

DIVERSION FIRST

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/diversionfirst

Diversion First offers alternatives to incarceration for people with mental illness or developmental disabilities who come into contact with the criminal justice system for low level offenses.

The goal is to intercede whenever possible to provide assessment, treatment or needed supports. People needing diversion may also have a substance use disorder, which often co-occurs with mental illness.

Diversion First is designed to prevent repeat encounters with the criminal justice system, improve public safety, promote a healthier community, and is a more cost-effective and efficient use of public funding.

Commitment to Training

Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training is an intensive, state-certified program that addresses the challenges of living with a mental illness or developmental disability. CIT training teaches officers and deputies how to de-escalate crisis situations, both in the community and in the jail.

If You Need Help

- If a situation is immediately life-threatening, call 911. Ask for a Crisis Intervention Team officer.
- Otherwise, call Community Services Board (CSB) Emergency Services (ES): 703-573-5679 or TTY 711 for hearing impaired.
- Or go to Merrifield Center, 8221 Willow Oaks Corporate Drive, Fairfax, VA 22031. ES entrance is on lower level.

What Happens at CSB Emergency Services?

- Emergency Services (ES) clinician assesses risk of situation and person's condition.
- ES staff helps person become stabilized (calming room, medication if needed). If person needs psychiatric hospitalization, ES staff works to find an appropriate placement. (Merrifield is not a hospital; people do not stay there.)
- ES staff can look up individual's electronic health record, if already receiving CSB services, and consult staff familiar with person's situation.
- Staff may recommend additional services and supports for individual and family, either from CSB or from other providers in the community.

Diversion First

The investment Fairfax County has made in Diversion First is already having an impact.

- From January through June 2016, law enforcement officers brought 771 people to the Merrifield Crisis Response Center (MCRC). Of those 771 individuals, 209 had potential criminal charges but were diverted from potential arrest to mental health services.
- During the first six months of calendar year 2016, CSB emergency services staff conducted 472 mental health evaluations related to emergency custody orders (ECOs), compared with 200 such evaluations during the first six months of 2015.
- As of August 2016, 194 law enforcement officers have graduated from the intensive week-long Crisis Intervention Team training.
- The CSB now offers a version of its popular Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training specifically tailored for Fire and Rescue personnel and other first responders.
- In addition, all of the Fairfax County magistrates have completed MHFA training.

Questions? Need more information?
Fairfax County Office of Public Affairs
703-324-7329, TTY 711



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