



DRUG INTERVENTION

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BACKGROUND:

Drug or alcohol addiction can not only ruin the life of an addicted person but can affect the lives of family, friends and others in the community. People who are addicted to drugs often become involved in criminal activity such as selling drugs or committing crimes such as robbery, theft, and housebreaks to support their addiction.

The traditional role of the police has been to identify and arrest people who use drugs and the dealers who sell to them. Aggressive enforcement by police departments and federal agencies is an important component in controlling the spread of drug abuse, but it should not be law enforcement's only function. The police are in a unique position to identify members of the community who are addicted to drugs and who need treatment. Police often respond to drug overdoses, incidents of domestic violence, vehicle crashes, and reports of suspicious neighborhood activity that involve addicted persons. By identifying addicts and partnering with substance abuse professionals the police have the opportunity to help addicts receive the treatment they need. Reducing the number of addicts in the community is not only an ethical approach, it will reduce the cycle of criminality caused by drug addiction.

POLICY:

It is the policy of the Norwood Police Department, in partnership with Riverside Community Care, to provide information to addicted persons, and to assist them in obtaining treatment for their substance abuse problems.

PROCEDURES:***Duties of the Drug Intervention Specialist***

The Chief of Police will designate an officer(s) to serve as a Drug Intervention Specialist, whose duties shall include but are not limited to the following:

1. Receiving and developing information about people connected to the community who are addicted to alcohol or controlled substances.
2. Maintaining a working partnership with Riverside Community Care.
3. Communicating with addicted persons for the purpose of providing information about substance abuse treatment.
4. Assisting addicted persons in obtaining substance abuse treatment.
5. When necessary, providing transportation for addicted persons to treatment facilities.
6. In partnership with Riverside, periodically checking on persons receiving treatment to ensure that they have access to follow-up care.
7. Periodically checking in with addicted persons who have accepted an offer of assistance from the Department.
8. Performing other such duties as directed.

Drug Intervention

Police officers who learn that a person connected to the community is an active alcoholic, or a person currently using controlled substances, should notify a Drug Intervention Specialist by providing the person's name, biographical information, and circumstances surrounding the receipt of information.

The Drug Intervention Specialist will conduct further research into the person in an attempt to learn more about the nature of his or her addiction. In some cases, the person will already be seeking treatment by the time the information comes to the attention of the police. When that is not the case, a direct intervention by the Drug Intervention Specialist and a substance abuse counselor from Riverside may be warranted.

In most cases, an intervention will be conducted by one or two plainclothes officers and a substance abuse counselor from Riverside. The goal of the intervention is not to make an arrest, although in some cases an arrest may occur, but rather to confront the person about his addiction and offer assistance in obtaining treatment.

The intervention team should begin by gathering information from the addicted person about his level of drug use, associated high-risk behavior, and past experience with drug

treatment. The team should attempt to identify the best modality of treatment for the addicted person, as well as identify obstacles to accessing that treatment. The team should discuss with the addicted person such issues as, health insurance, whether a health professional is already involved, work and family obligations, and mental health history.

If it is determined that the addicted person requires immediate detoxification the team should immediately attempt to identify an available bed. Members of the team should offer to help the person pack, talk to his employer, resolve any obstacles related to the person's family or relationships, and handle any logistics that stand in the way.

If the addicted person requires transportation to a drug treatment facility, officers should offer to drive him there. Department procedures regarding the transportation of civilians in police vehicles should be adhered to and Dispatch should be notified before the transport occurs.

Upon arrival at the treatment facility officers should request that the addicted person sign a waiver so that the intervention team may call to check on his progress. (For this purpose, a Department waiver form has been created and should be carried by officers conducting this work.)

A few days after the addicted person has entered drug treatment the Drug Intervention Specialist or a substance abuse counselor from Riverside should call the facility to check on his progress. It is important that persons in detox make arrangements for follow-up treatment rather than simply being released back into the community following detoxification. The Drug Intervention Specialist shall coordinate with Riverside to ensure that a follow-up plan is in place for every addicted person who was the subject of an intervention.

Whenever practicable, a Drug Intervention Specialist will attempt to monitor the impending release of prisoners from the house of correction and the state prison system that were addicted at the time of his incarceration to ensure they have access to treatment upon release.

Court Commitment

In some cases addicted persons who are in need of treatment resist treatment. Massachusetts General Law Chapter 123, § 35 provides that such a person may be committed by the District Court if the court finds that the person has lost the power of self-control over his use of alcohol or a controlled substance, and that such use substantially injures his health or substantially interferes with his social or economic functioning. A petition for a section 35 commitment may be filed by a physician, spouse, blood relative, guardian, or police officer. In cases where a relative or family member is not available officers of the Norwood Police Department may sign a petition.

Addicted persons committed pursuant to a section 35 procedure should be assisted in the same manner as people who voluntarily accept treatment. As such, the Drug Intervention Specialist or a substance abuse counselor from Riverside should ensure that the person has a plan for follow-up care upon his release.

Arrests of Addicted Persons

When an officer knows an arrestee is a substance abuser, or whose criminal record reflects drug offenses, the officer should seek to engage the arrestee in a conversation about the current status of his drug use. An arrestee who admits to drug use or drug addiction should be informed of the Department's program to assist addicted persons.

Prior to being granted bail any person arrested for a drug offense, or whose record indicates arrests for drug possession, or who admits to drug use or addiction, shall be provided with information about the Departments drug addiction and treatment program. Persons under arrest shall be bailed before being remanded to the custody of a detox facility.

General Requests for Assistance

Patrol officers may have occasion to identify and meet with people who desire to enter treatment for their addiction. Officers are encouraged to seize the moment and assist them with obtaining treatment as long as the shift staffing allows. Officers may use information posted on the Department website under the Drug Control tab to assist them in finding treatment for those willing to get it. Every effort shall be made to find immediate treatment for a person willing to seek it to reduce the chance that he will change his mind.

Officers who successfully find a bed for a person seeking drug treatment should document this intervention in a police report. This report shall be forwarded to a Drug Intervention Specialist for follow up.

Officers working a shift may not be able to devote time to a person willing to enter a detox due to the requirements of the shift, but no person who wants drug treatment should be turned away. In the event that shift requirements prohibit an officer from helping a person with a drug intervention there are other options. Officers can call the Riverside hotline at 781-769-8674 and ask for their assistance. Another option is to reach out directly to a Norwood Police Drug Intervention Specialist and brief him on the case. He will make the determination as to whether immediate response is required or what other action may be taken.

Intoxicated persons are not typically appropriate candidates for admission to a detox facility. In such cases, the person will need to be sober before they can begin an intake procedure with a detox facility.

Any dispatcher who receives a call from a person seeking assistance with his addiction shall notify the shift commander.

Police Reports

A police report shall be filed by any officer who conducts a drug intervention, petitions a court for a Section 35 commitment, or serves a Section 35 warrant of apprehension.

Public Information

The Department will post on its website information about this policy and information about drug treatment under the Drug Control tab.