

To better understand this complex issue, public data on perceptions and attitudes towards substance use was collected. The results will help inform a strategic planning process for selecting targeted community prevention and response strategies. This report outlines the key findings from this assessment.

Mental Health and Substance Use Connection

Untreated mental health concerns are a risk factor for an increased likelihood of developing a substance use concern. In fact, many individuals who develop a substance use disorder are also diagnosed with a mental illness, and vice versa. Youth are particularly vulnerable. Although addiction can happen at any time during life, drug use typically starts in adolescence. This is also a time when the first signs of mental illness often appear.*

50%

of those who experience a mental illness during their lives will also experience a substance use disorder and vice versa.*

Oneida County - 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey**

50%

of high school students reported having experienced significant problems with anxiety and prolonged sadness in the past 12 months.

19%

of high school students reported having engaged in binge drinking.

21%

of 8th graders reported currently using vaping products (past 30 days).

Top Substances of Concern in Oneida County

General Community

Methamphetamine
Alcohol Consumption
Binge Drinking
Prescription Opioids
Vaping/E-Cigarettes

People Under the Age of 21

Vaping/E-Cigarettes
Alcohol Consumption
Binge Drinking
Methamphetamine
Prescription Opioids

Assessment Participants Reported

EVIDENCE

- Mental health, stress, anxiety and depression as the top factors that contribute to substance use concerns.
- Most people with a substance use disorder started with, or have a mental health disorder.
- Stigma around getting treatment for a mental health disorder leads to self-medication with substances.
- Limited coping skills or substance use acts as a coping mechanism.
- Substance use and addiction can contribute to the development of mental illness.

Treatment Services - The Human Service Center ***

807

Residents received mental health services in Oneida County - 2021

471

Residents received substance use services in Oneida County - 2021

675

Of the 1,461 people provided mental health services, 675 received crisis assessment in Forest, Oneida and Vilas Counties - 2021

Mental Health and Substance Use Connection

Assessment Participants Identified Next Steps

Increase availability and access to mental health services



- Consider telehealth in rural communities.
- Explore opportunities to integrate mental health and substance use services within the criminal justice system, specifically jail based treatment.
- Implement or enhance recovery supports and housing.

Employ early interventions for mental health, anxiety, and depression to prevent substance use disorder



- Consider community-based programs that treat and support the entire family.
- Implement education programs related to mental health coping and resiliency skill development, especially in youth.
- Expand public safety and first responder diversion models that connect individuals experiencing mental health and/or substance use concern to treatment and recovery support services.

Reduce stigma around seeking treatment for mental health issues



- Implement a comprehensive community awareness campaign that focuses on mental health and substance use.
- Authentically engage youth in the development and implementation of prevention and intervention strategies.
- Authentically engage the recovery community in the development and implementation of prevention and intervention strategies.
- Integrate community and school-based strategies that normalize having conversations about mental health.

*NIH - Common Comorbidities with Substance Use Disorders Research Report: <https://nida.nih.gov/publications/research-reports/common-comorbidities-substance-use-disorders/part-1-connection-between-substance-use-disorders-mental-illness>

**WI Youth Risk Behavior Survey: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/yrbs>

***WI DHS - County Services Dashboard: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/mh/county-services-dashboard.htm>

