

WEBINAR SESSION

# Crisis Is Not the Start: Prevention, Partnership, and Protection in Children, Youth and Families in Crisis Care

February 19, 2026



*Funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration*



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# Crisis Systems Response TTAC

SAMHSA has selected Altarum to provide training and technical assistance (TTA) support to states, territories, Tribal organizations, and community partners across the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and crisis continuum of care. Along with our partners, W2 Consulting Corporation and Change Matrix, LLC, who have extensive experience with crisis services and technical assistance, the Crisis Systems Response Training and Technical Assistance Center (CSR-TTAC) was formed to support the continued growth of the 988 Lifeline and build a more robust crisis care system.



# SAMHSA Acknowledgements

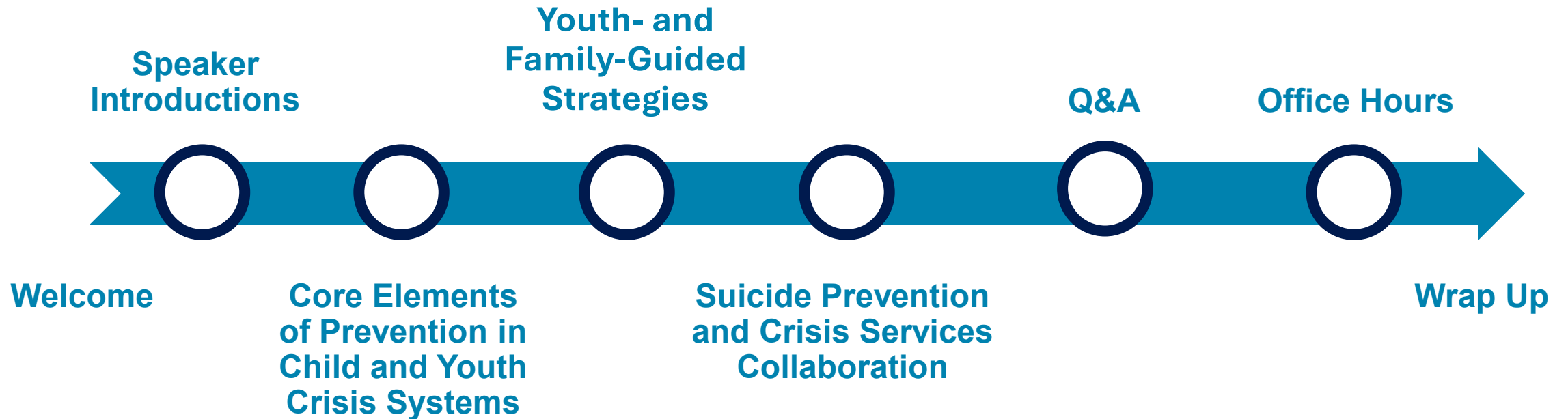


**Jill D. Mays, MS, LPC**  
Division Director of Crisis System  
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Public Health  
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# Agenda



# Speaker: Tracy Levins, PhD



**Tracy Levins, PhD**  
**Managing Director,**  
**Center for Applied**  
**Research Solutions**  
**(CARS)**

With more than 30 years of professional experience across juvenile justice, behavioral health, children’s mental health, and TTA, Dr. Tracy Levins has partnered with communities, organizations, policymakers, and service providers to design programs and policies to improve access to needed services and resources. She currently serves as Managing Director at the CARS, a nonprofit organization that delivers national, regional, state, and community-based TTA to strengthen services for children, youth, young adults, and their families. Tracy helped lead the SAMHSA-funded National TTA Center (NTTAC) for Child, Youth, and Family Mental Health, as well as CARS’ work on SAMHSA’s Program to Advance Recovery Knowledge. She contributes to the strategic direction and guidance of multiple behavioral health and substance use prevention initiatives, leading content development for TTA activities that include outreach and engagement, product development, innovation, and implementation support.

# Speaker: Lana Lipe, LCSW



Lana is a LCSW and doctoral candidate, as well as the State Program Director of Suicide Prevention & Crisis Response in Indiana. She oversees 5 programs including: 988, Mobile Crisis, Crisis Receiving & Stabilization Services, Disaster Behavioral Health, and Suicide Prevention initiatives.

