

The Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) News

The year went by quickly and we are already in the midst of the Holidays with Winter fast approaching. There have been many changes within the Behavioral Health Unit in the last few months. We have expanded to 5 Behavioral Health Response Teams (BHRT) and have continued our training and community outreach efforts.

2018 AFSP OUT OF THE DARKNESS WALK

On October 6, 2018 the Behavioral Health Unit, along with agency partners took to foot during the 2018 American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's (AFSP) "Out of the Darkness" Walk. The weather cooperated and made this year's walk one to remember. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention holds an annual walk to raise awareness and money to support education, policy work and support survivors of suicide loss. Walks like these are one of the foundation's largest efforts to bring about further awareness and fundraising. Sadly, suicide rates have increased over recent years. It is the goal of AFSP to find better ways to prevent suicide and to improve overall mental health nation-wide.

The Behavioral Health Unit has participated in this walk for many years and plans to do so for years to come. We encourage everyone to participate when and how they can. You can find out more information about AFSP at: <https://www.afsp.org>



Pictured: Many of our BHU and Service Coordination Team members and supporters

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Portland Police Bureau



Photo: Behavioral Health Response Team Officer William Kemmer and SCT Manager Emily Rochon

The 2018 Regional CIT Conference in Kennewick, WA was attended by several members of the PPB Behavioral Health Unit. This was an opportunity to network and collaborate in regards to the tools and methodologies being used within various agencies from around the Northwest region.

Officer Billy Kemmer (Behavioral Health Response Team) and Program Manager, Emily Rochon (Service Coordination Team) presented, "Thoughtful Approaches to Reduce Incarceration for Person Experiencing Behavioral Health Crisis." The presentation highlighted the importance of collaboration and coordination with stakeholders to provide appropriate, sustainable interventions for those in behavioral health crisis.

ECIT OFFICERS TALK FEMALE OFF VISTA BRIDGE

On November 6th, 2019 Central Officers responded to the Vista Bridge on the report of a subject threatening to jump. Upon arrival they found a juvenile female in the middle of the bridge on the outer side of the fencing. The female was extremely distraught and in obvious crisis.

An ECIT officer spoke with the female for approximately 1 hour before she agreed to come down. Due to her position on the bridge, Portland Fire Bureau had to assist and cut through the fence to get her out. She was then transported to a local hospital for evaluation and treatment.

ECIT OFFICERS STOP MAN FROM SHOOTING SELF

On November 6th the Bureau of Emergency Communications received a call from the V.A. suicide hotline of a veteran feeling suicidal. He stated he had a gun in his lap. Officers responded and staged nearby. An ECIT officer responded from North Precinct to help. The subject was contacted on the phone and agreed to speak with officers outside his apartment.

After speaking to the man for a lengthy time, he stated that he had hidden his gun and would not tell the police where it was. He was ultimately transported to the hospital for evaluation and treatment.



SCT / CCC HOUSING RAPID RESPONSE

Service Coordination Team / Central City Concern Housing Rapid Response

“I entered in the Central City Concern Housing Rapid Response (HRR) program broken and depressed. I had just been released from incarceration, again. I had no hope or anywhere to turn. I opened the phone book and started calling programs. By some miracle, I called the HRR program. I had never heard of Central City Concern or the HRR program before. The woman who answered the phone stated they had one room available, needed to call my probation officer, and asked me to call back later. When I called her back she told me to be at the Golden West building by 5pm. Today I am a Case Manager with the Parole Transition Program at Central City Concern, located at the Alder building. Every day I am grateful for the program and just celebrated 6 years clean and sober.”

– Dennis M.; SCT Graduate



Pictured: Dennis M. and Terry W. SCT Graduates and both recently celebrated 6 years clean and sober.

COFFEE WITH BHU — ANDREA PLACE



A/Sgt. Weinberger with Portland Citizen

Members of BHU collaborated with the staff at Cascadia’s Andrea Place to facilitate a “coffee with a cop” event with some of the program’s residents. Andrea Place is a transitional facility which is designed to help their residents move from long-term hospital settings to more independent living. The staff relayed that a number of residents have had previous encounters with police, some of which have led to a fear or concern of contacting or working with police officers.

On November 15th, BHU supervisors, officers and clinicians held the event at No Wave Coffee, to meet Andrea Place residents. Initial apprehension on the part of some transitioned into multiple healthy and constructive conversations! BHU members were able to connect with one of Andrea Place’s successful residents who is soon moving on to another living situation which gives him even more independence. BHU officers and clinicians were able to provide an environment where residents were able to feel safe enough to speak and to get to know officers in a non-enforcement setting. Residents also shared regarding their life experiences and allowed officer and clinicians to get to know them a little better.

At the end of the event, staff expressed their pleasure with how the residents decided to open-up and speak with officers and clinicians. All-in-all it was a fun event, shared over some good coffee! Many thanks to Cascadia’s Andrea Place and No Wave Coffee!

NEW BHU MEMBERS



Clinician
Jamie Williams

We would like to introduce you to one of our newer clinicians;

Jamie Williams

Jamie has been working with the Behavioral Health Unit since February 2018. Prior to working with the BHU she worked with Project Respond for about 4 years as a mental health crisis clinician with the Family Crisis Stabilization Team. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and a Certified Alcohol Drug Counselor I. She Graduated with a degree from Portland State University and has a history of working in residential treatment for teenage girls.

She sees BHU as having an integral role in the community, filling a gap in crisis services. Police often end up being the first responders during mental health crises and the partnership between a mental health clinician and law enforcement officer allows for more knowledge and better options for meeting their individualized needs.

“While working with the BHU I hope to provide support to both the community and the police bureau. I want to advocate for the people in the community who are often not heard while attempting to reduce the trauma often associated with crisis services. I also hope to focus on connecting folks to resources that will meet their individual needs and help to provide ongoing stabilization. Working with the BHU will help me grow and learn as a social worker while providing the best care possible to people in the city. “

“While not at work I enjoy spending time with my family and drinking good coffee. “