



RECOVERY IN MOTION



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March 2026 Edition

Mobile Crisis Teams: Providing an Alternative to Law Enforcement for Mental Health Crises

By Hannah Wesolowski, NAMI blog

About 2 million times each year, people with mental illness are booked in our nation's jails, often because communities rely on law enforcement to respond to mental health crises — and they lack the needed resources to truly support someone in crisis. It should not be the job of law enforcement to respond to health care crises, and people experiencing a mental health emergency deserve quick access to effective mental health care — just as people expect when experiencing physical health emergencies.

In 2020, Congress passed the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act, creating 988 as the nationwide number for suicide prevention and mental health crisis response. This number will be available in every community beginning in July this year, with the goal of connecting people in mental health crisis with mental health services.

NAMI supports the National Guidelines for Behavioral Health Crisis Care, released by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in early 2020. This framework identifies three pillars of services that every person experiencing a mental health crisis should have:

- Someone to call (988, answered by 24/7 local call centers)
- Someone to respond (mobile crisis teams staffed with behavioral health professionals)
- Somewhere to go (crisis stabilization facilities that provide an alternative to emergency departments)

The second pillar, mobile crisis teams (MCTs), presents an opportunity to significantly reduce the role of law enforcement in mental health crisis response. Unfortunately, very few communities currently have this type of service available.

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How Do Mobile Crisis Teams Work?

Ultimately, the goal of MCTs is to provide effective and timely care, while allowing individuals to remain in their communities, whenever possible.

One of the most well-known and established MCT programs is CAHOOTS, Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets, which has been operating in Eugene, Ore., through the White Bird Clinic since 1989. In a NAMI Ask the Expert special webinar series last year featuring CAHOOTS Program Director Ebony Morgan, she described their program as “operating in unarmed pairs with an EMT and a crisis worker.” The service is available throughout the city offering crisis intervention, support and resources to the community.

CAHOOTS and similar MCT programs are often dispatched when someone calls 911 or non-emergency police lines. When 988 becomes available, ideally 988 call centers will also be able to dispatch CAHOOTS-like teams — although 911 and 988 should always be in close collaboration. Once on the scene, MCTs assess a situation and are, as Morgan says, “ready to be helpful in whatever way is most effective.”

In some cases, a family member may call and request law enforcement, but Morgan notes that often, “Family members don’t know that we’re an option.” In these cases, CAHOOTS will work closely with dispatch and can be sent to the scene. There, they can build rapport with the individual, provide on-the-spot counseling and de-escalation, or transport the individual to a local emergency room that has psychiatric services, if needed.

Sometimes, an individual who needs more care than can be provided in the community may not want to go to the hospital. The team can’t force anyone to go anywhere, so instead, they try to explain how it might be helpful. “It’s a lot more comfortable to come with us of your own choice and just ride in the back of our van than to be handcuffed and put in a police vehicle and taken there against your will,” says Morgan. Once at the hospital, the team provides a warm handoff by sharing information with the hospital staff.

MCT programs provide many types of support in addition to crisis response. They can provide grief counseling or wellness check-ins. They are also trained in basic medical care and carry Narcan, a prescription medication that can reverse an opioid overdose, in case they are first to arrive on the scene. Morgan says CAHOOTS “brings both the medical and crisis intervention perspectives, which allows us to have a more holistic approach to each call.”

CAHOOTS leaders agree that partnership with law enforcement is critical. “We are not trained in law enforcement and do not have the same authority as police,” says Morgan. But the partnership with local police is a benefit to everyone, especially law enforcement. “It benefited the police when they were able to drop someone off that did not need to be in jail but did need some support.”

Now, CAHOOTS holds monthly meetings with the police department and works collaboratively to solve problems for the community together. Some situations require both the police and the CAHOOTS team to respond together, or one may call on the other for help. “What we do is work with these partners to figure out in what way we can best meet the situation’s needs.”

Are Mobile Crisis Teams Effective?

The evidence surrounding the impact of MCTs is compelling. MCTs have been shown to save money by reducing the number of hospital admissions and incarceration for people with mental health needs or substance use disorders. Nearly 85% of people who had an interaction with an MCT received an intervention other than hospitalization.

People who have become disconnected from mental health services are more likely to re-engage with those services after having contact with an MCT. This is especially true for those with depressive disorder, mood disorders and psychotic disorders.

