

MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES WITHIN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

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Assessment Process, 13th Judicial District

Youth Court Assessment Referrals:

- Approximately 965 youth were referred to 13th JD court services in the previous 12 months
- Youth appear before a hearings Officer for an initial appearance
- Juvenile Court Assessment and Tracking System (JCATS) Back on Track (BOT) pre-screening tool for basic risk and needs assessment completed at intake
- Youth may be referred to YIAC for a more comprehensive assessment,
 - * BOT full assessment
 - * Problem Oriented Screening Instrument for Teenagers (POSIT)
 - * Substance Use Survey (SUS)
- Tools assess risks and strengths, substance use, physical and mental health, social problems and identifies needed services
- Report with recommendations forwarded to the hearings officer and/or assigned probation officer
- Youth are referred for community based services and programs, based upon assessment recommendations
- Over 80% referred youth have informal dispositions, and most do not return to the juvenile justice system
- Formal petitions address the others, and conditions of probation are linked to assessment results and recommendations
- Community based programs and services and accountability, including electronic monitoring, are utilized
- Personal Accountability and Support Services (PASS) plan provides a minimum of 67 service and program referral options, including a minimum of 11 mental health support service and provider options
- The Family Stabilization Program provides counseling and a stable environment in an attempt to keep youth in the home, and for stabilizing youth returning from out of home placements prior to returning home
- The Opportunities Program serves youth with low delinquency involvement, but with elevated, identified risks and needs
- Chemical Dependency evaluations and an Intensive Outpatient Treatment program attempt to address substance abuse, and inpatient treatment is an option

Tumbleweed Runaway and Homeless Youth Program:

- Crisis response contract with Tumbleweed
- One and ½ positions assigned to completing youth assessments
- 24 hour Crisis Hot Line
- 24/7 response to youth and families in crisis, including runaway youth
- Provided crisis services to 1,476 referrals in the last year
- 453 received comprehensive services including counseling
- 48 runaway youth
- 83 nights of temporary Shelter Care for youth in crisis
- Over 3,500 hours of crisis service
- Over 4,800 hours of counseling services
- 163 comprehensive youth risk and needs assessments completed
- Parenting programs, teen support groups, life skills, counseling, mentoring
- Incredibly important service for youth in this district!!

Non Youth Court Assessment Referrals:

- Status offenders, youth in crisis, non delinquent youth
- At-risk youth referred to the Youth Intake and Assessment Center (YIAC), through the Tumbleweed program, for assessment services
- Referrals by parents, schools, Tumbleweed workers, others
- Tumbleweed workers can place youth in crisis in temporary shelter care pending family remediation
- Assessments are a comprehensive 4 hour process designed to identify areas of risk and need
- Referrals for services and programs or to other agencies can be made, consistent with recommendations of the assessment
- Tumbleweed counselors work with youth and coordinate access to community based services, including services and programs through Court Services

Youth who require residential placement:

- Youth who have failed other lesser restrictive options, including therapeutic foster or group home care

Residential Placements for treatment:

- Requires a current mental health diagnosis
- Lesser restrictive services have failed to meet the mental health needs of the youth
- Requires approval of a youth placement committee and the proposed provider
- Requires certificate of need (CON) signed by a medical doctor, therapist and case manager
- Placements are intended to be short term in nature for treatment and stabilization
- Qualified mental health placements paid by Medicaid and at times by Juvenile Delinquency Intervention and Placement (JDIP) funds

Pressing treatment needs include in-state options for:

- Early identification and intervention services for youth
- Seriously delinquent youth with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse issues
- Seriously delinquent but low functioning youth
- Youth with mental health issues who have violent tendencies requiring a secure placement
- Non-correctional, secure residential facilities to treat these high needs youth