
Beyond the Emergency Department

Redefining Diversion in Intensive Crisis Stabilization Centers



About Us

- Voluntary, community-based crisis stabilization center
- Serving individuals across the lifespan
- 24/7, 365-day operation
- Located at 430 Niagara St, Buffalo, NY
- Erie, Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, Allegany, Niagara Counties



BestResponse Goals



Provide an effective alternative to emergency rooms and inpatient hospitalization



Support first responders in diverting individuals to care



Promote long-term mental health and substance use recovery



Strengthen care transitions and system navigation

Key Features



No appointment
or referral
needed



Immediate
access for
assessment and
stabilization



Multidisciplinary
team approach



Trauma-informed,
person-centered
care



Non-locked
facility: voluntary
participation



Aim to divert from
emergency room



Focus on least
restrictive
interventions



Questions Every Community Should Ask



Are we measuring what matters?



Who defines diversion?



Does our data reflect system impact?



What are we missing?

Why This Matters

If we define diversion ONLY as...	We risk missing...
↓ ED visits	Successful stabilization in a community-based setting
↓ Hospitalizations	Connection to the appropriate level of ongoing care
↓ Inpatient admissions	Engagement with community providers and supports
Avoiding higher levels of care	Earlier intervention that may prevent future crises
A single outcome measure	The full impact of the crisis continuum

True diversion is not only where someone does not go – it is also where we successfully connect them to care.



