

## **Crisis Response for Southeast Minnesota**

Since mid-July, residents of Steele, Dodge, Waseca and counties in Southeast Minnesota have a centralized call number, **(844) -Crisis2**, for those experiencing a mental health crisis. This call center will be providing phone counseling, risk assessment, and local resources to callers from our region. The number will be available 24/7 for these services, for individuals, families, adults and children. The new service is called **Crisis Response For Southeast Minnesota**. The call center will be able to determine the need to dispatch crisis response teams, to be available from 5pm until 12am Monday through Friday, and 24 hours on weekends and holidays. The purpose of the teams is to provide support for situations that do not need emergency services such as at a hospital.

Since early 2014, South Central Human Relations Center staff has worked with MNPrairie human service managers, other counties, and mental health centers to develop **Crisis Response for Southeast Minnesota**. The mission is: Crisis Response inspires hope in adults and children (and their families) by delivering compassionate, person-centered, recovery-based mental health support during a crisis.

When a call comes to **(844)- Crisis2** call center, trained staff will gather information and determine what steps to recommend. The call center is nationally certified by the American Association of Suicidology. Recommendations may include going to the ER, encouraging next day appointments with current providers, accessing non-crisis services through health plans, EAPs or other local providers, calling 911, dispatching our mobile Crisis Response teams, phone counseling and a next day follow up. If a mobile Crisis Response team is dispatched for assist an adult, child or family, there would be a face to face, short-term intensive mental health service. The service may help cope with immediate stressors, identify and use available resources and personal strengths, develop action plans, avoid unnecessary hospitalizations and loss of independent living, and to help people return to their baseline of functioning. Mobile teams are made up of two mental health practitioners who will be supported by a mental health professional on the phone.

Text for Life may be a familiar term to some since this resource has been available to teens in northern and central Minnesota counties. Among our youth, texting versus phone calls is the preferred communication. Last week the Minnesota Legislature passed additional funding (\$1 million) to expand the Text for Life service to other Minnesota Counties. Our planning group will learn what the new funding will mean for adding more counties to the service. Through this service, youth are connected to an open line of texting conversation with a mental health professional. From the Txt4life website, here is what one texter said about the experience: "I've had help since the last time I've texted in. I'm getting treatment. And I want to thank you for saving my life."

In closing I offer some suggestions on connecting with others, since isolation and loneliness contributes to mental distress. Reaching out to our friends and family members, share what you may be going through. Be sure to find one person to talk to about your feelings. Also keeping up with social activities is key. Help someone else by volunteering, join a friend for lunch – take that lunch break from work, call

or email an old friend, go for a walk with a workout buddy, meet new people by joining a class. Keeping a healthy balance in your life brings you resilience to survive stressors. Healthy life skills are also part of a recovery plan for those who have been through emotional crises.

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