

Youth Services Survey (YSS)

May 2025 Survey Period

San Diego County

Behavioral Health Services for Children & Youth



Report prepared by the
Child & Adolescent Services Research Center (CASRC)

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COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY



LIVE WELL
SAN DIEGO

Overview

One way to ensure that services are responsive to consumer needs is to collect information from youth and families about their satisfaction with services and their perspectives on the quality of services. In San Diego County, data on consumer satisfaction was collected through the Youth Services Survey (YSS), which is completed by **all youth (ages 13+)** and **all available parents/caregivers** regardless of the youth/client age. The majority of questions on the YSS focus on satisfaction with the provision and results of services.

This report focuses on results of the YSS from the May 19-23, 2025 survey administration period. Two YSS measures were independently evaluated: **YSS compliance** and **YSS results**.

YSS compliance is determined by using Client ID numbers to compare the number of clients receiving services as reported in SmartCare to the number of clients who submitted surveys during the May 2025 YSS period. During the survey period, 162 (11.7%) of the 1,388 completed forms did not match to a client with a billed service. There are several reasons why this may have occurred: 1) Client information (incorrect ClientID number, date of birth or associated program) errors on the survey, 2) delays in billing data entered into SmartCare; i.e., client got a billed service, but it had not yet been entered in SmartCare at the time of data download, or 3) client should not have been given a survey (client had an open treatment episode, but did not receive a billed service during the YSS period).

YSS results are calculated directly from submitted surveys. The YSS gives a snapshot in time of youth receiving behavioral health services, and whether client data changes with duration of services received. Specifically, the YSS provides data regarding consumer perception of services received.

Individual items on the YSS are grouped into seven domains for analysis:

1. General Satisfaction
2. Perception of Access
3. Perception of Cultural Sensitivity
4. Perception of Participation in Treatment Planning
5. Perception of Outcomes of Services
6. Perception of Functioning
7. Perception of Social Connectedness

Clients may receive multiple services from more than one program during the YSS period; therefore, a single client may submit multiple forms. Results are evaluated by item and by domain, at the systemwide, level of care, and program levels.



Key Findings—May 2025

1. May 2025 was the fifth hybrid administration (electronic and paper form options) of the YSS in San Diego County. The number of completed surveys with usable data decreased from 68% (1,482 of 2,168) in May 2024 to 67% (1,388 of 2,062) in May 2025.
2. As compared to May 2024, parent/caregiver satisfaction on the *Perception of Functioning* domain increased more than two percentage points. Parent/caregiver satisfaction on the *Perception of Participation in Treatment Planning* and *Perception of Social Connectedness* domains decreased slightly. Among youth, satisfaction increased between three and eight percentage points on every domain, with the largest increase seen on the *Perception of Functioning* domain.
3. The County process objective of 80% of clients submitting a YSS form was not met in May 2025: 1,392 (46%) of 3,043 clients receiving an eligible service during the administration period submitted a YSS form.
4. The County outcome objective of 80% of clients responding “agree” or “strongly agree” for at least 75% of the satisfaction survey items was met for both parents/caregivers and youth.
5. Both parents/caregivers and youth were most satisfied with the *Perception of Cultural Sensitivity* domain and least satisfied with the *Perception of Outcomes of Services* domain.
6. Parents/caregivers reported higher satisfaction than youth on all domains except *Perception of Functioning*.
7. The greatest disparity in satisfaction between youth and parents/caregivers was found on the *Perception of Access* domain.
8. Satisfaction and perception of outcomes varied among different levels of care in the Behavioral Health Services for Children and Youth (BHS-CY) system. Some levels of care had very few clients/families submit completed surveys, making relative satisfaction difficult to accurately gauge. On average, youth receiving Outpatient services were most satisfied, and youth receiving Residential services were least satisfied.
9. Satisfaction and perception of outcomes also varied widely among different racial/ethnic groups. Among clients whose race/ethnicity was known, Hispanic youth and their parents/caregivers reported the highest satisfaction averaged across domains. Youth endorsing more than one race/ethnicity and their parents/caregivers reported the lowest satisfaction averaged across domains. Black/African American youth and their parents/caregivers reported the lowest satisfaction on the *Perception of Cultural Sensitivity* domain. Of note, only five surveys were submitted for Native American youth, thus they were excluded from this analysis.
10. On average, satisfaction was highest among youth ages 18 to 24.

