



WISe: Families

What is WISe?

WISe is a voluntary service that uses a team approach to meet your child's needs. It provides intensive mental health services to support your child and helps your family reach its goals.

The focus of WISe is:

- To provide intensive mental health services designed to assist your child and your family in achieving wellness, safety, and to strengthen relationships within your community.
- To develop an individualized care plan, based on strengths and needs that respect your family culture, values, norms, and preferences. Your child and family guide and drive the plan using a team. Team members include natural supports (such as family, friends, and religious leaders) and the professionals who work with your family (such as counselors, schools, CPS, and probation officers).
- To offer services and supports in locations and at times that work best for your child and family (including in your house or a public location of choice, and on evenings or weekends).
- To identify or provide resources and supports to your child and family.
- To provide help during a time of crisis. You have access to crisis services for your child any time of the day, 365 days a year. Your child will receive services from individuals who know your child 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.

Who can receive WISe?

WISe is available to Medicaid eligible youth up to age 21 who meet medical necessity criteria for this service.

WISe Principles:

WISe values that help improve outcomes for children:

1. Family and Youth Voice and Choice
2. Team based
3. Natural Support
4. Collaboration
5. Home and Community-based
6. Culturally Relevant
7. Individualized
8. Strengths Based
9. Outcome-based
10. Unconditional

When might it be helpful for me to access WISe?

You can refer your child for a WISe screen at any time. Parents can initiate treatment, but after age 13, a youth must consent to services. Family Initiated Treatment (FIT) can be used with WISe services. More information on FIT can be found online at the HCA website <https://www.hca.wa.gov/health-care-services-and-supports/behavioral-health-recovery/family-initiated-treatment-fit>

You should consider referring your child for a WISe screening if he/she is:

- A frequent user of the crisis line or emergency rooms, due to concerns about your child's 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.
- Displaying an elevated risk of harm to themselves or others.
- In need of a more intensive and individualized approach to treatment.
- In need of a more flexible and engaging approach.
- Involved in multiple systems (i.e., mental health, child welfare (CPS), juvenile justice, developmental disabilities services, and/or

substance use disorder treatment) and the system(s) are struggling to support your child together.

- In Special Education and/or has a 504 Plan, with multiple school suspensions for mental health and/or behavioral issues.

How do I refer my child to WISE?

Referrals for a WISE screen can be made at any time. To find out who to contact go to: <https://www.hca.wa.gov/assets/free-or-low-cost/wise-referral-contact-list-by-county.pdf> and click on the "WISE Referral Contact List by County" document.

If you believe your child would benefit from mental health services, use the contact information found on this site above to make a referral, or call the Recovery Helpline, toll free at 866-789-1511.

What Can I Expect?

All referrals should result in a CANS (Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths tool) screening. A CANS screen must be offered within 10 working days of receiving a referral. All CANS screens include:

Information gathering, to complete the CANS screen, which consists of a subset of 26 questions. This screen will determine whether it appears your child 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 your child, your child 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 your child and all care will be coordinated through that agency/team.

If it is determined that your child does not appear to meet the level of care WISE provides, your child will be referred to other mental health services, as appropriate, to have his/her needs addressed.

Want to get involved?

Your voice can help improve services for children and youth. Family, Youth, System Partner Round Tables (FYSVRTs) are an important part of a governance structure that is working to make improvements to the children's behavioral health system, including WISE. Learn more here: <https://www.hca.wa.gov/fysprt>

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.