

Defining Youth Crisis Centers vs. Youth Assessment Centers



Youth Crisis Center

Youth Crisis Centers (YCCs) are a place for youth to go if they are experiencing a behavioral health crisis (suicidal thoughts, recent self-harming, etc.) to get help. Youth can stay for up to twenty-three (23) hours and fifty-nine (59) minutes (most episodes of care are resolved in less time) and will receive a place to rest, food, and services from mental health trained staff to de-escalate, develop a plan of care and provide referrals to resources. Services provided include:

- 24-hour crisis hotline
- Medical screening
- Assessment
- Crisis intervention services
- Community-based referrals

YCCs have four (4) primary functions:

1. Divert youth experiencing crisis away from unnecessary hospitalization
2. Reduce the need for the incarceration of youth because of a behavioral health crisis
3. Prevent escalation of family conflict and violence in their home,
4. Provide access to professionals to de-escalate youth in crisis while setting up community-based treatment options for youth and families.

Youth Crisis Centers have been shown to reduce hospitalization, criminal charges, domestic violence, and child abuse and decrease the need for out-of-home placements.

Youth Crisis Centers will operate 24/7/365 to provide evaluation, intervention, and referral for youth experiencing a crisis due to serious emotional disturbance or co-occurring substance use disorder.



Youth Assessment Center

Youth Assessment Centers aim to prevent and divert youth from juvenile justice and child welfare systems through a single point of contact. Centers will use validated screening tools to determine needs for further assessment, provide case management, and linkages to community-based services.

When youth come into contact with law enforcement through an arrest, summons, or status offense, assessment centers become the first point of contact. Centers conduct in-depth interviews using validated screening and assessment tools to help identify needs, strengths, safety concerns, and other underlying issues. Information gathered through screening and assessments helps centers coordinate release, make recommendations for diversion from the juvenile justice system, and inform courts or other stakeholders of needs.

Assessment Centers partner with child welfare organizations preventatively and as an intervention. Information gathered through screening and assessment helps centers create opportunities to strengthen families and support individuals by focusing on intervention and prevention efforts, delivering enhanced services, and building stronger connections for youth and families with community partners.

Youth Assessment Centers provide early intervention that helps prevent the need for law enforcement and/or child welfare involvement. These centers will have established days and hours of operation unique to each individual center and are able to accept self-referrals from youth and families.