

The Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) News

Throughout 2021 our Behavioral Health Response Teams and the Service Coordination Team continued to meet with clients in a safe and healthy manner with Covid precautions in place. The relationships between officers, Clinicians, and the Portland community have been invaluable in meeting the needs of vulnerable populations in our city. With our community partners who share similar goals, we continually strive to coordinate multidisciplinary services for individuals to obtain the assistance they need. In action, the BHU facilitated numerous Crisis Intervention and de-escalation trainings for our partners in the past months.

Enhanced Crisis Intervention Team (ECIT) Training

In November, the Enhanced Crisis Intervention Team (ECIT) Coordinator and the Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) conducted their bi-annual three-day training sessions for its Enhanced Crisis Intervention Team (ECIT) members.

ECIT features specially trained and vetted police officers who respond to persons in behavioral health crisis and seek to safely de-escalate situations. In the training sessions, officers learned how to use the Communication Team Kit, which is equipment designed to facilitate better communication during crisis incidents.

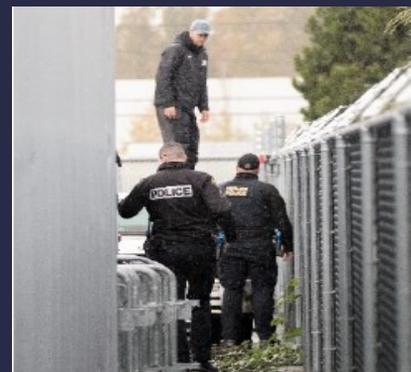
They also gained additional skills when working with juveniles in crisis. In another session, participants developed new skills to lessen stress and promote resiliency, and they learned how to utilize these new skills with persons in crisis.

The Portland Police Bureau (PPB) has developed a well-rounded Enhanced Crisis Intervention Training program that thoughtfully incorporates curriculum and scenarios relevant to the work ECIT officers perform on the street.

PPB added 29 new ECIT Officers and has 128 operational ECIT Officers total.



Enhanced Crisis Intervention Team Training



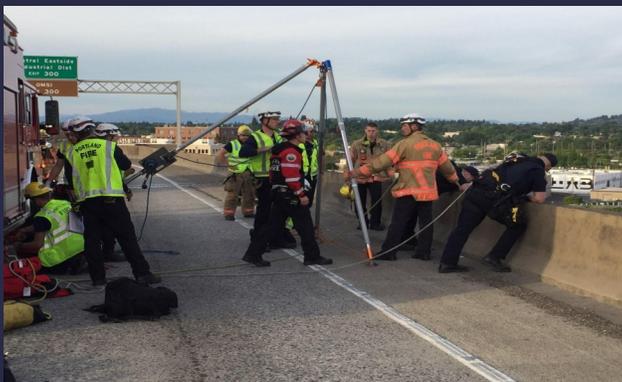
Officers practicing de-escalation skills in scenario training

Officers Help Person In Crisis

On May 26, 2021, Central Precinct officers were dispatched to the top deck of the Marquam Bridge for a female on the railing. Portland fire and police located the female towards the East side of the bridge, over the Willamette River, on an I-beam outside the railing. A pair of officers attempted to make contact with the female.

Traffic was diverted off the top deck of the freeway, and an additional ECIT officer joined the communication team. Soon after this, the female changed her location to an I-beam under the bridge's top deck. Additional resources were requested to stop traffic on the bottom deck of the Marquam Bridge. The female stated she would come down if a ladder was put up. The Portland Fire Bureau (PFB) assisted with the ladder, and she was taken into custody without force. She was transported to the hospital for evaluation and treatment. PFB was a great help with their technical rope gear, Fire boat and ladder assistance.

As primary responders to crisis calls, all Portland Police Bureau officers receive 40 hours of Crisis Intervention Training and annual CIT refresher training. In addition, the Bureau has volunteer officers from a variety of patrol assignments on the Enhanced Crisis Intervention Team (ECIT). These officers are the first responders dispatched by 9-1-1 to crisis calls that involve certain criteria and which involve a mental health component. ECIT officers receive additional training to identify risks during a behavioral health crisis, utilize crisis communication techniques to help deescalate a person in crisis, and have knowledge of available community resources.



There
is hope.

