

Crisis Alternative Response Evanston (C.A.R.E) Team



**Jeron Dorsey, Deputy Director
Certified Crisis Responder
Parks, Recreation & Community Services**

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What is the CARE Team

Mission

Offer trauma-informed,
non-police crisis response for
low-risk behavioral health &
quality-of-life calls



Core Values

-  Voluntary engagement
-  safety-first
-  cultural humility
-  harm reduction

Crisis Alternative Response Evanston (CARE) Team

- Established in June of 2024
- Develop non-police response to community members in need of immediate support
- Five-week intensive training with Oakton College to obtain Crisis Responder Certification
- Teams of two trained to respond to low-risk calls, conserving police resources and preventing negative or even dangerous interactions between officers and community members.
- Two- week public awareness campaign prior to responding to first call on July 29, 2024



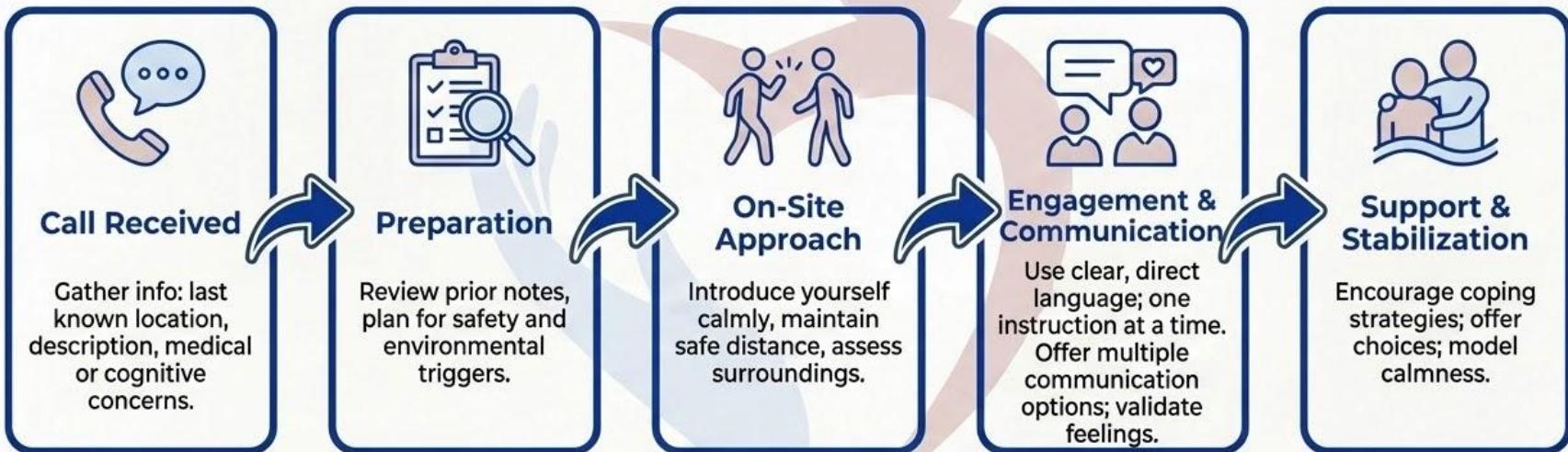
Trauma-Informed and Person-Centered Support

- Recognize that the person knows themselves best
- Consider the person's life experiences
- Understand that every person is unique
- Value the person's rights and dignity



Responding to the Call

Typical call flow



Resolution & Follow-Up



- ✓ Safely guide the individual if needed.
- ✓ Provide referrals, document strategies, debrief with team.

Key Considerations



Safety first

Individual,
Responder,
Community.



Person-centered

Focus on
preferences,
strengths,
autonomy.



Trauma-informed

Consider past
experiences
affecting
behavior.

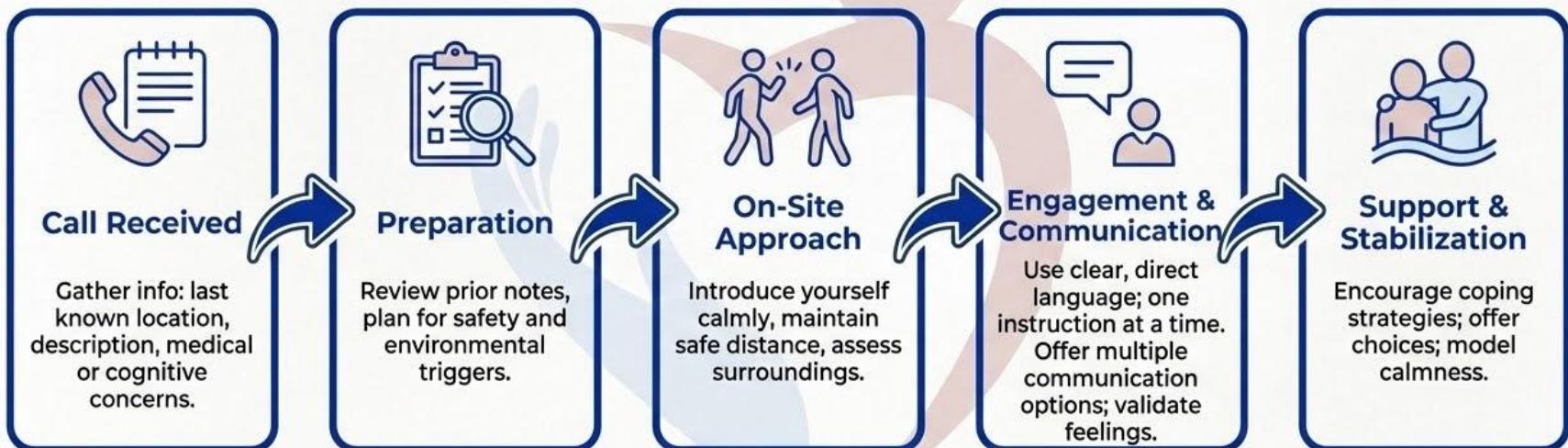


Strength-based

Emphasize
abilities and
coping
strategies,
not deficits.

