

## **Mental Health First Responders: Partnering with Law Enforcement for Crisis Intervention**

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First responders are often the primary point of entry into emergency mental health services for those individuals experiencing a mental health crisis . Partnering local first responders with mental health professionals forms an alliance which has proven to successfully reduce unnecessary hospitalizations or incarcerations as well as completed suicides.

Careful analysis of best practice methods may assist agencies to develop Crisis Services that fit the needs of the community utilizing the resources that are available. The partnership with law enforcement allows for a broadened ability to reach out to individuals in need. Cross training for such a model of intervention requires a thorough understanding of the diverse backgrounds of these two professions. The alliance between first responders and mental health professionals must allow for a continuum of care for those individuals served. Integral components are required to access, stabilize, and provide follow up to individuals served. Components of care may be available through local mental health resources if they are not available through the crisis centers.

The presenters will walk participants through differing models of police paired crisis Intervention for response to suicidal individuals. The presentation will cover all aspects of care from point of entry to follow up and discharge. Program components necessary for effective intervention will be clearly outlined and discussed. The cross training required for first responders will be covered with special attention on the diverse backgrounds of these two professions. The partnership required between law enforcement and mental health professionals often necessitates a breakdown of barriers in developing a united approach. The presenters will cover the implementation and requirements for a police based model of Mobile Crisis response. Ideas and strategies for dissemination of program information will be presented.