

Region 7E Adult Mental Health Initiative Needs Assessment Results

Mille Lacs County

The Region 7E Adult Mental Health Initiative (AMHI) contracted with Wilder Research to conduct a post-COVID mental health needs assessment for Region 7E, which includes the counties of Chisago, Kanabec, Isanti, Mille Lacs, and Pine. This assessment was conducted via an online survey sent through county staff to mental health consumers and caregivers, as well as primary care providers, mental health providers, and county staff working in the region. This report summarizes the findings from the needs assessment results in Mille Lacs County. In total, 24 consumers and 17 providers responded to the survey. Providers sometimes represented more than one county, and may have their data included in more than one county report. It should be noted that the Ns for county-specific reports are relatively low and conclusions from the data should be made with caution.

Demographics

Consumers and caregivers

In total, 24 consumers and caregivers from Mille Lacs County responded to the survey. Survey respondents are compared to county-specific data available through Minnesota Compass (mncompass.org). With regard to age, respondents were comparable to the region as a whole, with an overrepresentation of 25-34 and 35-44 year olds and a underrepresentation of individuals age 18-24 and 65 or older (Figure 1). Underrepresentation of older adults could be due to the sampling methodology, as younger adults are often more likely to be more comfortable with completing surveys online. Race and ethnicity data, as well as education level were not measured in the exact same way between the survey and regional data. Overall, survey respondents were slightly more likely to be white than the county as a whole and slightly less likely to have education beyond high school. With regard to gender, survey respondents over represent women when compared to county-specific data (76% compared to 49%). Thirteen percent of respondents reported having been in jail or prison in the past two years, and 13% had been homeless.

1. RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Age	Survey respondents (N=24)	Mille Lacs County (N=20,072)
18-24	0%	9%
25-34	29%	15%
35-44	33%	16%
45-54	21%	16%
55-64	13%	20%
65+	4%	24%

1. RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS (CONTINUED)

Race	Survey respondents (N=24)	Mille Lacs County (N=26,220)
White	96%	88%
American Indian or Alaska Native	4%	4%
Black or African American	0%	<1%
Other	0%	-. ^b
Asian or Pacific Islander	0%	1%
Two or more races, alone	0%	4%
Ethnicity	(N=24)	(N=26,220)
Hispanic or latino/a/e	0%	3%
Gender identity	(N=24)	(N=26,397)
Female (or woman)	79%	49%
Male (or man)	21%	51%
Non-binary, gender non-conforming, or genderqueer	0%	-. ^b
	(N=24)	-. ^b
Identify as trans	0%	
Education level	(N=24)	(N=18,239)
Some high school	4%	10%
High school diploma or GED	67%	36%
Vocational training	8%	39%
Associate degree	8%	
Some college	13%	
Bachelor's degree	0%	11%
Graduate degree	0%	5%

Note. All available regional data with the exception of age (includes ages 18+) and education level (includes ages 25+) includes data for children as well as adults in the region. Create your own regional profile at mncompass.org.

^a Column does not equal 100% as respondents were allowed to select more than one response.

^b These data are not available at the county level.

Ninety-one percent of survey respondents report having a disability or chronic condition that impacts their daily life, compared to 15% of the county as a whole (Figure 2). Fifty percent report that their disability affects their mobility, 25% affects their vision and 4% their hearing.

2. DISABILITY STATUS

Status	Survey respondents (N=24)	Mille Lacs County (N=25,982)
Reports having a disability	91%	15%
Disability affects mobility	50%	-. ^a
Disability affects vision	25%	-. ^a
Disability affects hearing	4%	-. ^a

^a These data are not available at the county level.

Consumers were asked about any diagnoses they may have. All respondents reported having been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder or panic disorder. Most respondents reported having been diagnosed with major depression (96%), or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD; 88%; Figure 3).

3. DIAGNOSED CONDITIONS

Have you ever been told by a doctor or nurse that you have any of the following conditions?	% (N=24)
Anxiety disorder or panic disorder	100%
Major depression	96%
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)	88%
Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	77%
Manic episodes or manic depression, also called bipolar disorder	63%
Anti-social personality disorder, borderline personality disorder, or any other severe personality disorder	43%
Substance abuse disorder	29%
A concussion or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)	29%
Schizophrenia	25%
Paranoid or delusional disorder, other than schizophrenia	21%
Anorexia, bulimia, or another eating disorder	13%
Autism spectrum disorder	8%

Note. Column does not total 100% as respondents were allowed to select more than one response.