BHS-CY Process Objective

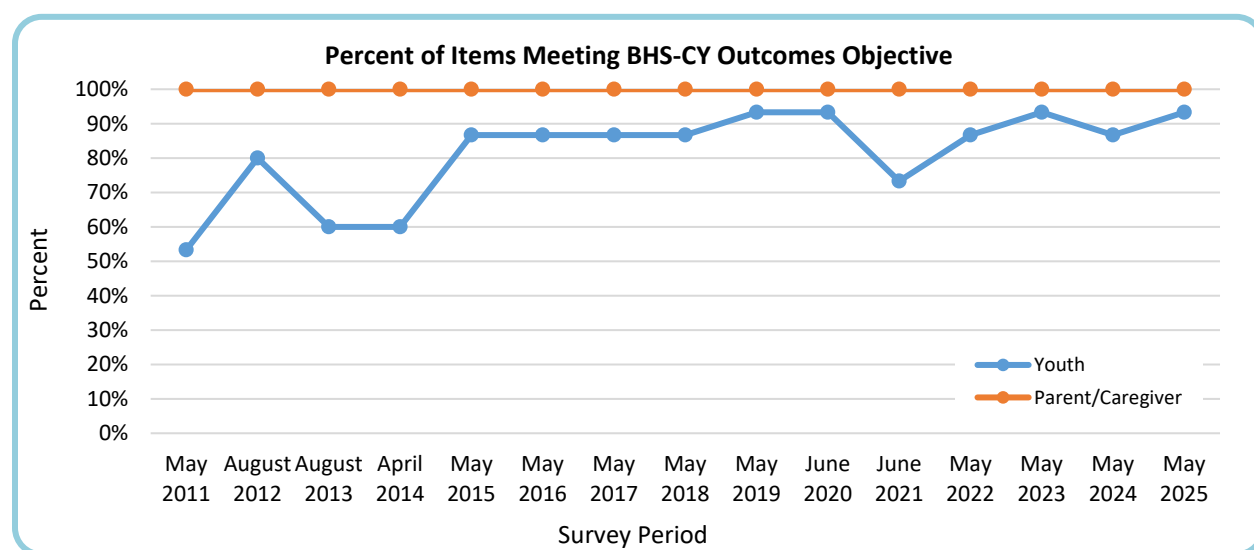
Providers are tasked with the administration of a YSS survey to every client (and/or parent/caregiver) receiving a service during the survey period. The process objective set by the County is 80% of eligible clients submitting a YSS form; this objective was not met in May 2025. The process objective is calculated using the number of clients served during the survey period, as opposed to the number of forms received. In the current survey period, **1,392 (46%) of 3,043 clients receiving an eligible service submitted a YSS form**, and 1,017 (33%) of 3,043 clients receiving an eligible service *completed* a YSS form.

BHS-CY Outcomes Objective

More than 2,000 survey forms were submitted for the May 2025 YSS (1,329 forms from parents/caregivers and 733 forms from youth). Nearly 1,400 of the forms were completed and had usable data (838 forms from parents/caregivers and 550 forms from youth). Overall, **67% of the forms that were turned in were completed**. Reasons for non-completion include refusals, access/technical issues, language issues, impairment, parent/caregiver not available (e.g., for a child in out-of-home care), and parent/caregiver or child not showing up for a scheduled appointment.

The first 15 items on the YSS address satisfaction, while the remaining items cover client demographics, outcomes of services, and involvement with police and schools. The County has established an **outcome objective for the satisfaction items** which applies to all contractors: Aggregated scores on the Youth Services Survey (YSS) and the Youth Services Survey Family (YSS-F) shall show an average of 80% or more of clients responding in the two most favorable categories (Agree and Strongly Agree) for at least 75% of the individual survey items. Countywide data on the outcomes objective are presented in this report.

Parents/caregivers were more satisfied with services than Youth respondents. Since the outcomes objective was initiated in November 2006, **parent/caregiver scores have been above 80% for all of the satisfaction items on the survey**, and the objective has been met. For youth respondents, the scores are lower; this has been true since the inception of these YSS measures. In May 2024, the County's objective was met for both caregivers and youth. One individual item fell below the threshold of 80% of youth responding favorably: "I helped to choose my services (74.0%)."



