



**Dundee Township Mental Health  
Board Needs Assessment  
Summary of Board Member Interview Findings  
November 2023**

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## Methodology

Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies (CGS) staff conducted interviews with the Dundee Township Mental Health Board members. The interviews are part of the Community Needs Assessment CGS was commissioned to conduct for the Mental Health Board. The purpose of the interviews was to obtain Board members' perceptions of the community's mental health, substance use, and intellectual/developmental disability needs, gaps in services, and barriers to accessing services.

The questions for the interviews were developed by Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies (CGS) staff. The questions may be found in Appendix A.

CGS staff conducted seven interviews during October and November 2023. Each interview was approximately 30 minutes in length. The interviews were conducted over the telephone or via Zoom.

Interviews are a type of qualitative research. An advantage of interviews is the in-depth probing of issues they foster. However, because of the small total number of participants, there is no statistical reliability. Therefore, caution should be exercised in interpreting the results.

## Findings

### Expectations of the Community Needs Assessment

The interviews began with the question, “What are your expectations of the Community Needs Assessment?” The Board members provide a variety of answers to the question, including determine the mental health, substance use, and intellectual and developmental disability needs of the community, provide information on the location of existing services, discern where there are service gaps, and identify the most vulnerable populations and those least able to access support because of financial, language, cultural, and other barriers.

One Board member responds, “don’t know” to most of the interview questions because “we (the Board members) are blind and are looking to the Community Needs Assessment findings to direct us.” A couple of Board members state they need the Community Needs Assessment findings so they can be “fiscally responsible with the tax dollars” and “do not want to throw money at a problem.”

### Perceived Strengths and Weaknesses of Dundee Township as Regards Mental Health, Substance Use, and Intellectual/Developmental Disability

Next, the participants were asked what they think are the perceived strengths and weaknesses of Dundee Township as regards mental health, substance use, and intellectual/developmental disability.

Most of the Board members mention as a strength that “67% of the community supported the referendum to form a Mental Health Board.” They believe this demonstrates “there is a strong commitment in the community” and that “the community recognizes the need to address these issues.”

Several Board members perceive the existing service providers, such as Ekert Center, Family Services of Elgin, Centro de Información, and the local hospitals for emergency care and crises, as strengths.

According to the Board members, the main weaknesses of the Township as pertains to mental health, substance use, and intellectual/developmental disability is the lack of awareness of existing services, the lack of awareness of the Mental Health Board, and residents need to travel outside Dundee Township to get services.

### **Specific Aspects of Mental Health, Substance Use, and Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities and Population Groups Most in Need of Attention in the Township**

The Board members were asked about the specific aspects of mental health, substance use, and developmental disabilities and the population groups which are most in need of attention in Dundee Township. There is no consensus among the Board members on the specific aspects of mental health, substance use, and developmental disabilities and the population groups which are most in need of attention in Dundee Township. The Board members comment the following aspects are most in need of attention.

- Substance abuse rehabilitation
- Mental health issues
- Domestic violence
- Bullying
- Mitigating the stigma of mental health
- Communicating the existing services
- Prevention services
- Medication management and adherence.

The Board members are not in agreement about which population groups are most in need of attention. They mention the following population groups:

- All residents
- Latinos
- Asian Indians
- Ukrainians
- low-income residents
- uni
- teens
- children
- young adults
- elderly
- LGBTQIA youth, especially transgender youth
- the homeless population
- non-documented residents

### Gaps in Mental Health, Substance Use, and Intellectual/Developmental Disability Services in Dundee Township

The Board members were then asked about the gaps in mental health, substance use, and intellectual/developmental disability services in the Township.

The majority of Board members state they do not know what the gaps in services in Dundee Township are. A couple of Board members say there are no mental health, substance use, and intellectual/developmental disability services in the Township. Those who indicate a gap mention intellectual/developmental disability services for adults and guardian and third-party trust

services.

### Barriers to Accessing Services

The Board members indicate cost of services (for all income levels), stigma, individuals admitting they have a problem, long wait lists, no public transportation, and lack of knowledge about existing services are barriers to accessing services.

### Suggestions for Improvements

Lastly, the Board members were asked for their suggestions for improvements.

The Board members suggest the following improvements:

- More accessible treatment services
- More culturally appropriate services
- Greater involvement of faith community. Have them provide information about mental health, substance use, and intellectual/developmental disability services to their congregations
- Mental Health Board should reengage the community
- Mental Health Board should have specific criteria for selecting agencies to be funded
- Mental Health Board should design performance measures to determine effectiveness of funded agencies
- Tax groceries or pot dispensaries rather than homeowners to fund Mental Health Board

## **Appendix A: Interview Questions**



## **Dundee Township Mental Health Board Needs Assessment-Board Member Interview Questions**

1. What are your expectations for the needs assessment?
2. What are the strengths of Dundee Township when it comes to mental health, substance use, and intellectual/developmental disability?
3. What are the weaknesses of Dundee Township when it comes to mental health, substance use, and intellectual/developmental disability?
4. Which specific aspects of mental health, substance use, and intellectual/developmental disability are in most need of attention?
5. What are the specific population groups (e.g., teens, low-income, Hispanics or Latinos, Asians) in the Township who are in the greatest need?
6. What gaps in mental health, substance use, and intellectual/developmental disability services are there in Dundee Township?
7. What are the barriers to accessing mental health, substance use, and developmental disability services in Dundee Township?
8. What suggestions do you have for improvements to services?