

Regional
Crisis Team



PUTNAM | NORTHERN WESTCHESTER BOCES

**REGIONAL CRISIS TEAM (RCT)
NYSCOSS FALL SUMMIT**

September 24, 2018



Crisis Team Model & Theoretical Framework

The crisis team model is an exemplary example of an interdisciplinary intervention where health professionals from all disciplines come together for a common purpose.

Source: Roberts, A. R. (2005) Crisis Intervention Handbook: Assessment, treatment and research. New York: Oxford University Press.



History of RCT

In 1999 following the tragic events at Columbine High School, the Putnam Northern Westchester BOCES Regional Crisis Team (RCT) was established by Dr. Jeanne Gold, Coordinator of the Guidance & Child Study Center, along with a small group of school helping professionals. Their goal was to take proactive steps to create a network to assist school districts in the event of a similar serious crisis in our region.



The Purpose of the RCT

1 Provide guidance, support and/or assistance to students, staff and/or administrators within the PNW BOCES region that may be needed after a national disaster, school violence, the death of a school community member or other serious school crises.

2 Provide crisis intervention and response training and resources as well as share best practices with members of the team.

RCT Members

The RCT consists of volunteers from various component school districts and other community mental health agencies.

PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS: Bedford, Brewster, Briarcliff, Carmel, Chappaqua, Croton-Harmon, Garrison, Haldane, Hendrick Hudson, Katonah-Lewisboro, Lakeland, Mahopac, North Salem, Ossining, Peekskill, Putnam Valley, PNW BOCES, Somers and Yorktown.

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES: Bereavement Center of Westchester, Child Advocacy Center of Putnam County, ESI Employee Assistance Program, Four Winds Hospital, MHA of Westchester, Newtown Comfort (LCC K9) Dogs, and Putnam Northern Westchester Women's Resource Center.

SPECIAL CONSULTANTS: Dr. Barbara Bernstein (MHA of Westchester)

SPECIAL AFFILIATES: PNW BOCES Administrators Regional Crisis Team (ARCT), Regional Suicide Prevention in Schools Leadership Team, Long Island School Practitioner Action Network (LISPAN), Western Connecticut Regional Crisis Team.



Roles & Expectations of RCT Members

- Remain current and apply best practices in the areas of crisis prevention, intervention and response.
- Adhere to the professional code of ethics.
- Participate in monthly meetings.
- Be available to report when the RCT is activated
- Promote use of the RCT in the region.
- Share information, materials and resources with school districts, agencies, etc. throughout the region.



Monthly RCT Meetings

- Networking and sharing among members.
- Training and/or presentations on topics related to crisis intervention and response.
- Learning by debriefing recent school crisis situations.



RCT Activation Process

The RCT is activated when a school district contacts the RCT onsite facilitator (Lynn Allen or Frank Guglieri) who:

- Collects factual information about the situation and determines what additional services are needed.
- Contacts RCT members to report or be on standby as needed.
- Remains in contact with the school district throughout the duration of the crisis situation.
- Facilitates onsite debriefings with school districts and with the members of the RCT as needed or requested.



Onsite RCT Work

When RCT members are deployed, they:

- Report to the assigned RCT onsite facilitator for instructions.
- Understand that they are responding only to the stated needs of the school district.
- Are aware of the importance of supporting the school district without being intrusive or over reactive.
- Are cognizant that the school district's administrators and staff members know how best to meet the needs of their school communities.
- Check in with RCT onsite facilitator to be debriefed before leaving.



RCT Statistics

Since 2007 when statistics began being collected, the RCT has served over 18 schools in the region:

- 41 responses due to student deaths
- 20 responses due to staff member deaths
- 13 responses due to other crisis situations
- **74 = total responses (activation, standby, consultations, etc.)**



RCT Longevity

The RCT has remained in existence since 1999 because of:

- Longstanding, proven leadership in the areas of crisis prevention, intervention and response.
- Volunteer professionals from area school districts and agencies who are committed to helping schools in times of need.
- The team's responsive, supportive, trustworthy and professional approach.



Benefits of the RCT

- Providing additional guidance, support and assistance to students, staff and/or administrators during serious school crises at any time including evenings, weekends and vacations.
- Providing training and relevant information regarding crisis prevention, intervention and response.
- Sharing best practices and resources to help prevent crises and effectively respond when they occur.



RCT Affiliates

ADMINISTRATORS REGIONAL CRISIS TEAM (ARCT)

- Serves as an arm of the PNW BOCES' Regional Crisis Team (RCT) to share best practices in the areas of crisis prevention, intervention and response as well as expand available support to school districts in the region during crisis situations.
- Serves as a volunteer network of district and building level administrators who volunteer to support other administrators before, during and after crisis situations.



RCT Affiliates

NEWTOWN COMFORT (LCC K9) DOGS

Requesting the LCC K9 Comfort Dogs:

- If the district representative requests one or more comfort dogs, the RCT onsite facilitator will make arrangements for deployment.
- Types of Crises:
- LCC K9 comfort dogs are highly trained and are prepared to respond to a variety of crisis situations, including but limited to, disasters and deaths of students or staff. LCC K9 comfort dogs can be helpful after any crisis that has a significant emotional impact on students and staff.



RCT Recognition

- In 2011, the RCT was selected by the University of Western Sydney, Australia (School of Medicine - Disaster Response & Resilience Research Group) to meet with a Churchill Fellow to extend her knowledge of models for assisting children who experience disasters specifically in school settings.
- In 2011, the RCT was featured in an article in the New York Association of School Psychologists' Newsletter entitled, PNW BOCES Regional Crisis Team: A Collaborative Professional Learning Community Approach to Crisis Response.



RCT Recognition

- In 2009 and 2015, the RCT presented an *Overview of PNW BOCES Regional Crisis Team*, at the New York State Association of School Psychologists.
- In 2016, an *Overview of PNW BOCES Regional Crisis Team* was presented at the New York State Association of School Personnel Administrators' Annual Conference.
- In 2018, an *Overview of PNW BOCES Regional Crisis Team* was presented at the New York State School Boards Association Convention.



**American
Red Cross**

Recipient of the American Red Cross
Community Impact Heroes Award

- May 2009 -



RCT Replication

- At all times, the RCT is interested in supporting and improving crisis work on all levels and in all regions.
- Similar teams have been established at Western Connecticut State University in 2014-2015 and in Long Island (LISPAN) in 2015-2016.
- A similar team is in the process of being formed in the Greater Southern Tier.



RCT VIDEO:

*Only a
Phone Call
Away*



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

LYNN ALLEN

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT
PUTNAM | NORTHERN WESTCHESTER BOCES

lallen@pnwboces.org (914) 248-2310