

A Safer Naper --- Supporting Mental Health

One in four adults have been diagnosed with a mental health disorder in their lifetime. Mental illness is a medical condition, but unlike many other health emergencies, it can often go unseen and can affect how we think, feel and behave.

Sometimes, those feelings or behaviors lead to involvement by police. From January through September of 2020, our officers have responded to over 600 mental health related calls. Fortunately, Naperville's first responders are in a unique position to employ crisis intervention techniques that will help de-escalate crisis situations, properly identify the root cause of the incident and connect residents with mental health concerns to available services throughout the community.

With proper support and treatment, many individuals will learn to manage and recover from symptoms of their mental illness. Establishing a positive support network, meeting with a psychiatrist and therapist, medication compliance and self-awareness are all ways to support mental health concerns within yourself and others. The Naperville Police Department is proud to be one part of that larger community network of agencies trying to make our city safer by properly addressing mental health concerns. Here are a few examples of initiatives that help us do just that:

Training

The Naperville Police Department prides itself on training both sworn and non-sworn personnel in techniques to support individuals in need. We strive to certify all staff in Mental Health First Aid, and in recent years, we've put nearly a quarter of our officers through Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training. This 40-hour comprehensive training emphasizes mental health-related topics and enhanced crisis resolution and de-escalation skills.

Mental health related topics covered in CIT training include signs and symptoms of common diagnoses such as depression, anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. Also included in the 40-hour training are breakouts on geriatric issues, intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, substance use disorders and issues specific to veterans. Participants learn about how these disorders present differently amongst adults, children and adolescents as well as how medical conditions and the use of psychotropic medications affect mental health.

Furthermore, officers review CIT tactical responses like empathy, active listening, body language, rapport building, conflict resolution and complaint surrenders. Each participant in the training also engages in multiple role play scenarios with real actors as just one assessment measure of becoming CIT Certified by the State of Illinois.

What does this training look like on a real-time police call? Introducing one's self by first name and designating a primary speaker. Taking extra time to slow down the interaction to promote effective communication. Asking open-ended questions and using active listening techniques. Being honest and explaining each next step or action. All while ensuring that the safety of everyone involved remains top priority.

Social Services Unit

The City of Naperville's Social Service Unit, located in the Naperville Police Department, develops strategies to address unmet needs within the community, particularly those related to domestic violence, mental illness, child/elder abuse, sexual abuse, substance abuse and youth and family issues.

The Social Services Unit is staffed by two full-time Master level Police Social Workers and one full-time Master level Police Counselor, who provide a variety of services to the department and community. They provide crisis intervention in situations requiring immediate assistance, short-term counseling and referrals, court advocacy for Orders of Protection, assistance with death notifications and grief counseling. They also assist with mental health assessments, provide victim/witness support and follow-up on incidents reported to the police that require further assistance.

The Social Services Unit also maintains a directory of resources in the community that provides additional assistance and services to residents.

Contact information

Jamie Horner, LCSW, CADC

Naperville Police Department Social Worker

TEL: (630) 420-4165

Jamie Horner received her Master of Social Work Degree at Loyola University Chicago following a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology Degree from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Jamie is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor and Certified Clinical Trauma Professional with a focus on severe mental health issues and substance use disorders. Jamie also has extensive experience in domestic violence and sexual assault related matters. She has worked as a Social Worker for the Naperville Police Department since 2016 and serves as a chairperson for the department's Connect for Life program.

Eirene Boulougouris, LCPC, CDVP

Naperville Police Department Police Counselor

TEL: (630) 420-6174

Eirene Boulougouris received her Master of Science in Clinical Psychology Degree at Benedictine University. She is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor, a Certified Domestic Violence Professional, Certified Clinical Trauma Professional and a Certified Compassion Fatigue Professional. Eirene has extensive experience providing crisis services in law enforcement and community mental health settings and serves as a clinical coordinator for the department's CIT and Peer Support Program. Eirene has been employed with the Naperville Police Department since 2016.

Gianna Trombino, LCSW, CDVP

Naperville Police Department Victim Advocate

TEL: (630) 305-5488

Gianna Trombino received her Master of Social Work Degree from Aurora University. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and a Certified Domestic Violence Professional and has completed a certificate in Forensic Social Work. She has been working with survivors of interpersonal violence and their significant others since 2013 with extensive training in sexual assault and domestic violence advocacy, legal advocacy, linkage to local, state and federal resources and protective orders. Gianna joined the Social Services Unit in 2018.

Peer Support

Our department has also shown a commitment to the mental health of its employees through the creation of a formal Peer Support Team in 2017. Studies show that it is not uncommon for law enforcement officers to have an increased risk for both medical and mental health issues due to many cumulative career stresses and other compounding factors. We launched a Peer Support Team in 2017 to provide *all* our employees, not just sworn personnel, quality, confidential support and access to confidential resources to help them through times of personal or professional difficulties.

Currently, there are 17 trained peer support members, including sworn personnel, telecommunicators, an animal control officer and a detention officer. This number also includes two mental health clinicians and a Police Chaplain. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, additional trainings have been limited, but the team intends to add more sworn and non-sworn members.

Getting Help / Local Resources

See below for a list of additional supportive services for mental health concerns:

NAMI DuPage 630/752-0066
115 N County Farm Road
Wheaton, IL 60187

DuPage County Crisis Unit 630/627-1700 (available by phone 24/7)
115 North County Farm Road
Wheaton, IL 60187

Edward-Elmhurst Health
Resource and Referral Center 630/305-5027 (available by phone 24/7)
852 South West Street
Naperville, IL 60540
Text REACH to 741741

In case of emergency, always call 911.