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Hearing the Concerns of Our People

Concerns related to mental health in our community were first identified during a Listening Process organized by the Good Faith Network during the fall of 2021 and affirmed in the fall of 2022. Community members shared concerns such as:

- “Worried about the criminalization of people with mental health issues. Jails aren’t the right place for someone struggling with their mental health.”
- “There’s a lack of quality services - doctors, hospitals, therapists, medications - for people with mental health issues.”
- “Mental health workers in JoCo are overworked and underpaid.”
- “I see younger and younger children attempting suicide, and there’s a lack of space at facilities to treat them.”
- “I’m concerned about the effects of social media on society, but especially teens. See a lot of bullying, self-esteem issues, body image problems.”

Continuing the Research and Action

The Mental Health Research Committee held the following research interviews and meetings during the 2022-2023 research and action season:

- Susie Gurley, Cindi Buck, Reagan Hunt and Garrett Drake - Johnson County residents
- Study Session: Reviewing the Roadmap to the Ideal Crisis System
- Tim DeWeese - Director of Johnson County Mental Health Center
- Kristen Engelbrecht - Director of 211, United Way of Greater Kansas City
- Liisa Kuuter, Dr. Anthony Leavitt, Dr. Roula Markoulakis - Family Navigation Project
- Andy Brown - Commissioner, Behavioral Health Services, Kansas Department of Aging and Disability Services
- Dr. Ken Minkoff - lead, Roadmap to the Ideal Crisis System
- Board of County Commissioners Study Session re: Adult and Juvenile Crisis Service
- Participating as members and co-facilitators of the Johnson County Continuum of Crisis Care workgroup, June 2022 to present

The Problem (statement adopted Spring 2022)

The scale of mental health needs in Johnson County is heartbreaking. Data from SAMHSA’s 2021 report Key Substance Use and Mental Health Indicators in the United States indicates that over 92,000 Johnson County adult residents may currently have a diagnosable mental health condition—of those residents, more than 25,000 may currently experience severe mental illness (e.g., schizophrenia, severe bi-polar disorder, major depression). We can also estimate that in 2020 12.8% of adults had substance use disorder and 12% of our youth experienced a major depressive episode.

Our local systems for mental health care and substance use disorder in Johnson County are difficult to navigate and not scaled to the scope of need for those experiencing these problems. As a result, citizens regularly cannot secure the essential and ongoing mental health care they need, and residents in crisis often languish in emergency rooms and sometimes jail, with nowhere else to go. Without adequate access to appropriate resources or treatment, those needing care will continue to cycle through and place strain on local systems, to the detriment of the individual, the family, and the community.

The Solution (statement adopted spring 2022)

We seek a full commitment to access to mental health care and substance use disorder treatment in Johnson County, particularly for its most vulnerable residents, through:

- Swift and fully resourced implementation of the Certified Community Behavioral Health Center (CCBHC) model for Johnson County Mental Health Center, including the staffing and facilities necessary for effective delivery of service, in order to increase access to care in the community.
- Design and implementation of a system of mental health crisis care that allows any Johnson County resident immediate access to appropriate care, allowing for diversion from emergency rooms and jail.
- Launch of a mental health navigator program that provides consistent and customized navigation service to all residents of Johnson County to support individuals and families seeking treatment and intervention

2023 Certified Community Behavioral Health Center (CCBHC) Update

Kansas Department of Aging and Disability Services granted provisional CCBHC status to Johnson County Mental Health Center in summer 2022, allowing JCMHC to begin enhancing its staffing levels and increasing access to care in the community.¹²

2023 Crisis Stabilization Center Update

One required service of CCBHC status is crisis stabilization services sufficient to the need of the community—and there is a clear need for increased crisis stabilization services in Johnson County. Currently, crisis stabilization for Johnson County is provided through a partnership with RSI, Inc in Wyandotte County.

Multiple research interviews conducted by Good Faith Network indicate that beds at RSI are often occupied to capacity and law enforcement is unable to consistently drop clients off at the facility; national best practices indicate that a crisis stabilization center should be "Be structured in a manner that offers capacity to accept all referrals at least 90% of the time with a no rejection policy for first responders."³

¹ Krisman, L. (2022, September 21). *Johnson County Mental Health Center to add chronic care and health integration staff*. Blue Valley Post.

