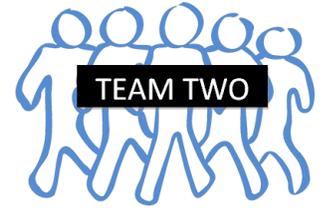


TEAM TWO TRAINING NEWS



VOLUME V ISSUE I

SUMMER
2021

COLLABORATIVE RESPONSE TO MENTAL HEALTH CRISES

Training Testimonial—Insights from a Team Two Training Participant:

In November 2020, Officer Abigail Zimmer, Manchester Police, wrote: “Just thought I would let you know in my nine years as a police officer today was the first time I have ever had to be a “negotiator.” I attended your class on the 4th and I really feel that helped me so much, today, and I am so thankful I took it! I just spent three hours talking to a guy with a knife to his throat. United Counseling Services did come after we got him to drop the knife, but I definitely used a lot of the ideas that came from the discussions and videos we watched. He is on his way to the hospital now and it was a good ending.

Thank you and I look forward to doing more classes in the future regarding this subject!”

For more information about Team Two Training see page 6

TRAINING IN ACTION—STATEWIDE OUTCOMES

Williston—

In March, 2021, **Howard Center crisis clinician, Kelsey Carpenter**, had a chance to work with **Sgt. Mike Anderson, of the VSP, Williston Barracks**, who went above and beyond in support of First Call for Chittenden County (FCCC) in responding to a potential volatile situation. An adult client was experiencing severe paranoid delusions and was making suicidal and homicidal statements according to his very concerned family members.

Kelsey was the clinician assigned to the case and coordinated with Sgt. Anderson, expressing her concerns about safety for the client, his family, and any FCCC clinician sent to respond to this remote home, at a time well after dark. In the past, and while in crisis, the client had bolted into the woods. Matters were complicated in that there were

unsecured and unaccounted for firearms in the home.

Given the severity of risk factors, Sgt. Anderson agreed to arrive first, securing the scene at the home. At Sgt. Anderson’s request, Kelsey contacted the client’s family to notify them that VSP was responding. She was on the phone when Sgt. Anderson arrived. The client presented as disorganized, agitated, displaying extreme anger towards family members and was experiencing suicidal ideation. Kelsey listened to Sgt. Anderson approach to de-escalate the client. Kelsey observed, in awe, Sgt. Anderson’s calm demeanor, kindness and professionalism as the client was extremely unhappy with law enforcement’s involvement.

It was clear that Sgt. Anderson was able to quickly develop a rapport with the client, working with him in a respectful manner,

even as the client yelled obscenities while refusing to go to the hospital. Eventually, Sgt. Anderson was able to convince the client to go to UVM Medical Center Emergency Department, where he was found to meet criteria for emergency examination and involuntary psychiatric hospitalization.

Kelsey has high praise for how Sgt. Anderson handled this situation ensuring the safety of all involved. She believed this situation had a high probability of ending in tragedy were it not for his actions. Sgt. Anderson showed genuine compassion, patience, respect, and professionalism towards a very unstable person and was able to resolve the situation peacefully. Kelsey was grateful for his involvement and now feels safer as a Crisis Clinician and as a community member knowing that Sgt. Anderson is serving her community.

Training In Action continued on page 2

ERNIE & JOE: CRISIS COPS

Team Two collaborated with NAMI-VT in three different communities (so far) to show a 25-minute excerpt from the full-length documentary about the San Antonio, TX police department’s mental health unit. A panel discussion was held after each showing featuring a police officer, a crisis worker and a person with lived experience contributing

to the discussion and answering audience questions. Robust discussions about police response to mental health calls, police training, and ideas about future response models took place in host towns Bennington, Randolph and Montpelier.



The Bridge Scene from the documentary, “Ernie & Joe: Crisis Cops,” utilized in the training

TRAINING IN ACTION continued from page 1

Lamoille—

In February, 2021, **Lamoille County Mental Health (LCMH) Emergency Services Director, Monique Reil**, accompanied Lamoille County Sheriff Sargent Christian Watson for a wellness check. Sgt. Watson was professional, kind and empathetic

with the client. The client responded well to him and his approach with her, which was essential in facilitating her willingness to interact with the crisis clinician. The client had previously made suicidal comments to another staff member, then would not answer her phone, nor would the client's mother

(whom she lives with) answer the phone to speak with the first responders. After Sgt. Watson left, Monique was able to engage the client in a self-care plan including follow-up check-in calls with LCMH, which, in Monique's opinion, would not have happened if they had not conducted a joint intervention.

“VSP Trooper Marchand was empathetic and patient with the woman. He was understanding and calm and was able to convince the woman to go to Copley for an assessment.”