**Lana Lipe, LCSW**  
**Assistant Director of**  
**Suicide Prevention and**  
**Crisis Response,**  
**Indiana Division of**  
**Mental Health and**  
**Addiction**

PRESENTATION

# Crisis Is Not the Start

Prevention, Partnership, and Protection in  
Children, Youth, and Families in Crisis Care

Presented by:

**Tracy Levins, PhD**

Center for Applied Research Solutions

# Learning Objectives

- Describe key prevention-focused strategies that support individuals and communities before crisis occurs.
- Examine how youth- and family-guided planning strengthens crisis preparedness and reduces escalation.
- Identify how schools, behavioral health, child welfare, juvenile justice, and healthcare systems collaborate to support prevention.
- Apply community-responsive strategies that reflect family identity and firsthand experience.
- Elevate the ways suicide prevention and crisis services can work collaboratively to effectively impact the lives of children, youth, and families.

# A Crisis Rarely Happens Overnight



A close-up photograph of a car's dashboard. The background is dark, with several gauges and indicators visible. A prominent feature is a glowing yellow 'CHECK ENGINE' light in a red-bordered box. To the right, there's a gauge with a needle pointing towards the right, and a control knob with the word 'OFF' and a number '8'. The overall lighting is dramatic, with the 'CHECK ENGINE' light being the brightest element.

**Crisis Is a  
Symptom;  
It's Not the  
Starting Point**

**CHECK ENGINE**



**Prevention Isn't the  
Absence of Crisis—  
it's the *Presence of  
Protection.***

# We Can Increase a Family's Protection from Crisis by Intentionally Focusing on

- Protective factors
- Early identification
- Community-based supports

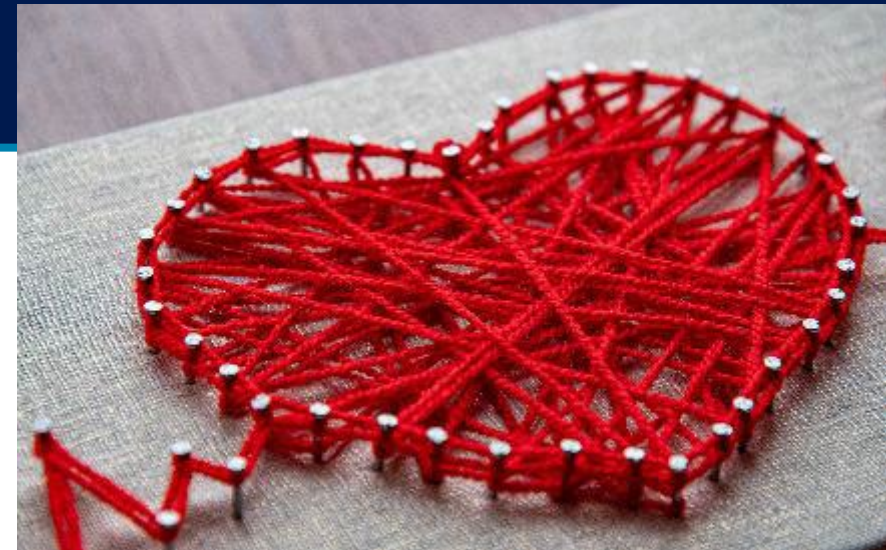


# Protective Factors for Youth Mental Health

- **Protective factors** are characteristics that are associated with a **lower likelihood of problem outcomes**. *They support healthy development and help buffer stress before it escalates into crisis.*<sup>1</sup>
- Protective factors **increase the possibility of experiencing positive mental health** including strong social connections and stable relationships.<sup>2</sup>

1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). [About Mental Health & Protective Factors](#). Accessed February 8, 2026.

2 CDC. [Mental Health and Suicide Risk Among High School Students and Protective Factors — YRBS 2023](#). MMWR 73(Suppl-4):79–86. Accessed February 8, 2026.



## Examples of Protective Factors

- Positive coping and emotional regulation skills
- Strong family connections
- Supportive and stable relationships
- Clear expectations and structure
- Strong social connections
- Access to employment, housing, education, healthcare



## Early Identification

Most crises are preceded by signals—changes in behavior, school attendance, mood, family stress. Often, different people involved in the families' lives each see a piece of the picture.