Warmline Hours

Agape Center



806-678-9699

Hours of Operation:

Monday – 6:00pm – 10:00pm

Tuesday – 6:00pm – 10:00pm

.HAPPY.
Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day Party Photos



The Panhandle Criminal Diversion Taskforce Meeting will convene on March 2, 2026 at 11:00 am

Open to all stakeholders
Location: The Agape Center, 1422 SW. 15th Ave.



“Where justice meets mercy, and crisis meets care.”

“Restoring dignity through diversion.”

“From cellblocks to compassionate care — a pathway to stability and hope.”

Monday Classes, 2:30 - 3:30 & Wednesday Classes, 2:45 - 3:45

Art supplies provided

(Home lessons by reservation only, call 335-5896)



Agape Center Artwork

Artwork done by Agape Center Members



Surreal Art – M.F.



Silver Goblet, A.I. – T.F.




Cartoon Dog – C.J.



Masters of the Universe - E.H.

March 2026 Calendar
Telegroup Phone Number: 1-(720)-740-9050

\$\$ - Bring money for Social Outings, Red Groups can be done over the phone.

MON 9:30 – 4:30	TUE 9:30-4:30	WED 9:30 – 4:30	THU 1:00-4:00	FRI 9:30 – 4:30
<p><u>2</u> Beginner's Computer Class 10:00-11:00 Love In Action Shop Planning Group 1:00-2:00 Art Class 2:30-3:30</p>	<p><u>3</u> Advanced Computer Class 10:00-11:00 Coping With Anxiety 1:00-2:00 Movie Analysis 2:30-3:30</p>	<p><u>4</u> Consumer Programing 10:00-11:00 Yoga 11:00-12:00 NOW SERVING LUNCH Agape Caring & Sharing 1:15 – 2:15 Art Class 2:45 – 3:45</p>	<p><u>5</u> Center Closed</p>	<p><u>6</u> Current Events 10:00-11:00  6th Street and Braceros 1:00-4:00</p>
<p><u>9</u> Beginner's Computer Class 10:00-11:00 Bipolar Education 1:00-2:00 Art Class 2:30-3:30</p>	<p><u>10</u> Advanced Computer Class 10:00-11:00 Resource Group 1:00-2:00 Music Analysis 2:30-3:30</p>	<p><u>11</u> Friendly Concerns 10:00-11:00 Yoga 11:00-12:00 NOW SERVING LUNCH Agape Caring & Sharing 1:15 – 2:15 Art Class 2:45 – 3:45</p>	<p><u>12</u> Center Closed</p>	<p><u>13</u> Meditation Analysis 10:00-11:00  Long John Silvers And Movies At the Center 1:00-4:00</p>
<p><u>16</u> Beginner's Computer Class 10:00-11:00 Love In Action Inventory/Prep 1:00-2:00 Art Class 2:30-3:30</p>	<p><u>17</u> Advanced Computer Class 10:00-11:00 Mental Health Jeopardy Game 1:00-2:00  Board Meeting 2:30-3:30</p>	<p><u>18</u> GED Class 10:00-11:00 Yoga 11:00-12:00 NOW SERVING LUNCH Agape Caring & Sharing 1:15 – 2:15 Art Class 2:45 – 3:45</p>	<p><u>19</u> </p>	<p><u>20</u>  Hockey Game 6:45pm-10pm</p>
<p><u>23</u> Newsletter Assembly 10:00-11:00 Love In Action Inventory/Prep 1:00-2:00 Art Class 2:30-3:30</p>	<p><u>24</u> Advanced Computer Class 10:00-11:00  Food Bank Run 1:00-4:00</p>	<p><u>25</u> GED Class 10:00-11:00 Yoga 11:00-12:00 NOW SERVING LUNCH Agape Caring & Sharing 1:15 – 2:15 Art Class 2:45 – 3:45</p>	<p><u>26</u> Center Closed</p>	<p><u>27</u>  Birthday Loteria 12:00-4:00</p>
<p><u>30</u> Beginner's Computer Class 10:00-11:00 Love In Action Inventory/Prep 1:00-2:00 Art Class 2:30-3:30</p>	<p><u>31</u> Advanced Computer Class 10:00-11:00 PTSD & Recovery 1:00-2:00 Religion & Mental Health 2:30-3:30</p>			



AAMHC

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Amarillo, TX, 79102

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