

Youth Experiencing Homelessness Wraparound with Intensive Services

Worried about a Youth who may be struggling with complex behavioral health concerns?

Medicaid eligible youth up to 21 who are struggling due to possible mental health concerns should be considered for a WISE screen. A WISE referral should be completed by personnel in an effort to support the youth with their behavioral health needs when it is impacting their success in everyday life.

Service array include:

- Intensive care coordination
- Intensive mental health services
- Youth and/or Family peer support
- Crisis outreach

Implementation of WISE, utilizing the Washington State Children's Behavioral Health Principles, will:

- Reduce the impact of mental health symptoms on youth and families, increase resilience, and promote recovery.
- Keep youth safe and making progress toward their goals.
- Help youth to avoid residential or inpatient placements.
- Promote youth development, maximize their potential to grow into healthy and independent adults.

WISE and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

WISE offers a network to provide support to individuals in both home and community settings. The goal is to reduce the impact of mental health symptoms and to increase resiliency and recovery. It is a flexible engagement approach that meets the youth where they are in their lives. Youth experiencing homelessness are most often not best served in an office. The WISE model honors and promotes the Washington State Children's Behavioral Health Principles, which include:

Team Based, Natural Supports, Collaboration, Home and Community Based, Culturally Relevant, Individualized, Strengths Based, Outcome Based, and Unconditional.

WISE also promotes Family and Youth Voice and Choice: Family and youth voice, choice and preferences are intentionally elicited and prioritized during all phases of the process, including planning, delivery, transition, and evaluation of services.

How do I identify youth who should be referred to WISE?

Experienced staff and street outreach professionals will often recognize youth in need of a more intensive and individualized approach to treatment through engagement, trust building, self-disclosure, and visible behaviors and interactions.

Indicators can be:

- A frequent user of the crisis response system or emergency rooms, due to concerns about mental health.
- Experiencing hard to understand behaviors (such as running away, or frequent arrests that are due to mental health) that are challenging to you, other caregivers, or therapist/clinician, and traditional services alone are not helping.
- Encounters with multiple systems (i.e. child welfare, juvenile justice, substance use disorder treatment)
- In need of a more intensive and individualized approach to treatment.
- Showing an elevated risk of harm to self or others.
- Experiencing frequent school disruptions or delinquency.

How do I refer to WISE?

To find out who to contact in your county go to:

<https://www.hca.wa.gov/billers-providers-partners/behavioral-health-recovery/wraparound-intensive-services-wise>

What Information is needed for the referral?

- Youth's name and date of birth
- Caregiver's name and relationship, if there is a caregiver
- Youth's Provider One Identification Number (Apple Health Insurance Number)

Additional information will assist with the screening, such as:

- Any known child-serving system involvement (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)

What happens once I make a referral?

All referrals should result in a WISE screening. A WISE screen must be offered within 10 working days of receiving a referral. All WISE screens include:

- Information gathering, to complete the Child Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) screen, which consists of a subset of 26 questions. This screen will determine whether it appears the youth could benefit from the level of care WISE offers. This screening tool can be completed over the phone or in-person.
- When the screening tool shows that WISE could potentially benefit the youth, the youth is referred to a WISE agency so that an intake evaluation can be completed. The WISE provider agency will then assign a new team to the youth and all care will be coordinated through that agency/team.
- If it is determined that the youth does not appear to meet the level of care WISE provides, the youth will be referred to other mental health services, as appropriate, to have his/her needs addressed.

Special System Considerations

When working with youth experiencing homelessness it can be a challenge to transition from the immediacy of crisis into formalized service. This transition is often incremental and takes time. There are no limits to the number of referrals a youth can have, and street outreach workers can be involved with the WISE team.

The coordination of WISE with homeless services already being offered may help reduce barriers to obtaining and maintaining a steady home and reduce future disruptions.

Youth experiencing homelessness are not attached to a particular system and there is no built in authority or regulatory body. The system is a variety of non-profit organizations and social service agencies, which can make communication a challenge.

WISE is a voluntary service and youth must agree to participate.