From Crisis Cycles to Recovery Pathways

Traditional Crisis Response before ICSC

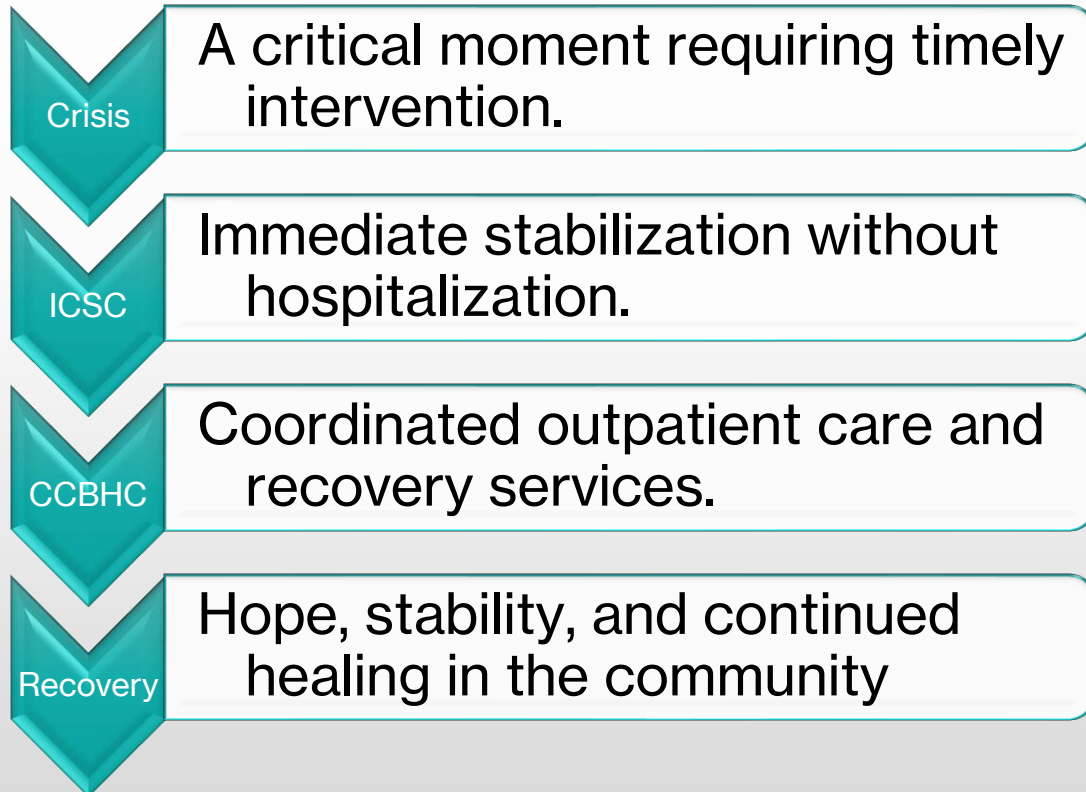


Integrated Diversion Model with ICSC

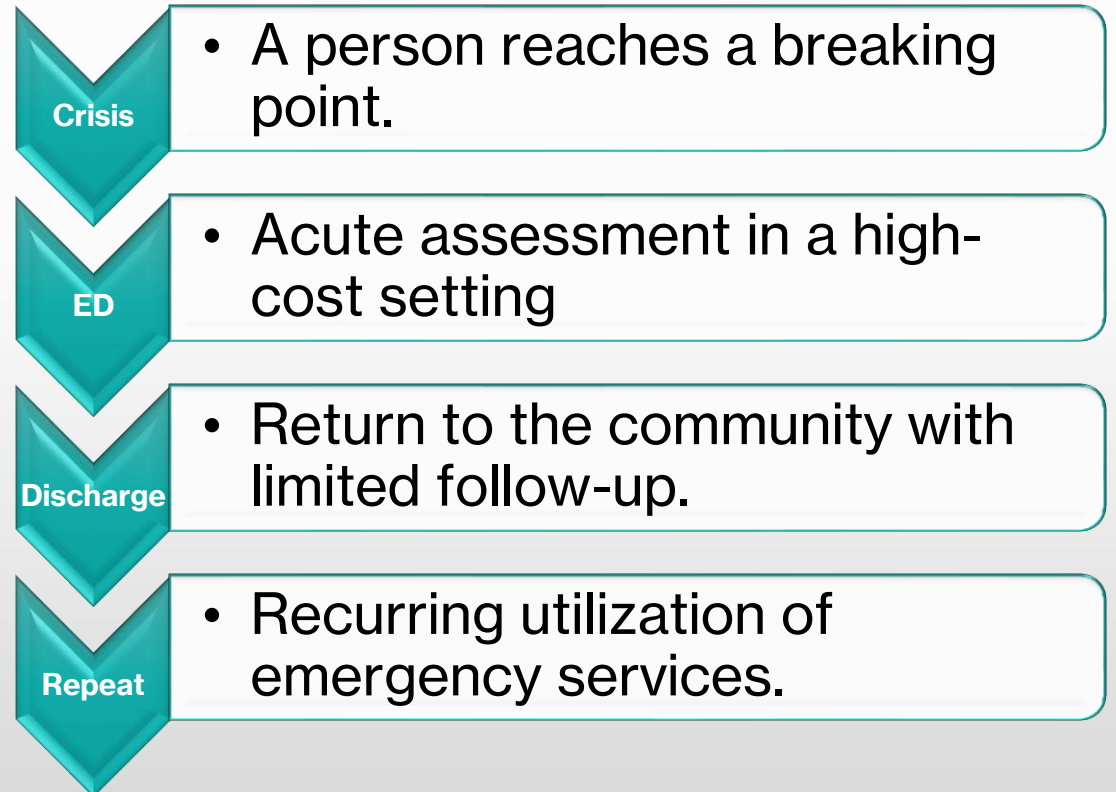


Pathway Perspectives

DIVERSION PATHWAY



INSTEAD OF



Looking Through Different Lenses

How would others describe our
impact?

Community Members

Law Enforcement

EMS

Hospitals

988

CCBHC

Families

Peers

Mobile Teams/Crisis Services

Law Enforcement Perspective

Diversion means:

Less officer wait time

No unnecessary arrests

Quicker return to service

Better behavioral health option

Community Perspective

“By far the best place ever. My son was having a crisis and the ER was a long wait so we came here and it was super fast. Everyone was friendly understanding and great with him. I can’t say how happy I am. Thank you so much.”

“I wanted to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude to every single member of your organization for the incredible support, compassion, and care you provided to my niece --- during one of the most difficult times in her life.

When someone you love is struggling with their mental health, it can be an overwhelming and frightening experience for the entire family. Throughout this journey, your team showed kindness, patience, professionalism, and genuine concern that made an immeasurable difference.