Survey Response Rate

	Parent/Caregiver	Youth	TOTAL
Forms Submitted	1,329	733	2,062
Forms Completed	838	550	1,388

Satisfaction by Item Response: Systemwide

Parent/Caregiver Satisfaction by Item*		
Questions based on services received in last 6 months:	% Strongly Disagree/Disagree	% Strongly Agree/Agree
1. Overall, I am satisfied with the services my child received	3.0%	94.2%
2. I helped to choose my child's services	3.9%	91.2%
3. I helped to choose my child's treatment goals	3.8%	91.5%
4. The people helping my child stuck with us no matter what	4.7%	89.2%
5. I felt my child had someone to talk to when he/she was troubled	2.9%	94.2%
6. I participated in my child's treatment	2.6%	94.1%
7. The services my child and/or family received were right for us	1.9%	91.2%
8. The location of services was convenient for us	4.7%	92.6%
9. Services were available at times that were convenient for us	3.4%	93.5%
10. My family got the help we wanted for my child	2.6%	91.2%
11. My family got as much help as we needed for my child	3.6%	85.6%
12. Staff treated me with respect	1.6%	98.1%
13. Staff respected my family's religious/spiritual beliefs	2.0%	95.5%
14. Staff spoke with me in a way that I understood	1.1%	98.0%
15. Staff were sensitive to my cultural/ethnic background	2.3%	94.8%
At least 80% of clients responded "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" to 15 of 15 questions – 100%		
As a result of the services received:	% Strongly Disagree/Disagree	% Strongly Agree/Agree
16. My child is better at handling daily life	4.9%	75.3%
17. My child gets along better with family members	5.5%	76.9%
18. My child gets along better with friends and other people	4.7%	75.1%
19. My child is doing better in school and/or work	7.8%	70.8%
20. My child is better able to cope when things go wrong	6.4%	71.3%
21. I am satisfied with our family life right now	7.8%	75.8%
22. My child is better able to do things he or she wants to do	4.7%	79.6%
23. I know people who will listen and understand me when I need to talk	3.9%	90.3%
24. I have people that I am comfortable talking with about my child's problem(s)	4.3%	90.5%
25. In a crisis, I would have the support I need from family or friends	4.3%	88.9%
26. I have people with whom I can do enjoyable things	3.4%	92.3%

*Percent may not add up to 100, as "Undecided" response is not reported here.

Youth Satisfaction by Item*		
Questions based on services received in last 6 months:	% Strongly Disagree/Disagree	% Strongly Agree/Agree
1. Overall, I am satisfied with the services I received	1.8%	92.3%
2. I helped to choose my services	6.2%	74.0%
3. I helped to choose my treatment goals	1.5%	91.3%
4. The people helping me stuck with me no matter what	1.8%	87.3%
5. I felt I had someone to talk to when I was troubled	3.1%	86.9%
6. I participated in my own treatment	1.7%	91.5%
7. I received services that were right for me	1.3%	90.3%
8. The location of services was convenient for me	3.1%	86.5%
9. Services were available at times that were convenient for me	3.7%	88.8%
10. I got the help I wanted	1.5%	87.3%
11. I got as much help as I needed	3.3%	82.2%
12. Staff treated me with respect	0.9%	97.2%
13. Staff respected my religious/spiritual beliefs	0.8%	93.9%
14. Staff spoke with me in a way that I understood	0.9%	95.6%
15. Staff were sensitive to my cultural/ethnic background	4.6%	83.9%
<i>At least 80% of clients responded "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" to 14 of 15 questions – 93%</i>		
As a result of the services received:	% Strongly Disagree/Disagree	% Strongly Agree/Agree
16. I am better at handling daily life	3.4%	76.5%
17. I get along better with family members	8.9%	64.8%
18. I get along better with friends and other people	2.6%	79.5%
19. I am doing better in school and/or work	9.1%	66.9%
20. I am better able to cope when things go wrong	5.2%	76.9%
21. I am satisfied with my family life right now	13.3%	61.7%
22. I am better able to do things I want to do	3.9%	76.7%
23. I know people who will listen and understand me when I need to talk	3.2%	86.0%
24. I have people that I am comfortable talking with about my problem(s)	3.9%	82.8%
25. In a crisis, I would have the support I need from family or friends	3.2%	83.3%
26. I have people with whom I can do enjoyable things	1.5%	92.9%

*Percent may not add up to 100, as "Undecided" response is not reported here.

