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CHIEF OF POLICE

IRVINE POLICE DEPARTMENT

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The Irvine Police Department is committed to the mental health and wellness of the citizens of Irvine. As such, in 2013 the department created the position of Mental Health Outreach Officer. This position started as one officer reaching out to residents who are either suffering from mental health related issues, or families of those living with mental illness. The Irvine Police Department recognized the value of this program and in 2016 the unit grew from one to two full time police officers. Now, in 2022, there are three full time police officer positions dedicated to the Mental Health Outreach Unit, which is part of the department's Threat Management Unit. Our Mental Health Outreach Unit collaborates with the City's FOR Families Program as well as Orange County Behavioral Health in order to focus on wrap-around services and linking clients to resources. This approach allows the mental health professionals to engage the client at a time when they are not in crisis and better able to understand and accept resources. This approach also allows for a broader spectrum of resources that can be delivered, hopefully eliminating another crisis. The Mental Health Outreach Unit tries to focus on what is best for the client. Based on the desire of the client, we can conduct a home visit, have the client meet with us at the police station, or meet in a public place.

Within the Mental Health Outreach Unit is our Homeless Liaison Officer (HLO) position. The goal of the HLO is to work with the homeless members of our community and connect them to housing, food, medical, mental health, and other critical resources. They partner with Orange County's Outreach & Engagement (OCOE) to help link the homeless in our community to these services. Helping someone connect to housing can take several interactions; however, the HLO and OCOE is committed to contacting a client as many times as it takes to help them access these services.

One question that is often asked is, "as a member of the community, what can I do to help someone who is homeless, or who is suffering from mental illness?" The first thing you can do is reach out to the Mental Health Outreach Unit at outreach@cityofirvine.org. Whether you're looking for support for yourself or someone you know, or just wanting to report that you have seen someone in the community who may benefit from contact by our unit. Using this email address and providing as much detail as you can will help us connect to those community members. This email address is monitored during business hours, so if there is an emergency or immediate attention is needed, you can reach out to our dispatch center by either calling 949-724-7200, or 9-1-1, to have a patrol officer respond.

You can also look to the City of Irvine's website at <https://www.cityofirvine.org/seek-assistance/mental-health-resources> for access to local mental health services or <https://www.cityofirvine.org/services/affordable-housing/homeless-services>, which lists a number of non-profits in the city who are committed to helping our homeless community.

The Irvine Police Department's Mental Health Outreach Unit is here for you and our community, and we hope you will reach out if you need us.

- Sergeant Sarah Tunnicliffe, Supervisor for the Threat Management Unit