

Commanding Calm: Leading in High-Pressure Moments

Melissa Lucy, LPC
Chief Executive Officer

HORIZON BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



*For Health
Independence,
and Self-worth*

Pressure Reveals Priorities

- Why pressure leadership matters
- Why crisis professionals understand behavioral health leadership differently
- *Calm is contagious*



Calm Under Pressure

From Clinical Practice to Organizational Leadership

Establish Rapport and Safety 1 → **Establish Rapport and Support**

Assess the Crisis and Risk 2 → **Risk Assessment and Preparation**

Identify Precipitating Factors and Emotional State 3 → **Open Door Policies**

Develop a Short-Term Action Plan 4 → **Collaborative Strategic Planning**

Provide Immediate Support and Coping Strategies 5 → **Autonomy Paired with Accessibility**

Document and Follow Up 6 → **Timely Feedback**

Key Principles

In Leadership Practice



Safety First



Collaboration



Time-limited



Referral



*Leadership Lessons **From the Front Lines***





Building the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) of Central Virginia

- Building partnerships with law enforcement
- Community resistance/barriers
- Staying mission-focused under pressure
- Persistence in obtaining funding

Establishing Jail Diversion + Forensic Services

- Pairing compassion + accountability
- Pressure on emergency services
- Identifying systemic gaps
- Leading practical change



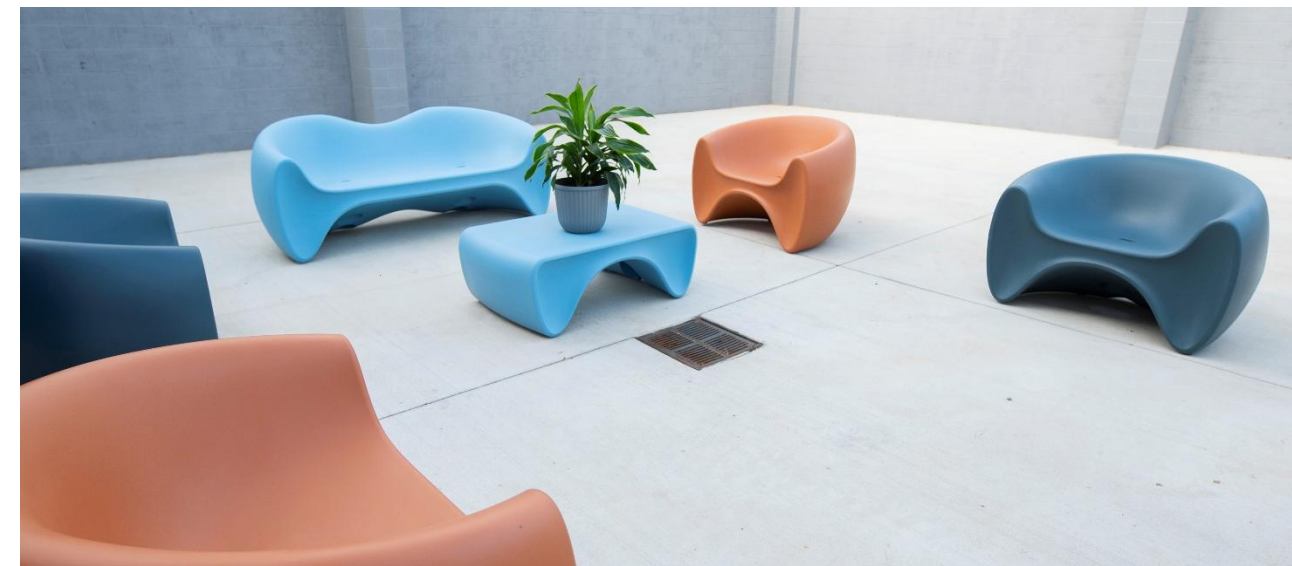
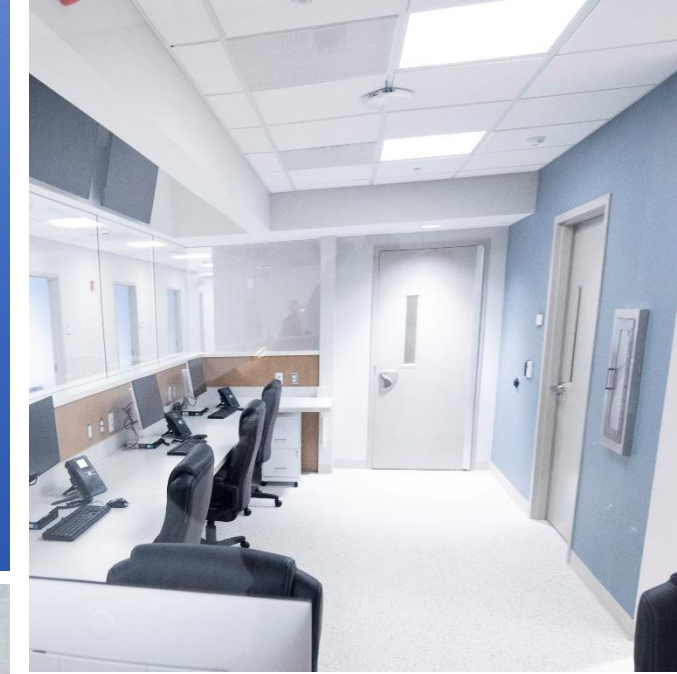


Introducing Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) Services & Beyond

- Recognizing unmet client needs
- Emotional regulation as both clinical and leadership skill
- Bringing evidence-based treatment and training to Horizon and beyond.