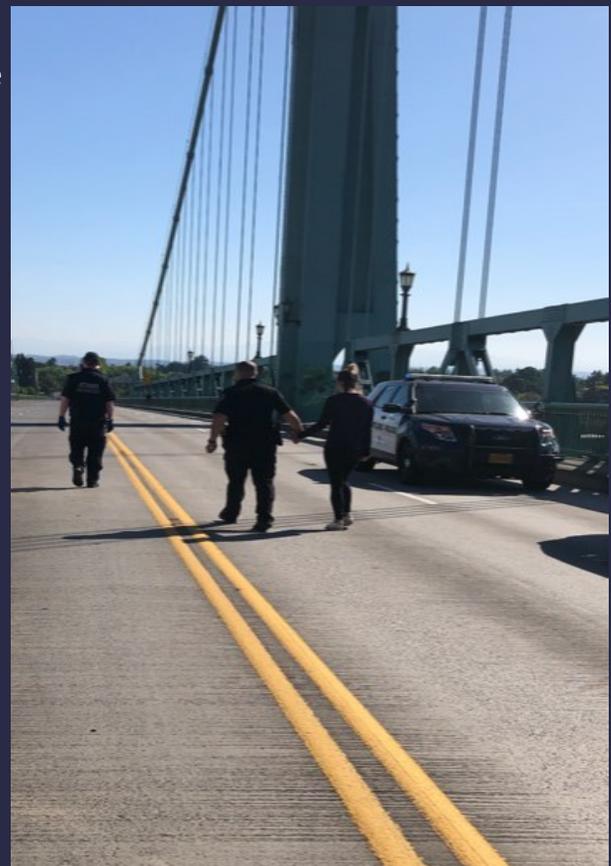
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24/7 CRISIS LINE

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here
to listen.

Officers Help Person in Crisis

On May 16th, 2021, four PPB Officers were dispatched to a person in crisis on the St. Johns Bridge. Officers located a student from a nearby college perched on a ledge out of the bridge's railings. Through their efforts, officers worked to obtain additional information about the person. They learned that the student was suicidal, depressed, and had stopped taking their prescribed medications. Two of the responding Officers spent nearly two hours communicating with the individual, while a third Officer performed information gathering efforts, feeding the primary Officer/Communicator information and support to help facilitate a safe resolution. Collaborative efforts involved the Crisis Negotiation Team, the student's college, Multnomah County Call Center and others. This multifaceted coordination directly influenced the individual's decision to eventually come back over the ledge.

Once the individual was safely back over the ledge, the involved officers quietly and calmly walked the individual by hand to a waiting ambulance and later closed the loop on this event with the parents of the individual via phone. The individual was transported to the hospital for evaluation and treatment.



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suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Portland Street Response Training

The Behavioral Health Unit recently collaborated with the Portland Street Response to provide a block of instruction to newly hired Portland Street Response (PSR) employees. The four-hour training occurred on two separate occasions in October, with curriculum focusing on safety considerations, partnering/working with police, and assisting individuals in mental health crisis.

The training helped lay further groundwork for collaborative partnerships between BHU and PSR. Additionally, through cooperative dialogue, a better understanding of crisis response work within Portland was fostered. As the Portland Street Response pilot program moves to expand its geographic service area, the BHU and the wider Police Bureau continue to find ways to support the work of PSR and collaborate in serving the needs of vulnerable individuals within Portland.



Portland Fire Bureau Crisis Intervention for Firefighters (CIFF)



In May of 2021, members of the Behavioral Health Unit coordinated with Portland Fire and Rescue to facilitate a training titled "Crisis Intervention for Fire Firefighters (CIFF). The training was provided to 40 members of the Fire Bureau.

The two-day training (one day of classroom, one day of scenarios) included topics on crisis communication and collaborating with law enforcement on mental health crisis calls. During the classroom portion of the training, BHU members were present as a resource to the students to answer questions from a Law Enforcement perspective.



On the second day, BHU officers and clinicians helped facilitated a scenario involving an individual experiencing suicidal ideations and mental health crisis while atop an elevated position. The training provided the Police Bureau a unique opportunity to further strengthen its relationship with the Fire Bureau, and aid in creating better and more collaborative responses to crisis events.