

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND MENTAL HEALTH COLLABORATION

The Portland Police Department has been progressive and proactive in recognizing the increase of mental health issues within the community. Most recently the Portland Police Department was chosen as a Learning Site, having been recognized by the Bureau of Justice Assistance as a mentor to other agencies for our law enforcement and mental health collaboration.

HISTORY

Crisis Intervention Team

NAMI

In 2001, the Portland Police Department collaborated with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI Maine) to train our officers in the Memphis model of Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) to become more effective and efficient when responding to those who have mental illness. We continue to collaborate, and NAMI continues to provide two trainings a year for officers in our area. The Portland Police Department has made a commitment to have 100% of our officers trained in CIT; to date, we have approximately 75% of our officers trained. NAMI has been an accessible and valuable resource for consultation, and this has proven to be a beneficial, on-going relationship.

- In the spring of 2010, we also offered an 8-hour training, "An Introduction to Mental Illness," for civilians such as dispatchers and Community Policing personnel who interact daily with the public in a variety of ways.

Mental Health Police Liaison

Youth Alternatives Ingraham

The Portland Police Department collaborated with Ingraham 14 years ago in the innovative creation of the Mental Health Police Liaison position. This began as a grant-funded position that the department and community providers determined would benefit not only individuals in crisis when interacting with police, but would also improve the relationship between the police and area mental health agencies. The position placed a mental health professional on-site in the department, carrying a radio to communicate directly with dispatch and officers, and driving an unmarked departmental car. This employee responds to calls to support officers in assisting those in crisis with mental health issues. Over the years, this position has evolved into various responsibilities. These include:

- collaborating with other mental health agencies as a liaison for individual and system issues of mental health and law enforcement;
- responding to calls with officers to crisis situations and provide de-escalation for those in crisis;
- assessing the need for hospitalization. The position embraces the theory that hospitalization is the last resort. De-escalation, direct crisis support, and connecting with community sources are used when appropriate;

- when necessary, encouraging those to be transported voluntarily to the hospital, supporting officers in determining criteria for Title 34-B and defining when involuntary transport is necessary. In addition, assisting in facilitating communication with providers and hospital staff, supporting clients through triage and registration, and presenting to acute psychiatry hospital staff. In addition, this would include follow-up with providers, family, and other supports when appropriate, always considering confidentiality and respecting client's rights and the release of information;
- follow-up with other areas of the department;
- follow-up for clients;
- staying informed on individual and systems levels of CIT forms and monitoring the number of calls for service to determine gaps for those in need. The numerous calls for service are analyzed to identify needs and facilitate connection to appropriate follow-up services, which will directly correlate with a decrease in calls for service.
- actively participate in consistent communication with mental health agencies within the community to establish working relationships. This allows for evaluation of areas of potential change and fosters growth towards the most effective and efficient response for the consumers, both individually and systemically.
- Participation in the Community Crisis Provider's monthly meeting to address mental health issues within our community, and further develop a team approach.
- Continually addressing opportunities to improve as a team, responding to the needs of the community and providing consistent and supportive paths to treatment. A list of those represented at this monthly meeting is below.

This position is currently held by:
 Bob Rockett email:rrockett@yimaine.org phone:207.420.9934

A Specialized Mental Health Co-response Program

Mental Health Coordinator
Portland Police Department

This position is grant funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance's Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program for two years. The purpose of this position is to develop and supervise the mental health co-responder program, to integrate with the existing co-responder, provide additional co-responders, and to coordinate the mental health response program. In addition, this position will:

- Coordinate the functions of the current CIT and Mental Health Liaison responsibilities;
- Act as the primary point of contact with other mental health providers and social service agencies;
- Work cooperatively with area mental health and social service agencies including Youth Alternatives Ingraham, Preble Street Resource Center, and Milestone Foundation;

Portland Police Department
 Portland Maine

- Create an internship site for Master's level crisis professionals, and work toward implementing the training, supervision, and coordination of at least four interns within one year. The goal is to have a co-responder available 16 hours a day for officers responding to calls for service with those in crisis and/or who have mental health issues;
- Resolve the Calls for Service (CFS) reporting and tracking to gain a better understanding of volume and respond more efficiently; to coordinate a single integrated database for encounters with those with mental illness; and finally, to work collaboratively with other police department personnel to integrate mental illness tracking into existing reporting systems including Use of Force and Incident Reporting.

With the addition of internship opportunities and an expanded co-responder team, we will have mental health professionals more accessible to officers on scene, for follow-up, and to collaborate with other agencies in the integration of services.

This program will be significant for having the resources to follow up and connect to supportive services, which will decrease calls for service when the needs of individuals are identified and appropriate supportive services are implemented.

Within two years, we hope to have additional internship placement within the neighboring South Portland Police Department, who will also respond to the Cape Elizabeth Police Department.

The team approach of co-responders based out of the department provides a stronger collaboration of skilled mental health professionals and officers working together. Our co-responder program is a significant, invaluable asset to better serving our community.

Taking Care of Our Own

Our department is focused on making our officers feel appreciated and supported for the work that they do every day. Our officers are the best of the best walking into the worst of the worst. We recognize and appreciate that our officers go above and beyond their responsibilities. They uphold and exceed expectations of courage, strength and resilience.

Peer Support Program

For 21 years, those in the department have nominated their colleagues to the peer support team. The team's members can be reached at any time to serve as a confidential resource for other departmental employees. We believe in taking care of ourselves and each other.

Critical Incident Stress Management
Debriefings, Defusings, and one-on-one support
We want to be supportive of our officers and extend our reach to those within the
greater law enforcement family.

External Co-responders

Trauma Intervention Program/ Children's Initiative *Community Counseling*
Volunteers who, when requested by officers, respond on-scene within 20 minutes. They respond to assist with individuals who have experienced trauma wherever they are needed. Their support includes support at death notifications. These programs have become an invaluable resource for officers in supporting community members experiencing shock.

H.O.M.E TEAM *Milestone Foundation*
A team of mental health professionals outreaching those with chronic substance issues on the streets. Interacting with police on a daily basis, this valuable team reduces calls for service by building rapport with those with substance abuse issues, encouraging them to seek treatment, and facilitating this process when appropriate.

We acknowledge and thank the collaborating mental health service agencies working with us within the Portland community:

ACCESS
ACT team
Action
Amistad
Florence House
Logan Place
Maine Medical Center
Mercy Hospital
Oxford Street Shelter
Preble Street Resource Center
Shalom
Spring Harbor
Support and Recovery Services
The Teen Center

Please do not hesitate to contact us regarding the implementation of our program. We welcome potential opportunities to learn and collaborate with other jurisdictions regarding innovative and creative ways to become more effective and efficient when addressing the mental health issues within our communities. We also seek to educate and learn from other departments regarding support to our officers. We are always willing to consult on specific issues and to evaluate and explore more effective ways to serve our communities.

*Thank you,
Jo Freedman*

Portland Police Department
Portland Maine

Contact Information:

Jo Freedman, Mental Health Coordinator, Portland Police Department

Phone: 207.317.1170

email: jfreedman@portlandmaine.gov

109 Middle Street, Portland, Maine 04101