



Arts Programs in Juvenile Justice



**DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH**

Mental illness and suicide have developed into a public health crisis in the United States. Suicide is the leading cause of death for youth and adolescents between the ages of 10 and 17, and youth in the juvenile justice system die by suicide at a rate two to three times higher than the general population. (U.S. Department of Justice).

Youth involved in the juvenile justice, child welfare and foster care systems have a higher prevalence of risk factors for mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders associated with suicide.

According to the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP), 70% of youth in the juvenile justice system, and 50% percent of youth in the child welfare system have a diagnosable mental health disorder.

Suicide and suicidal thoughts and behaviors are preventable through a comprehensive approach that fosters hope, healing and recovery.

Research has shown that arts-based programs can have a positive impact on at-risk and justice-involved youth. Arts engagement proven to lower stress and anxiety, improve self-awareness and self-esteem, while helping advance social competence and problem-solving skills. The arts can also help youth deal with trauma and victimization by providing an outlet to process painful experiences in therapeutically. Moreover, the arts can help encourage positive emotions and strength, allowing youth to develop critical resiliency skills.

Examples of art supplies to be offered to juvenile justice facilities (varies based on setting):

- Sketching pencils, markers, color pencils, sketch books
- Paintbrushes, poly fiber (stuffing), sewing needles
- Craft thread (multi-color), canvas (various sizes)
- Water color and acrylic paint, sponges
- Drawing books, Fabric (fleece and cotton for tie blankets)
- Pillows, scrunchies, tie dye, white t-shirts (various sizes)
- Glue sticks, hot glue guns, hot glue sticks

Get started!

If your facility is interested in participating, or you would like to donate to this effort contact:

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Goal

Offer youth therapy/rehabilitation and opportunities for skill-building through arts programming.

Objectives

- To provide youth in detention and corrections facilities with arts supplies to enhance the youths' cognitive, linguistic, social, and civic development.
- To encourage the use of arts programming as a prevention, diversion and intervention.
- To make available, promote, and coordinate collaborative arts programs in the community for youth exiting correctional programs, so they can continue their arts experience.

Arts can be implemented at various points in the juvenile justice system

Prevention

Art programs may be designed as prevention interventions, targeting youth who have not yet come into contact with the juvenile justice system, but have displayed problem behaviors that place them at risk for arrest or referral.

Diversion

Art programs can serve as effective diversionary options for youth who have engaged in low-level, first-time offenses. Arts programming can also be used in detention or residential facilities for all youth including those who have committed deep-level offenses.



JUVENILE JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Setting a vision for juvenile justice in Minnesota