



Wold

**WHY WE NEED MENTAL HEALTH
CRISIS CENTERS
PROVIDING ADEQUATE RESOURCES
IN YOUR COMMUNITY**

A call comes into dispatch from a concerned neighbor regarding a disturbance next door. Dispatch notifies police, and one of the department's crisis intervention trained officers is also radioed to respond to the site. By the time she gets there, she encounters a fellow officer headed out of the home.

"I'm sure glad you're here," the officers exclaimed,
"He is very worked up."
"What's his name?" the intervention officer asks.
"I didn't ask," the other officer replies.

The crisis officer proceeds into the home to find a visibly agitated man. In a tone lower than the man's, she begins to address him. "Hi, my name is Lisa. I want to help you if I can. Can you tell me your name?"

Gradually, the situation de-escalates. Officer Lisa talks with the man to learn more about the issues he's been dealing with and what was explicitly troublesome. They agree that it's a good idea if he doesn't spend the night at home. She begins to describe a crisis center in the local area. She explains that individuals at the center are equipped with resources to help him.

That single interaction may likely have changed the trajectory of one man's life. There are many instances in which similar interventions, training and resources could positively impact the residents of your communities. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) reports that 1 in 8 visits to U.S. emergency departments are related to mental and substance abuse disorders. Over the past several years, awareness has grown relative to the prevalence and effects of mental illness in the United States; however, the responses to this reality are wide ranging relative to their approach and effectiveness.

Among these responses, there is substantial evidence that mental health crisis centers' introduction significantly contributes to improving communities by providing critical outreach and support to persons affected by mental illness. Mental health crisis centers are also responsible for relieving a burden on emergency departments, criminal justice systems and correctional facilities. Each year,

depression and anxiety disorders cost the global economy \$1 trillion in lost productivity. Therefore, developing more mental health crisis centers nationwide will help address the ripple effect of inadequate resources.

SHIFTING THE NARRATIVE

Many of Wold's public sector clients have faced the challenges head-on in addressing mental health realities in their communities. We have been both inspired by and appreciative of the collaborations we've had with each community. Their stories offer essential insights into how they can make differences in residents' lives. As an idea of what this could look like for other communities, we've partnered with four specific clients to highlight projects that showcase practical solutions to providing their communities with mental health crisis resources. These crisis center models revolve around delivering services and support at varying levels of mental health acuity, including:

- Law Enforcement Drop-off: (e.g., jail and emergency department diversion)
- Crisis Stabilization Units: Small inpatient facilities of less than 16 beds for people in a mental health crisis whose needs cannot be met safely in residential service settings.
- Crisis Respite: Facilities that provide short term care and crisis intervention to a person experiencing a behavioral or medical crisis.
- Substance Use Disorders: Occurs when a person's use of alcohol or another substance (drug) leads to health issues or problems at work, school or home.

While there were most certainly common themes and experiences among these clients, each organization engaged with Wold relative to their unique circumstance. In the following stories, we look to highlight the initial challenges identified, the final tipping points that motivated their leaders to action and the experienced outcomes (both intended and unintended).



Ramsey County East Metro Crisis Center

RAMSEY COUNTY EAST METRO CRISIS CENTER

In the mid-2000s Ramsey County, MN, was facing a unique issue. A planned project was put on hold, which allowed for its planned funding to go towards other county capital investments. The county, which has a population of over 500,000 residents, hoped to allocate the funding toward three pressing needs. First, a new facility for its existing, functionally challenged Detox Center. Next, an entirely new space for its commitment court which has the obligation of committing persons (removing their civil rights) to treatment centers or a variety of reasons including mental health conditions and chemical dependency issues. And finally, a first of its kind, physical space to house the county's mental health urgent care center.

From those individual needs blossomed the idea of a joint crisis center. Benefiting from a collaborative environment,

the three distinct functions service many of the same clientele. Through core planning group meetings with Wold, the team came to a consensus on how each distinct entity could co-exist in the same facility.

