



TeenScreen Program for Schools and Communities



What is the TeenScreen Program?

TeenScreen is a nationally recognized mental health screening program developed by Columbia University to identify youth who may be at risk for depression, anxiety, substance abuse, or suicide. The National Alliance on Mental Illness of Maine (NAMI Maine) coordinates the TeenScreen Program in Maine. The goal of the TeenScreen Program is to ensure that all parents are offered the opportunity for their children to receive a voluntary mental health checkup through school and community based locations. The program's primary objective is to help identify mental health problems, such as depression, before they develop into more serious conditions. The TeenScreen Program requires both parental consent and youth assent for participation, is free, and completely confidential.

Target Population:

TeenScreen is provided to students, ages 11-18, through the school based health centers at the Lewiston and Auburn middle and high schools. Screening takes place during school hours. Screening results are kept confidential, stored separately from academic records and not shared with school staff.

How does it work?

The school based health center staff arranges a date for the screening to take place and informs the parent/guardian. The student is informed of the process and gives their assent. There are three steps to the screening process:

Step One: The student completes a 10 minute computerized questionnaire about vision, hearing and dental problems, symptoms of depression and anxiety, suicidal thinking and behavior, and the use of drugs and alcohol.

Step Two: Students whose answers reveal a potential problem and students who ask for help then meet with a trained mental health professional in private to determine if further evaluation would be helpful. Students whose answers show they probably do not need help meet briefly with other program staff to answer any questions they may have about the program and to give them the opportunity to ask for help with any other concerns the screening did not cover.

Step Three: Parents/guardians are contacted by program staff only if their child meets with a mental health professional and the professional recommends further evaluation. If this is the case, program staff will share the overall results with the parent/guardian and discuss ways to get help for their child. Parents/guardians are not contacted if their child is not found to need additional mental health services. If a vision, hearing or dental need is identified during the screening process, program staff will share this information with the school nurse or notify the parent/guardian by letter. The program staff does not provide further evaluation or treatment services. It is up to the parent/guardian to decide if they want to obtain any additional services for their child.

For more information please contact:

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Information about the TeenScreen Program may also be found at www.teenscreen.org.