Williston—

In June, 2021, **Trooper Adam Marchand** and **LCMH crisis worker Jaime McLean** met to discuss a case in Eden where they needed to do a wellness check on a woman who had expressed suicidal ideation over social media. A friend of the woman called VSP seeking a wellness check. The trooper and Jaime met waiting for a second VSP trooper as back up. Trooper Marchand

and the other Trooper approached the home to find the woman and her husband at home. The second trooper spoke with the husband outside while Trooper Marchand entered the residence. The troopers told Jaime to wait off site so they could secure the residence, always the first priority. Trooper Marchand was empathetic and patient with the woman. He was understanding and calm and was able to encourage the

woman to go to Copley Hospital for an assessment where Trooper Marchand ultimately brought her. At one point the woman mentioned that she was here in VT on vacation and would not harm herself while here and that if she did anything, it would be back home. He told her that he cared and did not want her to hurt herself regardless of where she was. Jaime was very impressed by the demeanor of this Trooper!

Morrisville—

Also in June, 2021, Officer Andrew Glover requested the assistance of **Lamoille County Mental Health's crisis clinician Jaime McLean** to

locate a family of someone who was confused and who didn't know who he was. The person had Alzheimer's and was not experiencing a mental health crisis, as such, but it was

a great collaboration between LCMH and MPD. Together, they were able to figure out who the person was, locate his wife and reunite them. It was a joyous reunion to witness!

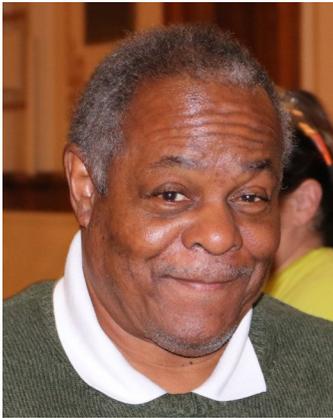
Training In Action continued on page 3

TEAM TWO STEERING COMMITTEE

- ✧ Lt. Michael Dion, Vermont State Police (VSP)
- ✧ Roger Langevin, Franklin County Sheriff
- ✧ Laurie Emerson, NAMI-VT
- ✧ Caitlin League, Consumer
- ✧ Tony Folland, VDH, ADAP
- ✧ Mary Moulton, WCMHS
- ✧ Mourning Fox, Community Health Center of Burlington
- ✧ Matt Murano, Chief, Wilmington Police Department
- ✧ Gary Gordon, WCMHS
- ✧ Ed Riddell, DAIL
- ✧ Kate Lamphere, HCRS
- ✧ Cindy Taylor Patch, VCJC
- ✧ Simone Rueschemeyer, VCP



INSTRUCTOR SPOTLIGHT: Gary Gordon, Washington County Mental Health



Gary Gordon, is not only a Central Region Team Two instructor, but he has served on the Team Two Steering Committee since its inception in 2011.

Gary is the Team Leader for the WCMHS Emergency Services

team, a position he’s held for the past ten years. He has also been the co-coordinator of the Behavioral Health Disaster Response Team for the VT Department of Health for the past 14 years. Gary is known for his ability to resolve crisis situations in a calm, reassuring manner.

Gary is known for meeting people where they are at and is the guy you hope is available during a mental health crisis. He travels around the state to perform debriefings for first responders, schools and communities who have been impacted by a tragic call or event.

One reason for his renowned cool may stem from his extensive musical background. After

graduating Summa Cum Laude from Morehouse College, Gary received his Masters in Music from the Manhattan School of Music and played professional saxophone in New York City

prior to entering into the mental health field. He attended the doctoral program in music education at Ohio State University and used his skills as a music therapist for six years before moving to Vermont.



TRAINING IN ACTION *continued from page 2*

Barre City—

June, 2021, **Barre City Police officers Jim Baril and Sargent Randall Tucker** responded to what could have been a very dangerous situation. They responded to a person who has a long history of interpersonal struggles and historic interactions with law enforcement that haven’t gone well. This individual had both medical and psychiatric struggles and has difficulty in effectively communicating his feel-

ings. At times, he could be volatile, impulsive and quick to anger. He contacted a former case manager, stating he was barricading himself and was going to do some significant self-harm.

The case manager contacted Barre City police and WCMHS emergency services. In the words of the case manager, “they were AWESOME!” The officers spent approximately 45 minutes talking with the indi-

vidual, treating him respectfully and calmly until he was able to de-escalate, ultimately agreeing he needed to see a doctor at the hospital. The officers leveraged the case manager’s established relationship with the individual extremely well. They were thoughtful, compassionate and clear in their communications. They prevented the situation from escalating into a potentially dangerous situation. Kudos to the Barre City Police Officers!

*“...Barre City Police and WCMHS emergency services... were **AWESOME!**”
former case manager*

TRAINING IN ACTION continued from page 3

“The police and screeners were able to effectively communicate with each other, understanding their roles in the joint response, the outcome was positive.”

Montpelier—

In the Fall of 2020, **Montpelier Police** received a call from a family member to whom a well known WCMHS client was expressing suicidal ideation. Dispatch called the WCMHS emergency screeners requesting a joint response. The screeners were able to meet the police outside the individual’s apartment and they responded together. Initially, they were able to communicate with the person through the

door. After building trust, the client opened their door and voluntarily rode in the police cruiser to the hospital. The individual continued making suicidal statements with intent and access to means having self-inflicted lacerations on their arms requiring stitches. Because the screeners and the police remained calm and respectful in their communication, offering clear options, the situation was able to resolve safely. And because the police and screeners were able to effectively

communicate with each other, understanding their roles in the joint response, the outcome was positive. The screeners were also able to talk with CVMC while the person was on their way to the hospital, providing a heads up to the emergency department as to the individual’s clinical and medical condition. Once the person was at CVMC, the police were able to leave to go back to duty in Montpelier while the screeners continued to support the individual.

