

Crisis Co-Response: Lessons Learned from BeWell

November 12, 2020

Words to Deeds
Panel Presentation



SANTA BARBARA COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF
Behavioral Wellness
A System of Care and Recovery

Collaboration between BW & Law Enforcement partners

- Initial Pilot 9/2018- 1 Sheriff Deputy/Mobile Crisis Team
 - Deputy assigned but not designated
 - LE vehicle response
 - 50% Call Response, 50% Proactive visits
 - Impact data prompted 2 grants for 3 teams
- Cross-Jurisdictional Response Agreement
- SBPD Homeless HEAP funded Co-Response
 - Volunteer Overtime shifts (9 months)
 - Suspended during Covid
 - Combination of Police car or foot response
 - Focused homeless and encampment visits
 - Redesign with dedicated funding 1-2 teams 10/2020



Initial Lessons Learned

- Team staff need to be Designated- not volunteer or as available
- Additional Teams allow the creation of coordinated shifts for wider coverage hours
- Issues when team involved with non-Co-Response tasks
 - Different LE should respond to criminal acts, traffic stops
 - If LE Emergency, BH staff NOT accompany (e.g. Active Shooter, Completed Suicides, Medical Crisis)
 - BH staff must stay in vehicle or safe location if an arrest or active LE is in progress



There ARE Basic Differences....

- Real Cultural differences, norms and employment standards exist between LE and BH and have EQUAL VALUE
 - Team members Must Be Trained, Knowledgeable, Understand, and Respect these
 - Trauma is an EXPECTED part of LE work, not so BH
 - BH Lived Experience is Valuable, but may be triggering
 - Team Differences should be addressed right away
- Regular meetings with all team staff and both BH & LE supervisors facilitates open communication, cross-training, challenging case debriefing, and HIPAA issue resolution



Peer Staff and Lived Experience: Different Perspectives

- LE staff are screened prior to employment for job fit; this may include psychological testing, polygraph, drug use history, etc.
- BH peers or staff with Lived Experience do not go through a similar background check.
- What may preclude an individual from getting a job in LE (criminal history, substance use history, history of mental illness) could make an individual a good fit for a job in behavioral health.



Three SO/BW Co-Response Teams as of 2/23/2020:

- 627 services and almost 100 outreach attempts to 455 individuals;
- About 60% of contacts are response to crisis and 40% are proactive engagements/follow up.
- 32% of encounters were with individuals who did not have a permanent residence
- 94% of the reasons for the encounter were related to a suspected underlying mental illness or substance use disorder



Of 627 Encounters:

- 138 clients' calls resulted in a 5150 or 5585
- BH staff made over 300 referrals and/or linkages to mental health and substance use treatment
 - Diversion Screening Outcomes (N=443):
 - There were 117 offenses where an arrest could have been made, but only 9 resulted in arrest (preliminary analysis)



Challenges both Large and Small

- Clothing- Uniform, civilian dress, LE or BH logos
- Vehicle- Marked or Unmarked, County or LE, Bikes, On Foot
- Important to maintain appropriate HIPAA standards

- Role Definitions must be collaborative but coordinated with clear separation between LE and BH (therapeutic) functions

- New Law AB 465 (Eggman) *“ensure the program is supervised by a licensed mental health professional, including, among others, a licensed clinical social worker”* and *“supervision of mental health professionals shall be consistent with existing county behavioral health agency standards and requirements for supervision”*



Feedback from a family

It has been a very long and difficult week for our family. However, the outlook for my son's future is so much brighter than it was at this time last Friday. This is due, in very large part to the dedication, training, skill, and incredible efforts of your team. We cannot thank you enough for all that you have done for our son's future and that of our family. The events of this last week, although extremely trying, have reinforced our faith in God and in humanity. Indeed, there were so many miracles and events we believe were divinely orchestrated using individuals like your team to bring our son to the point where he can find help, through that help find healing, and through healing find hope... if our son had to go through the painful situation he did, he was in the right place and was saved in exactly the right manner.

Please also pass this note on to your team, especially to your partner, “M”. M, my wife and I wish that we could have also met you in person and thanked you for your efforts to save our son, which you did. I cannot imagine how incredibly challenging your role in our son's situation must have been. With your skill and concern, all of the resources to restore safety to him were in place. You will forever have our heartfelt gratitude for the role you played in saving our son's life. We want you to know we will spend the rest of our lives, and will especially work within his life to pay forward to others the care and compassion you showed him on Friday. Thank you so much.



Co-Response
takes special
skills and
training, a
flexible nature,
and an
openness to
what the day
may bring



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