All consumer respondents report having health insurance, which is higher than the county average of 93% (Figure 4).

4. HEALTHCARE COVERAGE

Coverage	Survey respondents (N=24)	Mille Lacs County (N=21,486)
Has health care coverage/insurance	100%	93%

Consumer respondents exclusively had public health care coverage, whether that was Medicare (13%) or a public healthcare program other than Medicare (88%; Figure 5).

5. HEALTHCARE COVERAGE TYPE

Coverage type	(N=24)
Public healthcare program other than Medicare (Medical Assistance, MinnesotaCare, PMAP Plan)	88%
Medicare	13%
Private insurance	0%
Other	0%

Note. Column does not total 100% due to rounding.

Providers

In total, 17 providers working in Mille Lacs County responded to the survey. They most commonly represented mental health providers (53%; Figure 6), and most commonly worked for a mental health clinic (53%; Figure 7).

6. ROLE

Which of the following most closely describes your role?	(N=17)
Mental health provider/therapist ^a	53%
Foster care/housing provider	18%
County staff member	12%
Employment/vocational provider	12%
Nurse Practitioner (NP)	6%
Other ^b	18%

^a Mental health provider/therapist was not included as a category in the survey, but was back-coded from the "Other" category.

^b Other responses include: advocate (6%); community outreach (6%); social worker (6%).

7. TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS

What type of organization do you work for?	(N=17)
Mental health clinic	59%
Foster care/housing services	18%
Public health/human services department	12%
Employment/vocational services	12%
Hospital or emergency department	0%
Medical or primary care clinic	0%
Psychiatry clinic	0%
Law enforcement	0%
Other	0%

Services

Mental health services

Consumers

Nearly all consumers (96%) had received services for their mental health in the last two years (Figure 8). The most common types of services received by consumer respondents are psychiatric services (96%), mental health case management (96%), and individual psychology services (91%; Figure 9).

8. RECEIVED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

In the past two years (24 months) have you received any services for your mental health?	(N=24)
Yes	96%
No	4%

9. TYPES OF SERVICES RECEIVED

Services received	(N=23)
Psychiatric services (e.g., medications, medication management)	96%
Mental health case management	96%
Individual psychology services (e.g., outpatient therapy or counseling)	91%
Supported employment (services that help people get and maintain paid employment)	48%
Transportation services	43%
Adult Rehabilitative Mental Health Services (ARMHS)	39%
Emergency room services or an emergency mental health hold	39%
In-home supports (e.g. behavioral aide, personal care attendant)	39%
Community Support Program (CSP)	30%
Supportive housing (e.g., sober housing, mental health supportive housing, etc.)	30%
Group psychology services (e.g., outpatient therapy or counseling)	22%
Crisis phone line, text line, or warm line	22%
Inpatient counseling or treatment	13%
Mobile crisis assessment/stabilization services	13%
Day treatment (adult and children's)	9%
Integrated Mental Health/Chemical Dependency Treatment	5%
Adult foster care (residential care for people age 18 or older that require mental health supports)	4%
Respite services (services that provide short-term care for caregivers)	4%
Faith-based support services	0%
Recovery services	0%
Peer-to-peer support services	0%
Children's Therapeutic Services and Supports (CTSS)	0%
Other	4%

When asked about their satisfaction with the services they received, 91% of Mille Lacs County respondents reported being very satisfied or somewhat satisfied, 4% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 4% somewhat or very dissatisfied (Figure 10).

10. SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES

Satisfaction with services (N=23)	Very/somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Very/Somewhat dissatisfied
Overall, how satisfied are you with the services you have received?	91%	4%	4%

Note. Row does not total 100% due to rounding.

