

Outcomes:

How Much?

In 2021, 433 Dakota County children being served by either Corrections or Social Services were offered a mental health screening.

How Well?

In Dakota County, the Mental Health Screening Allocation is used to address children's mental health in the following manner:

- Inform the parent or primary caregivers of the screening results
- Assist families with referrals to a mental health professional for any necessary follow up assessments and/or treatment
- Utilize grant funds for short-term clinical, ancillary, or supportive services not reimbursable by Minnesota Health Care Plans or other insurance

Is Anyone Better Off?

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, one in five children meet criteria for a mental health diagnosis during their lifetime. For many children, lack of access to mental health care is an extraordinary burden due to barriers, including low socioeconomic status and membership in traditionally underrepresented groups. Unfortunately, it is likely less than one-third of children who may need mental health services receive treatment.

The mental health screening can help to open doors for youth because questions are asked that they may never have been asked before. These screenings can assist in obtaining information that helps identify problems the child or youth may be experiencing. By addressing these identified mental health, substance use, and other challenging life experiences these youth may no longer need the assistance of social services, corrections, truancy, or children's mental health.

Those children/youth who are subsequently identified through screening who need or who are at risk of needing mental health services are offered additional referrals and/or services. Early identification of mental health concerns followed by the appropriate intervention and treatment may prevent years of disability and provide improved outcomes for children and their families. Mental health screening can also reduce barriers to learning and result in positive educational and behavioral outcomes as well.