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CARF crisis and information call centers standards respond to first responder needs

Behavioral Health Link in Atlanta awarded accreditation for its crisis hotline

Tucson, AZ -- September 18, 2007 -- Crises may befall even a seemingly happy and healthy person. Events can trigger thoughts of suicide, violence, or a relapse to alcohol or other substance abuse.

Fortunately, in most communities individuals can seek immediate help through a crisis or information and referral hotline. Crisis call centers are typically staffed 24/7 by professionals trained to defuse a personal crisis over the telephone or possibly with face-to-face intervention. Crisis hotlines are often first responders to a variety of immediate requests identified by persons they serve.

First responders also need tools to provide quality-driven and outcomes-focused services. Call centers need guidance in developing staff training, interagency coordination, and appropriate intervention procedures to ensure that persons served receive safe, timely, and appropriate responses in a crisis.

CARF's Behavioral Health standards for crisis and information call centers respond to this need. A provider's demonstrated conformance to the standards during an on-site survey may lead to accreditation for its call center program.

CARF recently awarded three-year accreditation, the highest level available, to Integrated Health Resources in Atlanta, doing business as Behavioral Health Link, for its crisis and information call centers program. Behavioral Health Link's hotline responds to persons with mental disorders and alcohol or other substance abuse issues, often providing direct services at emergency rooms, schools, or wherever assistance is requested.

In addition to its crisis and information call centers, Behavioral Health Link was also accredited for its assessment and referral and crisis intervention programs serving adults, children, and adolescents.

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