



Vermont Project AWARE Evaluation Update

Advisory Committee Meeting

February 7, 2025

Evaluation Overview & Approach

- **SAMHSA requires an external evaluator on all AWARE grants**
- **Collaborative approach**
- **Formative feedback for continuous improvement**
- **Three evaluation components:**
 - Collect formative feedback from LEAs, DAs, state team and partners
 - Collect and report performance measure data (required by SAMHSA)
 - Outcome evaluation at the end of the grant

SAMHSA Performance Measures

1. **Training.** The number of individuals who have received training in prevention or mental health promotion.
2. **Partnerships.** The number of organizations that entered into formal written inter/intraorganizational agreements (e.g., MOUs/ MOAs) to improve mental health-related practices/activities that are consistent with the goals of the grant.
3. **Screening.** The number of individuals screened for mental health or related interventions.
4. **Referrals.** The number of individuals referred to mental health or related services.
5. **Access.** The number and percentage of individuals receiving mental health or related services after referral.
6. **Knowledge gains.** The number and percentage of individuals who have demonstrated improvement, between pre- and post-test, in knowledge/attitudes/beliefs related to prevention and/or mental health promotion as a result of the training activity.

VT AWARE Goals & Example Evaluation Measures

VT Goals (from AWARE proposal)	Examples of Evaluation Measures
<p>1. Increase awareness of mental health, substance use, and co-occurring disorders among school-aged youth. Address YRBS trends in youth who report not feeling safe, having made a plan for suicide, attempting suicide or misusing prescription drugs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training survey data • DCLT survey • MH Staff survey
<p>2. Increase the mental health literacy of individuals who interact with school-aged youth to understand and detect the signs and symptoms of mental illness, substance use/misuse, and co-occurring disorders. Address concerning YRBS needs and identified service gaps.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YMHFA • YRBS data
<p>3. Promote and foster resilience building and mental health well-being for all school aged youth. Address troubling YRBS issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCLT survey • YRBS data • Up for Learning training data • VTMTSS Survey
<p>4. Provide positive behavioral health supports; targeted services to those who need more support; and intensive services to those who need them. Address access to care, service gaps and troubling YRBS issues identified as service gaps.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPARS screening data • YRBS data • LEA/DA interviews
<p>5. Connect school-aged youth who may have behavioral health issues, including serious emotional disturbance (SED) or serious mental illness (SMI), and their families to needed services. To address access to care issues identified as service gaps.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEA/DA interviews • SPARS
<p>6. Increase and improve access to culturally relevant, developmentally appropriate, and trauma-informed school and community-based AWARE activities and services. Address identified MH & ACEs concerns and service gaps noted</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VTMTSS Survey • LEA/DA Interviews • Training data