Because of your intervention, support, and dedication, ---- is receiving the help she needs. Knowing that she has access to the resources, care, and support necessary for her recovery has brought our family hope and relief. The positive path she is on today would not have been possible without the people who stepped in when she needed help the most.

What stands out most is how every person we encountered went above and beyond what was expected. It was clear that this is more than just a job to your staff. You truly care about the people you serve. The empathy, understanding, and dedication shown by each employee helped my niece feel supported, valued, and heard during a time when that meant everything.”



Healthcare Community Perspective

Person-centered
aftercare planning

Warm handoffs to
outpatient
providers or social
supports

If recipient is
currently linked
with an outpatient
provider, follow-up
appointment is
scheduled prior to
discharge from
BestResponse.

Referral to
community-based
services based on
need

Diversion Is Bigger Than the Emergency Department

Police	School	988
ICSC	ICSC	ICSC
Stabilization	Stabilization	Stabilization
Avoids Legal System	Return to School	Rapid Access

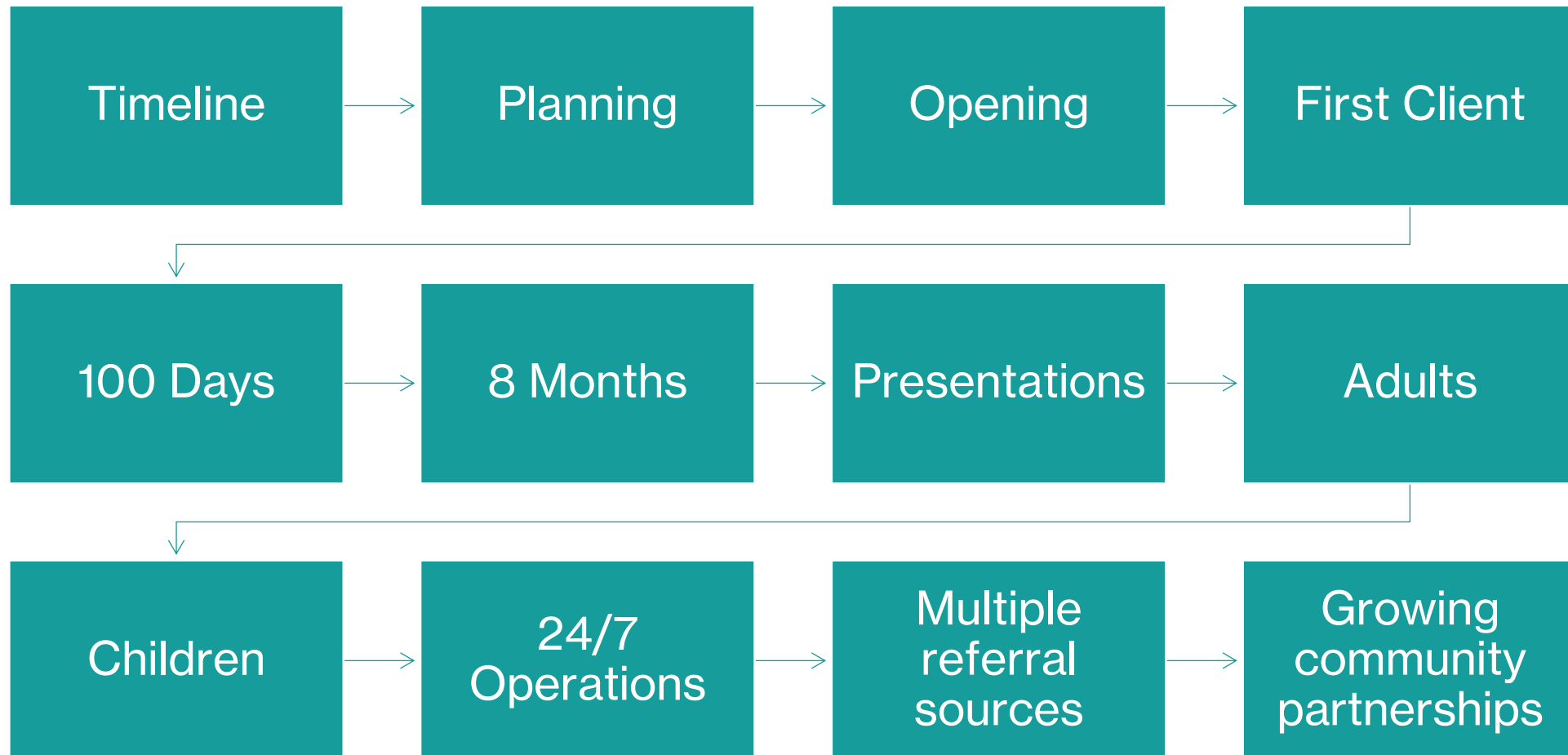
Family	Case Manager	Walk-Ins
ICSC	ICSC	ICSC
Stabilization	Stabilization	Stabilization
Follow-Up Care	Obtained Resources	Community

