



# **Mental Evaluation Unit Presentation for the SB 882 Advisory Council**



**Lieutenant II  
Jonathan Larsen**

**Detective III  
Elizabeth Reyes**

**October 18, 2024**

# **MENTAL EVALUATION UNIT (MEU)**

## **HISTORY**

On September 3, 1991, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors convened the Incarcerated Mentally Ill Task Force (IMITF), comprised of concerned governmental and private agencies charged with addressing growing public concerns about the **increased forced hospitalization and incarceration of mentally ill citizens.**

In July 1992, the IMITF findings concluded that there was a societal failure to adequately meet the needs of the county's mentally ill population. The task force's primary recommendation to resolve this problem was the implementation of a **Systemwide Mental Assessment Response Team (SMART) pilot program.**



LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF

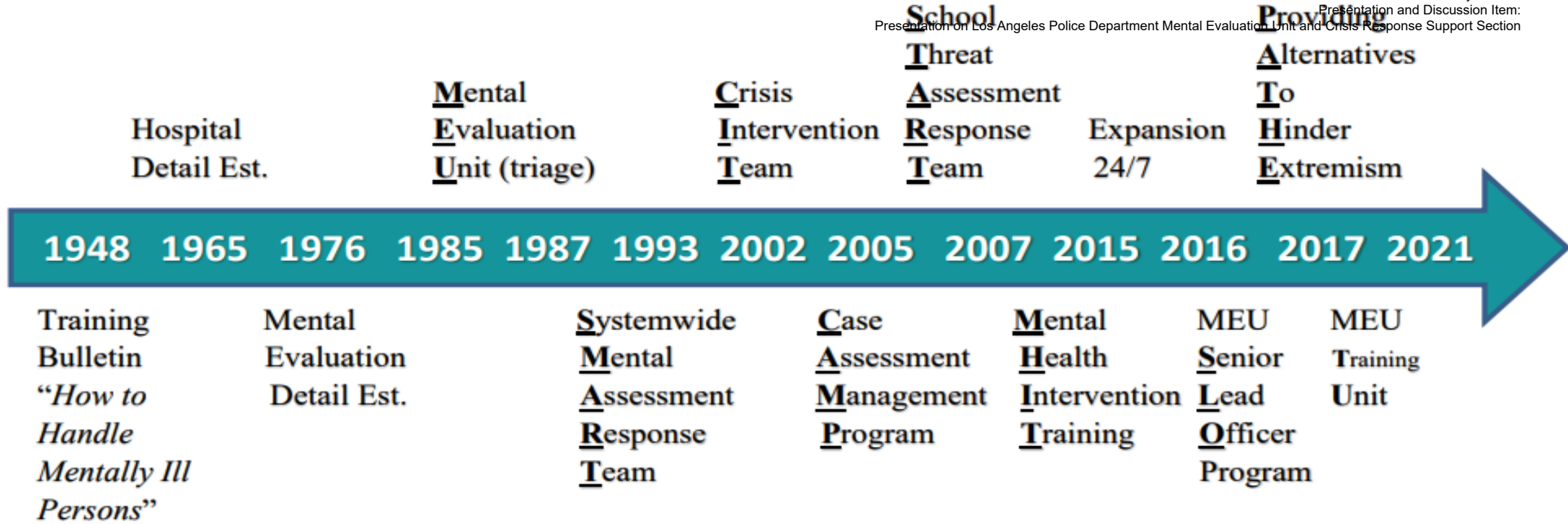
# Mental Health

hope. recovery. wellbeing.



## MEU Overview

- In 1993, Los Angeles became one of the first communities to partner LAPD officers with mental health professionals in the form of a Systemwide Mental Assessment Response Team (SMART).
- The program is co-supported by the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) and is the largest of its kind in the country.



**ORIGIN OF THE LAPD’S MENTAL EVALUATION UNIT:**

The first documented procedure on the management of persons suffering from a mental illness, were the Department’s Daily Training Bulletins, dated November 10 & 12, 1948. The Department entity responsible for the management of persons suffering from a mental illness was the “Hospital Detail,” at Central Receiving Hospital, on Georgia Street.

