



WISe: Designated Crisis Responders (DCRs) and Crisis Teams

Introduction

The WISe program targets a group of high need Medicaid enrolled or eligible youth. Crisis team staff and Designated Crisis Responders (DCR) staff will frequently encounter youth while responding to crisis service requests or evaluations who may qualify for these services. Becoming more aware of this service option and whether it may be appropriate for such youth is the purpose of this notice.

What is WISe?

Washington State's Wraparound with Intensive Services (WISe)* provides comprehensive behavioral health services and supports to Medicaid eligible youth, up to 21 years of age, with complex behavioral health needs. WISe is designed to provide individualized, culturally competent services that strive to keep youth with intense mental health needs safe in their own homes and communities, while reducing unnecessary hospitalizations. WISe offers a higher level of care through these core components:

The Time and Location of services: WISe is community-based. Services are provided in locations and at times that work best for the youth and family, such as in the family home and on evenings and weekends.

Team-based Approach: Using a Wraparound approach, WISe relies on the strengths of an entire team to meet the youth and family's needs. Intensive care coordination between all partners and team members is essential in achieving positive outcomes. Each team is individualized and includes the youth, family members, care coordinator, natural supports, a therapist, a youth partner and/or family partner, and members from other child-serving systems when they are involved in a youth's life. Other

team members could include family friends, school personnel, a probation officer, a religious leader, a substance use disorder treatment provider, or a coach/ teacher. The team creates ONE Cross-System Care Plan that identifies strategies and supports, using the youth and family's voice and choice to drive their plan.

Help during a crisis: Youth and families have access to crisis services any time of the day, 365 days a year. Youth receive services by individuals who know the youth and family's needs and circumstances, as well as their current crisis plan. Whenever necessary, this includes face-to-face interventions at the location where the crisis occurs.

How Does Someone Access WISe?

A youth must receive Medicaid or be Medicaid eligible to receive WISe services. Referrals for WISe can be made directly to a WISe agency or in coordination with the youth's current behavioral health clinician if the youth is enrolled in behavioral health services. For a list of current WISe agencies please go to <https://www.hca.wa.gov/assets/free-or-low-cost/wise-referral-contact-list-by-county.pdf>

When should I refer youth for a WISe screen?

A WISe screen is required when:

- Youth and families self-refer, by requesting a screen for WISe.
- There has been a request for out-of-home treatment or placement substantially related to unmet mental health needs.
- There has been a step-down request from institutional or group home care.
- There has been crisis intervention and the youth presents with past or current functional indicators* of need for intensive mental health services.

* *Functional indicators include: an inpatient mental health stay; multiple out of home placement stays; Juvenile Rehabilitation services or adjudication; use of multiple psychotropic medications; anorexia/bulimia; substance use disorder; and suicide attempt or self-injury.*

You should consider referring youth for a WISE screening if the youth who, primarily due to a suspected or identified mental health difficulty:

- Has repeated episodes of contacts with the crisis mental health system.
- Has repeated requests for inpatient psychiatric care.
- Is held in Emergency Rooms due to danger to self or others.
- Is involved in multiple systems (i.e., child welfare, juvenile justice, substance use disorder treatment).
- Is at risk of out-of-home placements, such as foster/ group care, Children's Long Term Inpatient Program (CLIP) or acute hospitalization.
- Is in Special Education and/or has a 504 Plan, with multiple school suspensions for mental health and/or behavioral issues.
- Is at risk based on a history of running away or disengaging from care due to mental health difficulties.

What information is needed for the referral?

When making a referral, please have as much of the following information available as possible:

- Youth's name and date of birth
- Youth's Provider One Identification Number
- Caregiver's name and relationship
- Any known child-serving system involvement (i.e., legal/justice involvement)
- Risk factors (i.e. suicide risk, danger to self or others, runaway, medication management)
- Knowledge of the youth's personal life (i.e., living situation, school functioning, physical health)
- Known arrests and number of convictions
- Number of hospital emergency room visits (any for mental health or substance use)
- Any psychiatric prescription medications taken (currently or in the past)
- Reported diagnoses
- History of recent crisis contacts, phone support and/or outreach

- Need for spoken language or American Sign Language interpreter services

Special Considerations

WISE program participants have a plan that addresses their specific triggers and outlines individualized strategies to reduce the risk of crises. WISE participants in crisis have access to a trained and experienced mobile crisis professional or team, who know the youth and family's needs and circumstances as well as the current crisis plan. They will individualize the crisis response to avoid any unnecessary use of other crisis system responses (DCRs, outreach crisis staff, ER staff, etc.).

What happens once I make the referral

When working with a youth who is not currently receiving but is eligible for Medicaid-funded mental health services:

- Youth and family are educated about WISE and its benefits, and agree to participate.
- Youth are referred to a screening entity.
- A screen is completed by a designated provider to determine whether a youth's needs appear to rise to the WISE level of care. They use the administration of the Washington Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) tool to make this initial screening determination. This screening tool can be completed over the phone or in-person.
- When the screening tool shows that WISE services could potentially benefit a youth, youth are referred to a WISE agency so that an intake evaluation can be completed.
- The intake process is used to determine whether services are medically necessary. Determining whether a youth meets medical necessity is required to provide any Medicaid mental health service to a person. Eligibility for WISE services is also determined at this time.
- When it is determined that a youth does not meet the WISE level of care, they are referred to other mental health services, as appropriate, to have their needs addressed.

When working with a youth who is currently receiving Medicaid-funded mental health services:

- Youth and family are educated about WISE and its benefits, and agree to participate.
- Youth are referred to a screening entity.
- A screen is completed by a designated provider to determine whether a youth's needs appear to rise to the WISE level of care. They use the administration of the Washington Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) tool to make this initial

screening determination. This screening tool can be completed over the phone or in-person.

- When it is determined that a youth does not meet the WISE level of care, they are referred to the screening agency or the youth's Manage Care Organization to other services, as appropriate, to have their needs addressed.

Referral to a WISE service provider can be done through coordination with the youth's current clinician, or by making a referral to a screening entity.

Washington's Wraparound with Intensive Services (WISE)

Overview of the T.R. et al. v. Birch and Strange

In November 2009, a Medicaid lawsuit was filed (formerly called T.R. v. Dreyfus) against the Department of Social and Health Services and the Health Care Authority about intensive mental health services for children and youth. The lawsuit is based on federal EPSDT (Early and Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment) laws that require states to provide mental health services and treatment to children who need them, even if the services have not been provided in the past. After several years of negotiations, both sides agreed on a plan that they believe will put them in compliance with the laws, and most importantly, work for youth and families in Washington State. The federal court approved this Settlement Agreement on December 19, 2013. The goal of the Settlement Agreement is to develop a system that provides intensive mental health services in home and community settings that work – for Medicaid eligible youth up to 21 years of age.