# Community-Based Supports

**Support starts in  
the community**



# The System of Care Approach Can Be the Safety Net





## **What Is a System of Care Approach?**

The system of care framework is an approach to coordinating efforts by agencies, organizations, families, and youth in a community so that services and supports are accessible, appropriate, and lead to positive outcomes.

## How familiar are you with the System of Care (SOC) approach?

- A. I could teach a course in the SOC approach.
- B. I know what it is and I've been part of one in my community.
- C. I've heard of it but can't remember details.
- D. Wait—the system of what?



# The SOC Approach

*A system of care* is a comprehensive spectrum of effective services and supports for children, youth, and young adults with or at risk for mental health or other challenges and their families that...

...is organized into a **coordinated network of care**;

...builds meaningful **partnerships** with families & youth;

...and is **responsive to the unique needs** of the child and family.

**Primary Goal:** To help children, youth, and their families function better at home, in school, in the community, and throughout life.

A system of care incorporates mental health promotion, prevention, early identification, and early intervention in addition to treatment and crisis services to address the needs of **all** children, youth, and young adults.

# Dimensions of the SOC Framework



*Where do you fit in?*

Source: Adapted from Stroul, B.A., Blau, G.M., & Larsen, J. (2021). *The Evolution of the System of Care Approach*. Baltimore: The Institute for Innovation and Implementation, School of Social Work, University of Maryland.

# Elements of the SOC Framework



## Philosophy

- Values
- Principles

## Infrastructure

- Structures
- Processes
- Partnerships

## Services & Supports

- Home and community-based
- Individualized support
- Care delivery is aligned with SOC principles

# SOC Philosophy: Core Values

Core Values	SOCs Are:
Family- and Youth-Driven	Family- and youth-driven, with families and young people supported in determining the types of treatment and supports provided (with increasing youth/young adult self-determination based on age and development), and their involvement in decision-making roles in system-level policies, procedures, and priorities.
Community-Based	Community based, with services and supports provided in home, school, primary care, and community settings to the greatest extent possible, and with responsibility for system management and accountability resting within a supportive, adaptive infrastructure of structures, processes, and relationships at the community or regional level.
Responsive to the unique needs of the child and family	Culturally aware and linguistically responsive with services, supports, and resources adapted to meet the specific and unique needs of each child and family.

# Family- and Youth-Driven

Individual Youth and Family	Systems and Administration	Community and Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Youth and families are the experts on their own experiences</li><li>• Voice and choice in designing their services and treatment plans</li><li>• They identify the goals they want to achieve</li><li>• Access to peer support</li><li>• Design agendas for their team meetings</li><li>• Employed as outreach workers, peer support specialists, evaluators, etc.</li><li>• Develop and run peer support groups</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Equal partners on advisory boards</li><li>• Decisions reflect input</li><li>• Critical voice in system design</li><li>• Involved with evaluation, social marketing, etc.</li><li>• Engaged in policies and procedures which affect them and others</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• As staff on hiring committees</li><li>• Drive Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) processes</li><li>• Facilitate training(s)</li><li>• Lead and drive advisory boards</li><li>• Serve on local governance boards and in community advisory settings</li></ul>

# Components of SOC Infrastructure



- Cross-Sector Partnerships
- Governance
- Workforce Development
- Evaluation/Continuous Quality Improvement

# Cross-Sector Partnerships

**Key Consideration:** If the goal is to create a system of care that works for your community, who must be at the partnership table?

