

Human Services @ QVCC Webinar

Policing Mental Health Crises

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Housekeeping



Audio & video are muted

Call-in if you have audio issues



Participate

Chat



Follow-up email

Recording
Presentation



No CEs available

[Email with questions](#)

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Webinar Objectives

Identify mental health crisis & police role in crisis response

Identify negative police interactions during crisis & causes

Identify ways to reduce negative police interactions during crisis

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Police Violence & Mental Health Crisis

2020 fatal police violence included people in mental health crisis



Why was 911 called?



Why was fatal force used?

[Daniel Prude's Death Ruled A Homicide. He Was Restrained By Police](#) (NPR, 2020)

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Mental Health Crisis



A person's behavior

- Risk of hurting themselves or others
- Prevents them from caring for themselves



Situations that contribute

- Changes in mental health (e.g., medication, substance use)
- Stressors of the home, school or work (e.g., conflict, big deadlines, failing)



Warning signs

- Rapid mood swings including increased agitation
- Isolation from school, work, or family
- Paranoia or psychosis

What situations you've seen contribute to mental health strain?

From NAMI's [What is a Mental Health Crisis?](#)

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Do's and Don'ts to De-escalate a Crisis

- Be patient
- Listen to the person
- Express support and concern (e.g., ask how you can help)
- Keep stimulation level low (e.g., reduce from TV, bright lights)
- Offer options instead of trying to take control (e.g., "do you want the lights off?")
- Gently announce actions before initiating
- Keep your voice calm and move slowly
- Give them space (e.g., allow to pace)

Do



- Don't overreact
- Don't talk loudly or move quickly
- Don't argue or try to reason
- Don't make judgmental comments
- Don't flash lights or make loud sounds
- Avoid touching the person unless you ask permission
- Don't make them feel trapped
- Avoid continuous eye contact

Don't

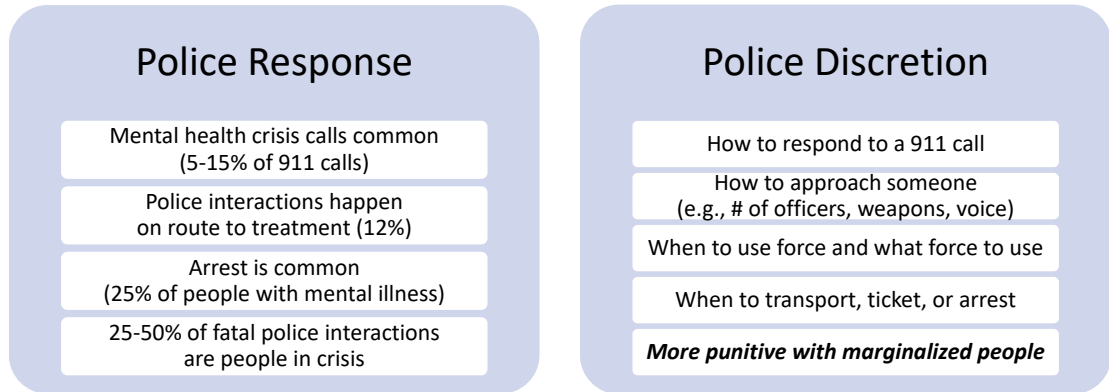


What could you use?

From NAMI's [What is a Mental Health Crisis?](#)

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Crisis 911 Calls Trigger Police Response



What police responses have you seen that show discretion?

(Comer et al., 2022; Livingston, 2016; Neusteter et al., 2019; Saleh et al., 2018)

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Results of Police Response to Crisis

Transport to emergency rooms

- Inadequate mental health care
- Held for hours or days waiting for treatment

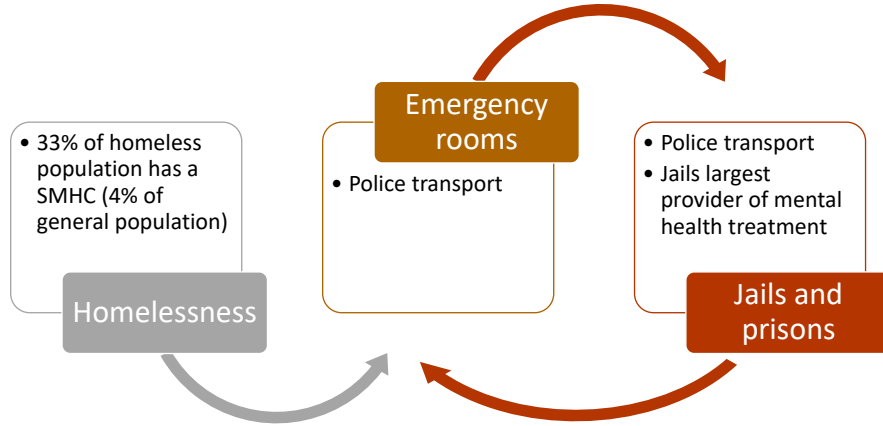
Transport to jail

- More than 2 million police bookings a year for people in mental health crisis

(Saleh et al., 2018)

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Revolving Door for People with Serious Mental Health Conditions



Have you seen people go through this revolving door?

