



MENTAL HEALTH PLAN

DRAFT

Revised: May 2023

Edgewater City Council believes that our community will benefit from an intentional effort to develop a holistic and strategic plan related to mental health.

Our desire to improve the mental health of our community by increasing quality mental health resources within our community is in direct response to social injustices that have occurred locally and nationally, the COVID-19 pandemic, the increase of suicide and domestic violence, a collective prioritization of mental health, and an acknowledgment that to thrive individually and as a community we all need mental health resources.

The City of Edgewater's needs in the realm of mental health exist in diverse and varied ways. Specifically, City Council would like to see mental health resources bolstered at the organizational and community levels. For example, City Council has committed to supporting our police department's efforts to provide public safety services with a mental health lens that addresses complex situations with a sensitivity toward mental health. In addition, providing trauma-informed support for police officers, victims, and community members affected by a crime or tragedy is one of Council's priorities. At a broader community level, city staff is being trained in understanding mental health to ensure that city services consider our community's mental health needs, whether it is through city sponsored events, city services, or through other city initiatives.

Opportunities to provide mental health specific resources will be welcomed as we embark on development a road map that supports our community's

unique needs.



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STEPS TAKEN SO FAR

Starting in June 2022, a small steering committee has been meeting to craft this draft plan. The steering committee is made up of:

- *Council Member Cory Reid-Vanas*
- *Council Member Lilly Steirer*
- *City Manager Dan Maples*
- *Assistant City Manager Jocelyn Mills*
- *Community Member and West Metro Fire Fighter Kevin Meyer*
- *Police Chief Eric Sonstegard*
- *(Former) Co-Responder Theresa Fenander*
- *Mental Health Subject Matter Expert Dr. Libbi Palmer*

INTRODUCTION OF AREAS OF PLAN

As our group worked together it became clear that there were four areas of mental health and mental wellness that needed to be addressed by this plan. Those four areas are:

- *Interventions for people in mental health crisis*
- *Resources for people with mental health issues (not in crisis)*
- *Ideas for the overall mental wellness of our community*
- *Internal mental health services for our staff.*

Each area will be addressed separately in the following pages.

INTERVENTIONS FOR PEOPLE IN MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

The City of Edgewater understands the importance of having properly trained professionals ready and able to assist people in mental health crisis. It is important to make sure first responders and front-line staff understand mental health issues, that they are comfortable intervening when needed, and that the interventions provided provide as much safety and dignity as possible to everyone involved.

Recommendations:

- *Provide and require Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training for all current sworn officers and for all new officers within 12 months of being hired. This goal is contingent on staffing levels and the ability to find available training. This goal will be monitored by the Chief and reported to the City Manager and as a part of the mental health plan reporting to council.*
- *Provide all public facing staff including non-sworn police department staff Mental Health First Aid within the first year of employment. This goal is contingent on staffing levels and the ability to find available training. This goal will be monitored by Human Resources and reported to the City Manager and as a part of the mental health plan reporting to council.*
- *Develop a job description and hire a mental health provider to respond to calls for service to people in crisis. Options for this are varied and may depend on actions taken by other agencies. Options include:*
 - *A co-responder (shared with Mountain View PD) who is an employee of a community mental health provider.*
 - *A crisis management team or mobile crisis unit (responding without law enforcement) who may work directly for the City of Edgewater or may be a partnership with some other entity.*

- *A mental health provider who works directly for the City of Edgewater in coordination with the Edgewater Police Department.*
- *Based on the experiences with the past co-responder, this position would require about 20 hours per week. Whether the current position is modified or combined with the recommendations in further parts of this plan will be determined at a later date.*
- *If partnerships are made with other entities to provide this service, there will need to be some attention paid to make sure that people in the City of Edgewater are getting their needs met and not getting lost due to the needs of larger entities.*



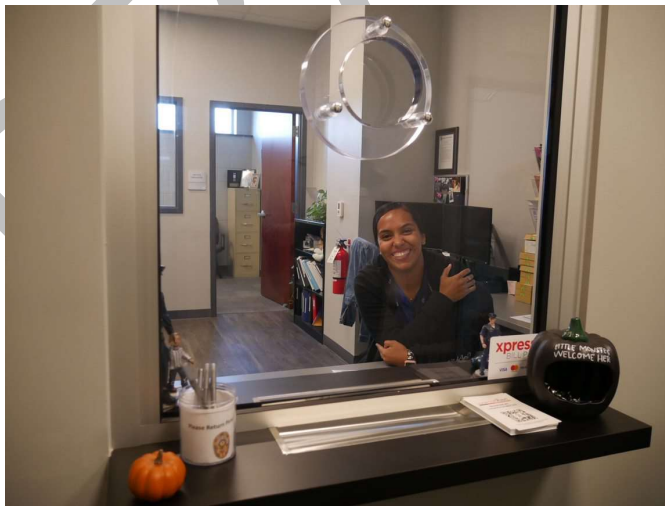
RESOURCES FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

The City of Edgewater needs to be prepared to provide resources to people experiencing mental health issues. These resources need to be readily available and known by staff and anyone who may come in contact with people experiencing mental health issues.

