



Bureau of Justice Assistance Police-Mental Health Collaboration (PHMC) Toolkit “Essential Elements of PMHC Programs” (2010)

ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION
1. Collaborative Planning & Implementation	Organizations / individuals representing a wide range of disciplines / perspectives and with a strong interest in improving law enforcement (LE) encounters with people with mental health (MH) concerns work together in one or more groups to determine the response program’s characteristics and guide implementation efforts.
2. Program Design	The planning committee designs a specialized LE-based program to address the root causes of the problems that impede improved responses to people with MH concerns and make the most of available resources.
3. Specialized Training	All LE personnel who respond to incidents in which MH appears to be a factor receive training to prepare for these encounters; those in specialized assignments receive more comprehensive training. Dispatchers, call takers, and other individuals in a support role receive training tailored to their needs.
4. Call-Taker & Dispatcher Protocols	Call takers and dispatchers identify critical information to direct calls to the appropriate responders, inform the LE response, and record this information for analysis and as a reference for future calls for service.
5. Stabilization, Observation, & Disposition	Specialized LE responders de-escalate and observe the nature of incidents in which mental illness may be a factor using tactics focused on safety. Drawing on their understanding and knowledge of relevant laws and available resources, officers then determine the appropriate disposition.
6. Transportation & Custodial Transfer	LE responders transport and transfer custody of the person with a MH concerns in a safe and sensitive manner that supports the individual’s efficient access to services and the officers’ timely return to duty.
7. Information Exchange & Confidentiality	LE and MH personnel have a well-designed procedure governing the release and exchange of information to facilitate necessary and appropriate communication while protecting the confidentiality of community members.
8. Treatment, Supports, & Services	Specialized LE-based response programs connect individuals with MH concerns to comprehensive and effective community-based treatment, supports, and services.
9. Organizational Support	The LE agency’s policies, practices, and culture support the specialized response program and the personnel who further its goals.
10. Program Evaluation & Sustainability	Data are collected and analyzed to help demonstrate the impact of and inform modifications to the program. Support for the program is continuously cultivated in the community and the LE agency.

For more information, see <https://pmhctoolkit.bja.gov/learning#the-essential-elements-of-pmhc-programs>