



# San Diego County Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT)

## County of San Diego

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# Learning Objectives



- Why We Are Here
- MCRT Defined
- How Services are Delivered
- How School Can Access MCRT Services
- Best Practices and Resources
- Q & A



# Why We Are Here

# Background



- Being responsive to our schools, students, and families
- Stop criminalizing mental health crises
- A compassionate, trauma-informed alternative approach to mental health crises

# CHKS Countywide Secondary Data



| Seriously Considered Suicide In the Past 30 Days |                 |                 |                  |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| School Years                                     | 7 <sup>th</sup> | 9 <sup>th</sup> | 11 <sup>th</sup> |
| 2022-23  | 14%             | 14%             | 14%              |
| 2023-24  | 12%             | 11%             | 11%              |
| 2024-25  | 11%             | 9%              | 9%               |
| Change   | Decreased by 3% | Decreased by 5% | Decreased by 5%  |

| Chronic Sadness & Hopelessness |                 |                 |                  |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| School Years                   | 7 <sup>th</sup> | 9 <sup>th</sup> | 11 <sup>th</sup> |
| 2022-23                        | 29%             | 32%             | 37%              |
| 2023-24                        | 27%             | 27%             | 31%              |
| 2024-25                        | 24%             | 23%             | 26%              |
| 2025-26                        | 24%             | 23%             | 26%              |
| Change                         | Decreased by 5% | Decreased by 9% | Decreased by 11% |

# CHKS Countywide Elementary Data



| School Years | Frequent Sadness |
|--------------|------------------|
| 2022-23      | 19%              |
| 2023-24      | 19%              |
| 2024-25      | 17%              |
| Change       | Decreased by 2%  |

# Youth Suicides in San Diego



| Year           | Number School-Aged Youth Suicides |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2021           | 12                                |
| 2022           | 3                                 |
| 2023           | 11                                |
| 2024           | 13                                |
| 2025           | 8(half year)                      |
| Past 4.5 Years | <b>We have lost 47 youth!</b>     |

| Age          | # Suicides |
|--------------|------------|
| 17           | 15         |
| 15           | 9          |
| 14           | 9          |
| 16           | 6          |
| 12           | 4          |
| 13           | 3          |
| 10           | 1          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>47</b>  |



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# MCRT Defined



# What is MCRT?



- Launched in January 2021, Mobile Crisis Response Teams (MCRTs) offer an alternative response option for San Diego County residents experiencing a mental health or substance use-related crisis.
- **Non-law enforcement teams** are trained to **respond, assess, and de-escalate behavioral health crises** dispatched via the Access & Crisis Line (ACL) or calls to emergency services across all regions of the county.

# MCRT Services



- ✓ Crisis triage, screening, and assessment
- ✓ Crisis intervention and stabilization
- ✓ Safety Planning
- ✓ Conduct 5150s/5585s
- ✓ On-site support in vehicles equipped with a host of resources & safety features for 5150s/5585s

# MCRT Video



**Telecare Corp. & Exodus Recovery Inc.**  
[MCRT School Training Video](#)



# Service Delivery



# Behavioral Health Crisis Defined



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**Behavioral health crises can include but are not limited to:**

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**Active suicide ideation** (high severity level)

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**Extreme paranoia** (e.g., irrational belief that someone/thing is going to cause harm)

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**Dissociation** (e.g., feeling the surroundings are unreal, not feeling body or other sensations)

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**Active visual or auditory hallucinations**  
directing the student to harm

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Some common signs that may be associated with a mental health or substance use-related crisis:

- Changes in mood or behavior that cause concern
- Thoughts of self-harm or suicide
- Sudden changes to hygiene and self-care practices
- Unusual thoughts, sounds, or visions that cause fear or distress

# How Services are Delivered



In a **developmentally and culturally appropriate** manner

- Programs employ Transitional Age Youth (TAY) **staff/peer support specialists** to engage with youth

With **de-escalation strategies** specific to youth and family

- Establish safety & present as calm & empathetic
- Engage in active listening, avoid judgment & respect the young person's physical space
- Sensory soothing, mindful breathing, and grounding exercises

Through a **trauma-informed lens** for youth & family, considering the social determinants of health

# Background & Program Overview



## Each team includes a:

- ✓ Peer Support Specialist
- ✓ Licensed Behavioral Health Clinician
- ✓ Case Manager

## Care Coordination:

MCRT will assess for other needs a student may have and assist with the coordination of treatment services as needed for up to 30 days from the initial service.

