

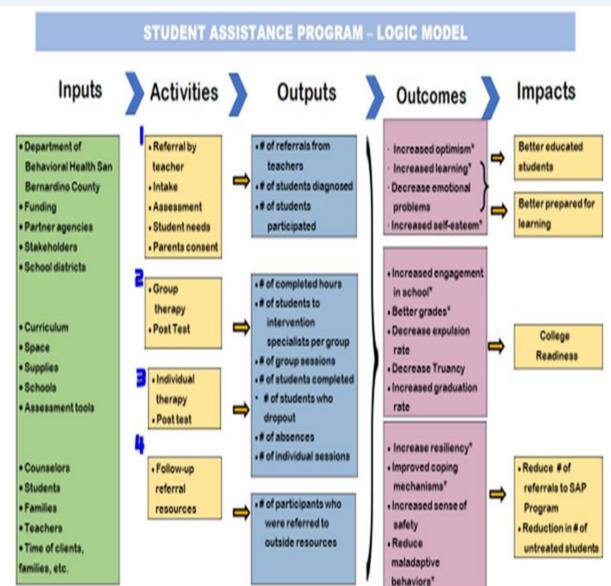
## ABSTRACT

Reach Out's Student Assistance Program (SAP) has been established to serve public school students from elementary through high school level. The students are referred to the program by their school administrators and teachers to work on their social and emotional development stages due to exhibiting negative behaviors in school and at home.

This evaluation determined if there was any significant when offering group counseling sessions on increasing critical thinking. Two different statistical tests (a one-sample t-test and an independent samples t-test) were used to answer the evaluation question. A de-identified data set was provided by Reach Out through a convenient sample and the measuring tool used was Holistic Student Assessment (HAS).

## INTRODUCTION

- The Student Assistance Program (SAP) is a school-based approach that serves students in grades K – 12 who might have barriers to academic success. Reach Out has implemented the program in San Bernardino County up until 2018.
- This program was funded by the San Bernardino County Department of Behavioral Health. The purpose of this program is to reduce behavioral problems that are reported by educators and parents due to school or family situations.
- The students are referred to the program as they evaluate their needs to the services through classroom observations and personal interactions.
- The purpose of this evaluation is to measure the effect of SAP in increasing learning and critical thinking among the students. The evaluation will start with focusing on exploring *to what extent did group counseling increase critical thinking for students in the Student Assistant Program?*
- The logic model appears like a chain of causes and effects that will yield an outcome of short or long terms.



## LITERATURE REVIEW

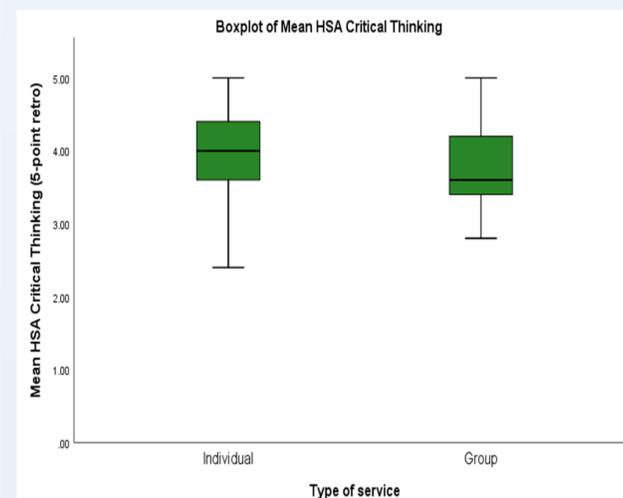
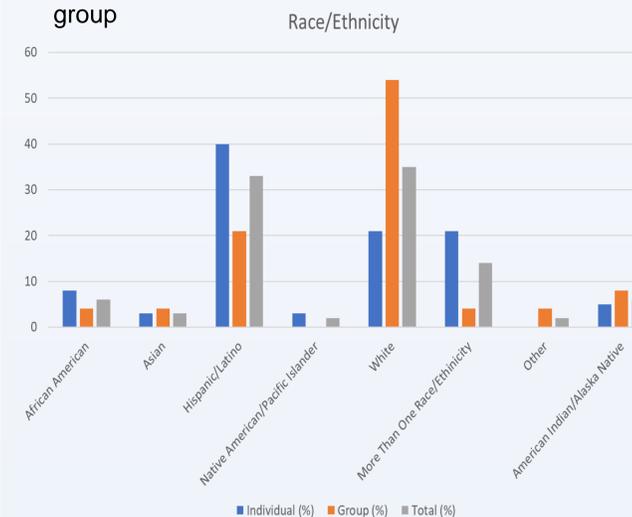
- When a school-based program is built on addressing all components and elements that are experienced by the individual, it gives the counselors a range of interventions and topics to explore (Masten, 2014).
- The outcome and eventually communal effects are not experienced on a large scale or measured due to the participant not showing up and attending the sessions (Edwards, Mumford, & Serra-Roldan, 2007).
- This study yields partial congruency with the literature review in finding significance in group session in relationship to increasing critical thinking. What was not known is the significance between group and individual due to the small sample set this study provided.
- Overall, SAP and the PYD framework share the concept of teaching students through building skills in a positive way. Especially when dealing with students who are overcoming trials in their personal lives, SAP strives to build on their already existing skills and enhance their toolboxes by adding new tools through the concepts of the PYD framework.

## METHODS

- A de-identified data was provided by SAP for this study.
- The research design was utilized for this evaluation.
- The research design used in this research is one-group posttest design-only research.
- The sample for the evaluation project was selected from the year 2016-2018 through convenience sampling.
- The group session is used as a subsample for this research.
- The sample size is 79.
- The dependent variable is critical thinking and the independent variable is the group session participation.
- All demographics were collected during the initial screening. As each participant filled out the intake forms, it was done in a self-administrated questionnaire.
- Inferential analyses, including one-sample t-test and independent samples t-test, were conducted to assess the effects of the program on critical thinking.
- All statistical analyses were conducted utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, version 26.0.
- Descriptive statistical analysis was utilized to describe the study sample and program outputs.

## RESULTS

- Demographics of the study sample included 79 participants who were age 6 to 18.
- There were 45 participants in individual sessions and 28 participants in group sessions.
- Group sessions did impact participants Critical Thinking scores by statistical significance.
- The mean HSA Critical Thinking of individual session participants was not significantly different from the mean HSA Critical Thinking of group session participants.
- The individual sessions had more male (55.6%) than female (42.2) participants and the group sessions had more female (78.6) than male (17.9) participants.
- Group counseling sessions significantly increased critical thinking.
- No Significant difference between individual and group



## DISCUSSION

### 1. Implications

- Pre-test and post-test to be administered to measure improvements.
- For future evaluations having bigger sample set to start out with would benefit the study.
- Having mental health counselors who are fully trained to administer the pre and post tests and conduct the group and individuals sessions would bring a level of depth to the results and the effectiveness of the program.
- Providing mental health trainings to better equip the counselors with the latest interventions and tools would serve the program well.

### 2. Study Limitations

- Small sample size which did not provide a large pool of data and information for the evaluator to work with.

### 3. Conclusion

- The involvement of social workers in a similar program would provide a professional experiences for the social workers.
- Importance of school-based interventions/preventative services
- Importance of expanding the evaluation and research of programs similar to SAP.
- Impact/value of programs similar to SAP could be utilized in advocating for policy change that fund school-based programs.

## REFERENCES

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