

Riverside CARE Awards

Upton Police Department and Upton Fire & EMS Department



Many people haven't heard of Upton, a town of about 8,000 people in the Blackstone Valley area of central Massachusetts. But there's something special going on there – something we think is a model for the way community services can work together. Over the last 20 years, the Riverside Outpatient Center has had the very good fortune to count on the Upton Police and Emergency Medical Services staff as true partners in the community.



The Upton Police and EMS respond to calls from the Riverside Outpatient Center when their support is necessary for patient and community safety. They have always responded with sensitivity and due care, conferring ahead of time before joining in the situation because they are aware that they are responding within the context of a psychological intervention. They understand that there is a spectrum of circumstances when a person is experiencing a mental health episode.

They are mindful to preserve the dignity of the person in distress, and respect the knowledge of the Riverside clinicians, often working collaboratively to find creative ways to resolve a situation. This can make a huge difference in the outcome of a mental health crisis.

Not only do the Police and EMS personnel take the time to ensure that their support for the clinicians is informed by compassion and understanding, they have invited Riverside staff to consult with them on specific situations that arise in their community safety work, and they recently invited the Outpatient Center to provide mental health training for their staff.

And some of you may remember the incident in May 2018, when an SUV crashed right through the wall of the Upton Outpatient Center, stopping in the room where a clinician was meeting with a client. Miraculously, neither was hurt, but our emergency responders needed to cut through the adjacent wall to extract them safely, along with our clinician's beloved mudpuppies – aquatic creatures that were safely relocated to a bucket of water!

We are very grateful for their partnership and for their dedication to the health, well-being, and safety of the Upton community!