## MCRT CLINICAL TEAM



# Who Does MCRT Respond To?



## Anyone

- All people on a school campus during school hours

## Anywhere\*

- **Exodus** responds to the North Coastal Region and has nine (9) teams weekly
- **Telecare** responds to all other regions of the County, and has thirty-five (35) teams weekly
- If you are unsure which region your school is in, please click below
  - [Regions and Zip Codes \(double click the image below\)](#)



## Anytime

- During school hours
- Via ACL outside of school hours



# 2024-2025 Youth Program Data



MCRT response to schools **began September 2024** with a pilot school

- Response expanded to **all districts November 2024**

**MCRT's goal** is to provide a response in **under one hour**:

- **95%** of responses met this goal
- The average response time is **29 minutes**, countywide

Across 26 districts and 113 schools:

- **227 calls** responded to at school
- **69% (151)** were stabilized in the field



# Accessing MCRT

# MOA Templates



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MCRT does not require  
an MOA to respond to  
schools

However, if your school  
district requires an MOA,  
templates have been  
provided for your use

## Memorandum of Understanding/ Agreement

### Participation in Mobile Crisis Response Team Services

#### Parties

This Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is made on **Date (MM/DD/YYYY)** between **Exodus Recovery, Inc.** ("Exodus") and **Name of School District** "Parties" or individually as a "Party".

#### Recitals

WHEREAS, the County of San Diego's Health and Human Services Agency ("County") offers behavioral health services to residents of the County, including responding to urgent and emergency calls involving behavioral health crises;

WHEREAS, the County has contracted with Exodus to operate the Mobile Crisis Response Team ("MCRT") program which is designed to respond to urgent and emergency behavioral health-related calls in the community, provide a non-law enforcement intervention for individuals of all ages in a behavioral health crisis and to connect them to the most appropriate level of behavioral health care; and

WHEREAS, The County of San Diego Board of Supervisors by Resolution has authorized the local Behavioral Health Director or the Behavioral Health Director's Designee to designate on behalf of the County members of MCRT to take, or cause to be taken, into custody persons suffering from a behavioral health disorder in accordance with the provisions of Sections 5150 and 5152 of the Welfare and Institutions Code. A copy of the Board Resolution is available by request from the Clinical Directors Office.

WHEREAS, Name of School District provides education to its students and is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of its students; and

WHEREAS, the Parties recognize the importance of a coordinated response to behavioral health crises involving minors within the school environment; desire to utilize MCRT services to minors experiencing behavioral health crisis in the school environment.

THEREFORE, in consideration of the foregoing recitals and the mutual covenants and promises set forth below, and for other good and valuable consideration, receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, the Parties hereto agree as follows:

#### Article I: Purpose

The purpose of this MOA is to outline the responsibility and procedures to be followed when a minor within the school premises is experiencing a behavioral health crisis and the school determines that MCRT services are indicated.

## MCRT MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

This Memorandum of Agreement ("Agreement") is made between Telecare Corporation, ("Telecare") and Name of School District ("Partner") (individually, "Party" and collectively "Parties), effective \_\_\_\_\_ ("Effective Date").

#### RECITALS

- A. WHEREAS, the County of San Diego's Health and Human Services Agency ("County") offers behavioral health services to residents of the County, including responding to urgent and emergency calls involving behavioral health crises;
- B. WHEREAS, the County has contracted with Telecare to respond to urgent and emergency calls involving behavioral health crises through San Diego Mobile Crisis Response Teams ("SDMCRTs") that provide non-law enforcement intervention for individuals experiencing crises and that connect them with the most appropriate level of behavioral health care;
- C. WHEREAS, County expects Telecare to coordinate its SDMCRT services with various local jurisdictions, including law enforcement agencies, fire departments, universities, and schools, through contracts and associated protocols;
- D. WHEREAS, Partner is \_\_\_\_\_ that wishes to obtain Telecare's MCRT services and to coordinate them with its own services; and
- E. WHEREAS, Telecare and Partner desire to enter into this Agreement to set forth their understandings regarding Telecare's provision of SDMCRT services to individuals within Partner's jurisdiction.