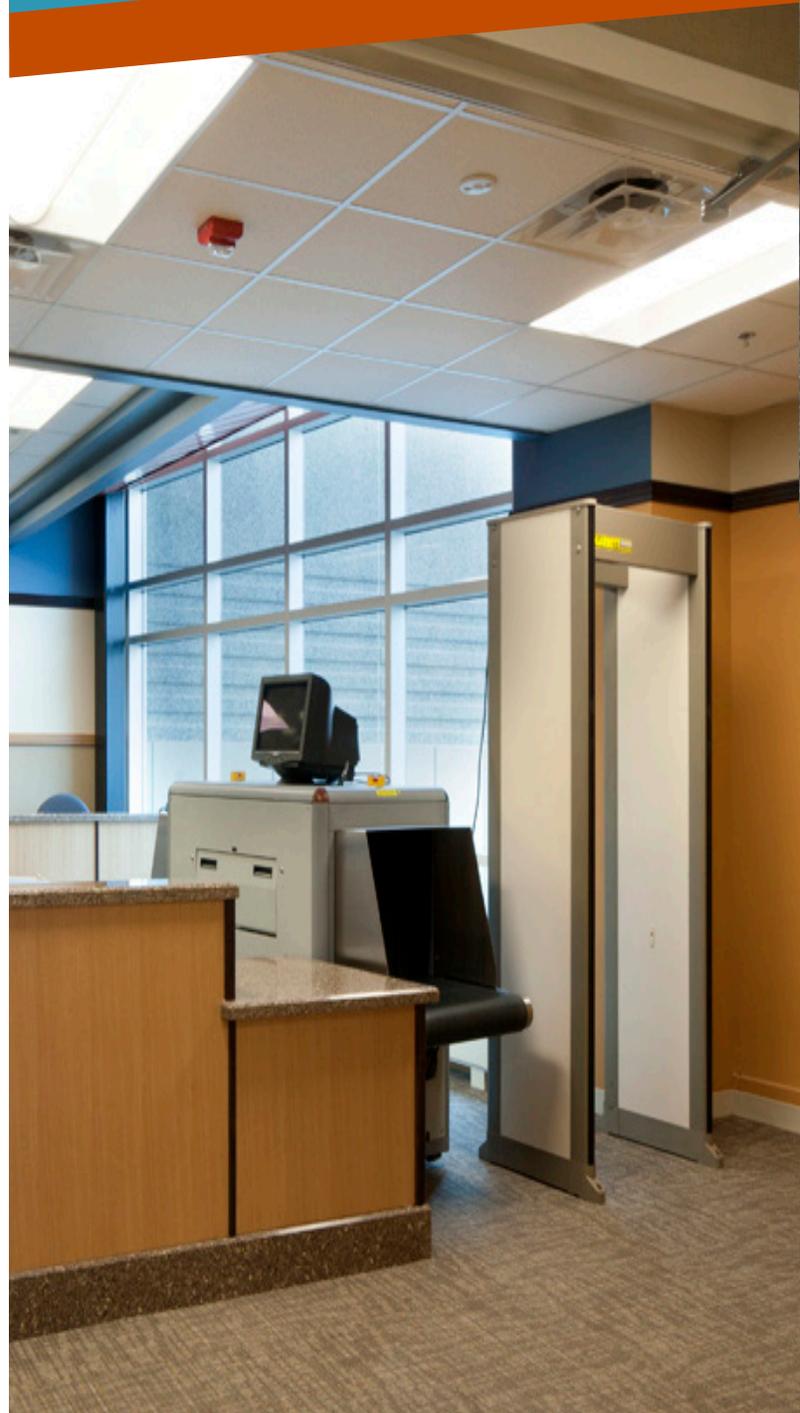
An overarching challenge in developing the new space was creating a welcoming environment for voluntary patients of mental health treatment while coexisting with non-voluntary patients who received government referrals. For the facility to reach the people it seeks to help during a crisis, the center must overcome the stigma associated with detox and commitment courts. After navigating vastly different needs and arriving at a consensus, the stakeholders envisioned a design that was inviting, service oriented, reflective of its mission and accommodating to the separate departments. The design ensures that the crisis center is spatially distinguishable from its counterparts. The commitment courts have a respectful and secure environment and the detox center is a safe space for the chemically dependent.

Completed in 2011, the facility covers a total of 38,000 square-feet, allowing the tenants to directly coordinate with one another while giving the participants of each program the discreet dignity they deserve. One example of design discretion is through the security check-in for commitment court. Discovered in user group meetings, it was vital to ensure that the check-in was out of sight from voluntary mental health patients to ensure ease-of-mind. Therefore, the facility features a main entrance vestibule that directs the individual services to separate locations in the facility. Thus, the court security checkpoint is out of sight for patients of the mental health division.

The center provides urgent care service to adults (ages 18 and over) in Ramsey County who are experiencing a mental health or chemical health crisis. Recognizing that no two people take the same path to recovery and wellness, the facility intends to find resources and support for patients to live an independent, full and meaningful life in their community. As a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC), Ramsey County provides comprehensive behavioral health services directly to independent patients and through contracts with private agencies. Services include mental health crisis assessment, crisis psychiatry, chemical health screening, peer support, crisis stabilization services and many more unique resources.