Every pathway avoids crisis escalation

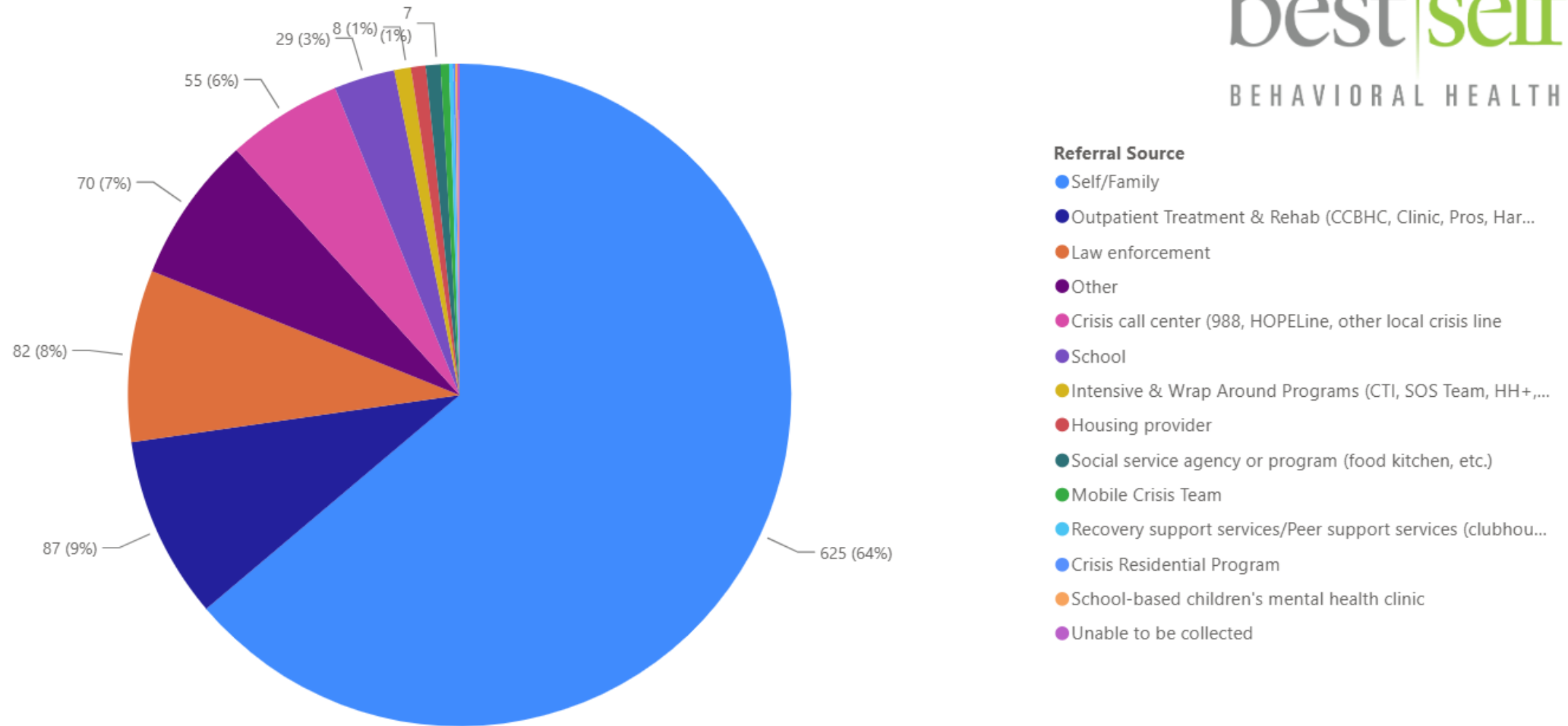
Every pathway avoids Emergency Department.