## Youth & Family Partners

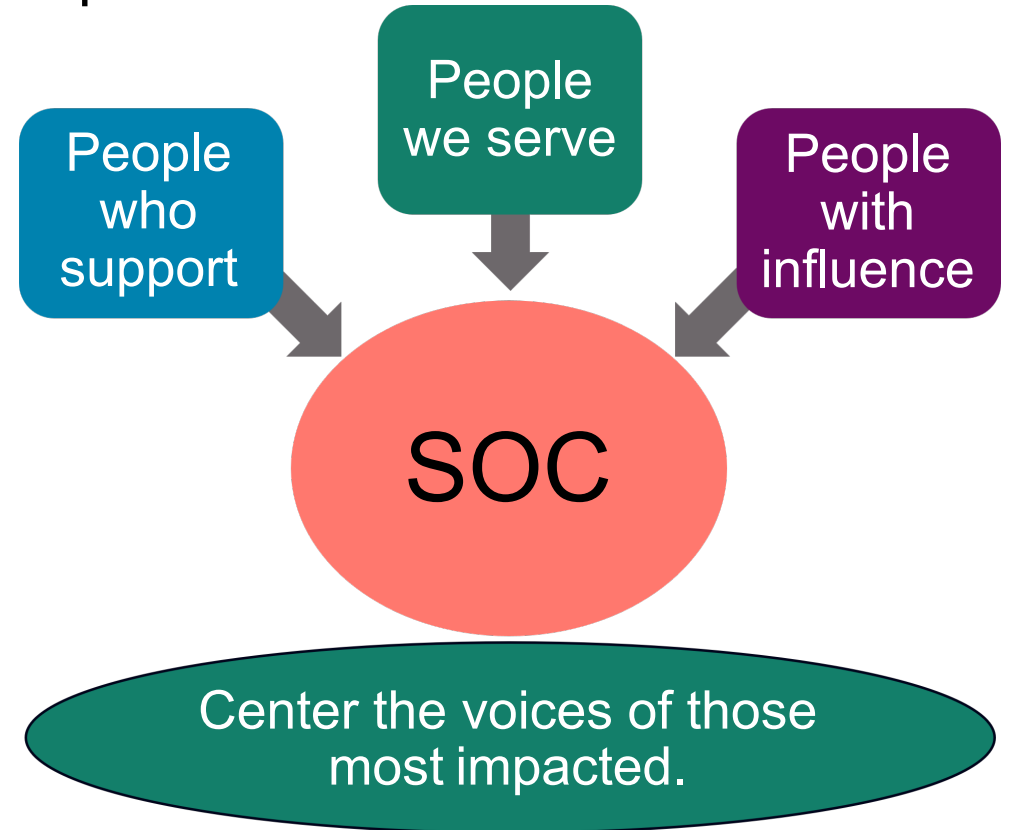
- Partnership with youth- and family-run organizations

## System Partners

- Mental health; health; education; child welfare; juvenile justice; human services; Medicaid; higher education

## Community Partners

- Housing; sports and recreation; faith-based; creative arts; after-school programs; other community-based organizations



# SOC Infrastructure: *Governance*

Governance is a structure for decision-making at a policy level that has legitimacy, authority, and accountability.

Governance structures are distinct in purpose and function from system management.

Source: Davis, C. & Pires, S.A. (2015). [System of Care Governance](#). Baltimore, MD: The Technical Assistance Network for Children's Behavioral Health. Retrieved on February 9, 2026.



# SOC Infrastructure: *Workforce Development*

- Embed SOC principles and values in workforce recruitment and training
- Develop and implement training strategies that:
  - Facilitate cross-training
  - Are co-presented by staff and youth/family
  - Consider pipeline approach (upcoming, new, and seasoned professionals)
  - Are supported and funded across systems
- Provide coaching, mentoring, TA
- System level focus on preparation, recruitment, and retention of MH workforce (across sectors)



# SOC Infrastructure: *Evaluation*

Evaluation aims to ensure that the system is effectively meeting the needs of the population it serves, continuously improving, and maintaining accountability to all stakeholders involved.

Evaluation helps to inform...	Evaluation helps move SOC forward by supporting...	Evaluation supports transformation by...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Planning</li><li>• Administration</li><li>• and Coordination</li><li>• Funding/Cross-Sector Partnerships</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Informed Decision-Making</li><li>• Documentation of Outcomes</li><li>• Replication and Scaling</li><li>• Sustainability</li><li>• Stakeholder Engagement</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assessment of Effectiveness</li><li>• Continuous Quality Improvement</li><li>• Accountability</li></ul>

# SOC Services and Supports

## ***Start and end with youth and families!***

- Family and youth determine type and mix of services/supports AND are full partners in all aspects of SOC
- Community-based, and provided in least restrictive, most normative environments
- Responsive to unique needs of the youth and family
- Availability of and access to broad, flexible array of services and supports (effective, evidence-informed, community-based)
- Developmentally appropriate (early childhood to transition age)
- Coordination, linkages, and easy transitions between services/systems



# SOC: *Connected Communities*

- Community-based organizations (CBOs) enhance/expand the array of available services and supports for children, youth, and families.
- CBOs are often the first place families will seek support and serve as an important transitional service.
  - Faith institutions
  - Early learning centers and childcare
  - Sports and recreation
  - Schools and after-school programs
  - Creative arts (music, writing, art, etc.)
  - Vocational and trade schools; community colleges and universities
  - Agricultural extension offices
  - Libraries



# Prevention Isn't

Prevention isn't the absence of crisis—  
it's the presence of protection.

