



Justice Center

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Partnering with Community Colleges to Grow and Strengthen the Community Responder Workforce

Dec. 12, 2024 | Anne Larsen, Melissa McKee, Dr. Amy Watson, Audrey
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Objectives

- Learn what the general community responder program field believes are the critical education, skills, and credentials needed in this profession.
- Learn how Evanston, Illinois, established its C.A.R.E. team through a critical partnership with Oakton College.
- Learn tips on how other programs and colleges can partner to increase and strengthen the community responder program workforce.

Agenda

I. Welcome

II. Introductions

III. Keynote Presentation by Dr. Amy Watson

IV. Evanston, Illinois, Panel Discussion

V. Questions from the Audience

VI. Closing

Panelists



Audrey Thompson,
Director, Parks and
Recreation
Department



Jeron Dorsey,
Deputy Director,
Parks, Recreation
and Community
Services



Rachel Stams,
Evanston C.A.R.E.
Team Member



Dr. Jesse Ivory, Assistant
Vice President, Oakton
College

Keynote Speaker

Dr. Amy Watson, Wayne State
University, School of Social Work



A National Study of Community Responder Workforce Needs

Dr. Amy Watson

Acknowledgments

- Co-PIs Michael Compton and Leah Pope-Columbia University
- Our study team also includes Tahir Duckett, Lucia Mock, Kellan McNally, Lucinda Qu, Lisa Elliot, and Ashnee Patel.
- The project is guided by an advisory board composed of people representing lived experience, families, peer services, youth services, community responder programs, mental health providers, and law enforcement:
 - Chyrell Bellamy, Ron Bruno, Whitney Bunts, Taleed El-Sabawi, Dan Fichter, Don Kamin, Stefanie Kaufman-Mthimkhulu, Angela Kimball, Moki Macias, Ama Merrell, Matthew Moody, Eric Rafla-Yaun, Patricia Strode, Eduardo Vega
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Background: The Need to Develop the Community Response Workforce

- Recognition of the need to reduce the role of law enforcement in behavioral health crisis response
- Behavioral health workforce shortages
 - 47 percent of the U.S. population lives in BH workforce shortage areas
 - Existing workforce lacks adequate diversity
 - Mismatch in training and interest among existing BH professionals and community response needs
- So, how do we build the community response workforce?

Goals

1. Identify the core competencies needed for safe and effective behavioral health crisis response to inform the development of a diverse workforce that is prepared to respond independent of law enforcement most of the time.
2. Identify implementation and policy barriers, facilitators, and issues.
3. Identify steps required to develop a recognized professional certification process to facilitate rapid entry and workforce expansion.
4. Develop and implement a training and credentialing process for a new professional role: Community Behavioral Health Crisis Responder

Project Design

- Advisory Board
- Literature Review
- Key Informant Interviews
 - Part 1: People working within the crisis/community response ecosystem
 - Part 2: People with knowledge relevant to implementing a new profession/credentialing process
- Focus Groups
 - People working as community/mobile crisis team responders
 - People with lived experience of mental illness/use of crisis services
 - Family members
- Review of other professional training programs

What We Learned

- Need for core values specific to this work.
- Important characteristics of people doing this work include compassion/empathy, ability to self regulate/stay calm, lived experience broadly defined, flexible problem-solver.
- Most important skills are related to connecting, building trust, and helping the person feel safe.
 - People do not like feeling like agency agenda/paperwork is driving the service.
- Responders can be trained in skills for maintaining safety in the community and supported with agency protocols, technology, etc.

Core Values of Community Behavioral Health Crisis Responders (CBHCRs)

- DIGNITY
- RELATIONSHIP
- COLLABORATION
- AUTONOMY:
- SUPPORT SYSTEM
- INTEGRITY
- ADVOCACY:
- TRAUMA-INFORMED
- VALUE OF LIVED EXPERIENCE

Core Competencies & Skills

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING-RELATED COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS

- Self Awareness
- Interpersonal skills
- Unconditional Positive Regard

COMMUNICATION-RELATED COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS

- Engagement
- Active Listening
- Language and Communication
- Cross Cultural

Core Competencies & Skills

KNOWLEDGE-BASED COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS

- Mental/Behavioral Health
- Cultural Humility
- Physical Health
- Safety Assessment and Intervention
- Interventions
- Documentation and Privacy Practice

Core Competencies & Skills

SAFETY-RELATED COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS

- Managing the physical environment
- Preparation
- Crisis de-escalation and maintaining safety

RESOURCE NAVIGATION AND ADVOCACY-RELATED COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS

SELF-CARE-RELATED COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS

What We Learned: Training Content

- Engagement skills
- Trauma-informed care
- Harm reduction
- Cultural humility
- Mental/behavioral health presentations
- Risk assessment
- Suicide intervention
- Motivational interviewing
- De-escalation
- Safety in the community
- Basic medical/First Aid/NARCAN
- Navigating community resources and geography
- Self-care/self-awareness/self-regulation
- Documentation/privacy practices
- Ethics

Training should be a mix of didactic, experiential, and field training.

What might such a training look like?

| Prerequisites | Didactic Hours | Skills Practice/Lab | Practicum/ Internship | Credentialling |
|----------------------------|----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--|
| GED or High School Diploma | 120 hours | 30 hours minimum | 100 hours | Provisional Basic Certification after completing training program and passing practical exam. After 1000 hours supervised work experience, apply for full Basic Certification. |

Could be completed in a six-week intensive block or in a more traditional course framework carrying academic credit.

Partnering with Community Colleges

- Community colleges have experience developing and delivering professional training programs.
- Community colleges have experience with workforce development and apprenticeship programs and know how to support students in these programs.
- Community colleges are accessible.