

**STUDENT ASSISTANCE SERVICES CORPORATION**  
*Substance Abuse Prevention • Mental Health Treatment • Bullying Prevention*  
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**For Immediate Release**

**New Adolescent Counseling and Bullying Prevention Resource  
Center for Westchester**

Beginning on June 1st, the Student Assistance Services Corporation (SAS) Adolescent Counseling and Bullying Prevention Resource Center will be the first of its kind in Westchester to provide direct support and solutions to parents, adolescents, and educators who seek advice on how to best resolve a bullying situation. Individual assistance will be available for adolescents who have been targeted/bullied, who have targeted/bullied others, and/or are anxious or depressed from involvement in bullying situations.

Bullying can be traumatic and research shows that adolescents who report being bullied and/or those who bully others are more likely to engage in substance use and experience mental health related issues such as symptoms of depression and anxiety, emotional dysregulation, and behavioral problems. "The rise in online bullying during COVID related shutdowns and the incidents of first time bullying or escalation of bullying for adolescents returning to in-person contact with peers has been a contributor to the increase in adolescent anxiety, depression, aggressive behaviors, and problems at school" according to Kara Santucci, the new Center Coordinator.

Phone and in-person consultations for parents, adolescents, educators, and other professionals are free of charge as a result of a generous grant from the Phelps Community Corporation. According to Board President, Vincent DeSantis, "As we know from the Surgeon General's Dec. 2021 report, there is a national youth mental health crisis that's been exacerbated by COVID-19 and we are committed to addressing this crisis."

The new program includes a confidential Bullying Prevention Helpline (NoBullying or 662-855-9464) and email ([bullyinghelpline@sascorp.org](mailto:bullyinghelpline@sascorp.org)) that will be operating Monday-Friday between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM. All calls or emails will be answered within 24 hours and on the next business day. A website with information about training, workshops, and other events will be available soon.

Since 1985, Student Assistance Services (SAS) Corp. has been helping adolescents and their parents and has been a resource for educators and other professionals in Westchester County, collaborating with them to meet their specific needs and concerns. Staff in the Student Assistance Services' substance use prevention, mental health, and impaired driving prevention programs, as well as other professionals working in schools, have noticed an increase in mental health and behavioral issues and waiting lists for agencies and private practitioners who can provide help. "The new grant to expand out-patient mental health treatment for adolescents and the new bullying prevention services will help fill an important need," according to Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health Commissioner Michael Orth, "The opening of these services during Mental Health Month helps further raise awareness of adolescent mental health challenges and resources available."



SAS is a contract agency of the Westchester County Dept. of Community Mental Health and the Office of Drug Abuse Prevention & STOP-DWI

