



# Diversion/Deflection

Recommendations for the Criminal Justice Council's  
Behavioral Health Subcommittee

## Training Investment for All Dane County Law Enforcement Officers

**Crisis Intervention Team Training** – CIT is an innovative, community-based approach to improve the outcomes of mental health crises. Training provided for a cost by NAMI.

**Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics** – ICAT takes the essential building blocks of critical thinking, crisis intervention, communications, and tactics, and puts them together in an integrated approach to training. A Critical Decision-Making Model that helps officers assess situations, make safe and effective decision, and document and learn from their actions anchors ICAT. Trainers available from the University of Wisconsin Police Department and Janesville Police Department; cost is low to none.

**Verbal Defense & Influence** – Training includes strategies to prevent and mitigate violence, de-escalate anger and resistance, avert verbal and physical attacks, control crisis and aggression, and improve future interactions. Trainers available at the Janesville Police Department; may be able to participate in train-the-trainer which will allow Dane County to build capacity and provide a no to low cost program.

## Policy & Procedure Changes

**Madison Area Addiction Recovery Initiative**: All Dane County law enforcement agencies should partner with the Madison Area Addiction Recovery Initiative (MAARI) and refer appropriate cases. Created and coordinated by the Madison Police Department, MAARI is a pre-arrest diversion program allowing individuals committing low-level, addiction-driven crimes to engage in treatment while charges are held in abeyance. Following six months of compliance with a treatment plan, the charges eliminated and never entered as part of the individual's criminal record. NOTE: MAARI referrals are for substance use disorder, but often address co-occurring disorders; no financial investment for partner law enforcement agencies.

**Community Restorative Court**: All Dane County law enforcement agencies should partner and refer appropriate cases to the Community Restorative Court (CRC). Additionally, an expansion of the scope of charges appropriate for CRC should be considered. The CRC enlists restorative justice principles and practices for felony, misdemeanor, and municipal offenses. As a community-based form of justice, the CRC seeks to repair the harm caused by crime. NOTE: While the CRC is not specifically for behavioral health challenges, it can be utilized to address crimes committed while an individual was struggling with behavioral health issues. No financial investment for participating law enforcement agencies.

**Mental Health Awareness Flags**: Dane County should begin a Mental Health Awareness Flag program similar to the program at the Veteran's Administration and in Rock County. This program provides law enforcement with information and tools to address individual's mental health challenges, avoid escalation, and keep people who are ill out of the criminal justice system. NOTE: Potentially no financial investment needed, but will require coordination efforts.

## Continue to Explore

**Behavioral Health Response Team** (Cahoots-type program): Calls to the non-emergency number and/or the 911 system, which have a strong behavioral health component and do not seem to require law enforcement, are routed to a team comprised of a medic and a crisis worker. Appropriate situations are not a legal issue or involve an extreme threat of violence or risk to the person, the individual or others. The team responds to the call, assesses the situation, and assists the individual if possible. This type of program cannot work in a vacuum. Cahoots Crisis Worker, Ebony Morgan stated, "I often say that the Cahoots crisis response is only as strong as our community resources. If we don't have anywhere to take you, that really limits our ability."