

Committee Chair Brad Larose introduced Charlotte McCorkel, Assistant Director at First Call. McCorkel was present to discuss the role of Howard Center and Child, Youth and Family Services in the event of a community crisis.

Each county in VT has a designated crisis center. The Howard Center has 2 – one for adults and one for children. If folks have questions or a concern, they call and they will be referred to the appropriate resource. First Call has seen a 25% increase (in cases) from the previous year.

The Howard Center is a community health center. The Department of Mental Health does provide some funds and oversight, but Howard employees are not State employees. Most bills are paid through Medicaid or medical insurance.

If there is a major crisis, First Call has a Response Team readily available to help. If it is a Community tragedy, help would be available from another county as well.

Howard Center uses Lifelines Curriculum after a tragedy. It includes sample drafts of letters for home, school website, a readiness survey, etc. It is focused on youth suicide but may be tailored to other incidents.

A discussion ensued on how to get students to report on a hotline what they've heard or seen and how the reporting student could remain anonymous. After a lengthy discussion, P. Farrell stated that he felt the conversation about reporting on a hotline needs to be generated by students rather than adults talking about it.

McCorkel was asked to talk about the Howard Center's role following the Mt. Mansfield High School suicide. She said that crisis response teams were alerted. They brought resources such as one page handouts and then partnered with administrators. They set up spaces in the cafeteria where kids could gather in small groups. Howard Center Staff walked school halls and checked in with distraught people.

McCorkel stressed that they drop everything for these events. She felt it would be most helpful to get the call from the police. Chief Larose indicated that the police are often very busy in the early stages of a tragic incident and perhaps the school administration should call more timely than the PD.

Having worked through some crises with Essex High School, McCorkel stated that the staff at the high school was very prepared and easy to work with.

Kurt Miglinas then discussed the School Resource Officer (SRO) position. He is currently teaching but provided a partial listing of what he has done in the past as a SRO:

- Assisted in preventing a problem before it becomes a crime
- Been involved in criminal cases
- Handled truancy cases for both town and village
- Helped with students/parents out of control
- Worked to resolve conflicts in schools between students
- Gotten involved with bullying and cyberbullying

- Sent cases to court
- Explained what crimes are, such as grand larceny/ petty larceny
- Attended act 264 and child protection meetings
- Walked the halls in a preventative way to get kids to know him through positive interactions
- Taught alcohol prevention in gr. 6-8
- Monitored safety drills
- Gave classes as requested – what do police do, how does a person become a police officer, safety talks in schools.

The Police Department now needs to use Miglinas' position for more. There is currently a SRO vacant position and Chief Larose will develop a job description that will best serve the needs. He would like input from school officials. M. Andrews indicated that he would talk with ETSD building principals and perhaps meet with CCSU personnel to discuss the best use of a SRO in the schools.

K. Brayton reminded the group to keep in mind the Community Justice program when help was needed with Community projects.

The meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.