

On P.O.I.N.T.

A Shared Service Proposal: Law Enforcement, Social Workers, And Mental Health



Ocean Mental Health Services

Building Better Tomorrows, One Life at a Time

Program Overview

The Stafford Township Police Department (STPD), located in Manahawkin, New Jersey in conjunction with Ocean Mental Health Services (OceanMHS) located in Bayville, New Jersey are partners in the On P.O.I.N.T. (Proactive Outreach In Needs and Treatment) program. On P.O.I.N.T. provides on-site social workers in the STPD two days per week. The program was developed to address the high volume of mental health, substance abuse and social service related calls and incidents that utilize a considerable volume of police and emergency resources. Our current research indicates police officers respond to calls for service from the same individual/family on multiple occasions. Police officers restore peace, but they are not sufficiently trained to address the underlying cause of behavioral and mental health issues, therefore, are often forced to respond multiple times to address crises. On P.O.I.N.T. is an innovative program, currently in its abbreviated pilot phase of the conceptualized program that STPD and OceanMHS are working to develop. On P.O.I.N.T. in both its current modality and future modality, assists in providing early intervention to individuals who may otherwise engage in the criminal justice system, and/or consumers of acute and emergency services. The On P.O.I.N.T. program's impact is expected to reduce the use of acute and emergency services through the implementation of a police-initiated social work intervention, in turn creating a new community culture of health and well-being.

Program Objectives

- Ongoing Collaboration, training, education as well as needed support for police
- Reduction in the use of acute and emergency services
- Reduction in psychiatric and emergency room screenings via police transport

- Reduction in recurring crises that repeatedly absorb police and emergency resources
- On-going development of early intervention, pre-arrest and jail diversion programs
- Engaging community members to achieve stability and wellness

Program Outcomes

- Cost Effective
- Reproducible
- Sustainable
- Enhance Community Policing Efforts
- Address the overwhelming need for service and support for citizens

Program Highlights

Since its inception on September 15, 2016, On P.O.I.N.T. has received over 90 referrals from Stafford Township police officers and dispatchers. Below are three success stories that have occurred in the brief time since the program's inception.

One of the first referrals to On P.O.I.N.T was a female who had overdosed on heroin and was subsequently involved in a motor vehicle accident. Ptl. Pascale administered NARCAN to the individual, and referred her to On P.O.I.N.T. The social workers of the program worked with the client and her mother by facilitating linkage to appropriate treatment. After 3 weeks of providing support, resources and assisting with phone calls, she was admitted into inpatient rehabilitation treatment for her substance use disorder. Her mother called On P.O.I.N.T. staff to thank them for their assistance and gratitude for this program. She had been trying for an extended period of time to obtain help for her daughter and had been unsuccessful until On P.O.I.N.T. became involved.

On P.O.I.N.T staff has been working for several weeks with a mother and her son, a young adult diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. This young man became overwhelmed one evening and held a knife to his throat, threatening to take his life. Officers were able to safely remove the weapon and immediately referred the young man to the program. On P.O.I.N.T. social workers have been providing direct support and linkage to him and his mother, assisting the family with getting appropriate services in place.

On P.O.I.N.T. staff were referred to a local family in crisis. Stafford Police officers were dispatched to a first aid call at the residence and arrived to find a hoarding situation. A referral to On P.O.I.N.T was made and upon follow up, it was discovered that 3 people were living in the residence. Most troubling was our discovery that an adult male in the house had not left the confines of his bedroom in excess of one year and could no longer walk as his leg muscles were extremely atrophied. On P.O.I.N.T staff were able to develop a rapport with the family, but could not link the family with other needed social services due to the poor condition of the residence. The family agreed that members of the police department

and On-P.O.I.N.T staff could clean up the residence. The son was admitted to the hospital for several conditions and was released about a week later.

Awards

Governor's Council on Mental Health Stigma recognized the Stafford Township Police Department on April 20, 2017 with a 2017 Ambassador Award. The award recognizes Law Enforcement Professionals that provide effective support, services or programs that reduce the ways in which society stigmatizes people with mental illnesses.

Mental Health Awareness Committee of Ocean County issued an award to Stafford Police On-POINT program on May 3, 2017 for demonstrating commitment to mental health awareness and stigma reduction in the community.

Questions

Any questions concerning the On-POINT program can be directed to the On-POINT Coordinator Meghan Corrigan (Mondays and Thursdays only) at 609-597-1189 ext. 8597 or to Chief Thomas Dellane at 609-597-1189 ext. 8318.