The SOC approach gives every  
community the ability to build that  
protection for families.



# Key Points

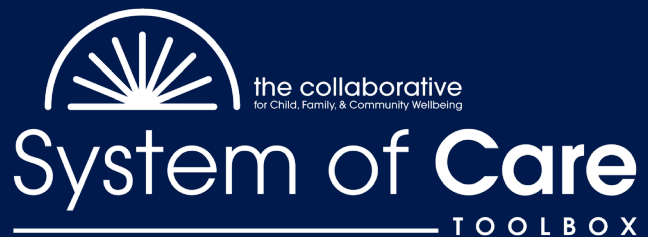
- A crisis is a signal; it's not the starting point.
- Protective factors, early identification of challenges, and community connections can help prevent/reduce the likelihood of crisis.
- The SOC approach can help build connected communities and contribute to a strong safety net.
- Youth and families drive the approach.
- Normalize safety planning for all families.



**Thank you!**



# Contact Tracy Levins



[The Collaborative: System of Care Toolbox](#)

- Email me at: [Tlevins@cars-rp.org](mailto:Tlevins@cars-rp.org)
- [Center for Applied Research Solutions \(CARS\)](#)



Center for Applied  
Research Solutions

## PRESENTATION

# Advancing MRSS in Indiana: Progress, Partnerships, and Path Forward

Presented by:  
Lana Lipe, MSW, LCSW, Doctoral Candidate

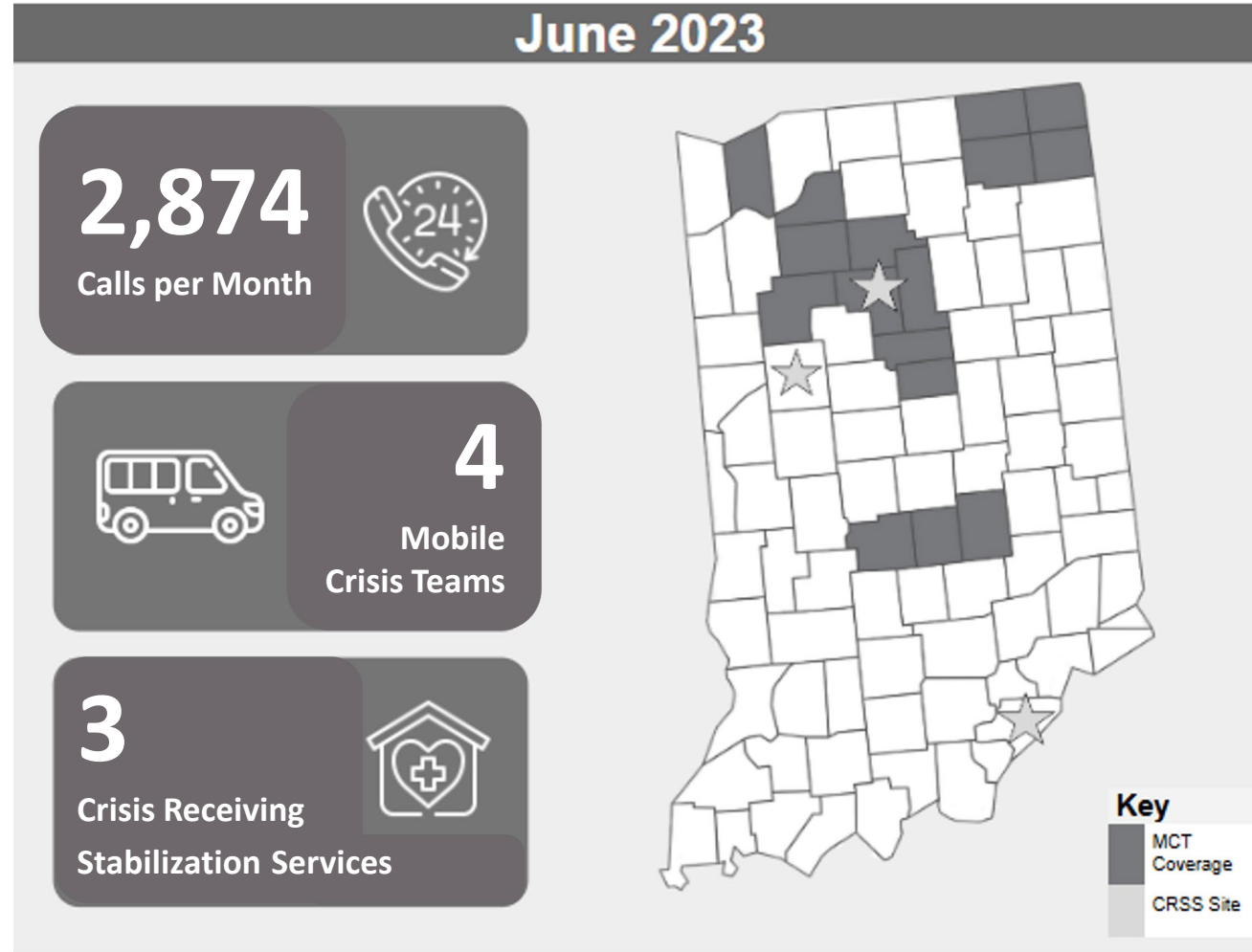


# Indiana's Crisis Continuum



# What Is MRSS?

# Indiana's MRSS Landscape: Where We've Been



# Where We're Going and How We're Getting There


## Someone to Contact

988 Indiana Contact Centers  
Serving all of Indiana.

## Someone to Respond

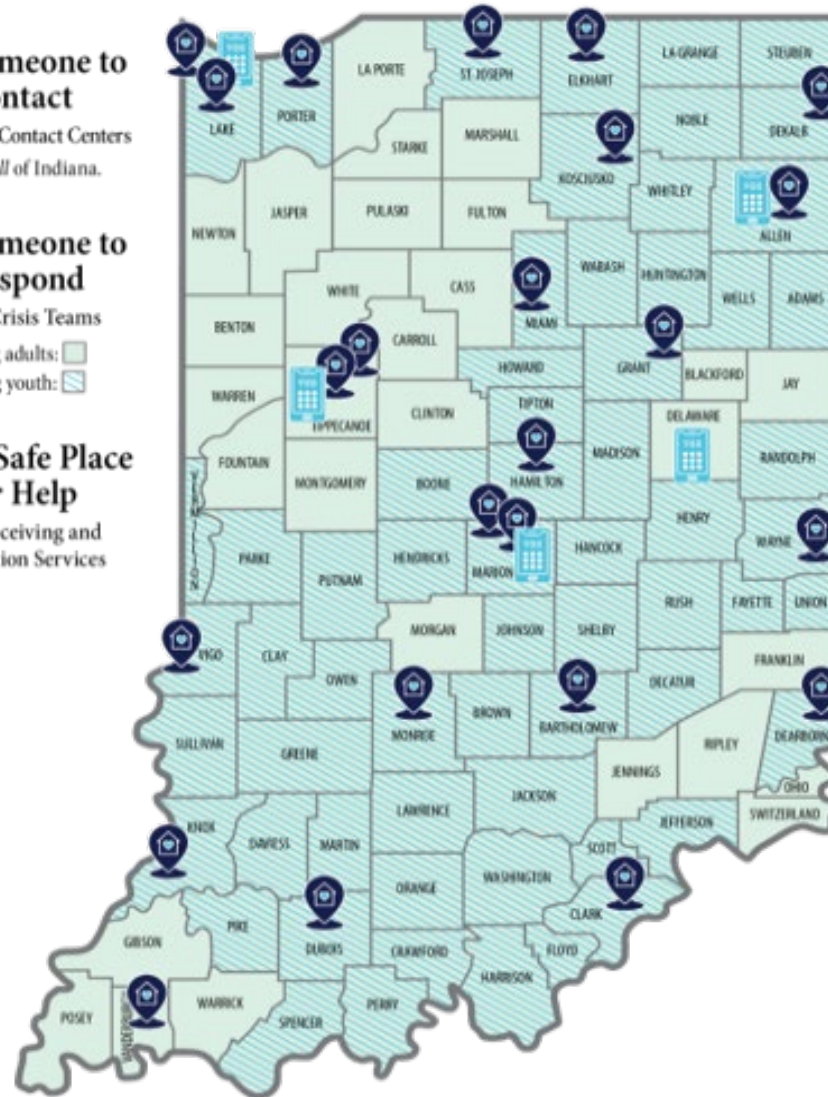
Mobile Crisis Teams

Serving adults: 

