



# It's Up to Us<sup>®</sup>

to Create a Healthy & Supportive San Diego

A special bulletin covering mental health topics for San Diegans



Edition 37

## About the Bulletin

Seeing a loved one struggle is never easy. If a friend, family member, neighbor, or coworker is ever going through a mental health, drug, or alcohol-related crisis, this bulletin will help you learn the steps you can take to support them.

This bulletin is part of the *It's Up to Us* campaign, developed through the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, and supports the County's *Live Well San Diego* vision to promote a community that is healthy, safe, and thriving. By raising awareness, encouraging dialogue, and providing access to local resources, we aim to inspire wellness, reduce stigma, and prevent suicide in all San Diegans, with a particular emphasis on San Diego's hardest hit and most at-risk populations.



Scan to read more community bulletins.

**Up2SD.org<sup>®</sup>**  
LINK UP FOR INFORMATION AND MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

San Diego Access & Crisis Line

**888-724-7240**

National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

**988**

Community Resources

**211**



## Shine a Light On: Understanding Mental Health, Drug, or Alcohol-Related Crisis

In the event of a mental health or substance use-related emergency, there are services available to help people get connected to professional support. Crisis intervention and response services help make sure emergency workers and law enforcement are only called to situations that require immediate attention.

Mental health and substance use-related emergencies, also known as psychiatric emergencies or behavioral health crises, are situations in which a person's actions, feelings, or behaviors may lead them to hurt themselves or others, or make it hard for them to take care of themselves. Situations like these often involve feelings of hopelessness or helplessness which may lead to alcohol or drug use. If someone you care about is going through a crisis like this, it's important to know how to get them the support they need.

## 4 Key Services to Know

**San Diego Access & Crisis Line (ACL) 888-724-7240** If you need information or help finding resources, this is a good place to start. There are other services listed below that you can connect with too. You can call the ACL if you would like to receive information on programs, support for yourself, or a referral to a specialist.

**Crisis Stabilization Units** These are centers located in the community and also near or within different hospitals in the County of San Diego. These facilities are designed to provide stabilization services for people experiencing a crisis.

**Outpatient Services** These services are provided by the County of San Diego mental health clinics and other providers. They take appointments for those experiencing mental health or substance use disorder conditions and can take urgent walk-in appointments.

**Crisis Response Services** When you call the ACL, a trained dispatcher will answer your call and ask about the situation you are facing. Based on your responses, the dispatcher will determine if certain crisis intervention and response services should be sent out, such as the Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT) or emergency services.

# Read Up: Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT) Program

The Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT) is a crisis response service that was launched in San Diego County in January 2021. MCRTs respond, assess, and de-escalate crisis situations and may be dispatched after a community member contacts the ACL or emergency services.

One thing that makes this program unique from other crisis response teams like the Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT) is that MCRTs are not part of law enforcement. They offer an alternative response option for San Diegans experiencing a mental health or substance use-related crisis. Teams have a clinician who is trained in behavior, a case manager, and peer support. MCRTs can help in situations that meet specific criteria, like when there are no threats of violence or medical emergencies (read below for more information). These services are designed to meet the individual “where they’re at” in a way that is responsive and respectful.

MCRTs will arrive and help you to understand and de-escalate the situation. They will explain your options and suggest what you can do next. If you need it, they can also give you a ride to get further help. **Their goal is to help you find the best kind of support that fits your needs.**

## What Do Crisis Intervention and Response Services Provide?

**MCRT** Non-Law enforcement team



**PERT** Law enforcement + clinician



**EMS** If there is a medical emergency



Depending on the situation, additional crisis response services may be deployed.

## MCRTs Can Be Helpful When ...

1. There are no injuries requiring a medical response.
2. There are no weapons involved or known possession of a weapon.
3. The person is not involved in serious criminal activity related to the need for a response that warrants law enforcement involvement.
4. The person is not known to be in connection with an ongoing law enforcement investigation.
5. There is no threat of violence or potential for immediate violence or use of violence toward others or self.

If law enforcement was not specifically requested AND all other criteria listed above are met, a dispatcher may recommend MCRT be sent out to respond to the crisis situation.

If you're still unsure what to do or what you need, call the **ACL 888-724-7240** to speak to a trained expert. To learn more about these services, visit [sandiegocounty.gov/mcrt/](https://sandiegocounty.gov/mcrt/) and [comresearch.org/pert.php](https://comresearch.org/pert.php).

## SOURCES

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