Services

Crisis Call Center

MHAGC currently operates the only 24-hour suicide prevention call center in South Carolina. This Crisis Intervention Services program has operated continuously since 1990 and is both accredited by the American Association of Suicidology and a member of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline network, 988. This lifeline connects callers in mental health crisis to trained counselors who can listen, offer compassion, and address immediate needs. Follow-up services and connection to ongoing care are also available.

Education and Outreach

Through the Mental Health Matters program, MHAGC offers customized community presentations on a variety of mental health topics. MHAGC also maintains staff certified to teach QPR — Question, Persuade, and Respond. Like CPR, QPR teaches skills anyone can learn to help support someone in mental health crisis until they can be connected to professional help.

Ongoing Support

MHAGC’s Consumer Support Services program offers ongoing support, like housing and bill pay services, for community members who live with chronic mental health conditions. The Reassurance Line program is a 24-hour call line that serves as a bridge between mental health consumers and county mental health case managers and promotes confidence, safety, and connectedness. The agency also hosts a peer-facilitated Survivors of Suicide Loss offering support for those who have lost a loved one to suicide.

2022 Needs and Challenges

988 — the new national 3-digit mental health emergency number — went live on July 16, 2022, with the following results:

- call volume to MHAGC’s crisis line increased 216% the next day and has remained higher than average
- the pace of calls and the number of suicidal callers increased.
- texts, which have a longer response process, increased.

With the Student ID Bill, the 988 number will be printed on the back all SC student IDs for 7th graders and up, which is expected to further increase call, chat, and text volume. With every increase in volume, MHAGC is facing higher follow-up demands for which additional staffing is critical.

Well resourced crisis line services work to reduce healthcare spending with more cost-effective early intervention and relieve the pressure on law enforcement and emergency services to address mental health emergencies. While one-time funding helped MHAGC achieve important call center technology upgrades, there is still a critical need for sustainable funding to staff the center at sufficient capacity to meet the new demands.