Serving youth: 

## A Safe Place for Help

Crisis Receiving and  
Stabilization Services



# Indiana's Core Challenges

Resource &  
Service Gaps

Population-Specific  
Needs

System Navigation  
Challenges

# Our Strategic Goals

## Strategic Goal 1:

Identify challenges for individuals navigating the crisis system

## Strategic Goal 2:

Increase school personnel knowledge & utilization of existing crisis resources

## Strategic Goal 3:

Increase awareness of youth peer support groups and stories of hope and healing

# Strategic Goal 1: Identify Challenges to Navigating the Crisis System

- **Goal:** Identify challenges for children, youth, and families navigating the crisis system to support the design of a youth-focused system and share findings with local crisis entities
- **Key Activities:**
  - Identify audience and recruitment strategy
  - Host listening sessions with specified groups
  - Analyze themes from listening sessions
  - Develop final report and findings
- **Timeline for Completion:** December 2026

## Strategic Goal 2: Increase School Staff's Knowledge of Crisis

- **Goal:** Increase school personnel and other critical stakeholders' knowledge and utilization of existing crisis resources
- **Key Activities:**
  - Meet with partners to define next steps for resource gathering
  - Research and gather resources for statewide map/directory
  - Develop county-level map and directory of statewide resources
- **Timeline for Completion:** July 2026

# Strategic Goal 3: Promote Youth Help-Seeking Through Stories of Hope

- **Goal:** Promote help-seeking behavior among youth by sharing stories of hope and healing and providing information on crisis and suicide-prevention resources
- **Key Activities:**
  - Identify youth and family-led organizations to collaborate with
  - Connect with groups to identify individuals with lived experience willing to share their stories
  - Host listening sessions to learn how individuals want their stories shared
  - Develop opportunities for youth and families with lived experience to share their stories
- **Timeline for Completion:** December 2026

# Contact Lana Lipe

Please keep in touch!  
[in988questions@fssa.in.gov](mailto:in988questions@fssa.in.gov)

# Questions?



# Upcoming Events

## **Partnering with Emergency and First Responders: Collaborative Models of Crisis Response**

February 24, 2026

2:00–3:30pm ET

## **Leveraging the Skills of Older Adults and Tribal Elders to Strengthen the Crisis System**

February 26, 2026

1:00–2:30pm ET

## **The Work After the Work: Embedding Long-Term Recovery in CYF Crisis Systems**

March 19, 2026

2:00–4:00pm ET



[SAMHSA CSR-TTAC  
Upcoming Events](#)

# We Value Your Feedback!

Please take a minute to complete the evaluation poll on your screen.



# Certificate of Attendance

[Available by Request](#)



# 988 CRISIS SYSTEMS RESPONSE

TRAINING &  
TECHNICAL  
ASSISTANCE  
CENTER

**SAMHSA**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

*Funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration*

## Thank you for attending!

Have additional questions? Email us!

[support@988crisisttac.org](mailto:support@988crisisttac.org)

This project is supported by SAMHSA, the agency within HHS that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. The CSR-TTAC works in conjunction with the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. In 2020, Congress designated the new 988 dialing code to be operated through the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. SAMHSA sees 988 as a first step towards a transformed crisis care system in America. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of SAMHSA or the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.



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## Contact SAMHSA's 988 CSR-TTAC

- [support@988crisisttac.org](mailto:support@988crisisttac.org)
- [844-464-8338](tel:844-464-8338) (toll free)
- [SAMHSA CSR TTA](#)
- [SAMHSA's 988 CSR-TTAC](#)
- [Subscribe to the CSR-TTAC contact list](#) to get the latest 988 news and event invitations!