Evaluation Findings

Year 1 Review

Year 2, Quarter 1 Review

Year 1: Performance Measures and Year 1 Targets



Examples of Performance Measures from Year 1

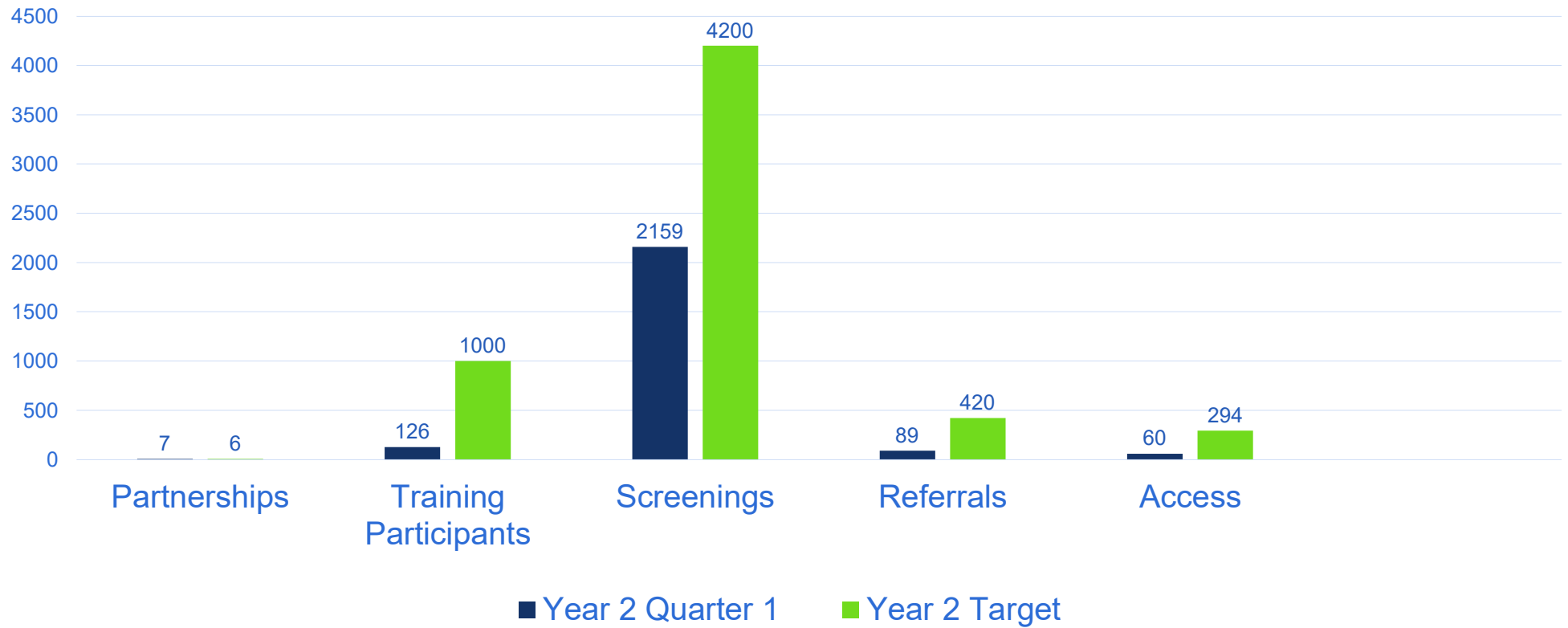
Partnerships

- MOU between LEAs and local mental health agencies
- State agreements signed between LEAs, DAs, TA provider and training partners

Trainings

- SEL training in SVSU
- Up for Learning Restorative Practices training
- Summer BEST Institute (AWARE strand)

Year 2: Q1 Performance Measures and Year 2 Targets



Examples of Performance Measures from Year 2 (Q1)

- ✓ **Partnerships:** SVSU and Mentor Vermont, MOU with Outright Vermont, MOU between CCSU and DA, MOUs in CCSU for PBIS representatives
- ✓ **Trainings:** UP for Learning, U Matter Suicide Prevention, BEST October Forum
- ✓ **Screening:** October screening in SVSU using the SRSS-IE in all but one school
- ✓ **Referrals:** 67 internal referrals to counseling/clinical/therapy services. The remaining 22 referrals were for external services
- ✓ **Access to services:** Access to services included 48 to internal services and 12 to external services

Year 2 Interview Findings (October-December)

- **Successes**

- Sending staff to training with AWARE funding
- Coordinators building positive relationships with schools
- Building district support for AWARE
- Establishing the District-Community Leadership Team (DCLT) with the “right people”
- Completing project key tasks: the district initiative inventory
- Establishing a mentoring program for unhoused students

Year 2 Interview Findings (October-December)

- **Challenges**

- Building buy-in and understanding of AWARE, not seeing it as a burden but as a resource
- One LEA is experiencing lack of training around their universal screener (from the developer)
- Staffing challenges (e.g., LEA and DA coordinator role vacancies)
- Lack of district tracking system for referrals and access to services
- Scheduling grant funded trainings
- Engagement of community members on the DCLTs

Spring 2025 Evaluation Plans

- ✓ **DCLT survey of members to measure engagement, collaboration, and implementation**
- ✓ **Staff mental health survey to measure schools staff perceptions of policies, practices, and data use related to mental health**
- ✓ **Monthly interviews with LEA and/or DA staff**
- ✓ **Training survey data collection**
- ✓ **Administrative data collection (existing school climate survey data, AOE discipline and attendance data, VTMTSS survey data)**

Thank You!

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