Ramsey County's East Metro Crisis Center offers an alternative to visiting the emergency room during a mental health crisis. Visitors can expect excellent, professional service in a caring, supportive environment. Additionally, phone support is available 24/7 and mobile crisis teams are available to meet individuals experiencing crises at their home, school, workplace or in the community. Since its inception, the crisis center continues to be a successful program. Combining entities in a joint location has allowed for a shared collaboration of resources to ensure effective treatment.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), 1 in 25 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness.





Ramsey County East Metro Crisis Center Day Room

BROWN COUNTY COMMUNITY TREATMENT CENTER

Driven by its skilled care division, Brown County, WI, hoped to become a leading example of a county that prioritized mental health treatment. Home to Green Bay and a population of over 250,000 residents, Brown County understood the need to create a facility for crisis care treatment. After allocating a percentage of resources to the development, Brown County determined that a treatment center consolidating several health departments would be the best approach. The center would include departments from several deteriorating facilities and would act as a home for a new team centered around crisis respite.

Wold is a public sector-focused design firm with over 50 years of experience assisting counties in assessing, planning and designing law enforcement and public health environments. With offices located in Illinois, Colorado, Minnesota and Tennessee, the Wold team can partner with communities in all parts of the country. For more information and to discuss opportunities for your community, call 1-888-254-6789 or email info@woldae.com.



Brown County Community Treatment Center Clinic Hallway

Brown County's goals emphasized combining the county's psychiatric hospital, long term care center and a new mental health clinic all in one collaborative facility. Although the combination of entities was a step in the right direction, budget restraints arose consistently. Prior designs and mockups from other firms had the project out of reach in terms of cost. Through collaboration with Wold, our team was able to deliver efficiency at a reasonable price. We focused on creating a space that housed essential treatment options while simplifying by trimming excessive space. Through prior experience on a wide variety of projects, and user group meetings with Brown County, Wold was able to create an efficient plan that fit the county's budget constraints.

Completed in 2010, the one-story, 120,917 square-foot facility includes 35 beds for the psychiatric hospital and the mental health clinic and 63 beds for long-term care.

The long-term care facility represents a cultural change in skilled nursing to a "neighborhood concept," replacing long, double-loaded corridors with neighborhoods where households have their own living rooms, dining rooms, bathing areas and private rooms for 10 residents. The mental health clinic acts as an outpatient center for short term crisis care. This portion of the facility includes a comforting waiting room, group rooms and spaces for interviews and exam treatment.

Benefiting from a collaborative environment, the 35-bed psychiatric hospital is designed with two separate treatment areas to meet the needs as a mental health crisis drop-off. One area provides initial assessment, and the other includes stabilization and treatment. Where legal issues are pertinent, there are judge's chambers and a small court that permit civil commitment and criminal hearings for patients without needing to transport them.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that, each year, depression and anxiety disorders cost the global economy \$1 trillion in lost productivity.

The hospital's connection to the outpatient mental health clinic benefits inpatients by enabling them to see the same mental health professionals as outpatients. The client and designer's commitment to the community treatment center demonstrates that outstanding healthcare facilities are feasible despite formidable complexity and constraint.

While its prairie-style architecture of stone, wood and glass projects an appropriately warm and reassuring image, the Brown County Community Treatment Center is a complex healthcare facility housing essential entities. The mental health clinic continues to be a definite asset to Brown County. Breaking down the stigma of being in a hospital, the facility provides a welcoming environment that allows residents to engage in relaxing outpatient care.



CARVER COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH WELLNESS FACILITY

As the importance of mental health treatment grows in prevalence, our team has noticed there are many unique ways that a community could facilitate this type of care. A list of considerations is vital to uncover in the first phase of conversation regarding how to respond to each community's needs. One way to understand these considerations and reveal the best facility options is through community-based stakeholder meetings. These meetings provide insightful discussions from a wide variety of stakeholders. One county that utilized these discussions is Carver County, MN, located on the Twin Cities' west side.

Early discussions identified a need for short-term interventions in their community that would allow individuals to seek out focused treatment that would allow them to stay in the community with their loved ones and keep their support system intact. In the past, persons experiencing a mental health crisis were sent to facilities located in different counties and the lack of space could cause individuals to not seek out treatment due to distance. Carver County saw an opportunity to provide these services in the County when a hospice facility became available that could be adapted to provide this short-term treatment.

Wold helped Carver County develop a Mental Health Wellness facility that would be a renovation and addition to the hospice care facility they acquired in 2017. The county received a \$1.25 million grant from the State of Minnesota to construct a residential crisis stabilization center in Carver County. The vision of this addition provided 12 stabilization beds for drop-in clients. The State of Minnesota will license the short-term facility as an IRTS (Intensive Residential Treatment Services) facility for intensive crisis stabilization with up to a 10-day stay.

