

Team Two A Training for Law Enforcement and Mental Health Crisis Workers

When a mental health crisis arises, whether it is within a family home, at a high school or in a public place, it is critical that the first responders are trained in mental health issues, in mental health law and in working together to resolve the crisis. Team Two seeks to both educate the first responder and to build the relationships necessary to working together in crisis. The training provides an overview of relevant mental health statutes and a refresher on mandatory law enforcement mental health training (ACT 80). Three different scenarios are presented in break out sessions with local teams of police, dispatchers and mobile crisis workers where specifics of response to the scenarios are discussed in detail. Small groups report back to the entire group to hear feedback and discuss strategies. A short video on law enforcement response to situations involving persons on the autism spectrum is shown and discussed. Participants learn from a panel presentation which includes a person with mental illness or a family member, a crisis clinician and a law enforcement officer who all share personal stories. Additionally, the audience hears about resources in their particular regions.

Team Two is just beginning its sixth year in existence, thanks to a collaboration between the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the Department of Public Safety to provide funding. Team Two, which finds its origins at the initiative of then DMH Deputy Commissioner Mary Moulton, initially got off the ground in May, 2013. Currently, 35 law enforcement and mental health crisis workers train their peers in the Team Two curriculum in five regions around the state. The Northwest Region captures Chittenden, Grand Isle and Franklin Counties, the Central Region is comprised of Washington and Orange Counties, Southeast is Windham and Windsor Counties, Southwest is Addison, Rutland and Bennington Counties and the Northeast Region is Caledonia, Essex, Lamoille and Orleans County. Participants include dispatchers, law enforcement officers, mental health crisis workers, EMTs, State's Attorneys and emergency department personnel. Team Two coordinator Kristin Chandler organizes the teams and the trainings and acts as a facilitator at each of the trainings. The grant is overseen by Vermont Care Partners.

Participants have expressed gratitude for this type of training which brings first responders together in one room – sometimes for the first time – to learn about how each other responds to a mental health crisis. These first responders learn how to better work together to not only help one another, but to provide the best possible response to a person in crisis. Highlights and lowlights are discussed – situations where something worked well or could have been better. Changes in mental health statutes and forms are covered. New ideas for better collaboration emerge from these trainings. Previous unknown mental health resources are discovered. Everyone comes away learning something new about mental health crisis response.

Team Two is getting recognized across the nation! Coordinator Kristin Chandler will be presenting this model at the National Association of Rural Mental Health conference in Santa Fe, New Mexico in August, 2019. Kristin will travel to Seattle in September to

present this unique training at the RADAR symposium for the city of Shoreline, WA. Lastly, in October, Kristin, Montpelier Police Chief Tony Facos and Washington County Mental Health Services CEO Mary Moulton will present Team Two in Chicago at the International Association of Chiefs of Police annual conference.

Trainings for the 2019-2020 grant cycle are scheduled for Montpelier, Springfield, Bennington, Newport and South Burlington. For more information about the training, contact Coordinator Kristin Chandler at teamtwovermont@gmail.com or (802)236-5065