Responding to a Psychiatric Crisis:
A Vision for Public Health Reform in New York City

Discussion Paper by
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Summary of Major Points

One Mental Health Emergency is a Health Emergency

Thousands of Mental Health Crises Represent a Public Health Crisis

A Public Health Crisis Requires a Response that is:
  • Data-Driven
  • Coordinated Across Communities and Government Programs
  • Transparent in all its decisions and actions
  • Flexible to respond to changing conditions
911 Crisis Cycle

- 911 Call
- EDP Determined
- Other Calls
- NYPD/EMS Deployed
- Response Disposition
- Person having BH Crisis
- Emergency Department
- Hospital Transport
Calls Assessed for Mental Health Response

- Help Line
- Drop In Center
- Mobile Team
- Emergency Respite

X

Alternative Emergency Supports:
- Help Line
- Drop In Center
- Mobile Team
- Emergency Respite

EDP Determined

Mobile Team with peers and professionals deployed

X

Or Transport to:
- Respite Center
- Safe Haven
- Health Triage Center
- Detox

New ED Services:
- Quiet Waiting Area
- Lounges
- Peers and Social Workers
- 23-Hour Observation beds

Response Disposition
Pre-911: Reduce the Number of Calls

**Prevention:** Prevent crises from escalating to 911 by diverting calls and connecting people to easily accessible supports.

**Early Intervention:** Intervene early to avoid the use of 911 whenever appropriate and engage people in meaningful supports.

**Example:** 211 San Diego is a source for 6,000 health, social and disaster services in more than 200 languages.

**In New York City,** NYCWell could be an alternative to 911.
Post-911: Respond Differently

- Triage Calls in 911 Call Center
- Deploy Trained Crisis Workers (peer and non-peer)
Conclusions

• New Approach Needs Community Input: Community-Led Design

• New Programs and Services Built on a Social Impact Model that is Flexible and Adapts to Changing Conditions – Avoid Rigid RFPs, Line Item Budgets and Scope of Services Contracting

• New Approach Needs Independent Oversight and Consistent Leadership that Spans Election Cycles – 10 to 20 Year Vision

• Focus on People’s Lives Outside of Services: Social Determinants of Health and Racial Equity
Presenters

Alternative Response to 911 Calls
• Jennifer Battle
• Tim Black

Community-Led Design
• Betsy Maclean
• Durell Coleman

User Perspective
• Carla Rabinowitz
• Ron Ryer
• Christina Sparrock