THEREFORE, in consideration of the foregoing recitals, the Parties agree as follows:

#### 1. TELECARE'S RESPONSIBILITIES. Telecare will fulfill the following responsibilities under this Agreement:

- 1.1 Accept referral calls from the \_\_\_\_\_ School District that have been appropriately screened to meet all of the MCRT criteria, as outlined in the Exhibit to This Agreement titled "SDMCRT Referral Criteria" ("SDMCRT Criteria").
- 1.2 Provide staff for each call, consisting of a Behavioral Health Clinician, Case Manager, and/or Peer Staff.
- 1.3 Coordinate behavioral health services for the individual experiencing a behavioral health crisis including, but not limited to: screenings; crisis triage assessments; crisis intervention and stabilization; safety planning; care coordination; transport to an appropriate health care setting when clinically indicated; and performance of a clinically necessary 5150 involuntary hold when all criteria are met;
- 1.4 Perform referrals to community-based organizations to meet the needs of the target populations;
- 1.5 Develop partnerships with community members and organizations to coordinate and enhance SDMCRT services;

Exodus MOA School District  
Template

Telecare MOA School District  
Template

# SAMPLE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CRISIS RESPONSE FOR SCHOOLS

**Student has displayed signs of a behavioral health crisis**

**Follow School Threat Assessment Protocol**

## Consider MCRT when student has:

- Active suicide ideation (high severity level)
- Extreme paranoia (e.g., feeling that someone/thing is going to cause harm that is not feasible)
- Dissociation (e.g., not aware of surroundings or feeling the surroundings are unreal, not feeling body or other sensations, acting as a separate self)
- Active visual or auditory hallucinations directing the student to harm

**Behavioral Health Crisis or Psychological Distress Determine**

**Contact Parent/Caregiver (unless counter indicated)**

**Identified School Employee Activates MCRT**

## MCRT will:

- Come to school and meet with identified school staff, student and parent (if present) in a confidential place
- Assess the student for Homicidal Ideation/Suicidal Ideation, or grave disability and work with identified school staff, student and family to develop a plan to resolve the crisis
- Coordinate/connect student and family to appropriate services

**Student is stabilized with a plan**

**MCRT will provide care coordination for up to 30 days if relevant, to provide support and follow up on the plan that was developed.**

## Consider PERT/911 when student:

- Makes a verbal/nonverbal threat to harm another or homicidal threat
- Has a physical altercation that results in ongoing fear/intimidation on the part of the target, or injury to the target that requires medical attention
- Brings a dangerous object to school that could cause harm

**Safety Threat is Determined**

**DO NOT CONTACT MCRT**

**Contact 911/PERT if student is stating or showing an immediate intent to harm others and has access and means to follow through with that intent in the moment. Follow emergency procedures**

**Occasionally a student will need to be transported by guardian or MCRT to be assessed for a psychiatric hospitalization**

**\*MCRT or Guardian Transports Following District Protocol to an acute care setting:**

**Children and Youth Crisis Stabilization Unit (CYCSU)**

**Emergency Department**

**Aurora, Sharp Mesa Vista, Rady CAPS**

# How Schools Access MCRT



School Point of Contact calls  
MCRT

North Coastal: (760) 292-8288

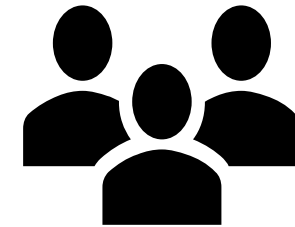
All other Regions: (619) 831-6890

**Passcode:** 939690



Triage by MCRT  
Dispatcher

**Please note these numbers are  
for school sites ONLY and not  
for public distribution.**



MCRT response  
team is  
dispatched

# Required Information Needed for MCRT School Referral



- ✓ **Name** of referring party and callback phone number
- ✓ **Name** of youth in crisis and DOB
- ✓ **Reason** for referral
- ✓ **School address**; point of contact and campus location upon arrival
- ✓ **Safety criteria** cleared
- ✓ Has the **parent/guardian** been notified?
- ✓ **Parent/Guardian** contact information
- ✓ **Accommodations** (language, accessibility, etc.)

