

# Creating Safe Communities



CalMHSA's Prevention and Early Intervention Programs foster partnerships with public safety agencies and promote safe communities.

## To date, CalMHSA's partners have:

- Trained crisis responders so they are better equipped to respond with appropriate intervention when people experience mental health crisis.
- Worked to reduce violence toward people living with mental illness by breaking down stereotypes.
- Expanded resources to prevent people from winding up in the streets or in jail.
- Freed up public safety resources for important community priorities.

## Improving Public Safety by Decreasing the Stigma of Mental Illness

Decades of disinvestment in mental health services has made our public safety systems mental health providers by default, and fueled misconceptions that violence is associated with mental illness. The fact is people with mental illness are far more likely to be victims of violence than to be perpetrators.

CalMHSA's Stigma and Discrimination Reduction Partner Disability Rights California (DRC) partners with San Francisco Crisis Intervention Team officers to develop training curricula for law enforcement to appropriately manage crisis situations involving a person with mental illness. To date, more than 500 public safety partners across the state have been trained.



## Did you Know...?

**Leading epidemiologists say we can't afford not to take a prevention approach to mental health.**

Focusing only on mental health crisis misses the opportunity to prevent more people in our communities from reaching the crisis point and costs more in the long run. Prevention in the mental health field is a public health priority, just as working to prevent heart disease must happen at the same time we treat people experiencing heart attacks.

Half of all mental health challenges begin by age 14 and three-quarters appear before age 24.

Investing in our young minds is an opportunity to improve mental health over a generation. CalMHSA's PEI programs strategically target young people to connect them with preventative services and set them on a lifetime path of mental wellness.

California voters supported transforming California's mental health system with a prevention approach. Voters passed Prop. 63 (the Mental Health Services Act) in 2004, dedicating resources to keep individuals healthy so they never reach the crisis point of our jails, hospitals, or homelessness. At the same time this investment saves lives, it reduces the strain on community hospitals, jails, and public safety resources.



## Creating Safe Campus Communities

While the incidence of violence on college campuses are rare, CalMHSA's partnerships with the University of California (UC), the California State University and the California Community Colleges recognize the opportunity to identify mental health concerns among students in a difficult transition period and respond appropriately to crisis situations. Campuses across California have engaged with campus safety and local law enforcement agencies to develop crisis intervention strategies.

- Modesto Junior College is teaming up with local law enforcement to improve response to suicidal crisis on campus and has developed a Behavioral Intervention Team.
- The Los Angeles Harbor Consortium of nine local colleges conducted a two-day violence prevention training.
- UC Berkeley partnered with Alameda County public safety officials to conduct Mental Health Training for Police Dispatchers, where dispatchers from Oakland, Richmond, Bay Area Rapid Transit, and the City of Alameda attended to learn about mental health issues and crisis intervention.
- West Los Angeles College is working with the lead Sheriff on campus to design workshops for law enforcement personnel that will teach them how to effectively address students with apparent mental health conditions.

For more information about any of the programs described above, contact Jamie Sepulveda at [Jamie.Sepulveda@calmhsa.org](mailto:Jamie.Sepulveda@calmhsa.org).

*In 2008, state strategic plans were developed for suicide prevention, stigma and discrimination reduction and student mental health. CalMHSA, a Joint Powers Authority, was created by counties in 2009 to implement the PEI Statewide projects efficiently and effectively. These are just a few program highlights; for more information please visit: [www.calmhsa.org](http://www.calmhsa.org)*



WELLNESS • RECOVERY • RESILIENCE



Prevention and early intervention save lives and dollars by delivering help before a crisis when it's most effective and less costly.