[\(Treatment Advocacy Center, 2017\)](#)

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Growing Mental Health Crisis in Cities

Deinstitutionalization of people with SMHCs from state hospitals 1970s & 80s into cities



Shortage of community mental health treatment

- Lack of providers and waitlists are too long
- Lack insurance or insurance doesn't cover providers
- 50%+ not treated



Move to cities in housing crisis

- Mass closure of single room occupancies (SROs) housed most vulnerable city residents
- Homelessness crisis



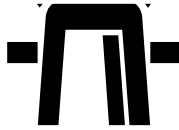
People unhoused and untreated

- Camp publicly
- Ask for money
- Do hygiene outside
- Use substances

(Aberg-Riger, 2018; AHRQ, 2016; Ghiasi et al., 2020; Vera Institute for Justice, 2016)

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Response to Unhoused & Untreated People



Negative public response

- Towns
- Businesses
- Residents



Police response to move, ticket and arrest

- Trespass
- Loitering
- Disorderly conduct



Willimantic Police response to encampment

- Tent encampment
- Calls from people walking and living close (e.g., upset, fear)
- Police evicted people in tents & signage not to camp

Have you seen this public or police response?

(Garcia, 2015)

Police Contact & Violence

Higher rates of police contact and violence

People with a serious mental health conditions

People who are racial/ethnic minorities

People who are sexual minorities

Forms of police violence

Neglect (e.g., police nonresponse after being called)

Psychological violence (e.g., threats, intimidation, slurs)

Sexual violence (e.g., forcible contact)

Physical violence with & without a weapon (e.g., fists, baton, Taser, gun)

Negative mental health outcomes

Suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, and psychotic experiences

Worst outcomes for people experiencing physical violence with a weapon and sexual violence

(DeVylder et al., 2018; DeVlylder et al., 2020)

Police Not Suited
for Crisis
Response

- Not trained
- Not their role
- Not given support

[Why Police Are the Wrong Response to Mental Health Crisis \(ACLU\)](#)

(Gill et al, 2019)

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Changes

Crisis Intervention Teams

Alternatives to Police Responders

Reducing Policing

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Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT)



CIT Training for police and mental health professionals

- Basic information about mental illness & verbal de-escalation skills
- Trained officers in 2700+ departments
- CIT training through [CABLE CT](#) & [Bill in CT Assembly](#) for more CIT
- Training voluntary and mandated



Outcomes

- Increased officer attitude and knowledge about mental illness
- Lower rates of arrest for people with a mental illness
- Higher rates of receiving mental health services
- Reduced officer injury during mental health crisis calls



Limits

- Limited scale & buy-in
- Limited change
 - Response to Daniel Prudes death from former Rochester CIT coordinator
 - *Some people are too ill, too angry, too violent that no matter what training, some bad things are gonna happen*

[CIT Core Elements](#) | See NAMI [CIT Resources](#)

(Balfour et al., 2021; Comartin et al., 2019; Compton et al., 2014; Franz & Borum, 2011)

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About [Crisis Intervention Teams](#) (CIT)



Any CIT experience?

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Alternatives to Police Response to Crisis



Crisis Lines (24/7) instead of 911

- 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline
 - Call or text 988 or www.988lifeline.org
- Access Line for Substance Use Treatment
 - 1-800-563-4086
- 211 Action Line (Adult Crisis)
 - Call 211 or 1-800-467-3135



Mobile Crisis Response

- Divert 911 calls from police to behavioral health teams
- CAHOOTS in Eugene Oregon (1969)
 - Diverts 5-15% of 911 calls (18,583 calls in 2019)
- Rescue Plan (2021) funds for more mobile teams

(Waters, 2021)

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Reducing Police Role in Crisis

Smaller Role
for Police

- Reduce police funding (5-15%)
- Increase support services

Be Careful
with 911

- 911 is a response to behavioral crisis
- What can be done differently?

Questions?

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Wrap Up



Next Webinar

Healthcare Deserts & the Social Determinants of Health Friday 12/9 @ noon (register)



Follow Up Email

- Recording
- Presentation



Learn more about [Human Services @ QV](#)



Take Evaluation

- When you exit Webex

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