Satisfaction by Domain: Systemwide

DOMAIN	Percent Stating Agree or Strongly Agree	
	Parent/Caregiver (N=838)	Youth (N=550)
General Satisfaction (Items 1, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11)	92.4%	88.9%
Perception of Access (Items 8, 9)	90.4%	84.9%
Perception of Cultural Sensitivity (Items 12, 13, 14, 15)	97.3%	94.4%
Perception of Participation in Treatment Planning (Items 2, 3, 6)	93.1%	89.0%
Perception of Outcomes of Services (Items 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21)	73.3%	69.8%
Perception of Functioning (Items 16, 17, 18, 20, 22)	77.3%	79.5%
Perception of Social Connectedness (Items 23, 24, 25, 26)	89.7%	85.1%

Satisfaction by Level of Care

Parent/Caregiver Satisfaction by Level of Care			
DOMAIN	Percent Stating Agree or Strongly Agree		
	Outpatient (N=786)	Residential (N=4)*	TBS (N=42)
General Satisfaction	92.7%	n/a	87.5%
Perception of Access	90.3%	n/a	92.7%
Perception of Cultural Sensitivity	97.2%	n/a	100.0%
Perception of Participation in Treatment Planning	93.1%	n/a	95.0%
Perception of Outcomes of Services	74.4%	n/a	56.8%
Perception of Functioning	78.6%	n/a	59.5%
Perception of Social Connectedness	89.8%	n/a	89.5%

**Only four surveys were submitted; results not reported.*

Youth Satisfaction by Level of Care			
DOMAIN	Percent Stating Agree or Strongly Agree		
	Outpatient (N=511)	Residential (N=21)	TBS (N=11)
General Satisfaction	90.0%	76.2%	80.0%
Perception of Access	85.4%	80.0%	81.8%
Perception of Cultural Sensitivity	95.2%	70.0%	100.0%
Perception of Participation in Treatment Planning	89.3%	85.0%	81.8%
Perception of Outcomes of Services	71.5%	60.0%	44.4%
Perception of Functioning	80.9%	68.4%	55.6%
Perception of Social Connectedness	86.2%	71.4%	70.0%

NOTE: Not every youth/caregiver completed responses for every domain.

Satisfaction by Client Race/Ethnicity

DOMAIN	Percent Stating Agree or Strongly Agree							
	White (N=194)	Hispanic (N=914)	Black/ African American (N=87)	Asian/ Pacific Islander (N=43)	Native American (N=5)*	Mixed Race/ Ethnicity (N=63)	Other (N=11)	Unknown/ Missing (N=71)
General Satisfaction	89.5%	92.1%	91.8%	88.4%	n/a	85.5%	80.0%	87.0%
Perception of Access	84.5%	89.8%	88.1%	83.7%	n/a	88.9%	80.0%	82.6%
Perception of Cultural Sensitivity	97.5%	96.5%	91.4%	92.9%	n/a	94.7%	100.0%	95.4%
Perception of Participation in Treatment Planning	92.7%	91.9%	91.7%	90.7%	n/a	91.8%	80.0%	83.8%
Perception of Outcomes of Services	65.1%	73.8%	72.3%	74.4%	n/a	62.9%	80.0%	70.2%
Perception of Functioning	70.4%	80.9%	73.5%	81.4%	n/a	72.1%	70.0%	73.7%
Perception of Social Connectedness	85.9%	88.3%	84.7%	90.5%	n/a	87.3%	90.0%	91.4%

*Only five surveys were submitted; results not reported.

Satisfaction by Client Age

DOMAIN	Percent Stating Agree or Strongly Agree				
	0-5 years (N=97)	6-11 years (N=341)	12-15 years (N=536)	16-17 years (N=329)	18-25 years (N=80)
General Satisfaction	96.8%	91.4%	89.2%	90.5%	96.3%
Perception of Access	88.5%	90.2%	86.6%	88.0%	92.5%
Perception of Cultural Sensitivity	98.8%	97.8%	94.8%	95.1%	98.6%
Perception of Participation in Treatment Planning	96.9%	93.1%	88.4%	91.7%	96.3%
Perception of Outcomes of Services	69.0%	73.9%	70.2%	70.7%	81.6%
Perception of Functioning	71.1%	78.1%	77.2%	79.9%	84.4%
Perception of Social Connectedness	90.4%	89.6%	85.7%	88.3%	89.6%

NOTE: Not every youth/caregiver completed responses for every domain.

The Child and Adolescent Services Research Center (CASRC) is a consortium of over 100 investigators and staff from multiple research organizations in San Diego County and Southern California, including: Rady Children's Hospital, University of California San Diego, San Diego State University, University of San Diego and University of Southern California. The mission of CASRC is to improve publicly-funded behavioral health service delivery and quality of treatment for children and adolescents who have or are at high risk for the development of mental health problems or disorders.