# Safety Criteria for MCRT



Students experiencing a behavioral health crisis **must meet the safety criteria below** to be accepted by MCRT:

## **Safety Criteria:**

- ✓ No weapons
- ✓ No threat of immediate violence to self or others
- ✓ No physical injuries /medical emergency

## **Other Criteria:**

- ✓ The student is not involved in serious criminal activity
- ✓ The student is not known to be wanted in connection with an ongoing criminal investigation
- ✓ Law enforcement was not specifically requested

# What to Expect from an MCRT Response



**Once the team arrives, please expect MCRT to:**

- ☐ **check in with identified school point of contact** and obtain any additional information
- ☐ **request a private space** to meet with the student
- ☐ **request student/guardian's consent** for school personnel to be present during the assessment
- ☐ **assess for danger** to self, others, and/or grave disability
- ☐ **file any applicable reports** as mandated reporters
- ☐ **provide crisis intervention**, de-escalation, safety planning, and referrals/linkage to services
- ☐ make several attempts to **notify the guardian** if the student is placed on an involuntary hold (5585), and the location to which the student is being transported to
- ☐ **coordinate care** with the student, guardian, and other service providers as needed during the 72-hour follow-up call



# Consent for Treatment



## MCRT Policy and Procedure for Serving Youth

### Parental Consent:

- MCRT makes every effort, when clinically appropriate, for the licensed clinician to notify and involve parents/guardians in treatment in accordance with Family Code 6924

### 5150/5585 (involuntary psychiatric hold):

- When clinically appropriate, the Licensed Clinician will make several attempts to notify the parent/guardian that the student has been placed on an involuntary psychiatric hold for evaluation and the facility that the youth will be taken to.

***Inability to obtain the consent of the minor's parent or legal guardian shall not preclude the involuntary treatment of a minor who is determined to be gravely disabled or a danger to themselves or others.***

# Policy & Procedures for Transporting Youth



**Voluntary Transportation:** MCRT will contact parents/guardians when a minor would benefit from transport to treatment. Transportation can include taking one adult family member in the vehicle along with the youth.

**Involuntary Transportation for 5150/5585:** Inability to obtain the consent of the minor's parent/guardian shall not preclude the involuntary transport of a minor who is determined to be gravely disabled or a danger to themselves or others.



# Recommended Approach and Resources

# MCRT Clinicians Trained on Best Practices in K12 Schools



1. Why MCRT in K12 Schools was Launched
2. Roles of School Personnel
3. School System Terminology
4. Issues Impacting School Communities
5. Lessons Learned
6. Resources
7. Approach –HUGS

# HUGS



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- Humility
- Understanding
- Grace
- Service





# MCRT in Schools Flyer



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY • BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

### Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT)

*Behavioral Health Crisis Response in Schools*  
**NEW in November 2024**

The **Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT) Program** is a countywide service that offers an alternative response option for those experiencing a mental health or substance use-related crisis during school and after school hours.

Launched by the County of San Diego in January 2021, non-law enforcement MCRTs are trained to respond, assess, and de-escalate behavioral health crises in the community and can now respond in all school districts in San Diego County (grades K-12).

For response on campus during school hours, personnel should call Telecare MCRT and Exodus MCRT directly.

- For after-school hours and community response, call **988** or the **Access & Crisis Line (ACL)** at **888-724-7240** or call emergency services.

#### How can MCRT help?

MCRT can respond to behavioral health crisis calls in schools that do not involve known threats of violence or medical emergencies. Depending on the situation, MCRT can:

- Provide assessments
- Utilize crisis intervention and de-escalation techniques
- Initiate and transport a 5585 (5150) hold when there is a not a safety concern
- Connect students to appropriate behavioral health services and resources, provide initial coordination for treatment services as needed, and follow-up for up to 30 days after initial service

#### How can schools access MCRT?


Deployment of MCRT to a school campus begins with school personnel calling the MCRT dispatch center at Telecare or Exodus. Schools are provided with direct numbers to the MCRT providers. Trained dispatchers determine the most appropriate response based on the information shared. MCRT will come to the school location in a clearly marked "MCRT" van, with a small team that includes a licensed mental health clinician, case manager, and peer support specialist. MCRT will talk to the person in crisis along with school staff to determine how to best assist and problem-solve together.



