Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS)

Washington State Health Care Authority

Reference guide supporting youth, families, caregivers, and communities

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MRSS guide

The **Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS)** model is a crisis intervention approach designed to address the immediate needs of children, youth, young adults, and their caregivers. It emphasizes rapid response and intervention to stabilize families experiencing behavioral health challenges and prevent further escalation or harm. Overall, MRSS plays a role in providing timely and effective support to families facing behavioral health challenges, helping to prevent crises from escalating and promoting the overall health and stability of children and their families.

Who can access MRSS?

MRSS supports:

- Children and youth ages 0-20
- Parents and caregivers
- Young adults and their support networks

No diagnosis required. No cost to familes.

How it works (what to expect)

1. **Call your regional MRSS number***
2. **Team arrives (within 2 hours or less)**
3. **Crisis support and de-escalation provided on-site**
4. **Stabilization plan developed with the family**
5. **Connection to longer term support services**

*Find your regional MRSS number at: **hca.wa.gov/assets/program/mrss-youth-team-map.pdf**

MRSS teams

Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS) teams are composed of trained professionals who work together to provide rapid and effective crisis intervention and stabilization services. A mobile crisis response team provides support 24 hours per day, every day of the year with at least one team of two staff per shift. Overall team composition can be flexible based on regional need and staff availability.

Key components

MRSS teams include trained staff such as Family or Youth peers, social workers, or counselors who respond quickly to families when they call for help. They assess the immediate needs of the youth and caregivers and provide an appropriate face-to-face assessment to ensure de-escalation, safety, and stability.

Services may include crisis assessments, education about mental health, short-term therapy, skill-building, and other evidence-based approaches. MRSS helps support safe behavior at home, in school, and in the community, and helps avoid unnecessary involvement with police or the court system due to behavioral health needs.

MRSS teams include supervisors who oversee the team's operations and ensure adherence to best practices. Psychiatric consultation may be available to provide additional support and expertise in managing complex cases.

MRSS teams often work closely with other community-based services, including mental health agencies, schools, hospitals, primary care providers, after school programs, and community supports to coordinate care and ensure continuity of support for the child and family. These components ensure that MRSS teams are well-equipped to provide timely and effective support to families facing behavioral health challenges, promoting the overall health and stability of children and their families.

Positive outcomes

The Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS) model offers several positive outcomes for children, youth, young adults, and their caregivers facing behavioral health challenges.

Key benefits

- **Prevents disruption of living arrangements:** MRSS interventions help stabilize the immediate crisis, preventing the need for children and youth to be removed from their current living arrangements
- **Reduces emergency department visits:** By addressing behavioral health crises promptly, MRSS interventions reduce the admission to emergency departments, inpatient psychiatric units, detention centers, and residential treatment centers.
- **Reduces hospitalization:** By providing timely and effective support, MRSS interventions can prevent hospitalization or re-hospitalization whenever possible.
- **Connection to support services:** Families receive connections to clinical or peer support services, ensuring they have access to ongoing support and resources.
- **Access to trauma-informed services:** MRSS interventions provide community access to trauma-informed services, which are crucial for addressing the behavioral health needs of children and youth.
- **Cost-effective:** Early and immediate access to care through MRSS is a cost-effective intervention that prevents the unintended harm associated with more restrictive interventions like law enforcement responses, emergency department visits, and inpatient care.
- **Promotes safe behavior:** MRSS teams intentionally partner with families and supportive adults in a youth's life to ensure safety in homes, schools, and communities. These coordinated, responsive efforts help reduce disruptions and keep youth in their homes and communities.
- **Reduces system involvement:** MRSS helps prevent unnecessary contact with law enforcement and family court by addressing behavioral health needs early. In some situations, such as when multiple calls are received from schools, a single clinician may respond alone.
- **Supports daily activities:** Stabilization services help youth manage daily activities and establish clear connections to community support.

These benefits highlight the importance of MRSS interventions in providing timely and effective support to families facing behavioral health challenges, promoting the overall health and stability of children and their families.

System of Care (SOC) values

The term "System of Care" refers to a coordinated network of community-based services and supports designed to meet the needs of children, youth, and families facing complex behavioral and mental health challenges. Overall, the System of Care aims to create an array of services and support that are youth- and family-driven, community-based, and culturally and linguistically responsive, promoting the overall health and well-being of children and their families.

Key aspects

- **Philosophy and Collaboration:** The System of Care is based on cross-system collaboration that supports youth and families with significant behavioral and mental health needs. It integrates care planning and management across multiple levels of care and builds meaningful partnerships with families and youth.
- **Core Values:** Systems of Care are family-driven and youth-guided, with the strengths and needs of the child and family determining the types and mix of services and supports provided. They are community-based, culturally and linguistically competent, and designed to build meaningful partnerships with families and youth.
- **Guiding Principles:** Systems of Care ensure availability of and access to a broad, flexible array of effective, evidence-informed, community-based services and supports. They provide individualized services, deliver services within the least restrictive environments, and ensure cross-system collaboration.
- **State and Local Levels:** Systems of Care exist at both state and local levels, with policies and management infrastructure supporting the delivery and management of services. Local Systems of Care address barriers experienced by youth and families and involve various community groups and organizations.
- **Family-Driven and Youth-Guided:** The strengths and needs of the child and family determine the types and mix of services and supports provided.
- **Community-Based:** Services are provided within the community, ensuring that the locus of services, as well as system management, rests within a supportive, adaptive infrastructure at the community level.
- **Culturally and Linguistically Competent:** Agencies, programs, and services reflect the cultural, racial, ethnic, and linguistic differences of the populations they serve, facilitating access to and utilization of appropriate services and supports.

These core values ensure that the System of Care is responsive to the unique needs of children and families, promoting their overall health and well-being.

Learn more

Contact your regional location: **hca.wa.gov/assets/program/mrss-youth-team-map.pdf**

Visit mental health crisis line webpage: **hca.wa.gov/free-or-low-cost-health-care/i-need-behavioral-health-support/mental-health-crisis-lines**

Email: **HCADBHRInformation@hca.wa.gov**