

**Protocol on State Cut-Off Criteria Mandating Responses by Detention Centers**

The Indiana Juvenile Mental Health Screening, Assessment and Treatment Pilot Project State Advisory Board has adopted a Cut-off Criteria Mandating Responses by Detention Centers for youth with high scores on the MAYSI-2. This cut-off level determines what response level is mandatory for the project and minimally acceptable given the various resources in the local community. The State Mandatory Cut-off has been established for all youth scoring a Caution or Warning on the Suicide Ideation Scale, or 2 or More Warnings on any Combination of Scales.

When a youth scores above the Caution cut-off scores on a given scale, the youth has scored at a level that can be said to have “possible clinical significance.” The Caution cut-off scores, therefore, simply mean that youths scoring above the MAYSI-2 cut-off would probably score high enough on other tests of similar adolescent disturbances to require special attention of some kind.

Warning cut-off scores are intended to alert staff that the youth has scored exceptionally high in comparison to other youths in the juvenile justice system. The Warning cut-off scores were set at the point that identifies approximately the top 10% of youths on a given MAYSI-2 scale. They identify a subset of youths in the Caution zone that are in the most in need of attention, and whose mental health needs should be given the highest priority caution for suicide ideation and requiring warning scores for 2 or more of the other sub-scales. National data indicates that the State Mandatory Cut-off would identify youth reporting very serious levels of mental health symptoms, *i.e.*, approximately a quarter of the juvenile population upon admission. Clinical follow-up (assessment or evaluation) is presumed for all youth scoring in the State Mandatory Cut-off range unless the results of a secondary screening process indicate that this evaluation is not warranted and evidence for not referring for clinical follow-up is clearly documented.

County Pilot Sites are encouraged to adopt a more protective level for their cut-off in their own policies regarding how and when to respond to elevated MAYSI-2 scores.

Please also refer to:

- *Indiana Guidelines for Counties to Develop Policy on Responses to Elevated MAYSI-Scores*

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