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PENNSYLVANIA JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

CHILD TRAUMA SCREEN (CTS)

Intake decision-making shapes a youth's trajectory through the juvenile justice system. As a core component of Pennsylvania's Evidence-Based Informed Intake process, trauma screening operates alongside behavioral health and risk/needs tools to ensure objective, fair, and individualized case planning while balancing community safety and youth accountability. The Child Trauma Screen provides a brief, empirically based measure designed specifically to detect child traumatic stress and determine whether a youth requires further clinical evaluation. The tool is not a comprehensive clinical assessment, a full diagnostic screen for post-traumatic stress disorder, or a prompt for lengthy discussions about past trauma during intake. Instead, its focused scope quickly identifies the presence of trauma indicators to guide necessary next steps.

EVENTS

Exposure to Trauma

(e.g., abuse, neglect, violence, accidents, loss of a caregiver)

REACTIONS

Symptoms of Trauma Used to Determine Score of CTS

(e.g., nightmares, hypervigilance, emotional numbness, trouble concentrating)

83%

Of All Youth Screened
Indicated **WITNESSING
VIOLENCE**
IN THEIR LIFETIME

14%

Of All Youth Screened
Indicated **THEY WERE A
VICTIM OF SEXUAL ABUSE**
IN THEIR LIFETIME

43%

Of All Youth Screened
Indicated **THEY WERE A
VICTIM OF VIOLENCE**
IN THEIR LIFETIME

68%

Of All Youth Screened
Indicated **THEY WERE A
VICTIM OF OTHER TRAUMA**
IN THEIR LIFETIME

2,220

CTS
COMPLETED
STATEWIDE



4

Average
TRAUMA REACTIONS
SCORE*

25

Counties
COMPLETED CTSs
IN 2025



84%

Of All Youth Screened Reported
**1 OR MORE TRAUMATIC
EVENTS**

Note: Based on all 2025 CTSs.

*Youth who scores 6 or more on the Reactions scale are considered "Screened In" and should be administered the CTS Secondary Screen. When a youth is "Screened In", there is a high likelihood that the youth is suffering from clinically significant levels of PTSD symptoms.



Pennsylvania
Juvenile Court
Judges' Commission