


**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES
COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Subject: YOUTH SCREENING ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT	Policy Number: 33
Number of Pages: 3	Section:
Attachments: A. Initial Screening Protocol	Related Standards & References:
Effective Date: 10-1-11	Approved:  Kathy Pittman, Director

I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Youth Services (DYS), Community Services that every youth entering the youth services office undergo a screening and assessment. The screening and assessment may be used to develop a case plan designed to address the needs of youth under the supervision of the youth court.

II. DEFINITIONS

As used in this policy and procedure, the following definitions apply:

- A. **Screening** – An objective process of identifying potential risk factors for future delinquent behavior and problem areas impacting normal adolescent development.
- B. **Assessment** – A more thorough evaluation process using standardized instruments and procedures designed to further assess identified risk factors and other problem areas. The goal of these assessments is to delineate specific interventions and programming designed to reduce the propensity for further delinquent activity and facilitate improved functioning toward normal adolescent development and health.
- C. **Risk/Need** – Certain behavioral and/or cognitive areas that have been found to have a high correlation with and predictive of future criminal behavior.

Subject	Policy #	Page
YOUTH ASSESSMENT SCREENING INSTRUMENT	33	2 of 3

- D. **Case/Treatment Plan** – A detailed written plan addressing identified clinical needs prepared by a youth services counselor which details specific measurable objectives, evidenced based treatment interventions, behavioral management plans, persons responsible for delivering services and reasonable time frames for accomplishing these tasks.
- E. **Re-Assessment** – The periodic use of the various screening and assessment instruments to identify any changes in a youth’s risk/need scores and/or to measure treatment impact.
- F. **Serious Mental Illness** – Any mental illness which severely impacts a youth’s ability to establish and maintain normal interpersonal relationships or function in an age appropriate manner to include diagnoses with psychotic features, schizophrenia, severe post-traumatic stress disorder or schizoaffective disorder.

III. PROCEDURE

The Youth Screening and Assessment procedure shall take place in two consecutive phases. Phase I shall consist of the screening of youth by the intake unit using the identified tools. Phase II shall consist of the assessment of youth by the assigned supervision counselor using the appropriate tools based on the level of risk/need identified in Phase I.

- A. **Phase I: Screening** – Every youth referred to the youth services office shall have an initial screening completed by the intake unit. When appropriate standardized screening instruments may be administered by another staff member who has received specific training in the use of these instruments. In such a case, the results of the screening instruments shall be reviewed by a regional director. If the YASI or MAYSI screening instruments have been administered with the last 60 days by institutional staff, the instruments shall not be re-administered unless the prior results appear unreliable or inaccurate. The protocol is as follows:
 - 1. **Initial Screening** – All youth shall be screened by than intake counselor using the Initial Screening Protocol (Attachment A).
 - 2. **Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI)**
 - a. The YASI shall be administered during intake.
 - b. Intake staff shall pose standard questions to youth following the YASI tool format.
- B. **Phase II: Assessment** – Youth whose initial screens indicate the possible need for mental health services, shall receive timely, comprehensive and appropriate assessment by the local mental health center. Assessments shall be updated as new diagnostic and treatment information becomes available.

Subject	Policy #	Page
YOUTH ASSESSMENT SCREENING INSTRUMENT	33	3 of 3

All youth who have been identified as having a high level of risk/need shall have further testing done in order to identify treatment and programming needs to be included in the youth's treatment plan, which address the identified risk/need.

- C. **Re-Assessment** - A re-assessment shall be completed if significant new facts are learned, if programming appears to have had a substantial impact on behavior and thinking, and/or if it has been ninety days since the last formal assessment. The YASI re-assessment shall be completed by the assigned counselor. If needed, psychological testing shall be completed by the local mental health center or a private psychologist. If needed, educational testing shall be completed by the youth's local school district.

- D. **Referral** – Youth with serious mental illness shall be promptly transferred to an appropriate setting that meets their needs.
 - 1. **Screening** – If the mental health screen identifies an issue that places the youth's safety at immediate risk, the youth shall be immediately referred to a qualified mental health professional for assessment, treatment, and any other appropriate action, such as transfer to a more appropriate setting.
 - 2. **Assessment** – Youth whose mental health screens indicate the possible need for mental health services shall receive timely, comprehensive and appropriate assessments by the local mental health center. Assessments shall be updated as new diagnostic and treatment information becomes available.

- E. **Documentation** – The Youth Assessment and Screening process shall be documented and records shall be maintained in the youth's case file.

- F. **Training** - All staff who are responsible for working with youth during the intake and assessment process, and staff who assist in the development and implementation of the treatment plans, shall receive training in the programming needs assessment process. In-service training requirements shall be determined annually.