The design solution adds six individual sleeping rooms with shared restrooms/showers. Additionally, the building allows for the expansion of beds should the licensing change. Additional modifications to the building will allow for individual and group counseling, office space for staff and recreation space for residents. The building design is of a residential scale and the interior finishes intend to provide a more stable "home" environment for residents. The site is located on Lake Bavaria and is located adjacent to a city park.

Though the construction of the addition is complete, the facility awaits its operational phase, which will be managed by a third-party entity. Throughout this process, our team at Wold has been able to elicit several positive elements from this project, many we hope to implement in further facilities. These takeaways include; creating normative environments for residents rather than a space that takes a standard hospital approach and working with forward-thinking communities to discover unique ways of approaching mental health.





Existing Lake County Community Health Center

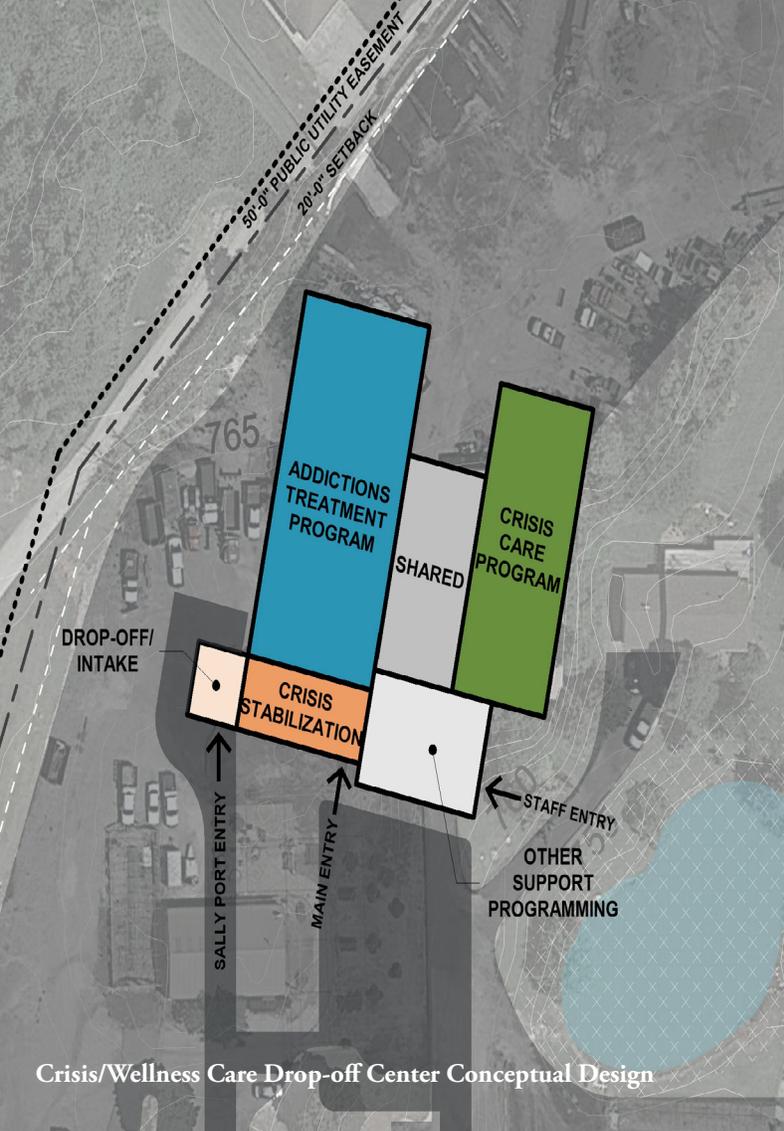
LAKE COUNTY CRISIS/ WELLNESS CARE DROP-OFF

With the increasing prevalence of mental health, Lake County Government understood there was a need to provide its population with services for mental health assessment and referral to treatment. Situated in the Northeastern corner of Illinois, Lake County is home to a diverse population of over 700,000 residents. Urban and suburban areas make up a majority of the county's residents. In a 2014 behavioral health assessment, 17-percent of Lake County responding adults reported mental illness in the preceding year.

