

The Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) News

The BHU is excited to be able to return to some of the conferences, trainings and gatherings with the community and other law enforcement and mental health professionals that COVID prevented from occurring in the past couple of years. We also look forward to some of our Unit attending the International Crisis Intervention Team Conference at the end of August.

Joint Threat Assessment Training (JTAT)

The Joint Threat Assessment Training (JTAT) holds annual trainings which are sponsored by the National Association of Threat Assessment Professionals. The BHU are members of the Northwest Regional Chapter. At the end of April the Behavioral Health Unit participated in the Western Regional Joint Threat Assessment Training (JTAT) with three officers and two clinicians in attendance. The training focuses on major issues surrounding public attacks, workplace violence, domestic violence, and other situations involving the prevention of targeted violence. Information relating to the most up-to-date information, research, and techniques on community safety are presented. Specifically, BHU attendees learned of industry standards for threat mitigation. This training provides a great opportunity for BHU staff to learn the latest best practices associated with threat assessment and management, along with networking with professionals who are engaged in similar work across the Northwest region.



Northwest Chapter



BHU Members at Montana State University

BHU and Service Coordination Team Partnership in Action

On April 12, 2021, Mary was referred to the Behavioral Health Unit after a recent release from St. Vincent's Hospital. She was hospitalized after she stopped taking her medication and began experiencing acute mental health symptoms. At the time Mary was living in a motel and generated multiple police calls over several months.

Mary's husband was extremely concerned for her and the impact her mental illness was having on their children. They had recently separated and he had full custody of the children. DHS recommended that Mary not be left alone with the kids and her husband was awaiting a custody agreement to be established through mediation. He struggled to find viable resources to help get her to a stable place.

BHU Officers contacted Mary's godmother. She revealed Mary was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder I. She believed Mary would be willing to consider medication adjustments and some form of mental health support. She expressed concerns that Mary did not fully trust the police and was hesitant to let us know where she was staying. After several conversations, BHU Officers were able to explain what services they could offer and Mary's godmother ultimately agreed to provide her contact information.

A BHU Officer called Mary and spoke to her by phone. The Officer described BHU and Service Coordination Team resources. Mary presented highly manic, and although hesitant at first, agreed to meet with the Supportive Transitions and Stabilization staff on April 22, 2021. The BHU team met Mary in front of the location prior to the meeting and introduced her to the staff. She moved into the program in late April.

While in the program, Mary participated in peer support, case management, and outpatient behavioral health services. She started taking medication, which helped stabilize her mental health and engaged in vocational rehabilitation. Due to her progress and consistency, she reconnected with her family, starting with supervised visits with her children. In the middle of January 2022 Mary completed the program and reunited permanently with her husband and children.

BHU Welcomes New Sergeant and Clinicians

On April 14th Sergeant Joshua Silverman joined the Behavioral Health Unit as a new BHU Sergeant, replacing Sergeant Benson Weinberger. Josh joined the Bureau in August of 2009 and worked multiple assignments, including time as a Behavioral Health Response Team (BHRT) officer from 2012-2015 in the Behavioral Health Unit (BHU). He has also been assigned to Central Precinct, North Precinct, the Tactical Operations Division/ Specialized Resources Division and worked New Columbia Detail from 2018-2020. He is currently a member of the Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT) for PPB and has been since 2016. During Josh's time at North precinct he was promoted to Sergeant and worked in that role from 2020-2022 prior to his transfer to BHU.