School call is received by MCRT dispatch center



Triage by MCRT dispatch center



Appropriate response team is dispatched

If you are not sure what to do or what you need, call MCRT to consult a trained expert.

**San Diego MCRT During School Hours**

- Schools in North Coastal Region of San Diego County (Carlsbad, Oceanside, Pendleton, San Dieguito, & Vista): contact Exodus MCRT directly.
- Schools in all other regions of San Diego County: contact Telecare MCRT directly.

**San Diego County Access & Crisis Line**

Call (888) 724-7240 for free, confidential support and resources for anyone dealing with alcohol, drug, or mental health challenges, available 24/7 in over 200 languages. Individuals with San Diego County area codes (619, 858, 760, or 442) may also reach the ACL using quick-dial code 9-8-8.



Scan for More Information on MCRT

## One-page information sheet to share with schools includes:

- How can MCRT help
- How schools access MCRT

# MCRT in the Community Flyer



**Community access is available  
through the Access and Crisis Line  
(888) 724-7240.**

The information flyer can be **shared  
with parents, guardians, and  
community members.** It highlights:

- How MCRT helps
- How to access MCRT in the community

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY • BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

09/01/22

### Mobile Crisis Response Teams (MCRT)

Get Help for Alcohol, Drug, or Mental Health Crises


The **Mobile Crisis Response Team Program** is a countywide service that offers an alternative response option for those experiencing a mental health or substance use-related crisis. Launched by the County of San Diego in January 2021, non-law enforcement Mobile Crisis Response Teams (MCRTs) trained to respond, assess, and de-escalate behavioral health crises may be dispatched in response to calls to the Access & Crisis Line (ACL) (888-724-7240) or calls to emergency services.

#### How can MCRT help me?

The team can respond to behavioral health crisis calls that do not involve known threats of violence or medical emergencies. If needed and/or appropriate, MCRT can:

- Provide assessments
- Utilize crisis intervention and de-escalation techniques
- Connect individuals to appropriate behavioral health services and resources (e.g., counseling, case management, substance use treatment services)


MCRT Case Managers and Peer Support Specialists can also assess other needs an individual may have and help with initial coordination for treatment services as needed for up to 30 days from initial service.



Scan for More Information on MCRT

#### How can I access MCRT?

Deployment of any crisis response service starts with calling the ACL or emergency services. Trained dispatchers determine the most appropriate response based on the information you share. Depending on the situation, additional crisis response services may be sent out. Upon acceptance of the referral from the dispatcher, a MCRT will come to your location in a clearly marked "MCRT" van, with a small team that includes a licensed mental health clinician, case manager, and peer support specialist. This team will talk to the individual in crisis and determine how to best assist and problem solve with them as the client.





If you are not sure what to do or what you need, call the ACL to consult a trained expert. For more information on MCRT, including [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and outreach materials, visit [www.sandiegocounty.gov/mcrt](http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/mcrt).

**San Diego County Access & Crisis Line (888) 724-7240**

Free, confidential support and resources for anyone dealing with alcohol, drug, or mental health challenges, available 24/7 in over 200 languages. Individuals with San Diego County area codes (619, 858, 760, or 442) may also reach the ACL using quick-dial code 9-8-8.

**Not in San Diego County?** Call 9-8-8 to connect to the national network of suicide and crisis call centers.

211 Call 2-1-1 for health and social service assistance, information, and referrals.





# Q & A



# MCRT BHS Team



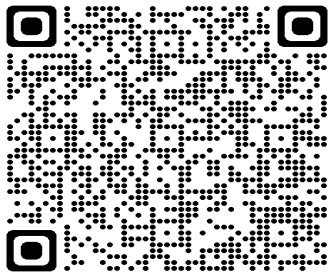
## QUESTIONS?



### Visit the Website

[www.sandiegocounty.gov/mcrt](http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/mcrt)

Flyer QR Code



Website QR Code



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## Questions or Feedback

Visit the [SDCOE MCRT  
Webpage](#)

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