# The Five Pillars of MEU

---

- Training
- Triage
- Crisis Response
- Follow-up
- Community Engagement



# TRAINING



© 2024 Reyes 36106

# What We Teach

- Departmentwide Strategy
- Stigma Reduction
- Risk Assessment
- De-Escalation
- Case Management
- Legal
- Resources
- Self-Care

**LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
**Mental Health Intervention Training**  
**1850-20911**

**Expanded Course Outline**

**IV. DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, INCLUDING AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS**

**1030-1200 (90 Min)**  
**IV (c,g,e,i)**

- A. Introduction of Instructor (s)
  - 1. Name, Assignment
  - 2. Experience
  - 3. Brief overview of the presentation
- B. Lecturette
  - 1. What is a Developmental Disability?
  - 2. Disability Rights
  - 3. Autism Worldwide
  - 4. Causes of Autism
  - 5. What is Autism?
- C. Large Group Activity & Debrief: "Write On"
- D. Lecturette
  - 1. Difficulties in Police Encounters
  - 2. Accommodating Processing Delays
  - 3. Social Features: Lack of Reciprocity
  - 4. Social Difficulties in Police Encounters
- E. Small Group Activity & Debrief: "Say What?"
- F. Large Group Activity & Debrief: "How do I Feel?"
- G. Lecturette
  - 1. Social Communication
  - 2. Behaviors
  - 3. Tips to Manage Behaviors
- H. Lecturette
  - 1. Sensory Issues
  - 2. Increased Vulnerability

# MHIT

## Mental Health Intervention Training (MHIT) 40-hour Course / Four Days

- 25 deliveries annually (every other week)
- POST-certified
- Personnel Trained (2014 through September 20, 2024)
  - **5,769 - LAPD**
  - **582 - Outside agencies**
  - **6,351 - Total**

# MHIT

---

## Priorities:

- Probationary Officers
- Field Training Officers
- Clinicians assigned to Co-Responder teams
- Homeless Outreach
- Patrol Officers

© 2024 Reyes 36106

# MHIT

---

**Also provide blocks of instruction at:**

- **Custody Services Division Academy**
- **FTO School**
- **Basic Dispatcher School (Suicide Incidents)**
- **EBO School**
- **SECSD**
- **Juvenile Procedure School**
- **Supervisor School**
- **Presentations (conferences, LE-MH Learning Site )**



[https://post.ca.gov/Portals/0/post\\_docs/publications/Mental\\_Health.pdf](https://post.ca.gov/Portals/0/post_docs/publications/Mental_Health.pdf)

**A FIRST RESPONDER'S GUIDE  
FOR PERSONS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS  
OR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY**



CALIFORNIA COMMISSION ON PEACE OFFICER  
STANDARDS AND TRAINING

© 2024 Reyes 36106

# MHIT

---

- [https://youtu.be/LR\\_plzYZCPI](https://youtu.be/LR_plzYZCPI)

## VIRTUAL REALITY DEMO

© 2024 Reyes 36106



# Law Enforcement/ Mental Health Collaboration

- **92** - Specially Trained Police Officers, Detectives, and Field Supervisors
- **29** – Clinicians
  - Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH) Professionals:
    - Clinical Psychologist (PsyD)
    - Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW)
    - Mental Health Registered Nurse (RN)
    - Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT)

© 2024 Reyes 36106

# TRIAGE DESK



- The MEU-Triage Desk operates 24 hours a day 7 days a week.
- Triage personnel provide advice and guidance to responding officers in the field and document all Department contacts with the mentally ill who are in crisis on a Mental Evaluation Incident Report.

© MEU Training

© 2024 Reyes 36106

# CRISIS RESPONSE (SMART)



© MEU Training Unit



# Deployment

- Citywide Responsibility (468.7 square miles)
  
- Operations
  - 11-14 Units per day
  - 4 Watches
    - Days 0600 - 1600
    - Mids 1000 - 2000
    - PM 1530 - 0130
    - AM 2030 - 0630
  - 24 Hours a day
  - 7 days a week

# SMART

---

- SMART Unit
  - Responds to emergent situations
  - Responds to requests from patrol units
  - Evaluates a subject to determine:
    - Level of risk
    - Arrest
    - Application for a 72-hour Detention for Evaluation and Treatment
    - Voluntary Assistance
    - Referral

# SMART Goals

---

- Prevent unnecessary incarceration and/or hospitalization of persons with a mental illness
- Provide alternate care in the least restrictive environment through a coordinated and comprehensive systems approach. Clinicians determine insurability and locate the most appropriate care facility.
- Prevent the duplication of mental health services; Assist patrol with de-escalation and support the incident commander with intelligence gathering at critical incidents.
- Allows patrol to return to service as soon as possible.