Crisis Care Center

- Years of seeing people in crisis without adequate support
- Refusing to settle for the bare minimum
- Long-term vision under sustained pressure



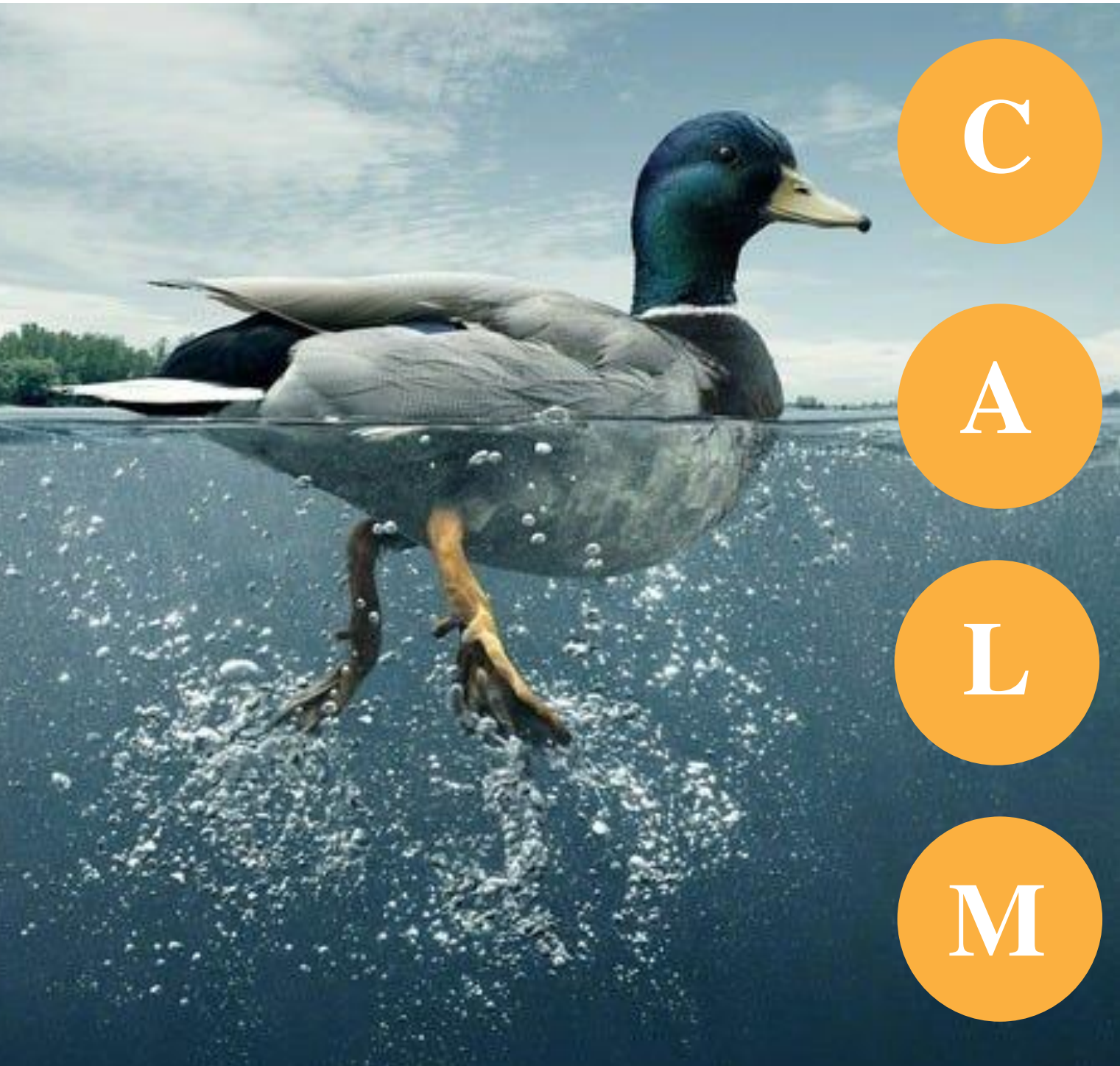


**“Knowing what must be done
does away with fear.”**

Rosa Parks

How to Act C.A.L.M. Under Pressure

A Practical Leadership Framework



C

→ **Center Yourself**

A

→ **Assess Clearly**

L

→ **Lead with Clarity**

M

→ **Mission-Focused**





Melissa Lucy, CEO

Horizon Behavioral Health

(434) 455-1760

Melissa.Lucy@HorizonBH.org

