

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



City of Duluth - Police Department

Mike Tusken, Chief of Police
2030 North Arlington Avenue • Duluth, Minnesota 55811 •
www.duluthmn.gov

*For more information contact:
Public Information Officer, Mattie Hjelseeth at (218) 730-5434 or
mhjelseeth@duluthmn.gov*

DATE: 11/1/2021

SUBJECT: The Substance Use Response Team is another innovative program DPD utilizes to provide a safe Duluth for all

BY: Mattie Hjelseeth, Duluth Police Department Public Information Officer

NATURE OF INCIDENT:

CASE NO.:

INCIDENT DATE:

INCIDENT TIME:

INCIDENT LOCATION:

The Substance Use Response Team is another innovative program DPD utilizes to provide a safe Duluth for all

The Duluth Police Department is known for its nationally recognized innovative programs. A few innovative programs that DPD uses to find solutions to problems facing our community include the Mental Health Unit (CORE Unit), the Duluth Model, the Person-Centered Incident Matrix, and now a team that's grown exponentially, the Substance Use Response Team (SURT).

"The Duluth Police Department is dedicated to providing a safe Duluth for all," said Chief Mike Tusken. "Each day our team works to prevent substance abuse through enforcement, education, and normalizing discussions about drugs and alcohol. Our holistic approach includes equal parts of emphasis on enforcement, education/prevention, and recovery by helping those suffering from Substance Use Disorder get access to the resources they need to aid finding health."

The Substance Use Response Team started in 2018 as primarily an Opioid Overdose Outreach. However, since 2020 SURT has grown due to a Comprehensive Opioid Stimulant and Substance Abuse grant. With the grant, the team is staffed with six individuals, which include three Peer Recovery Specialists, an ADC-T, a Diversion Officer, and a Lieutenant that oversees the program. The grant has also allowed the team to expand in their outreach efforts, bridging barriers, and providing resources to those who are struggling with Substance Use Disorder (SUD).

"The Substance Use Response Team within the Lake Superior Drug and Violent Crimes Task Force is continuously building relationships with those in our community who are struggling with substance use," said Lieutenant Jeff Kazel. "SURT is another tool that the Duluth Police Department and the Task Force continues to utilize to provide a safe Duluth for all."

In the most recent quarter, SURT had a total of 88 active clients, provided 30 comprehensive assessments, and helped 41 individuals access some form of recovery support services. These services include access to clinical SUD treatment, mental health services, Peer Recovery Specialists, harm reduction, and more.

The Substance Use Response Team is continuing to evolve and improve on the services it provides by strengthening relationships and serving in a respectful, caring, and selfless manner.

For more information on DPD's Substance Use Response Team, go to our website or call a Peer Recovery Specialist at (218)-730-4099.

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