## Co-Response Policy

---

- February 2021 SMART's response was modified from a secondary responder to a co-responder. SMART units are now dispatched to MI calls meeting specific criteria at the same time as the patrol unit assigned the call.
- Previously, the patrol unit arrived at scene, then requested SMART support

--OCOP Notice, dated 1/14/21



## Co-Response Policy for SMART

---

May include the following:

- Subject is violent
- Subject is armed, and the public is at risk
- Welfare checks
- Subject has possibly committed a criminal act due to mental illness
- Subject's behavior is high-risk (barricade or unsecured on an elevated platform)
- Any critical incident where SMART may assist with de-escalation

--OCOP Notice, dated 1/14/21

# Alternative Crisis Response (ACR)

## By the Numbers: July 2024

### 988 Data – July

- **6,405** calls<sup>1</sup> to Didi Hirsch 988 Crisis hotline within LA County
- **96%** calls safely resolved over the phone
- **20** seconds to answer the call, on average
- **12** minutes of emotional support, risk assessment, and safety-planning on the phone, on average
- **69** crisis calls transferred to DMH ACCESS for potential FIT dispatch

### ACCESS/FIT Data – July

- **5097**, crisis calls to LACDMH ACCESS Helpline
- **1,797** calls resulted in FIT dispatch
- **41%** of dispatched calls resulted in hospitalization
- **51** PMRTs and **13** MCOTs were regularly available

### Urgent Care Center (UCC) Data – July

- **9** UCCs and **166** chairs available
- **3,470** visits were made to UCCs
- **3,281** unique clients visited UCCs
- **7.1%** of clients had re-admission to a UCC within 30 days

### Crisis Residential Treatment Program (CRTP) Data – July

- **18** sites and **280** beds available

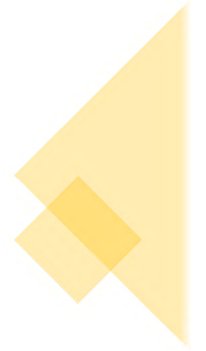
Note(s): 1) Calls encompass calls, texts, and chats

### Who Do I Call for Help?

<b>9-1-1</b> to report crimes, fires, and medical emergencies when law enforcement, firefighters, or paramedics are needed	<b>800-854-7771</b> for crisis response teams in the field or mental health resources through the 24/7 LACDMH Help Line
<b>9-8-8</b> for support with suicidal crisis or mental health-related distress	<b>2-1-1</b> for general information on local resources or linkages and referrals to health, human, and social services



# Alternative Crisis Response (ACR)



- In February 2021, the LAPD launched a pilot program to divert 911 calls so those in suicidal crisis or severe emotional distress could receive appropriate mental health assistance promptly, the Community Call Re-Direction to Ensure Suicide Safety (CRESS).
- Communications Division dispatchers divert 9-1-1 calls involving non-imminent suicidal or potentially suicidal individuals to the Didi Hirsch Suicide Prevention Center instead of initiating a police response. In July 2021, CRESS was funded and became 24/7.
- From Jan 1 - September 28, 2024, there have been **1,123** calls diverted to Didi Hirsch.



# Alternative Crisis Response (ACR)



- Jan 2022, the "Crisis and Incident Response through Community-Led Engagement (CIRCLE)" program began
- Deploys non-law enforcement teams to calls involving homelessness to divert a police response.
- When a call involves a crime (i.e. active narcotics use), violence/potential for violence, or involves someone who is NOT homeless, the call is not appropriate to divert to UA.
- From Jan 1-Sept 28, 2024, **14,762** calls have been diverted.



# Alternative Crisis Response (ACR)

## UMCR

- “Unarmed Model of Crisis Response”
- Pilot program - March 12, 2024
- Nonviolent calls related to mental health, substance abuse and behavioral distress, and well-being checks to unarmed civilian personnel who have expertise and training in de-escalation, mediation, and conflict resolution.
- From Mar 12 - Sept 28, 2024, **2,550** calls have been diverted.

© 2024 Reyes 36106



# Alternative Crisis Response (ACR)

## PMRT

- “Psychiatric Mobile Response Team”
- Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health 1-800-854-7771
- Provides non-law enforcement crisis response for people experiencing a psychiatric emergency.



# ■ QUESTIONS?

© 2024 Reyes 36106

# Contacts

- Lieutenant II Jonathan Larsen  
Officer-in-Charge, Crisis Response Support Section  
[37045@lapd.online](mailto:37045@lapd.online)
- Detective III Elizabeth Reyes  
Officer-in-Charge, MEU Training Unit  
**Law Enforcement-Mental Health Learning Site Contact**  
[36106@lapd.online](mailto:36106@lapd.online)