When asked how these services have helped them with specific life activities, the majority of respondents found services at least somewhat helpful. All respondents report services have been very or somewhat helpful in their ability to access the mental health services they need (Figure 11). Nearly all respondents (96%) report the services also help them to feel safe and stable and improve their overall quality of life. The majority of respondents (86%) report the services help them to perform daily activities and to have personal relationships, while 82% report services help them spend time doing the things they enjoy and 75% feel services have been helpful with their ability to work or volunteer.

11. EXPERIENCE WITH SERVICES

Please rate how helpful the services you have received has been in supporting your ability to do the following life activities successfully	N	Very/somewhat helpful	Not very/Not at all helpful
Access mental health services you need (completing paperwork, knowing options for services)	23	100%	0%
Feel safe and stable	23	96%	4%
Improve your overall quality of life	23	96%	4%
Perform daily activities (chores, paying bills, etc.)	22	86%	14%
Have personal relationships	22	86%	14%
Spend time doing things you enjoy	22	82%	18%
Work or volunteer	16	75%	25%

Most respondents (91%) feel that they have avoided in-patient psychiatric hospitalization because of the services they have received (Figure 12).

12. AVOIDANCE OF IN-PATIENT PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALIZATION

Hospitalization (N=21)	Strongly agree or agree	Disagree or strongly disagree
Because of mental health services I have received in the past 24 months, I have avoided in-patient psychiatric hospitalization	91%	10%

Note. Row does not total 100% due to rounding.

Currently, most respondents (92%) feel they have the support they need to remain safe and stable (Figure 13). In the past two years, 21% of respondents attempted to obtain services for their mental health but were unable to do so.

13. OBTAINING NEEDED SUPPORTS

Supports	% (N=24)
Do you feel like you have the support you need to feel safe and stable?	92%
In the past two years, have you attempted to obtain services for your mental health and been unable to do so?	21%

In terms of their current mental health, roughly half (52%) report their mental health depends on the day. An additional 30% report their mental health getting better overall, while 13% report it is staying the same (Figure 14). The remaining 4% report their mental health is getting worse overall.

14. MENTAL WELLBEING

Thinking about your mental health right now, overall would you say you are...	% (N=23)
Depends on the day	52%
Getting better	30%
Staying the same	13%
Getting worse	4%

Providers

Providers were asked about which services are most helpful for keeping consumers safe and stable. The top three supports included: psychiatric services (41%), individual psychology services (29%) and day treatment services (29%; Figure 15).

15. TOP THREE SERVICES FOR KEEPING CONSUMERS SAFE AND STABLE

In your experience, which services and supports are most helpful for keeping consumers with mental health needs safe and stable?	% (N=17)
Psychiatric services (e.g., medications, medication management)	41%
Individual psychology services (e.g., outpatient therapy or counseling)	29%
Day treatment services (adults and children)	29%
Mobile crisis assessment/ stabilization services	24%
Adult Rehabilitative Mental Health Services (ARMHS)	24%
Community Support Program (CSP)	24%
Mental health case management	24%
Supportive housing (e.g., sober housing, mental health supportive housing)	24%
Children's Therapeutic Services and Supports (CTSS)	18%
In-home supports (e.g., behavioral aide, personal care attendant)	12%
Inpatient counseling or treatment	12%
Transportation services	6%
Adult foster care	6%
Emergency room services or emergency mental health hold services	6%

15. TOP THREE SERVICES FOR KEEPING CONSUMERS SAFE AND STABLE (CONTINUED)

In your experience, which services and supports are most helpful for keeping consumers with mental health needs safe and stable?	% (N=17)
Crisis telephone, text line, or warm line	6%
Group psychology services (e.g., outpatient therapy or counseling)	6%
Integrated Mental Health/Chemical Dependency Treatment	0%
Peer to peer support services	0%
Supported employment	0%
Recovery services	0%
Faith-based support services	0%
Respite services	0%
None of the above	0%
Other	0%

Barriers to care

Consumers

When asked about barriers to service access, the most common reasons cited by consumers include wait times being too long (42%), not being able to access the service they need in their area (37%), not being eligible for services (37%), and being worried that their family would find out (32%; Figure 16). Twenty-one percent report not experiencing any barriers to services.