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Typical call flow



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Family Protocol for IDD Awareness



Provide Advance Information

- Share important details about the individual: diagnosis, communication preferences, triggers, and coping strategies.
- Use contact cards or behavior profiles to summarize key information for quick reference.



Share De-escalation Preferences

- Indicate which approaches work best (calm tone, choice offering, favorite coping tools).
- Highlight strategies that should be avoided to prevent escalation.



Use Voluntary Registries or City Coordination

- Enroll the individual in voluntary safety registries if available.
- Coordinate with local city or emergency departments to ensure responders have access to critical information before arriving.

Preparation and Awareness



Check Prior Information

Gather details on triggers, supports, and preferred communication methods.



Approach with Respect & Curiosity

Neurodivergence is not a deficit. Treat every interaction with dignity.



Practice Trauma-Informed & Person-Centered Thinking

Focus on the individual's needs, safety, and empowerment.

Initial Engagement

- Introduce yourself calmly, clearly, and without sudden movements
- Keep your language concrete and direct; avoid idioms, sarcasm, or abstract expressions
- Respect personal space; do not touch unless safety requires it
- Observe and minimize environmental triggers (lights, noise, crowding)

RESPECT

Communication Techniques



Allow Extra Processing Time

Patience is critical. Give them time to respond.



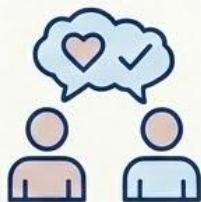
Offer Multiple Communication Options

Verbal, written, picture cards, gestures. Find what works best.



Give One Instruction at a Time

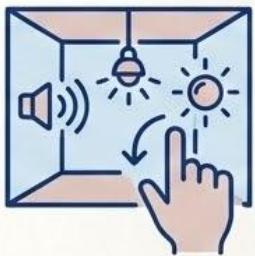
Keep it simple and clear to reduce overwhelm.



Validate Feelings and Experiences

Acknowledge their perspective. Show you understand.

De-escalation Strategies



Reduce environmental stressors whenever possible.



Offer choices to give the individual control.



Avoid physical restraint unless there is immediate risk.



Model calmness with tone, pacing, and body language.

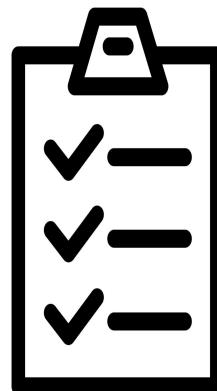
Collaboration and Support

- Include caregivers or support staff when appropriate and consented.
- Identify and encourage coping strategies the individual uses.
- Set realistic expectations; repeated attempts may be necessary.



Documentation and Follow-Up

- Record triggers, successful strategies, and communication preferences.
- Provide referrals to community supports as appropriate.
- Share lessons learned with your team to improve future responses.



How to Develop a CARE-like Program



CARE Team IDD Trainings



Neurodiversity Inclusion and Accessibility Training

Focuses on understanding and supporting individuals with diverse neurological profiles, promoting inclusive environments and accessible communication practices.



CPI (Crisis Prevention Institute) Certification

NCI (Non-violent Crisis Intervention) program. Provides evidence-based strategies for de-escalation and safe crisis management, prioritizing the safety and dignity of all individuals.

Evanston has *Joined the Sunflower*



- The movement
- How can this benefit your community members?
- Respecting privacy and autonomy

Additional Tools & Accommodations



Equipping our Crisis Responders



Resources

[Neurodivergent Affirming Language Guide](#)

[Hidden Disability Sunflower](#)

[Crisis Prevention Institute](#)

Social media groups/pages created by Autistic/Neurodivergent individuals:

- Autism Goggles
- The Autistic Teacher
- The Occuplytional Therapist
- Sally Cat's PDA Page
- [Autistic Self Advocacy Network \(ASAN\)](#) – Autistic-run nonprofit with plain-language toolkits, self-advocacy guides, and policy resources
- [Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network \(AWN\)](#) – Resources centering autistic women and nonbinary people, with a strong focus on intersectionality and support
- [Reframing Autism – "Autism Essentials"](#) – Free, self-paced online course that explains autism in a neuro-affirming way, geared toward families, educators, and professionals
- [AANE \(Association for Autism and Neurodiversity\)](#) – Information, support groups, coaching, and webinars for autistic adults, teens, and families
- [Autism Level UP!](#) – Practical tools and visuals for regulation, energy levels, and classroom supports that can be used at home or at school
- [NeuroClastic](#) – Articles, guides, and resources written by autistic and other neurodivergent people for parents, educators, and clinicians

Questions?



THANK YOU
SO MUCH

YOU ARE VERY MUCH APPRECIATED!

