



North Dakota Probation and Parole: Mental Health Training Needs

The **Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC)**ⁱ is a partnership between the University of North Dakota and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education and serves the states of Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming (Region 8). Funded by the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**ⁱⁱ, the Mountain Plains MHTTC is a five-year program focused on providing free training, products, and technical assistance to individuals serving persons with mental health disorders. In partnership with SAMHSA and state probation and parole offices, the Mountain Plains MHTTC team conducted an electronic survey in December 2019 to assess mental health training needs among probation and parole officers in the six-state region. Results from the survey will inform the development of new products, training materials, and technical assistance (TA). For more information, read the completed report, **Mental Health Training and Technical Assistance Needs: Findings, Implications, and Summary of a Survey of Probation and Parole Officers in Region 8**.

Probation and Parole in North Dakota

Approximately 58 probation and parole officers in North Dakota completed the electronic survey. Respondents were predominantly female (59%) and between the ages 30 and 49 (71%). Roughly 62% worked in urban/suburban settings while 36% worked rural areas. A majority (85%) worked in both probation and parole, and 43% had been working in the field more than 20 years.

Knowledge and Experience

In the last 12 months, a greater proportion of officers had attended a training on mental health (94%) than on substance use disorder (76%). When compared to probation and parole officers in all of Region 8, a greater proportion of officers in North Dakota had access to Narcan (89%) and knew how to administer Narcan to reverse an opioid overdose (88%). See Figure 1 and Table 1.

Figure 1. Access to Narcan/Naloxone

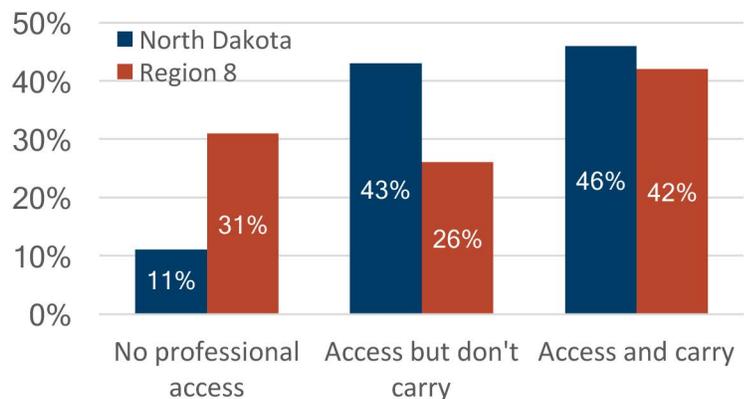


Table 1. Percent of Officers Who Strongly Agree/Agree

	North Dakota	Region 8
I know what trauma-informed care is	72%	80%
I can recognize signs of suicide risk	91%	89%
I know how to help someone calm down from a crisis state of mind	81%	85%
I can recognize the signs of addiction	95%	95%
I can recognize signs of a drug overdose	91%	83%
I know how to administer Narcan to reverse an opioid overdose	88%	67%

Training and Technical Assistance Needs

Participants identified the priority for training or TA on a variety of topics. Each topic was rated as not a current need, would be helpful, high priority, or not applicable/unsure. Probation and parole officers identified different training needs when exploring topics identified as high priority (Table 2) compared to those identified as either helpful or high priority (Table 3). When looking at only high priority topics, staff recruitment and retention made the list but were not included when looking at the top five topics combining either high priority or helpful.

Table 2. Top Topic Priorities Indicated as High Priority

	North Dakota	Region 8
1. Compassion fatigue/burnout	50%	40%
2. Permanent supportive house resources ^a	48%	42%
3. Staff retention ^a	48%	45%
4. Community support for recovery	44%	37%
5. Mental health and substance abuse (co-occurring disorders) ^b	41%	48%
6. Staff recruitment ^b	41%	37%

^a Housing and staff retention tied at 48% ^b Substance abuse co-occurring and staff recruitment tied at 41%

Table 3. Top Topic Priorities Indicated as Helpful Topics or High Priority

	North Dakota	Region 8
1. Mental health and intellectual disabilities (co-occurring)	97%	92%
2. Mental health and substance abuse (co-occurring disorders)	95%	93%
3. Responding to parolees with schizophrenia	93%	85%
4. Permanent supportive housing resources	91%	88%
5. Understanding the connection between trauma and deviant behavior	90%	88%

In addition to priority topics, the survey asked probation and parole officers to identify which populations (if any) they would like additional training or consultation about to assist in improving their professional efforts in the field of mental health. Participants could select multiple populations from a list of 25. Overall, the top priority populations for North Dakota were the same as those identified across all of Region 8.

Table 4. Top Priority Populations

	North Dakota	Region 8	Region 8 Rank
1. People with serious mental illness	69%	59%	1
2. People who are homeless/transient	66%	55%	2
3. People with substance use disorder (addiction)	64%	53%	3
4. Rural	60%	45%	5
5. People with serious emotional disturbance	59%	49%	4

¹ Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center: <https://mhttcnetwork.org/centers/mountain-plains-mhttc/home>.

² Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: <https://www.samhsa.gov>.