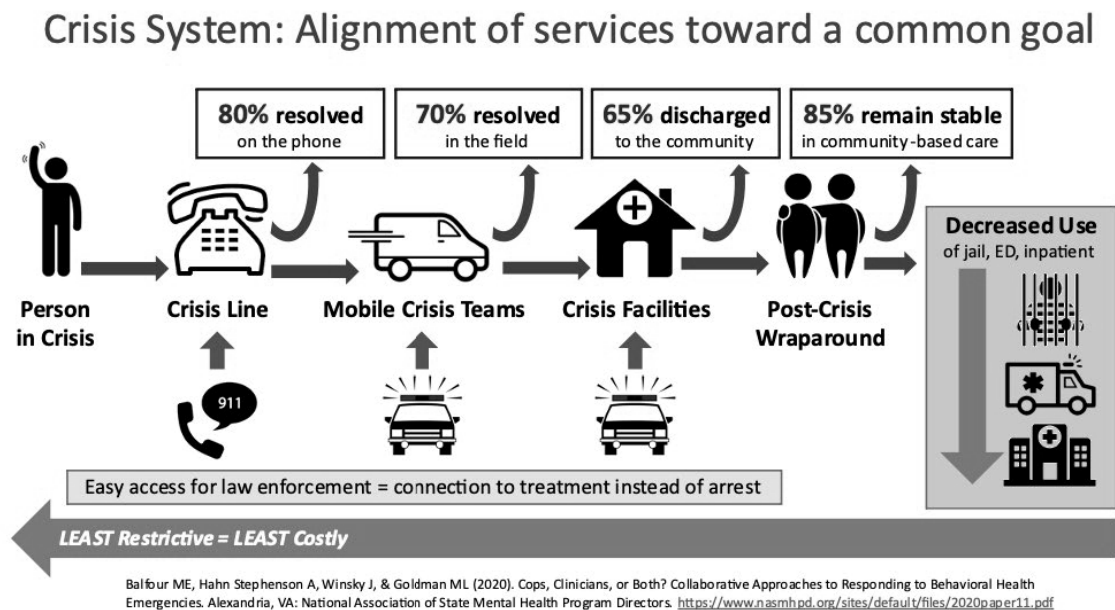
² Krisman, L. (2022, December 14). *Johnson County to consider \$2 million toward new mental health staff*. Shawnee Mission Post.

³ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2020). *National Guidelines for Behavioral Health Crisis Care Best Practice Toolkit*, p. 22

Along these lines, best practice indicates that in an urban or suburban area, the maximum population served by a crisis service continuum is 250,000.⁴ National projections through the Crisis Now Calculator indicate a need to provide crisis stabilization to 8175 Johnson County residents, while RSI, Inc was able to admit about 500 Johnson County residents to its facility in 2022.⁵

The best mental health crisis response is provided through a robust continuum that includes elements like the crisis stabilization center as the “recommended centerpiece.”⁶

Illustration of an Effective Continuum



(Balfour, 2020)

And national experts have been recommending Johnson County open a stabilization center of its own since 2017.⁷

As members of the county’s Continuum of Crisis Services work group, Good Faith Network is bringing national expertise from the authors of the Roadmap to the Ideal Crisis System to key stakeholders in the community (e.g., mental health providers, law enforcement, and county leadership), in order to ensure the work group makes well-informed recommendations around the need for a crisis stabilization center this spring.

2023 Navigation Update

The Good Faith Network continues its research into navigation models and takes great inspiration from its recent interview with the Family Navigation Project of Toronto, Canada. Their approach is designed around the expressed needs of the consumer:

⁴ Page 50, ‘Roadmap to the Ideal Crisis System.’

⁵ Statistical projections based on the work of Mike Brouwer, Criminal Justice Coordinator-Johnson County, using the Crisis Now Calculator at crisisnow.com

⁶ Page 88, ‘Roadmap to the Ideal Crisis System.’

⁷ Policy Research Associates, Inc. (2022). *Sequential Intercept Model Mapping Report for Johnson County, Kansas*, p. 14.

- a navigator that “gets in the boat” and engages with them throughout the care process, rather than providing a list of resources and leaving them to navigate the confusing system on their own.
- navigators that understand the nuances of resources in order to make individualized recommendations specific to the client's needs.
- And if the options pursued proved unhelpful, the navigator would persist in finding other alternatives.⁸

Good Faith Network will continue its research to uncover the best ways to pair this model of service with the care structure of Johnson County.

⁸ Markoulakis, Roula & Weingust, Staci & Foot, Jeanne & Levitt, Anthony. (2016). *The Family Navigation Project: An innovation in working with families to match mental health services with their youth's needs*. Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health. 35. 63-66. 10.7870/cjcmh-2016-026.