

WEST CENTRAL NEWS



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Sometimes Life Overwhelms Us—A Mobile Crisis Story

by Zachary Brock, MS



It was a late afternoon in June at West Central Behavioral Health’s Mobile Crisis Response office where I work. A call had just come into the NH Rapid Response Access Point crisis line. They referred the call immediately to us for a direct outreach.

We learned that a member of our community had visited another health agency the day before with suicidal thoughts. Today, those same thoughts and strong urges to end their life were back. This was not someone you might think would typically be threatened by a mental health crisis. It could have been my best friend, the neighbor next door, perhaps even you.

We, the Mobile Crisis Response team of two clinicians, set off from our office and were soon being greeted in the front yard by a family member who brought us to a pleasant outdoor sitting area. It was a nice day, and we were told it would be better if our conversation took place outside their home. In our work, finding a safe and comfortable space to talk is crucial to help people feel at ease. Soon, the person in crisis joined our small group with the help and support of their family members who were deeply concerned and frightened. We next asked a few questions and listened carefully to the client’s story of the past month’s events.

Several difficult life stressors had happened, including the breakup of their marriage. It was so overwhelming that the notion of ending their life had changed from passive thoughts to actively planning when, where, and what method to use. The client shared that they had pretended to be fine the night before at the emergency room, because it was too difficult to talk with strangers in the buzzing setting of a busy hospital. Here in the garden at their house on a lovely summer day, the client was more relaxed and open to sharing deep emotional thoughts.

We spoke with this family for quite some time, listening carefully to their concerns before making a decision. What path would be comfortable and offer the safest and most advantageous outcome for the individual and their family? Together, we decided that a voluntary stay at an inpatient setting would be the

best next step. We talked about working through stressful life events and how West Central as the local mental health center could help. Everyone thanked us for coming out to help them through this challenging time by offering options and defining the process of what to do. The family then drove their loved one to the hospital.

Next steps in crisis situations are not always clear cut or easy to make when life overwhelms us. A crisis can happen to anyone, at any time. It can be a relationship challenge like a divorce or separation. It can be the loss of a job, a financial setback, or both. It can be the death of a loved one, or a frightening health diagnosis. Everyone experiences life's challenges differently. Thankfully, the NH Rapid Response Access Point is available to everyone in New Hampshire, with mobile crisis response teams standing by 24/7 state-wide.

In this case, we encouraged a calm and open conversation about the distress one person and their family were experiencing while in a familiar setting. We are trained clinicians who offered solutions after a careful, in-person evaluation. The outcome became one that was neither foreign nor strange. The process of finding a solution became reasonable and personal.

Dispatches such as this one remind us that there is tremendous value in every mobile crisis response outreach no matter what kind of mental health or substance use crisis is happening.

Call or text 1-833-710-6477, or visit NH988.com to chat online if you or someone you know is suffering.

Suicidal and crisis moments are treatable. The life you save is precious.

At West Central Behavioral Health, we care. Your mental wellness matters. Please call on us.

Zack Brock, MS is a former NH police officer and is now a mobile crisis response team clinician for West Central Behavioral Health, the community mental health center for the Upper Valley and Sullivan County, with offices in Claremont, Lebanon, and Newport, NH.

(Story edited by Dave Celone, West Central's director of development & community relations.)

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