Screening and referrals for Project Tam An

At AARS, Tam An employs a screening process consisting of three steps.

Step 1. Parents and school staff including teachers, office personnel, academic counselors, principals and vice-principals refer students based on behavioral indicators in attendance, academic performance, drug-use, gang involvement, or violent behavior. A number of strategies help facilitate this process. On a weekly basis, our school-based counselor places a referral form with a cover letter in all staff mailboxes. Also on a weekly basis, the school staff interacts with our counselor at the staff meetings where referrals also take place. On the days that our counselor is at the school, morning announcements also lets all students and staff know that the counselor’s on campus that day. What has been tremendously helpful is that our counselor’s office is located in a central location in the main office close to desk areas of the main office staff that is at the front-lines with all student issues. Thanks to this central location, our counselor is able to interact frequently with the main staff that makes most of the referrals. We would like to explore training the school staff on culturally competent screenings strategies and would appreciate tips and learning from other CAC sites on how to do this.

Step 2. Once referred, clients go through individual screenings with two assessment tools that includes major elements of the standard mental health assessment tool used by Santa Clara County Mental Health department, called the Initial Mental Health Assessment. This tool is used to screen for clinical level of needs which may require referral out. The second tool includes clinical elements identified as unique to the Southeast Asian population, developed specifically for this project and meant to target counselor’s intervention to youth and families, called the Family Relations Assessment Tool. This assessment tool was developed to be administered by non-licensed and non-master level mental health rehabilitation specialist in Santa Clara County.

Step 3. Once screened, cases along with service plans will be reviewed weekly in our agency’s Youth Team’s Clinical Meeting, staffed by licensed, pre-licensed, and non-licensed counselors who will review the case and service recommendations and assist the counselor to proceed with services.