

Gabby P. on Behavioral Health Support in the Bronx

A mental health crisis can be frightening for all parties involved, especially when children experience them. Many people don't know where to turn to when a loved one is experiencing a crisis. VNS Health's Children's Mobile Crisis Team in the Bronx is trained to support children and their families. Thanks to team members like Gabby P., program assistant, they can get the help they need.

Gabby, a Bronx native, takes referrals and coordinates with her colleagues to send a team and meet children who need immediate help.

"My team is always on the go."

– Gabby, Program Assistant for the Children's Mobile Crisis Team in the Bronx

She mentioned that the definition of a crisis can be different from person to person. People call for a variety of reasons ranging from depression and self-harm to poor hygiene and refusal to attend school. Referrals are usually from school staff, family, friends, social workers, or city agency employees. Gabby also said how people calling sometimes don't know if the child is experiencing a crisis.

Gabby's team serves youth up to 20 years old. The team consists of a family advocate, a licensed social worker, and coordination team members like Gabby herself. She said the team is very "hands-on" and is responsible for organizing responses to referrals, connecting families with social support services, developing safety plans, and following up with individual weeks after their crisis.

While she isn't part of the street team, Gabby is always prepared to help people in need wherever they are. In April 2024, she was walking along East 153rd street where she saw a woman on the ground.

"I was walking to work that morning with a colleague, and we passed by an area where we're very used to seeing people who abuse substances," she recalls. "What I noticed this day was unusual, though—a woman was lying on the sidewalk with her hands at her sides and a purse, two phones and a wallet on the ground next to her. I said to myself, 'My God, is she breathing?' It just didn't sit right with me. So I went closer to check."

She asked others nearby if they knew the woman, but no one did. After checking the woman's condition further, she immediately called 911. Fortunately, Gabby was trained on how to administer Narcan as a nasal spray in the event of someone experiencing an overdose. Before EMS shows up, she sprayed two doses of Narcan into the woman's nostrils. Thanks to her swift action, Gabby saved the woman's life.

"It was surreal, thinking about it afterward and realizing I'd

saved a life,” says Gabby. “I was really nervous at the time, but I was also confident in what I was doing, thanks to my Narcan training. My feeling was that we’ve been equipped with these skill sets and these Narcan kits, and now I was able to utilize what I’d learned.”

While Gabby’s agility and empathy played a huge role in saving the woman’s life, she also gives credit to her training. “I think the training is very beneficial, because you never know what could happen when you’re out in the community,” she noted. “I’m ready to save lives all over the world now!”

Click [here](#) to read the full article.

VNS Health has several behavioral health programs, including crisis intervention, and substance use treatment, that support people of all ages. Learn more about our Behavioral Health programs.

Behavioral Health Services

