



Mental Health Mobile Crisis Response Teams

What are Mental Health Crisis Teams?

Mental health mobile crisis response teams are composed of mental health professionals and practitioners who can effectively and appropriately intervene in a mental health crisis. These professionals can meet a person at home, school, work or wherever a crisis occurs. The teams meet face-to-face with the person in crisis to assess and de-escalate the situation. Additional services can include: stabilization for up to ten days, rapid access to psychiatrists, health care navigators, mental health crisis beds and referrals to community mental health providers. Teams can also contact emergency services when necessary. Each county also has a 24-hour crisis hotline to provide advice and support. Additionally, teams can provide longer-term support by helping loved ones and caregivers develop “crisis plans” to better prepare for future crises. Crisis services are available 24-hours a day, 7-days a week, 365-days a year.

How are Mental Health Crisis Teams funded?

Mental health crisis teams were initially funded through the 2007 mental health initiative which was a bipartisan effort between the Governor and the legislature to reform our mental health system, providing for earlier and more effective treatment and supports. Mental health crisis teams received about \$6 million in funding in the 2009-2010 fiscal year. Crisis teams are also covered by Medical Assistance, Minnesota Care and many private health plans.

Who uses Mental Health Crisis Teams?

Crisis teams are designed to be accessible to anyone in the community at any time. Families and friends of a person experiencing a mental health crisis can call a crisis team to assist and support their loved one. Many of the families who use the crisis team are parents of children and adolescents.

Like all emergency services (fire, police, EMT), crisis teams are available to anyone, regardless of their ability to pay and must be ready to respond to any mental health emergency. Mobile crisis response teams are available for adults in all 87 counties and for children in 57 counties.

Why are Mental Health Crisis Teams important?

A mental health crisis can be an extremely frightening and difficult experience for both the person in crisis and those around them. Loved ones and caregivers are often ill-equipped to handle these situations and need the advice and support of professionals. All too frequently, law enforcement or EMT’s are called to respond to mental health crises and they often lack the training and experience to effectively handle the situation. Mental health crisis teams have the training and know-how to help resolve mental health crises.

By intervening early, mental health crisis teams can help prevent costly and unnecessary stays in hospitals and jails. In 2009, there were over 5,000 mobile crisis interventions for adults and over 3,000 for children. Of these, only 11 percent of adults and 28 percent of children were referred to a hospital emergency department or inpatient treatment. In addition, nearly 10,000 children and their families received crisis phone line services that year.

Crisis teams are also effective in connecting people with the community mental health system who had not accessed treatment and services before. In 2009, 58 percent of adults and about 60 percent of children who received crisis interventions had not previously received community mental health services.

Maintaining funding for mental health crisis grants is essential to ensure that children and adults in crisis have 24/7 access to appropriate crisis intervention services.

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