16. BARRIERS TO CARE

Have any of the following barriers prevented you from accessing services?	% (N=19)
The wait time was too long	42%
The service I needed wasn't available in my area	37%
I wasn't eligible for the services	37%
I was worried about my family finding out	32%
I couldn't find transportation to get to services	26%
I was worried about the effect on current or future employment	26%
I was worried about how I would be seen	21%
I don't have the technology I need to access telehealth services	21%
I don't know what services are available	16%
I couldn't pay for the services	16%
I don't know how to access services	11%
I don't think the service(s) will help	11%
I can't financially afford to take time off for treatment	5%
I did not want to get exposed to the coronavirus while using in-person services	5%
I don't require formal mental health services at this time	0%
The people who provide it don't speak my language/I couldn't get an interpreter	0%
The services weren't culturally specific	0%
I don't have a mental health diagnosis	0%
Other	5%
None of the above	21%

Providers

Providers were also asked about barriers to consumers getting the mental health care they need. The most commonly endorsed barriers were similar to consumer responses. The most commonly endorsed barrier from the provider perspective is not being able to find transportation to get to services (88%; Figure 17). Barriers related to knowledge were commonly endorsed including consumers not knowing how to access services (59%) or what services are available (47%). Barriers related to capacity also ranked fairly high, such as the wait time being too long (71%) or the service not being available in the area (59%). Barriers related to cost were also common, including consumers not being able to afford to take time off for treatment or not being able to pay for services (59% each).

17. BARRIERS TO ACCESSING SERVICES

In your experience, which of the following barriers prevent consumers in your area from getting the mental health care they need?	% (N=17)
Not being able to find transportation to get to services	88%
The wait time is too long	71%
The service needed isn't available in my area	59%
Consumers don't know how to access services	59%
Consumers can't financially afford to take time off for treatment	59%
Not being able to pay for the services	59%
Consumers don't know what services are available	47%
Consumers don't think the service(s) will help	41%
Consumers don't have the technology they need to access telehealth services	35%
Not being eligible for the services	29%
Consumers don't feel they require formal mental health services at this time	29%
Consumers are worried about how they will be seen/don't want to be judged	18%
Consumers are worried about the effect of services on current or future employment	12%
The services aren't culturally specific	12%
Consumers don't have a diagnosis	12%
Consumers are worried about their family finding out	6%
The people who provide services don't speak their language/No interpreters available	6%
Consumers don't want to get exposed to the coronavirus while using in-person services	0%
Other ^a	12%
None of the above	0%

^a Other responses include: lack of crisis services (6%); no therapists that accept Medicare (6%).

Providers were asked to identify the biggest barrier out of the barriers they selected. The most commonly selected barrier by far is not being able to find transportation (41%), followed by the wait times being too long (24%), the needed service not being available in the area (12%), and consumers not being able to pay for services (12%; Figure 18).

18. BIGGEST BARRIER TO ACCESSING SERVICES

Of those, which is the biggest barrier?	% (N=17)
Not being able to find transportation to services	41%
The wait time is too long	24%
The service needed isn't available in the area	12%
Not being able to pay for the services	12%
Consumers don't know how to access services	6%
Other barriers ^a	6%

^aOther responses include: lack of crisis services (6%).

Providers were asked about what they saw as the biggest gaps in mental health services. The most commonly cited gap for Mille Lacs County is transportation services (69%; Figure 19). Other services commonly listed include: emergency room services (31%), supportive housing (25%), ARMHS (25%), in-home supports (25%), and inpatient counseling or treatment (25%).

19. BIGGEST GAPS IN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Which of these do you consider the biggest gap in mental health services and supports available to consumers in your region?	% (N=16)
Transportation services	69%
Emergency room services or emergency mental health hold services	31%
Supportive housing (e.g., sober housing, mental health supportive housing)	25%
Adult Rehabilitative Mental Health Services (ARMHS)	25%
In-home supports (e.g., behavioral aide, personal care attendant)	25%
Inpatient counseling or treatment	25%
Psychiatric services (e.g., medications, medication management)	19%
Mobile crisis assessment/ stabilization services	19%
Children's Therapeutic Services and Supports (CTSS)	6%
Respite services	6%
Day treatment services (adults and children)	6%
Integrated Mental Health/Chemical Dependency Treatment	6%
Supported employment	0%
Community Support Program (CSP)	0%

