

# The Washington Student Assistance Program

## *School-based Prevention-Intervention Services*

### Overview

The program supports the placement of trained and certified Student Assistance Professionals in middle and high schools. The Student Assistance Program is a multi-tiered approach, where prevention services are provided to the entire school community (universal prevention). Group or individual counseling (selected/indicated prevention) is provided to students who are at-risk or are using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.

### Target Population for Selected/Indicated services:

☑ Students impacted by substance use in the family ☑ Student impacted by their own substance use, abuse, or addiction ☑ Students in recovery ☑ Students at risk for substance use or abuse

### Student Assistance Professionals provide the following services:

#### Screening and referral services

Students receiving services are screened with the GAIN-SS and, if necessary, are referred to appropriate services.

#### Support Groups

Student Assistance Professionals provide 8-12 week counseling groups, including: ☑ **At Risk Group** - Education and skill building for students at risk of using/abusing alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs (ATOD) ☑ **Intervention Group** -For students experimenting, using, or abusing ATOD ☑ **Affected Others Group** – For students impacted by substance use in the family ☑ **Recovery Group** – For students in recovery from substance use ☑ **Senior Group** – For seniors who are ambivalent about leaving school and home, and/or who have “senioritis”. The emphasis is on preventing students from increasing their use of alcohol or other drugs to deal with senior stress. ☑ **Newcomers Group** – For students new to the school, to help them form connections to adapt to a new school/community.

#### Universal school-wide prevention services

##### Classroom instruction

For schools where a Student Assistance Professional is placed, all students in the school’s lowest grade receive prevention education. Topics include: ☑ Being an Adolescent ☑ Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs ☑ Relationships: Friends and Family ☑ Skills for Coping

##### Establish Student Leadership Group

The purpose of the student leadership group is to empower students to: ☑ Change the culture and norms of the students to value being drug free ☑ Plan activities to decrease the stigma of interaction with the Student Assistance Specialist



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### **Participation in Student Assistance/Child Study Team**

If the school has an existing team, the Student Assistance Professional participates in meetings where students of concern are discussed; this team participation ensures that students in need of services are referred to the program.

### **Training and Information Dissemination to School Staff**

The purpose is to: ☑ Increase the awareness of substance use/abuse and its impact ☑ Increase knowledge of signs and symptoms of substance use, and issues children face when their parents misuse alcohol or other drugs ☑ Decrease favorable attitudes toward ATOD use

### **Parent Engagement**

- ☐ Outreach parents of discipline-referred students and involve them in the program ☑ Disseminate parent newsletters focused on ATOD prevention strategies ☑ Attend parent teacher conferences and provide ATOD information ☑ Inform parents of school and community events, and encourage participation

The Student Assistance Program undergoes annual program evaluation. Results over time consistently show that students who participate in intervention services increase their understanding of the risk of using substances, and reduce or delay the onset of their use.

Funding: The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), in partnership with the state's Educational Service Districts, oversees the school-based prevention and intervention component of the [Community Prevention and Wellness Initiative \(CPWI\)](#). CPWI is a prevention effort of the Health Care Authority (HCA), managed by the Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR).

### **Contact**

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