

One call away

Kudos to Meridian Behavioral Healthcare and the Gainesville Police Department in their recent idea to partner on answering calls. A Meridian clinician responds with an officer to calls involving mental illness and emotionally charged situations.

In Alachua County there are a number of mental health services including the county Crisis Center, the Gainesville Peer Respite house, the University of Florida Counseling and Wellness Center for UF students, and Meridian. These organizations offer different types of help. There are crisis lines for suicidal cases, "warm" lines for venting and general information lines.

Unfortunately, some are not a 24/7 service. UF students are often put on a waiting list to get counseling on campus. However, there is a 24/7 service and it is to dial 211. This number is available throughout the U.S. Locally it is supported by United Way of North Central Florida. A friendly voice is just one call away.

Larry Schwandes, Gainesville