

Mobile Crisis Response to Individuals Experiencing Mental Health Distress

105.1 POLICY

It is the policy of California State University (CSUN) Department of Police Services (DPS) to afford individuals experiencing crises related to mental health concerns the same rights, dignity, and access to programs and services provided to all other persons without compromising safety of the individuals, police services staff, or the community. The CSUN Department of Police Services will work collaboratively with University Counseling Services (UCS), Student Affairs, and other behavioral health treatment providers to help facilitate the delivery of care-based support services, and when doing so, prevent or de-escalate a crises and improve the quality of life for members of the CSUN campus community.

The CSUN Department of Police Services response to incidents involving people who are experiencing crisis or mental health concerns should generally be led by members of the Mobile Crisis Response (MCR) Team when available. The MCR team is comprised of a mental health professional referred to herein as the Mental Health Response Coordinator (MHRC), a civilian Community Service Specialist (CSS) trained in crisis intervention referred to herein as the Crisis Response Specialist (CRS), and a plainclothes police officer trained in mental health response and/or Crisis Intervention Training.

105.2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedural directive is to provide general guidance regarding interactions between members of the CSUN Mobile Crisis Response Team members and individuals who are experiencing crisis or a behavioral health condition. This procedural directive seeks to provide CSUN Department of Police Services members with the tools to safely and appropriately interact with individuals experiencing crisis or behavioral distress. Additionally, we seek to achieve the following outcomes:

- Assist individuals in crisis, or those in need of mental health support, with obtaining support and resources;
- De-escalate crisis to achieve peaceful resolutions and reduce the need for use of force;
- Promote collaboration with CSUN and community partners.

105.3 PROCEDURES

105.3.1 DISPATCH

- A. The quality of information gathered by the Dispatcher can affect the way officers respond to and resolve a call for service. This includes those calls involving individuals who may be in distress. Gathering information is critical at all stages in assessing these situations but is particularly critical at the onset.

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- B. When Dispatch receives a call concerning the actions or behavior of an individual who may be in distress, the dispatcher should determine the incident location. The dispatcher should attempt to collect as much information from the caller, such as, but not limited to:
- The nature of the individual's behavior;
 - The presence of weapons at the location, and/or whether the individual is armed;
 - Events that may have precipitated the individual's behavior;
 - A description of the individual.
- C. The Dispatcher should first notify a police officer(s) to respond to the scene if available information reasonably suggests that:
- A weapon is involved;
 - A crime has been committed;
 - The individual poses a threat of imminent physical harm to themselves or others;
 - The individual is engaging in concerning or threatening behavior.

Although these situations require a CSUN police officer to serve as the first responder to the scene, the dispatcher should also notify the MCR team to co-respond once the CSUN police officer advises that the scene is safe for the MCR team.

If the conditions listed are not present, only the MCR Team should be dispatched to respond. CSUN police officers should not co-respond unless they are specifically dispatched, though officers may remain close by and out of sight if available.

- D. If the safety concerns listed in paragraph C do not exist, only the MCR team should be dispatched to respond. CSUN police officers should not co-respond unless they are specifically dispatched, though officers may remain close by and out of sight if available. **If at any time the dispatcher, a police supervisor/police officer, or members of the MCR team feel there may be a safety issue, a police officer should be dispatched as the first responder.**
- E. The MCR team may be dispatched to requests from University Counseling Services (UCS) for a mental-health-hold transport under the following circumstances:
- Those individuals who are placed on a mandatory mental health hold who are not violent may be transported to a mental health medical/treatment facility by the MCR team and a plain-clothes police officer via the transport shuttle (unmarked passenger van).
 - Those individuals who are not placed on a mental health hold but seek voluntary treatment may be transported to a mental health medical/treatment facility via the MCR team. A plain-clothes officer will not be required to accompany the MCR team on the transport.
 - **Those individuals who are displaying violent behavior or threats of violence will not be transported using the MCR team. In these circumstances, Police Officers will be dispatched to UCS in accordance**

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with Department Policy 10-S.O.-022: *Police Services Response to Persons Suffering From Mental Illness.*

105.3.2 POLICE OFFICERS

- A. Police officers may be dispatched to calls involving individuals experiencing mental health concerns when the MCR team is not available. In these cases, police officers should do so in accordance with DPS department policy 10-S.O.-022: *Police Services Response to Persons Suffering From Mental Illness.*

105.3.3 MOBILE CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM

- A. Crisis Response Services and Case Management

The Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCR) may respond to calls-for-service, welfare checks, and referrals from the campus community (administrators, faculty, staff, students, guests) and family members/friends regarding individuals in distress.

Response may include contacting individuals via electronic communication or telephone, as well as an in-person.

The MCR team may not be the first to respond to those incidents involving weapons, individuals posing an immediate threat of violence/imminent physical harm to others, individuals engaging in concerning or threatening behavior, or situations where a crime has been committed.

Where such safety concerns exists, the Mobile Crisis Response Team may co-respond with police officers once officers arrive and declare the scene safe for the MCR team.

The MCR team may provide crisis intervention in various locations on- and off-campus that is both culturally responsive and utilizing trauma-informed practices.

The MCR team may make complex decisions about how to best care for individuals in crisis and for the safety and well-being of our campus community.

- B. Mental Health Hospitalization Transports/Mental Health Hospitalization Liaison Support

In situations where University Counseling Services requests a transport for an individual placed on a mental health hold, the MCR team will provide transport and liaison support services when available.

- Those individuals who are placed on a mandatory mental health hold and who are not violent may be transported to a mental health medical/treatment facility by the MCR team via the transport shuttle (unmarked passenger van) while accompanied by a plain-clothes police officer.
- Those individuals who seek voluntary treatment may be transported to a hospital via the MCR team without being accompanied by a plain-clothes police officer.
- **Those individuals who display violent behavior or threats of violence will not be transported using the MCR team.**

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C. Collaboration and Coordination

The Mental Health Response Coordinator (MHRC) will assist in the development of protocols identifying the typical response to various types of mental health crisis and concerning behavior.

The MCR team should develop and maintain liaison relationships with university departments, as well as build connections and collaborations with off-campus community partners, e.g. hospitals, mental health agencies, treatment providers, etc.

D. Consultation and Outreach

The MHRC will consult with faculty, staff, students, and administrative offices, including Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and the Office of Equity and Compliance, regarding individuals of concern.

The MHRC should participate in multidisciplinary team meetings, and attend departmental and divisional meetings.

The MCR team should consult with family, friends, and loved ones of individuals experiencing mental health crisis, and provide psycho education and resources as appropriate.

The MCR team will provide outreach programs and intervention to the campus community to promote help-seeking, reduce stigma, and teach individuals how to recognize and respond to signs of distress.

E. Records, Evaluation, and Assessment

The MCR team/MHRC will create and maintain all relevant records in an electronic records system, exercising strong knowledge of confidentiality and HIPAA regulations for mental health agencies.

The MCR team/MHRC will collect, manage, and analyze data, program evaluation, and develop reports.

The MHRC should develop strategies and execute plans for assessment of services provided.