19. BIGGEST GAPS IN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (CONTINUED)

Which of these do you consider the biggest gap in mental health services and supports available to consumers in your region?	% (N=16)
Individual psychology services (e.g., outpatient therapy or counseling)	0%
Mental health case management	0%
Adult foster care	0%
Peer to peer support services	0%
Crisis telephone, text line, or warm line	0%
Group psychology services (e.g., outpatient therapy or counseling)	0%
Recovery services	0%
Faith-based support services	0%
Other	13%
None of the above	0%

Respondents' organizations have done a variety of things to try and address gaps in mental health services in the past two years, including hiring more staff (47%), opening a new location (47%), and starting to offer telehealth services (41%; Figure 20).

20. ADDRESSING THE GAPS

What (if anything) has your organization been able to do to address gaps in the past 2 years (24 months)?	% (N=17)
Hire more staff	47%
Open a new location	47%
Started offering telehealth services	41%
Started offering new services	6%
Other ^a	18%
None of the above	24%

^a Other responses include: advocating for transportation reform (6%); grants (6%); working on Residential Crisis Stabilization option (6%).

Providers also provided information on service capacity in their area. For most area providers and most specific groups, service capacity is limited or not available (Figure 21). Providers most commonly reported services meet demand for adults age 25 years or older (27%). Providers most commonly report limited availability for transition-age youth (86%), and children under 16 (79%). Finally, providers commonly report that services for people experiencing homelessness (36%) or specific cultural or ethnic groups (46%) are simply not available in their area.

21. SERVICE CAPACITY

What is the service capacity of your geographic area to meet the specific mental health needs of the following groups (N=9-15)	Exceeds demand	Meets demand	Limited availability	Not available
Adults age 25+	0%	27%	67%	7%
People experiencing homelessness	9%	0%	55%	36%
Transition-age youth (age 16-24)	0%	7%	86%	7%
Specific cultural or ethnic groups	0%	0%	54%	46%
Incarcerated individuals	0/9	1/9	4/9	4/9
Children under age 16	0%	14%	79%	7%

Note. Data is represented in counts instead of percentages when N<10.

Primary care services

Most respondents (96%) report visiting a primary care doctor in the past two years. Of those, a majority of respondents agree or strongly agree that appropriate mental health resources are available at primary care offices (81%), that primary care doctors are respectful of them or family members when discussing mental health topics (78%), and that they feel comfortable discussing mental health issues with their primary care doctor (78%; Figure 22). Slightly over half report that primary care doctors are knowledgeable about mental health topics (55%) and services and supports (52%).

22. PRIMARY CARE SERVICES AND MENTAL HEALTH

Primary care services and mental health	N	Strongly agree or agree	Disagree or strongly disagree
Appropriate mental health resources (handouts, pamphlets) are available at primary care offices such as clinics and hospitals	21	81%	19%
Primary care doctors are respectful of me and family when discussing mental health topics	23	78%	22%
I feel comfortable discussing mental health issues with my primary care doctor	23	78%	22%
Primary care doctors are knowledgeable about mental health topics	22	55%	46%
Primary care doctors are knowledgeable about mental health services and supports	21	52%	48%

Note. Rows may not total 100% due to rounding.

COVID-19 and mental health services

When asked if COVID-19 made mental health services harder to access, 71% of consumers said yes. Three-quarters of consumer respondents (75%) agreed or strongly agreed that COVID-19 negatively impacted their mental health, while two-thirds (67%) said the same of their physical health (Figure 23). A majority of respondents (71%) feel that COVID-19 negatively impacted their ability to meet basic needs but two-thirds (67%) report being able to find enough support to meet any additional needs they had because of COVID-19.

23. COVID-19 AND MENTAL HEALTH

COVID-19 and mental health	N	Strongly agree or agree	Disagree or strongly disagree
COVID-19 negatively impacted my mental health	24	75%	25%
COVID-19 negatively impacted my ability to meet basic needs for myself (i.e., food or water, clothing or hygiene necessities)	24	71%	29%
COVID-19 negatively impacted my physical health	24	67%	33%
I was able to find enough services and support to meet additional needs I had because of COVID-19	24	67%	33%

Telehealth services

Eighty-eight percent of respondents report receiving mental health services through telehealth in the past two years. Of those, the majority of consumer respondents from Mille Lacs County had used telehealth 8 or more times (Figure 24).

