



Providing hope, conquering addiction, healing families.

Overdose Response Team

What is an Overdose Response Team?

The Overdose Response Team (ORT) is a partnership between RRC and EMS providers. The program is currently serving Tarrant County and we are actively working on expanding the program to other near-by counties. The team conducts follow up visits with individuals who are struggling with substance use disorder and have recently experienced an overdose. During these visits, clients and their households are given the opportunity to meet with a Peer Support Specialist or a Licensed Master Social Worker, receive and be trained on how to use Narcan, how to perform basic CPR, and ultimately discuss treatment and recovery options, if and when they are ready. The goal of the program is to connect with individuals and meet them where they are in their substance use disorder. The long-term goal of the program is to decrease the number of overdoses and overdose deaths and increase the number of individuals seeking treatment and entering recovery. We also understand that each individual we encounter has a unique situation, so ultimately, we ensure the provision of trauma informed care. Our hope is that these clients know that their life is worth saving, and that there is a network of services and resources available that care about them and want to support them through their fight against addiction.

What does the Peer Support Specialist offer?

Peer Support Specialists strive to empower individuals to achieve their goals and help them connect with their personal recovery journey. Peers can relate to others in a non-clinical, but personal way as they have a similar lived experience. They serve as positive role models, listening attentively with respect, acceptance, and encouragement to the wants and needs of their clients, and connect them with information and resources so that clients can make an informed, educated decision. These relationships offer hope and accountability, demonstrating that recovery is achievable. Our Peer Support Specialists are knowledgeable on a variety of treatment and recovery options, including medical detox, residential (in-patient), out-patient (IOP), sober living homes, medication assisted treatment (MAT), 12- step programs, long term peer support programs, and much more.

What does the Licensed Master-level Social Worker offer?

While our primary goal is to address a client's substance use disorder, we recognize that all people have basic needs of survival that must be met before they can prioritize self-actualization and personal growth. We must first assess if the client has access to, for example, stable shelter, food, employment, personal safety, and a way of addressing other medical needs that may be present. Lack of support in these crucial areas of need can often act as barriers to addressing substance use disorder. With a robust database of resources across the social services spectrum, our Program Support Specialist learns about each client's personal situations, assesses their needs, and works to find ways to remove these barriers, and improve the client's overall quality of life. Based on each client's individual needs and circumstances, we are also able to evaluate eligibility for additional support services such as funding for various kinds of treatment options, including but not limited to Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), and assistance with transportation related to their journey to recovery.

What is the City of Denton's role in the program?

The Denton Fire Department's role in this partnership is to identify individuals in our community who are in critical need of resources related to addiction and substance use. Denton FD will generate leads for the team by pulling patient information from their databases using specified criteria that indicates the individual may benefit from being connected with our program. Denton FD will facilitate a home-visit with these individuals, during which they will offer wellness checks and hands-only CPR training. Denton FD will also explain the additional services available to them through the ORT partnership program. If the individual is interested, Denton FD will facilitate a warm hand off to RRC staff. In operating this way, the Overdose Response Team is able to serve as a comprehensive response that includes both medical and behavioral health support. Without the FD's participation, RRC's ORT would not be able to gain access to the contact information of these individuals and therefore would not have an opportunity to connect with them. Having Denton FD as a partner in this program gives us the ability to reach clients that otherwise may never have the opportunity to be connected to life-saving resources like Narcan, and life-changing pathways to treatment.

What kind of community resources can ORT provide?

An important element of the Overdose Response Team is community collaboration, education, and information dissemination. Our team is available to provide education and training, both in person and virtually for any interested group. Topics include general drug-education, overdose prevention, peer support and recovery, medication assisted treatment, harm-reduction, and Narcan training. We can also provide free Narcan kits and educational/informational resources at community events.

Since the program launched in January 2022 in Tarrant County:

- 115 people have received at least one program service
- 82 have been connected to a peer support specialist
- 81 family members have received hands only CPR training
- 80 patients received a health and wellness screening and were referred to other community resources
- Over 200 Narcan kits have been distributed
- Over 25 individuals have been connected to treatment-related follow up care