



Elm City COMPASS Data Brief

Community Responder Team III:

Grounded in Evidence-Based Practice

What is COMPASS?

Elm City COMPASS (Compassionate Allies Serving our Streets) is a community-based initiative of the City of New Haven to create a system of sustainable supports for people with a mental health or substance use crisis.

Through COMPASS:

- ❖ We complement and support New Haven first responders on 911 calls and through outreach by a **community responder team** of a social worker and a peer with lived experience.
- ❖ We coordinate and integrate the **crisis response system** in New Haven.
- ❖ We seek out community feedback from our **Community Advisory Board** of residents and community stakeholders.
- ❖ We conduct a **multi-level evaluation** of the Elm City COMPASS Initiative.



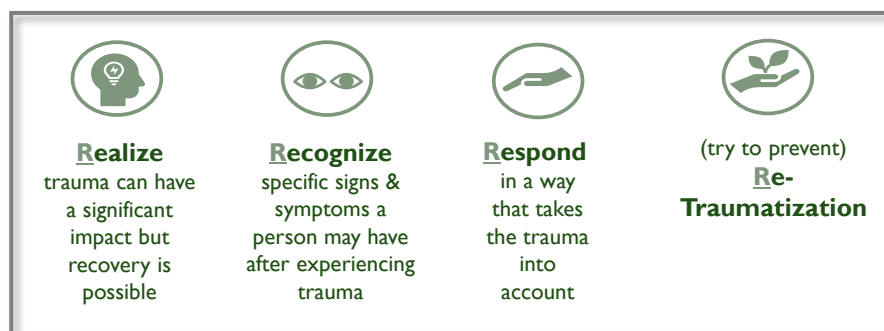
Data briefs summarize results from Elm City COMPASS quality improvement, evaluation, and research.

For more information, contact elmcitycompass@yale.edu

This Data Brief summarizes two core evidence-based practices of the COMPASS Community Responder Team: trauma-informed care and peer support. An evidence-based practice is a clinical intervention that has been shown through rigorous research to have a beneficial impact on someone in need. Below we describe the core elements of trauma-informed care and peer support.

Trauma-Informed Care

Trauma-informed care takes into account trauma's adverse impact by trying to avoid re-traumatizing the person in crisis. Consistent with National Guidelines for Behavioral Health Crisis Care (2020) developed by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and with SAMHSA Principles of Trauma-Informed Practice (2014), during a crisis, the COMPASS community responder team seeks to de-escalate the crisis by taking these actions:



This is done by having the team build a connection with the person through compassionate, transparent communication, and then leveraging that connection through trusted partnerships in the community and service system. In doing so, a trauma-informed approach can impact multiple levels: individual, community, and service system.

Peer Support

Peer support is another evidence-based practice used by the community responder team, one that is increasingly found as standard practice in health care. Individuals with lived experience of mental illness or addiction who are in recovery have a unique and valuable perspective to share with a person in crisis. They may have been in a similar crisis in the past and navigated their way to recovery through grit, belief, and support from others. A person in crisis can benefit from the experience of a peer to build connection and engagement during a crisis. In Connecticut, peers are certified as Recovery Support Specialists.

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This Data Brief was developed by Dr. Jacob Tebes and colleagues at Elm City COMPASS. For questions or comments, please contact Dr. Tebes at jacob.tebes@yale.edu.