Northfield—

In November, 2020, the **Northfield Police** contacted WCMHS screeners requesting a response to family members whose loved one had just died by suicide. The screeners went out to the family’s home to speak with the person’s parents.

The screeners provided support to the family members who were at the home, offering grief resources and support. The officers on scene showed kindness, patience and compassion towards all involved. They clearly responded, answering all questions they could respectful-

ly and thoughtfully. The WCMHS screeners were really impressed with the officers and how they handled a tragic family situation that was wrought with grief. Their interaction with the family was delivered with grace and dignity.

Middlebury—

In February, 2021, **Counseling Services of Addison County (CSAC) and the Middlebury Police** were joined by WomenSafe, Charter House (homeless shelter), and others in a collaborative response to the needs of a homeless individual emblematic of the impact of Team Two training. The individual decided to set up camp on the grounds of the Middlebury Police Department. Demonstrating their compassionate care and service to the community, members of

the PD offered warm beverages, use of cell phones, and checked on welfare/warmth through the night, demonstrative of their commitment to a helpful and non-confrontational stance. Others involved made efforts to find appropriate shelter and services that were acceptable to the individual.

Following what, if anything, could have been done differently towards a better process or outcome. They discussed why the choices were made at the time, was the rationale for choices adequately communicated, what values, policies, or statutes limited or informed those choices and any takeaways for future collaborative responses.

Following the approximately 36-hour effort, CSAC Emergency Team, Middlebury PD, WomenSafe and Charter House debriefed expressing mutual appreciation and exam-

CSAC is thankful to work in a community that is open to looking for ways to improve services and collaborations in such a respectful and helpful way.

FALL 2021 TRAINING SCHEDULE

- ✧ Sept 29 – Central Region – in person
- ✧ Oct 20 – SE Region – via zoom
- ✧ Nov 3 – SW Region – via zoom
- ✧ Nov 17 – NW Region – in person



2020 FRANK SILFIES SR. AWARD— Exemplifying Collaboration

Each year, the Team Two “Frank Silfies, Sr. Award” is presented to a Vermont law enforcement officer as well as a mental health crisis clinician who exemplify collaborative response to mental health crises. The 2020 Frank Silfies, Sr. Award recipients are **Sargent Jeffrey Pearson**, Montpelier Police Department, and **Kathleen Greenmun**, Lamoille County Mental Health.

The onset of COVID-19 and a worldwide pandemic required first responders to very quickly figure out how to provide services while maintaining their own safety. Mental health response and support are most effective with human contact and face-to-face interaction.

During this time of a pandemic, it is imperative to have the ability to reach out to fellow first responders to collaborate in offering the best possible outcome. For the 2020 award, the Team Two Steering Committee asked for nominations for officers and crisis workers who really went above and beyond in light of the world-wide pandemic.

In the words of a nominating colleague at Montpelier police department, **Sgt Jeff Pearson** “...is someone who is always able to connect with people, even under the worst circumstances. His calmness and ability to let people know he hears and understands what they are saying is unrivaled. Jeff never rushes when speaking to people and

allows them to say whatever is on their mind for however long is necessary.”

Lamoille County Mental Health Emergency Services Director Monique Riel nominated crisis clinician, **Kathleen Greenmun**. In Monique’s words, “when COVID impacted all of us, Kathleen remained strong and steady, frequently offering to go out on crisis calls for other staff who did not feel comfortable or safe doing so. Most commonly, these were trips to our hospital emergency room when telehealth was not working, or to police stations that did not have technology set up, or out in the community to assess for a possible mental health warrant. She has helped to cover open shifts while we have been short-staffed.”



Kristin Chandler, Team Two Coordinator presenting the 2020 award to Sgt. Jeffrey Pearson of the Montpelier Police Department.



Kathleen Greenmun, Lamoille County Mental Health, receiving the 2020 award surrounded by her colleagues. This COVID-safe event included first-responders participating virtually.

TEAM TWO TRAINING GALLERY

NW Region—
November 2020



SE Region—October 2020



NE Region—February 2021



About Team Two

Team Two is a grant funded one day scenario-based training provided in five different regions around Vermont six-to-eight times a year. This training grant is a collaboration between the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Mental Health to promote a collaborative response among first responders to a mental health crisis. The training is designed to build the relationships necessary for the best possible out-

comes to a person in a mental health crisis. It focuses on the safety, clinical and legal aspects of three different scenarios, as well as provides an overview of current legal issues and community and statewide resources. A person with lived experience gives a brief presentation along with a law enforcement officer and a crisis clinician to further demonstrate responses that have worked well for them.

STAY CONNECTED:



COLLABORATIVE RESPONSE TO MENTAL HEALTH CRISES

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