In previous years, to address this portion of the population, Lake County Government has managed the Crisis Care Program (CCP) in the primary health department facility. In addition to the CCP, the facility is

also home to the county's Addiction Treatment Program (ATP). The CCP is a voluntary, non-acute residential care facility. Persons in a mental health crisis, and in need of time to rest and recuperate in a peaceful environment, were offered 24-hour crisis intervention and respite care. There are a total of 8 beds available for crisis respite. The average length of stay for persons admitted to the residential crisis program is 6.2 days. The adjoining Addictions Treatment Program also has a current capacity of 6 substance abuse detoxification beds and 16 substance abuse rehabilitation beds.

The program has achieved limited success due to restrictions on admission and a lack of law enforcement utilization for the diversion procedure. To increase the behavioral health program's usage, Lake County government partnered with Wold to develop potential solutions. With consensus among the Core Planning



Crisis/Wellness Care Drop-off Center Conceptual Design

“Currently, police have only two options when responding to a person in mental health or substance crisis: Jail or the Emergency Room. Our crisis/wellness center will provide a safe, central, and holistic location for police to drop off an individual 24/7 to receive, within 23 hours, screenings, assessments, and referrals. The center will leverage recovery peers and community counseling professionals to provide emotional support and navigation to the appropriate level of care.”

-Lake County Board Chair, Sandy Hart

Group, Lake County concluded that a new Crisis Triage and Stabilization Center would benefit the community. The proposed center will offer up to 24-hours of care and support, in a safe and welcoming environment, for individuals in a state of a mental health crisis. During this period, individuals can relax comfortably in a living room setting, rather than a hospital bed or jail cell. They will partake in an assessment, be provided counseling and receive a referral to the appropriate measures of follow-up services and care.

Lake County’s planning has also contemplated synergies which may exist between the new Drop-off Center and their current respite program, and how those functions may benefit from being co-located in a shared facility. Features of the Crisis Care Program would include patient bedrooms, support spaces, nursing stations, outdoor recreation spaces and program rooms. A mix of day rooms and offices will accommodate a variety of therapeutic activities and encounters. Day rooms will also be distinct in look and feel to be adaptable for a range of uses.

Currently in the development phase, Lake County is seeking support for the Crisis Triage and Stabilization Center from community health partners that will also benefit from its services, and from the diversion of persons in mental health crisis from other critical infrastructures. The center’s design is envisioned to provide a holistic approach to mental health. Focusing on the entire person, the Center will include supplemental services in addition to its primary functions. These potentially include transportation services, food pantries, and a clothes closet.



Ramsey County East Metro Crisis Center Reception Area

CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

When assessing the current state of mental health resources in your community, it's essential to consider the following questions:

- How often does your community discuss mental health?
- What mental health resources does the community currently provide?
- Do your resources adequately represent the entire population?
- Which organizations currently facilitate these resources? Are these run publicly or privately?
- Where are the resources located?
- What challenges do these programs face?
- What are the features in the current facilities that house mental health resources?
- Are there any functional issues with the facilities?
- Are there any needs regarding mental health that are not currently addressed?

Becoming a necessity in counties across the nation, mental health crisis centers are an innovative and efficient way to care for behavioral health issues. The centers also benefit communities by alleviating time and resources for other organizations to focus on other tasks at hand. The centers Wold has partnered to design create a normative environment that challenges old beliefs of how a treatment center should look. Focusing on ease-of-mind, these crisis centers provide adequate resources that help to shift trajectories in community members' lives.

Contact Wold Architects and Engineers to learn more about each of these communities' processes to define their goals and plan to develop these impactful facilities. We will be able to help assess your community's needs through the discussion of our previous endeavors. Wold has a wealth of professionals on staff dedicated to addressing unique concerns in communities to benefit residents.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Matt Bickel, AIA, LEED AP

As an architect and partner, Matt has spent his entire 19-year career at Wold working with counties and other public sector clients across the Midwest to plan, design and implement community-based facilities – both new construction and renovations. He is proud of relationships that are forged as Wold partners with these groups to successfully translate their unique goals and realize their shared facilities visions.



Joel Dunning, AIA, LEED AP

Joel has spent his career at Wold Architects and Engineers working with public sector clients for the past 24 years. Joel has special expertise in the planning and programming of public facilities that translate the goals and objectives of the client into a highly functional, operational-based facility paying attention to continuity of operations.



John McNamara, AIA, LEED AP

John has more than 25 years of experience designing public sector facilities on all levels of government. He has special expertise working with clients to understand operational objectives while navigating the political environment for government facilities to meet all expectations. John is a leader in our Government business sector; building and maintaining long-term relationships with clients and collaborators.



Rick Moore, AIA, ACHA

Rick has devoted his 42 year career in architecture to creating inspired senior environments in many different settings, site configurations and varying program requirements. Rick works to create a supportive environment for community members in times they need it most.