24. TELEHEALTH SERVICE USAGE FREQUENCIES

Usage	% (N=15)
1-2 times	0%
3-4 times	7%
5-7 times	13%
8 or more times	80%

Note. There was a survey programming error that resulted in 40 respondents in total being misdirected for this question and are therefore not included.

When asked about telehealth services, 79% report that in-person services were cancelled or postponed because of COVID-19 sometimes or always (Figure 25). Roughly two-thirds (67%) of respondents report remote or telehealth services did not feel as helpful as in-person services and slightly over half (54%) report the services they needed were not available because of COVID-19. Many respondents had issues with having access to the proper equipment for remote services, with 46% reporting always or sometimes not having the devices or internet needed.

25. TELEHEALTH SERVICES

Services (N=24)	Always or sometimes	Rarely or never
In person services were cancelled or postponed because of COVID-19	79%	21%
Remote or telehealth services didn't feel as helpful as in-person services	67%	33%
Services I needed, even remote services, were not available because of COVID-19	54%	46%
I did not have a device, internet, and/or data plan necessary to connect for remote services (for example, no smartphone or tablet, or not enough Wi-Fi or cell service to connect for a Zoom group.)	46%	54%

Note. Rows may not total 100% due to rounding.

Information about mental health services

In Mille Lacs County, the most common place consumer respondents get information about mental health services in their area is various mental health service providers, especially case managers and therapists (other sources 83%; Figure 26). Several consumers also get information from their primary care provider (30%).

26. WHERE RESPONDENTS GET INFORMATION ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Where do you usually get information about mental health services in your area?	% (N=23)
Other	83%
My primary care provider	30%
Online search engines (e.g., Google, Yahoo)	17%
Peers, friends, or family	17%
The Region7E Adult Mental Health Initiative Website (www.adultmentalhealth.org)	0%
My neighborhood library or community center	0%
Social media pages (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)	4%
None of the above	4%

Other responses included: case manager/social worker (57%); therapist (22%); county health and human services (4%); call providers (4%).

Note. Respondents were able to select more than one option.

Respondents were asked about the Region 7E Adult Mental Health Initiative website. Overall, no consumer respondents report having visited the website (Figure 27), but 13% knew (prior to receiving the survey) that the website was a place to get information on mental health services.

27. WEBSITE AWARENESS

Website awareness	% (N=20-23)
Have visited the Region 7E Adult Mental Health Initiative website	0%
Knew the website was a place to get information on mental health services prior to receiving the survey	13%

Key findings

- **The majority of consumers feel they have the support they need to keep themselves safe and stable.** Nearly all respondents have used mental health services in the past two years, and most of them report being satisfied with the services they received and that these services have helped them improve a variety of aspects of their life, as well as avoid in-patient psychiatric hospitalization.
- **COVID-19 made services even harder to access.** Several respondents describe services as difficult to obtain anyway. Nearly three-quarters of respondents felt that COVID-19 made mental health services harder to access.
- **Consumers most commonly get information about mental health services from mental health providers and primary care providers.** Consumers have not used the Region 7E Adult Mental Health Initiative website to look for available services in their area. While a few are aware of the resource, the majority are not.
- **A majority of consumers had used telehealth services.** Those that had used telehealth report using the services often. However, roughly half of consumers report not having reliable access to technology required to access telehealth services.
- **For most area providers and most specific groups, service capacity is limited or not available.** The majority of providers identified limited or no capacity for all groups listed.
- **Similar barriers to accessing mental health services were provided by both consumers and providers, with some exceptions.** Common barriers endorsed by both groups included: not being able to find transportation to get to services, the service needed isn't available in the area, and the wait times are too long. Consumers differed from providers by more commonly citing barriers related to stigma.
- **Several providers have made strides to address gaps in services.** A majority of providers cite steps they have taken to address service gaps, including hiring more staff, opening new locations, and starting to offer telehealth services.