True Diversion

What We Learned Opening BestResponse

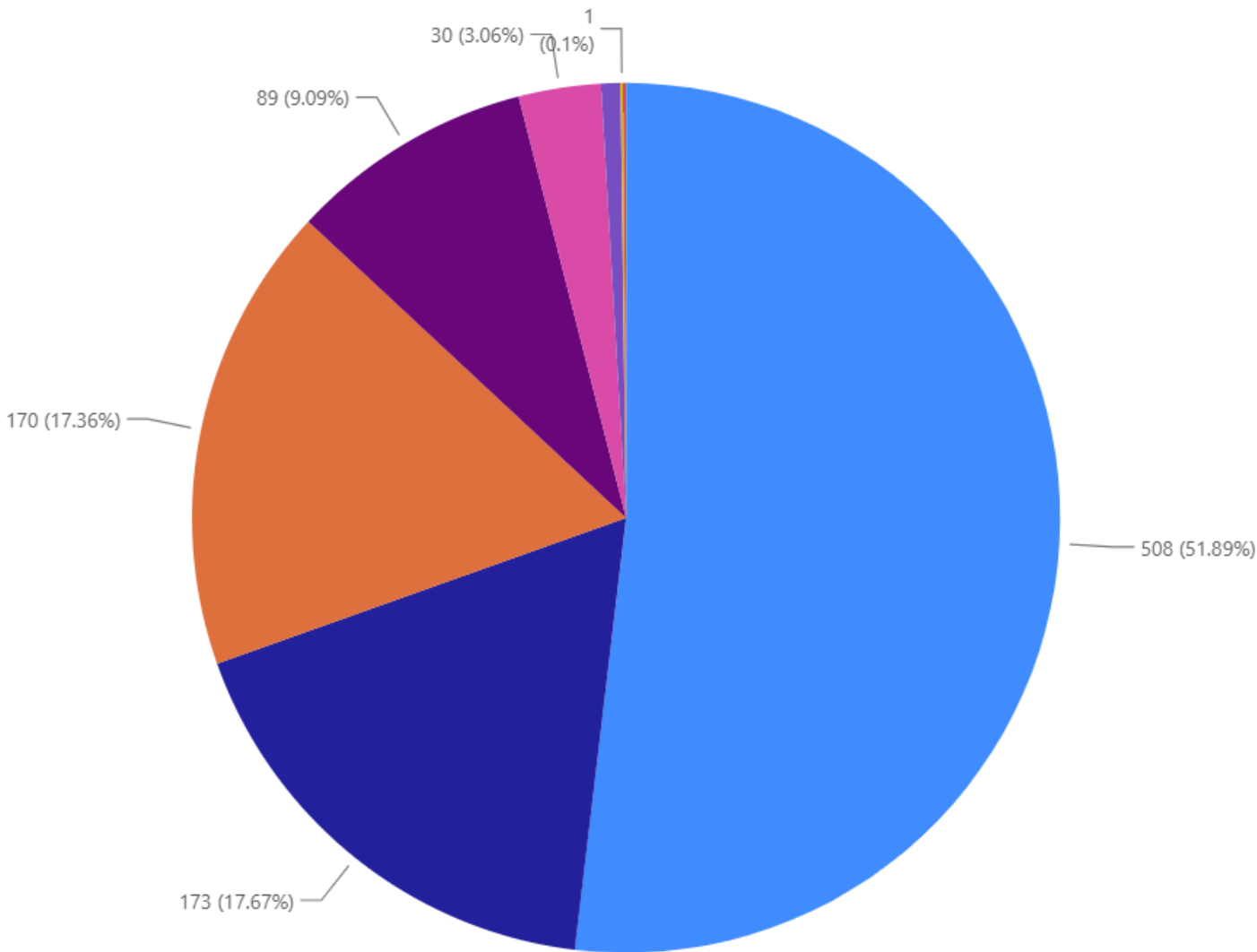


Where Did People Come From?