Recommendations:

- *Trauma informed care and trauma informed interviewing training for all police department staff. This can be accomplished by:*
 - *Adding these topics to field training requirements, and*
 - *Ongoing and regularly scheduled training by Victim Outreach Information and/or another expert in trauma informed interviewing and other areas of trauma informed care.*
 - *This goal will be reported on by the Police Chief to the City Manager and City Council on a regular basis.*
- *Mental health and mediation training for staff responding to neighbor disputes.*
- *Provide a staff member with mental health knowledge providing follow up with people who might need it within the city. This could include:*
 - *A person in the municipal building to provide mental health resources outside of people who are in crisis.*
 - *Follow up with people who were contacted by the Police Department or other city agencies (including the library).*
 - *Follow up requested by friends, family members, or other professionals.*
 - *Follow up with people already known to the mental health professional.*

- *This person may review law enforcement calls for service from the previous day to see who might benefit from follow up.*
- *The mental health professional doing this work could be:*
 - *The co-responder or crisis response team member employed by Jefferson Center for Mental Health or another entity, or*
 - *A mental health professional employed by the City of Edgewater.*
 - *This might be a mental health professional or a resource coordinator/navigator position that can be created with the shift of the co-responder to a .5 FTE.*
- *This person will establish a baseline for services that are provided and then set key performance indicators to work toward related to services provided, customer satisfaction, or other indicators to be determined at a later time.*



IDEAS FOR THE OVERALL MENTAL HEALTH OF OUR COMMUNITY

Community Mental Health is very important, and information and education will help provide community members with the needed resources to assist with dealing with mental health issues that may arise. Edgewater is a very close community and being able to educate the residents will provide a wider mental health safety net for everyone.

Recommendations:

- *Develop an education/ outreach program that:*
 - *Continues the efforts to reduce the stigma about receiving help for mental health concerns.*
 - *Provides resources and service contacts.*
 - *Details what to look for in people who might be experiencing mental health issues and how residents can help.*
 - *Provides specific education, outreach, and support to youth. This might be done in collaboration with schools, Gold Crown, or other youth serving organizations.*
 - *Provides specific education, outreach, and support to seniors. This might be done in collaboration with other senior serving organizations.*
 - *Provides specific education, outreach, and support about substance abuse prevention and treatment.*
 - *Provides specific education, outreach, and support to residents living in multi-family communities.*
 - *Provides all education, outreach, and support in both English, and Spanish; and interpretation of American Sign Language or other language upon request.*
 - *Provides specific education in internal conflict resolution centering nonviolence in how we work.*

- Ensures that mental health is included in information given from the city to the Gazette.
- Develop a communication plan with the city's communication team to improve communication about mental health issues and resources in the community with the goal of decreasing stigma about mental illness and help-seeking, increasing knowledge and understanding of people with mental health difficulties.
- Provide mental health resources and information to business licensees and others working in Edgewater who may come into contact or be in extra need of mental health services. For example, we may provide Mental Health First Aid type training to businesses who have liquor licenses in order to help them respond more effectively to people with mental health struggles.
- Have continued connection to other agencies and entities supporting the mental health of our community.
- Continue to provide Mental Health First Aid at least once each year for community members at no cost.
- Monitoring of these goals will be done by establishing a baseline during the first year of the plan, and then working to improve participation, reach, and achievement of other key performance indicators.



INTERNAL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The City of Edgewater currently has Mental Health Clinician Services through the health plan provided to all employees. Although this is a great service, additional mental health opportunities for service will provide a more robust resource for employees.

Recommendations:

- *Develop a trauma support team within the Police Department. This team could be created internally, but due to the size of the agency, it will probably be with a partnership of another agency, by or contracting with an outside organization.*
- *Creation and roll-out of a wellness app to Police Department personnel to provide easy access to mental health resources.*
- *Develop a plan and process for ongoing stress and trauma informed care education for all Police Department members. This could be provided by an internal resource with expertise in this area or other outside providers with the required expertise.*
- *Investigate and provide a robust Employee Assistance Program (EAP) available to all employees and their family members. Options include continuing to use Kaiser exclusively or looking at other EAP provider options in addition to Kaiser health insurance.*
- *Regular marketing of EAP resources to all staff.*
- *Provide resources to access psychological first aid provided to staff following difficult incidents. This can be done in groups or individually. Further clarification needs to be done with supervisors to increase their knowledge of this resource and how to access it. This service should be available to library staff, subcontractors, council members, and board members as well as employees.*
- *Consider rebranding of and how self-care/wellness days are encouraged and used.*
- *Regularly review the time off policy to see if changes need to be made to encourage staff to take time off that further supports their mental health and wellbeing.*

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Continue to work with community partners to develop regional solutions for crisis intervention, community care, housing resources, and medical care for all of our community members.*
- *Hire a mental health project coordinator to work with the Community Development Department, whose job responsibilities will include:*
 - *Represent the City of Edgewater in coordinating responses at the regional level and in developing system-wide solutions related to mental health.*
 - *Support to staff members to help them find the appropriate mental health resources they need.*
 - *Hosting office hours in the municipal building for people who need resources or support.*
 - *Mediating disputes between neighbors that cannot be resolved by other staff members.*
 - *Coordinating with the Municipal Court to connect people who are court-involved to appropriate mental health services.*
 - *Advising City Council and the City Manager on the mental health needs of staff and the community that they become aware of.*
 - *Spearheading all mental health related initiatives within the city with the goals of improving mental health for all of the people in the city (residents and visitors). These efforts might include:*
 - *Training for specified licensees and other workers in the city on mental health;*
 - *Coordination with other agencies and entities including governmental agencies, special districts, faith communities, community organizations, etc. on mental health related initiatives.*

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- *Coordinating with Jefferson County to maximize available mental health resources for the community.*
- *This position would encompass needs from the other recommendations.*
- *This position might be a part-time position allowed by moving the co-responder position to a separate part-time position or might be a full time position and include:*
 - *Co-response with law enforcement to people in crisis.*
 - *Response to people with mental health conditions who need support or resources.*

