

Creating a co-response model for responding to persons with mental illness

PURPOSE

The purpose is to establish guidelines for the recognition of and response to persons experiencing emotional distress or a mental health crisis.

Law enforcement officers may come into contact with individuals experiencing emotional distress or a mental health crisis. These situations may increase the likelihood of officers encountering a violent subject. The sanctity of life should be used in determining the best course of action, while weighing the totality of the circumstances. In doing so and when safe, officers shall ensure alternatives to arrest are considered to ensure the best treatment options are used. Officers are trained to observe the mental state of individuals, make quick judgements based on the totality of the circumstances, utilize de-escalation techniques to effectively and legally resolve encounters. In all circumstances, officers shall adhere to best practices and training.

Co-response unit: Involves SRT, Social Service/ Mental health workers, Unity Place, Emergency Response Services)

Unit is responsible for conducting follow-up visits for individuals who may benefit from mental or behavioral health services and as available, provides an on-scene response. They will utilize community resources, including the department's integrated Social Services Unit (social workers integrated in juvenile and adult investigations), to connect individuals with appropriate services. The three primary areas of focus for the unit will include mental and behavioral health, substance use disorder services, and homelessness issues. We would use the Special Response Team (SRT) officers in the resolution of violent or armed emotionally distressed persons (EDP). All SRT and will be trained in Crisis Intervention and ICAT (integrating communications, assessment and tactics). ICAT is Training that is designed for situations involving persons who are unarmed or are armed with weapons and who may be experiencing a mental health or other crisis. The training program is anchored by the Critical Decision-Making Model that helps officers assess situations, make safe and effective decisions, and document and learn from their actions. The training incorporates different skill sets into a unified training approach that emphasizes scenario-based exercises, as well as lecture and case study opportunities.

This unit will respond to the three primary areas of focus for the unit stated above.

Social worker in adult investigations

- They would be able to elevate some work on our domestic violence investigator
- They would be able to contact victims and assist them with safe housing, transportation, legal issues (i.e. orders of protections)

- They would also be able to provide other needed resource for the victim and their families. Most importantly working with children who witness and or experience domestic violence
- They would be able to assist with setting up counseling with victims and the children
- Overall, having a social worker lets us focus on the victim more, rather than the offender. Meaning, we can arrest a domestic violence offender, but that most likely will not stop a second or many more domestic occurrences. A social worker being involved with the victim will hopefully put the victim in a better situation away from the offender. Ultimately this could help reduce repeat domestic violence incidents within the same family.
- Reduce entry back into the circle of violence

Social worker within Juvenile CID:

- Able to work with families that have habitual runaways and figure out why the juveniles keep running away
- Provide services to families where there have been domestics between the juveniles and their parents
- Provide resources for parents to help their kids who are struggling in school or need transportation to school
- Provide guidance and advice to the families of a juvenile who has been arrested and what the next steps/options are in the process
- Could assist with Station Adjustments and creating the program to be put in place
- Provide services to juvenile's victims and families where DCFS either did not get involved or did not provide services
- Assist with squashing some of the feuds between groups of juveniles (elevate incident, big school fight, etc.)
- Assist us in instances where the families are not cooperative with police
- They would also be readily available to bounce ideas off of them and try to find better solutions or outcomes for the families and juveniles than just arresting them
- Would also be able to maintain a list of families in need that we have had contact with for special events, such as Holidays with Heroes
- Could help facilitate or assist us in community oriented events such as setting up an event where officers read books with younger children, talk about cybercrimes and social media, or have an officer show up at the school and sing happy birthday to all the kids that had birthday that month (this was done at Pleasant Valley Elementary school, called "Birthday Buddies")
- Reduce recidivism

Social Worker Position Overview (victim service specialist)

Position functions as a direct service provider to the victims of all crimes. Personnel are responsible for working as a team to provide trauma informed crisis intervention, case management, advocacy, and ongoing emotional support to the victims of all crimes, with extra attention to crimes that cause a high level of victim trauma.

Essential Functions

1. Serve as a resource to the Peoria community to identify and coordinate the social services available to residents who are victims of criminal acts.

2. Network with area social service agencies to develop a community mutual resource system and “wrap around” services for victims in need of social service assistance; foster relationships with community organizations not limited to area hospitals, school district 150, juvenile justice system, and various community groups.

3. Social worker will provide:
 - a. Provide status updates on the progress of the victim’s case.
 - b. Upon request, provide community presentations on an array of social service topics.
 - c. Provide diversion from the criminal justice system by addressing problems or concerns through therapeutic intervention.
 - d. Facilitate follow-up treatment or referral to the appropriate community resource organization.
 - e. When requested, assist police department employees in securing services for those in need; provide educational information to help the employee better understand the circumstances or the community concern.
 - f. Meet with walk-ins requesting information and/or assistance.
 - g. Protect the interest, confidentiality, and civil rights of the client.

4. All social workers will carry out the following requirements:
 - a. Review police reports to identify known victims and contact them to offer direct and referred services.
 - b. Assist victims with filing police reports and victim compensation forms.
 - c. Provide safety planning services to victims.
 - d. Provide crisis counseling services to victims and their families.
 - e. Conduct home visits with victims in conjunction with police backup, when needed.
 - f. Assist victims in obtaining orders of protection.
 - g. Facilitate court advocacy services for victims to include arranging for transportation to and from court.
 - h. Maintain confidential case files which include social history, diagnosis, formulation of treatment and documentation of services.

- i. Perform miscellaneous personal advocacy tasks for victims, as needed.
 - j Train social work interns who may be working within the unit.
 - k. Be on-call after hours.
 - l. Oversee activities to ensure those victims with the most urgent needs are given the highest priority for services.
 - m. Consult on all cases.
-
- 7. Adhere to and understand the applicable policies, procedures, and orders of the department.
 - 8. Attain established unit goals.
 - 9. Maintain positive relationships with co-workers, as well as the investigators from area police departments and facilitate the exchange of information and resources pertaining to investigations.
 - 10. Keep informed on crime trends within the city.
 - 11. Remain obedient and responsive to all verbal and written orders issued by superiors; complete police reports and other required documentation.
 - 12. Perform such other duties as may be required by state law, city ordinance, and department policy or as may be assigned by a sworn supervisor.
 - 13. The list of functions is not meant to be construed as being all inclusive. Duties may occasionally be deleted, or additional duties may be assigned permanently or temporarily in order to accomplish departmental and city objectives.