



HOMELESSNESS, ADDICTION RESPONSE PROJECT (HARP)

CPS has seen a steady rise in calls relating to mental health, addiction and public mischief over the last three years. Similarly, during this same period, on-street officers detailed an increase in visible homelessness centred within the downtown core and key local tourist areas (beachfront/municipal parks). As a result, CPS developed the Homelessness, Addiction Response Project (HARP). Two CPS Officers, Sergeant Janice MacDonald and Constable Janet Bertrand were assigned part-time between July and September of 2021 to this initiative. The HARP initiative focused on increasing police presence in the downtown core with an emphasis on engagement with members of the community with the highest acuity who may be struggling with homelessness addiction and mental health. The outcomes of this initiative

pilot showcased the importance of expanding and creating a full-time HARP unit.

The HARP initiative was developed in response to an increased report of visual homelessness by its officers as well as an over 50% increase in requests for service calls linked to suspicious persons (from 500 in 2020 to 783 in 2021). [it should be noted that there is high correlation between suspicious persons calls and homelessness]. The short term program made inroads into establishing a consistent presence in the downtown core that allowed for continuous interaction and the build-up of trust from the public and those experiencing homelessness.

HARP has worked closely with various agencies in Northumberland County, building essential partnerships with local community organizations, such as Transition House, Greenwood Coalition, and surrounding police services. Additionally,

HARP participated in Northumberland County's Homelessness Co-ordinated Response Team (HCRT) sharing expertise and existing resources to support individuals and families experiencing homelessness in the County.

HIGHLIGHT

HARP had the opportunity to engage with a 48-year-old male with an extensive history of criminogenic behaviour. This community member was struggling with addiction and homelessness. This male returned to the Town of Cobourg after an extended period of incarceration within the Provincial Justice System. HARP primarily became engaged with this male after a series of suspected drug poisonings, which HARP officers responded to. Over the duration of the summer, HARP was able to work closely with the male and reconnect him with family. The male now is successfully living with his family outside of Cobourg and is gainfully employed.

OUTCOMES

30
INDIVIDUALS
ENGAGED

10
PEOPLE CONNECTED
TO SERVICES

25
ARRESTS



WHAT'S INSIDE

Partner Features:

M-HEART

Cornerstone

Rebound



MENTAL HEALTH ENGAGEMENT AND RESPONSE TEAM (M-HEART)

In 2021, CPS responded to 243 mental health related calls. With each call being unique, officers work to make the appropriate referrals and connect community members to services. In partnership with Northumberland Hills Hospital, our Mental Health Engagement and Response Team (M-HEART) enhance what we are able to provide to our vulnerable populations or those experiencing a mental health crisis. The M-HEART team includes, one lead CPS officer, who works solely with M-HEART, one lead FourCAST addictions counsellor employed and designated by FourCAST to work solely with M-HEART, and one lead mental health clinician employed and designated by Northumberland Hills Hospital Community Mental Health Services to work solely with M-HEART.

Outreach, as an intervention process, provides support to an individual exhibiting symptoms of mental illness and/or experiencing substance use concerns that are at times disturbing to an individual or to others in the community. M-HEART coordinates the assessment, intervention, and referral to potentially reduce the risk of escalation of the symptoms and behaviour to the point of psychiatric emergency or involvement with justice services.

M-HEART provides mental health support and a wrap around service delivery model that extends individuals' family and/or identifies caregiver supports.

