



Crisis Stabilization Unit Offers Alternative to Hospitalization for Mental Health Crises

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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CARTERVILLE - Centerstone's Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) offers help to community members who need a few days of support.

The CSU, located in Cartersville, is aimed toward people who would benefit from mental health support but don't need the inpatient care of a hospital. People stay at the CSU for up to ten days to learn new coping skills, create a safety plan, and potentially get their medications sorted out. Karsen Finney, CSU coordinator, explained that people come to the CSU for different reasons.

"Crisis looks so different for everybody," Finney said. "You and I probably would have very different definitions of what would be a major event in our lives, so it can be straight mental health stuff, it can be loss of housing, relationship issues, anything that's kind of a major stressor. We're here to help support people through that."

The CSU offers six group therapy sessions a day, and clients have access to a nurse and telepsychiatry services. Trauma-informed recovery specialists are there 24/7, so there is constant support available. Finney said most of the recovery specialists have their own experiences with mental health and substance use, so they can offer unique perspectives and assistance.

Finney noted that a lot of mental health professionals focus on the highest level of need (inpatient hospitalization) or the lowest level of need (outpatient therapy), but there aren't a lot of stopgaps for people in crisis. Finney pointed out that many people will go to the ER or call 911 but won't meet the criteria to be hospitalized, so they'll be sent home. The CSU provides the extra support that many people need.

While at the CSU, clients will work with Finney to create a safety plan and learn other coping skills, often from their fellow clients. This support can be exactly what a client needs to feel more confident about returning to their life.

“It really flips to more of a growth mindset,” Finney said. “We focus so much on problem-solving. Like, yes, everybody’s got a story and it matters. What has happened matters. And then we kind of shift into moving forward. In the future, how do we avoid that or how can we help you get back to where you want to be? What does that look like? And really focusing on future-oriented, person-centered kind of conversations.”

The CSU can also provide interim care for people who are preparing to enter more intensive programs. Finney said they recently had a client who was going to a 30-day program but had another week before his bed was ready. He came to the CSU and spent the week there, receiving support before he entered the longer program.

Finney noted that upon admission, clients will work with a recovery specialist to create a safety plan. They will then update the safety plan with new coping skills before they leave the CSU. Finney said it is encouraging to see how many clients are more confident and comfortable by the end of their stay.

“I think that for me really is the most satisfying, because you can see just the change in the way that folks speak to you, the way that they’re talking about these plans, their level of confidence when they’re ready to go home. It’s just powerful,” Finney said. “They are the master of their own destinies here and they have done all this work and it shows and they know it, and that’s really satisfying for me to see.”

The CSU has eight beds and “doesn’t feel like a hospital,” Finney added. Clients must be over age 18 to be admitted to the CSU. People can call Centerstone’s crisis service line at 1-855-608-3560 to find out more, or you can talk to your provider about getting a referral. Centerstone will reach out within an hour of receiving a referral. Anyone who feels like they are in immediate danger of harming themselves or others should call 911 or go to the hospital, and Centerstone will send a mobile crisis team to the hospital. For [more information about the CSU](#), visit Centerstone’s official website at [Centerstone.org](https://www.centerstone.org).

*If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. **Call or text 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org.***