The Promise and the Pitfalls of 988: Survivor Advocacy Perspectives

L. Harris | Vic Welle | Jess Stohlmann-Rainey
Land Acknowledgement
National Context

Stages of social movements

- emerge
- coalesce
- bureaucratise

Success
Failure
Cooptation
Repression
Go mainstream
Decline

Adapted from Blumer (1969), Mauss (1975), and Tilly (1978)
Meskonsing (Wisconsin)

"River running through a red place"
Wisconsin 988 Planning
- County-based system of crisis services
- Plans for standardized coordination without enough time for meaningful evaluation of current system shortcomings
Tsenaicomoco
So-Called Virginia
Peters' sister blasts legislators and Gov. Northam as he ceremonially signs ‘Marcus Alert’ bill
There are significant costs associated with most aspects of this plan, without clear funding sources.

-Marcus Alert Workgroup report
Marcus Alert Triage Framework Process Map

* The response options will vary by local area.
** These processes are still under development.
Among all survey takers with personal experience, being able to **chose a supporter and advocate** was the most popular choice for increasing the likelihood of seeking help before the peak of crises.

- ...a chosen supporter (parent, friend, spouse, etc.) could stay to help communicate needs wherever I or my loved one went.
- ...a behavioral health response not involving a police officer was guaranteed.
- ...handcuffs or shackles would not be used.
- ...there was access to a quiet, private area wherever I or my loved one was taken.
- ...follow-up care to ensure linkages and referrals were made was guaranteed.
- ...a peer support professional (peer recovery specialist, family support partner) would be part of the response.

Some survey takers chose not to answer this question. Percentages do not add to 100% because survey takers could select more than one response.
Magistrate specifies:
- Primary law enforcement agency
- Alternative transportation provider in certain circumstances

When alternative transportation is ordered:
- Magistrate orders law enforcement to execute the ECO, take person into custody, and transfer custody to the alternative provider.

§ 37.2-808(C)

THANK YOU

I TRUELY APPRECIATE YOUR INPUT!
Arapaho, Cheyenne, Núu-amaha-tuvu-pú (Ute), Očhéthi Šakówin (Sioux) Land

So-Called Colorado
Peer Support as a True Alternative

- System of Giving & Receiving Support
- Rooted in Respect
- Shared Responsibility for Interactions & Outcomes
- Mutual Agreement About What is Safe or Helpful
- Not Based on Psychiatric/Medical Models or Diagnostic Criteria
- Moves beyond self-concepts built on disability, diagnosis, and trauma
Crisis Line Intervention

- Provide Resources
- Grounding Exercise
- Coping or distraction skills
- Problem Solving and Planning
- Offer new perspective
- Care and Concern
- Safety Planning
- Means Restriction
Follow Up

- Safety Plan Check In
- Ongoing message of care and concern
- Check in after significant event
- Opioid Concern (grant program)
- Hospital Follow Up
Walk in Center

- Need/Want to be seen or evaluated face-to-face
- Behavioral health issue (no medical assessment or concern)
- Caller can travel safely
- Complex / in depth intervention warranted
- Assessment outside environment beneficial
- Pave the way for the referral
Mobile Crisis

- Crisis Line Referral Only
- Need/Want to be seen face-to-face
- Acute Behavioral Health Crisis
- Complex / in depth intervention warranted
- Clear location of caller
- Environmental safety ensured
- Barriers to traveling to care
- Note: Response teams differ
Crisis Stabilization Unit

Accessible through WIC

Clinician must determine they need a higher level of care

1-5 day stay

Can be admitted voluntarily or involuntarily
Importance of IVR Options

988

Veterans

Spanish

Local Centers

Peer Support
Preserving Peer Support in 988 Calls/Chats/Texts

Alternative to traditional crisis intervention

No screening, no assessment

No coercive interventions – different standard from “least restrictive intervention”

Mutual, not paternalistic

Safety defined in relationship, not by policy/process

Separate guidance for average interaction length, volume, occupancy, and other call center data

Pay Equity

Peer Support Infrastructure in Organizations
Themes Across States

“Reform”
Co-optation of peers
Surveillance
Workforce shortages
Funding problems
Enmeshment with the carceral state
Dominated by system representatives
Privacy Issues/Geolocation

“The use of involuntary interventions paired with technologies like geolocation could prevent people in crisis from initiating contact if they are worried about their privacy or safety.”

—American Association of Suicidology, public comment to the FCC

“Would the knowledge that the caller’s location—even including apartment or room number—is available to the [National Suicide Prevention] Lifeline, and could be shared by the Lifeline with local authorities, potentially discourage callers?”

—Mitel, public comment to the FCC
Grassroots & Abolitionist Alternatives to 911
Interrupting Criminalization is led by researchers Mariame Kaba & Andrea J. Ritchie.