How Did They Arrive?

Mode of Arrival



- Mode of Arrival**
- Walk-in
 - With parent/guardian
 - Family/Friends/Significant other
 - Police drop-off
 - Other
 - Mobile crisis
 - Homeless outreach team
 - Unknown

Where do we refer to?

CCBHC

Clinic

Shelter

Inpatient

Care Management

PROS





True Diversion includes:

Emergency Department Diversion

Law Enforcement Diversion

EMS Diversion

Behavioral Health Linkage

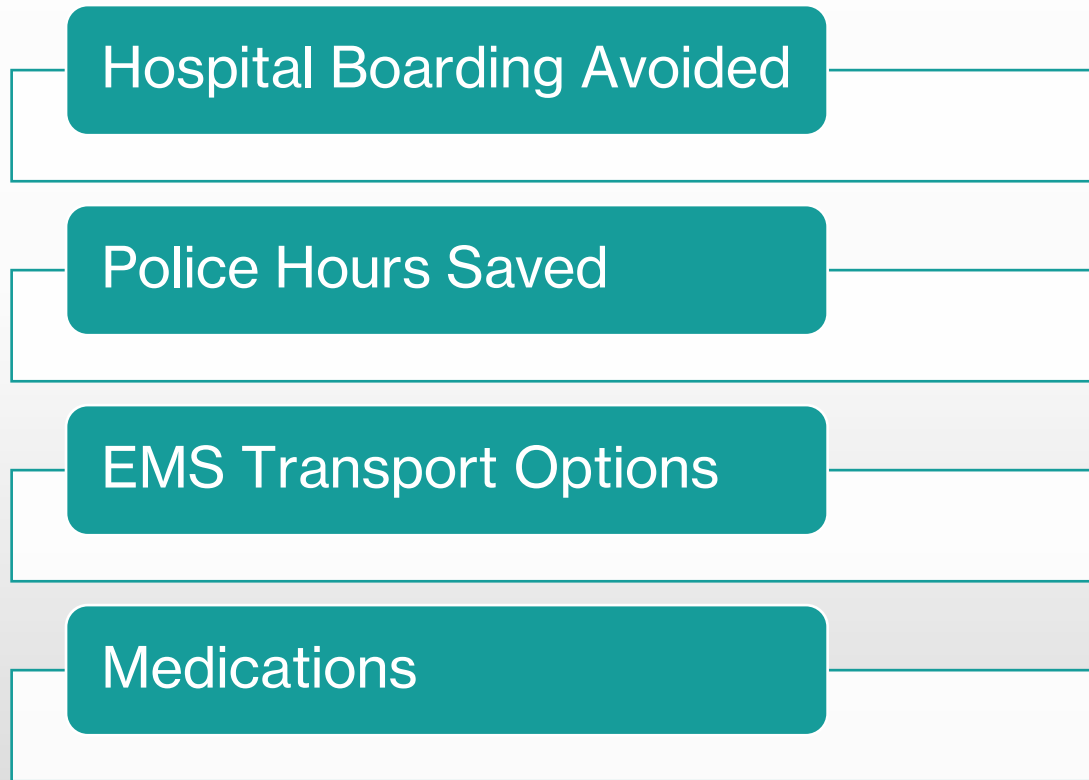
Rapid Access

Community Engagement

Repeat Utilization

Follow-up Care

Benefits of True Diversion at BestResponse



The image shows the exterior of a BestSelf Behavioral Health building. The building has a brick facade and a corrugated metal roof. A large sign on the roof reads "BestSelf BEHAVIORAL HEALTH". Below the roofline, there are several windows and doors. One window has a sign that says "Crisis Center Children Entrance". Another window has a sign that says "Your BestSelf Begins Here". There are also several posters in the windows, each featuring a photo of a person and a caption: "Best Sister", "Best Daughter", "Best Partner", and "Best Recovery".

**Diversion is more than where we
keep people from going.
It's where we help them go next.**