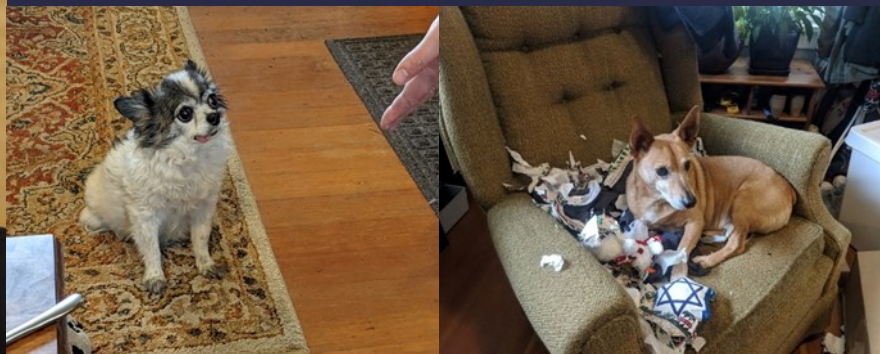
Prior to his career with PPB Josh worked as a Paraeducator at Grant High School in a Life Skills Classroom. He was also an English teacher in Istanbul. His volunteer experience includes being a tutor for GED preparedness at Inverness jail and volunteering at Lines 4 Life from 2013-2017.

Josh genuinely enjoys his work within the BHU. He states, "The work at BHU is collaborative, rewarding and focused on pragmatic solutions that increase safety and the wellbeing of all involved. The clinicians and officers do amazing work. I am currently focused on supporting the unit by improving our internal processes so we can be even more effective, efficient, evidence-based, and responsive to the ever-evolving problem of untreated mental illness."



Sergeant Josh Silverman

Josh has two geriatric dogs named Scout and Mitzi. In his time off he likes to rock climb, run and try to read most of the books in his book club.



Josh's dogs Scout and Mitzi

BHU Welcomes New Sergeant and Clinicians (cont.)

Our Behavioral Health Response Teams also recently expanded. The newest members of BHU are Clinician Sarah Attal, Officer Zack Nell and Clinician Marissa Benson.

Sarah actually worked for the BHU previously from 2018-2021. We are all very pleased to welcome Sarah back to the Unit. Her dedication and compassion for her work is admirable. Due to PPB's internal restructuring in 2020 Sarah left briefly to work for the Gresham Police Department's BHU in the same capacity as her position as a BHRT with PPB's BHU.



Clinician Sarah Attal

Prior to her BHU assignment, she was a mental health crisis clinician with Project Respond for two years. Before joining Project Respond, Sarah studied at UCLA. She believes her time with Project Respond gave her the opportunity to get to know the community she is serving. She has experience in crisis intervention and navigating appropriate interventions for individuals experiencing mental health crises.

Sarah believes that BHU has an integral role in the community. For some individuals struggling with mental illness who have contact with the police, it is highly valuable to have an officer/clinician team to work on developing relationships with those individuals, in order to assist them in getting connected to services. Sarah's team focuses on mentally ill individuals who are houseless or unsheltered in the City of Portland. Sarah states: "Our goal is to get them connected to permanent housing and services."

In her time off, Sarah enjoys cooking, coffee and her dog.

BHU Welcomes New Sergeant and Clinicians (cont.)

On March 3rd Officer Zachary Nell joined the Behavioral Health Unit as a new BHRT Officer. Zack joined the Bureau in March of 2011. He has worked as a patrol officer, foot patrol, and is a Crisis Negotiation Team Member.

Zack said, "I love to help people in need and to provide whatever support I can to those that may be affected by such difficult circumstances."

Prior to his career with PPB Zack served in the Air Force for six years as Security Forces right out of high school. During his time with the Air Force he had the opportunity to be stationed in Turkey, Italy and Wyoming.

Zack grew up on the east coast in Connecticut. He loves spending time with his family and travelling whenever he can. He loves playing video games, the New York Yankees, pop culture and inserting quotes from random movies and TV shows into normal day-to-day conversation.



Officer Zack Nell

Emergency Services:	911
Non-Emergency Services:	(503) 823-3333
<i>Crisis Lines (24-hours)</i>	
Multnomah County Behavioral Health Call Center	(503) 988-4888
Lines for Life Suicide Hotline:	(800) 273-8255
Spanish line:	(888) 628-9454
Oregon Youth Line:	(877) 968-8491
<i>Crisis Lines (not 24-hours)</i>	
David Romprey Warm Line:	(800) 698-2392