“This guide highlights considerations for real, meaningful shifts away from law enforcement and towards autonomous, self-determined community-based resources and responses to unmet mental health needs.”

A CHECKLIST FOR ASSESSING MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS RESPONSE MODELS

☐ Is the proposed mental health crisis response completely separate from and out of the control of the police? Or is it a “co-response” or CIT model?

☐ Will a police response or “co-response” model remain in place in addition to a non-police response?

☐ Will mental health crisis calls be routed through 911 or a separate number?

from Defund the Police, Invest in Community Care: A Guide to Alternative Mental Health Responses

bit.ly/NonPoliceResponse
READ THE FULL CHECKLIST!

bit.ly/NonPoliceResponse

Who is driving and controlling identification, selection, implementation, and evaluation of alternative mental health crisis responses?

Who is responding to mental health crisis calls?

How will the program be evaluated?

How will the program be funded?

Does the police contract contain any provisions relating to mental health crisis response?

from Defund the Police, Invest in Community Care: A Guide to Alternative Mental Health Responses
A CONVENING ON ALTERNATIVE MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS RESPONSES

ARE YOU WORKING WITH OR INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS RESPONSE PROGRAM?

Join Interrupting Criminalization for a two-day workshop series on our new guide, *Defund the Police - Invest in Community Care: A Guide to Alternative Mental Health Crisis Responses*. Explore current and emerging models and programming with organizers, advocates, and legislative experts.

REGISTER AT bit.ly/MHCRisisResponse

Source: https://www.interruptingcriminalization.com/events/alternativeresponse
Mobile Assistance Community Responders of Oakland (MACRO)

18 month pilot funded

Collab between grassroots groups such as the Anti Police Terror Project, Coalition for Police Accountability, and the Oakland City Council

Housed within the Fire Department

Responders and program director are civilians, not clinicians or cops/co-responder (CAHOOTS-based)
Types of Crisis Intervention

**Law Enforcement First**
- Co-Response
- Diversion

**Mental Health First**
- Crisis Line
- Mobile Crisis
- Walk-In
- Crisis Residential

**Peer Support First**
- Support Line/Warm Line
- Mobile Response
- Drop In
- Respite

**Community-Based Response**
- Mutual Aid Networks
- Community Centers
- Neighborhood Organizing
Reduce Funding to Police

Challenge the notion that policing = safety

Reduce tool & tactics of policing

Reduce the scale of policing
Respite & Community Care

State funded peer run respite

Informal respites, community care pods
Peer Run Respites as a crisis alternative in Wisconsin
Peer Run Respites in Wisconsin

- Locations in residential or mixed-residential neighborhoods
- 3-5 private bedrooms
- No clinical assessments
- Overnight stays up to 5-7 days
- Respite houses also operate warmlines for over the phone support
Community Based Support

- Draw on existing community support structures
- Culturally relevant supports
- Mutual Aid societies
- Under the radar respites
- Care pods
- Social action addressing factors contribute to crisis: living wages, affordable housing, child care, etc

The "Style and Substance: Mental Health and Community Resource Training" trained Black barbers and stylists in the Milwaukee area to have conversations about mental health.
Directions for Advocacy
Get Involved in Local and National Planning

- No clinical gatekeeping of peer support on the line
- Join or sit in on your planning council and say unpopular things
- Advocate against geolocation (use libertarian state in your favor)
- Advocate for detailing relationship between 988, 911, other crisis reforms
- Advocate against “building planes as you fly them”
Crisis Services: Someone to Talk to

Here for you

When life gets overwhelming, it helps to know you are not alone. The helplines, hotlines, and text services listed below provide support for all types of issues that can cause emotional distress, including:

- Anxiety and depression
- Divorce or relationship challenges
- Grief or loss
- Substance use
- Thoughts of suicide
- Violent or abusive situations

What to expect when you call or text

There are no scripts or predetermined solutions. The people who answer your call or text message are trained to help you find solid ground and identify the best next steps to help you handle your challenge.

Three things to know before you call or text

- For medical, police, or fire emergencies, call 911
- Many helplines, hotlines, and text services are available at no cost to the caller. Some helplines, hotlines, and text services may charge a fee or dispatch services that may come with a cost. If this is a concern, you can ask what the organization’s policy is regarding cost at any time. Message and data rates may apply.
- Many of the resources listed here may use restrictive interventions, like active rescues, wellness or welfare checks, involving law enforcement or emergency services. You can ask if this is a possibility at any point in your conversation if this is a concern for you.

Sources of support

| Your County Crisis Line | Veterans Crisis Line |

Small successes in advocacy: increasing informed consent in crisis messaging