

Crisis Intervention Teams: Lessons Learned on Working with Police

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NAMI (the National Alliance on Mental Illness)
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Welcome!

- First time using webex?
 - You can communicate with other attendees or the host in the **Chat Box** and seek technical assistance if needed.
 - You can type questions about the material presented in the **Q&A** section.
- Today's webinar will be **recorded and archived** on the NCCJD website. Please keep this in mind when sharing information and experiences during the webinar.

Polling Question

What percentage of adults in the criminal justice system have a serious mental illness?

Polling Question

What percentage of youth in the juvenile justice system have a mental health condition?

Polling Question

How do you change a police officer's perspective on disability?



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Polling Question

How long is CIT training?



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Polling Question

True or false: CIT stands for “Crisis Intervention Training.”



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National Center on
Criminal Justice & Disability

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People with Mental Illness in the Justice System

- Our mental health system is broken - fragmented, underfunded and difficult to navigate.
- Most individuals and families don't know where to get mental health care in a crisis, and often the only way to get help is to call the police.
- Most law enforcement officers aren't trained to deal with mental health crisis situations. Many don't know how to link a person to mental health services.

The outcome: unnecessary injuries, arrests and deaths.

The Nation's Largest Mental Health Treatment Facility



Twin Towers Jail, Los Angeles

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Mental Illness and the Justice System

- Low estimate: **20%** of people in jails and prisons in the US have a serious mental illness (about half a million people on any given day)
- Most people with mental illness in jails and prisons are charged/convicted with **non-violent** offenses
- **72%** of people who have mental illness in the justice system have a co-occurring substance abuse issue
- **66%** percent of boys, and almost **74%** of girls in the juvenile justice system meet the diagnostic criteria for at least one major mental illness

How did CIT come about?

Memphis, 1987: Death of Joseph Robinson



National Alliance on Mental Illness

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How CIT Works

Get all the players in a community talking to each other: law enforcement, mental health agencies and advocates

Plan, coordinate and change policy and procedure

40 hours of top-notch training for police:

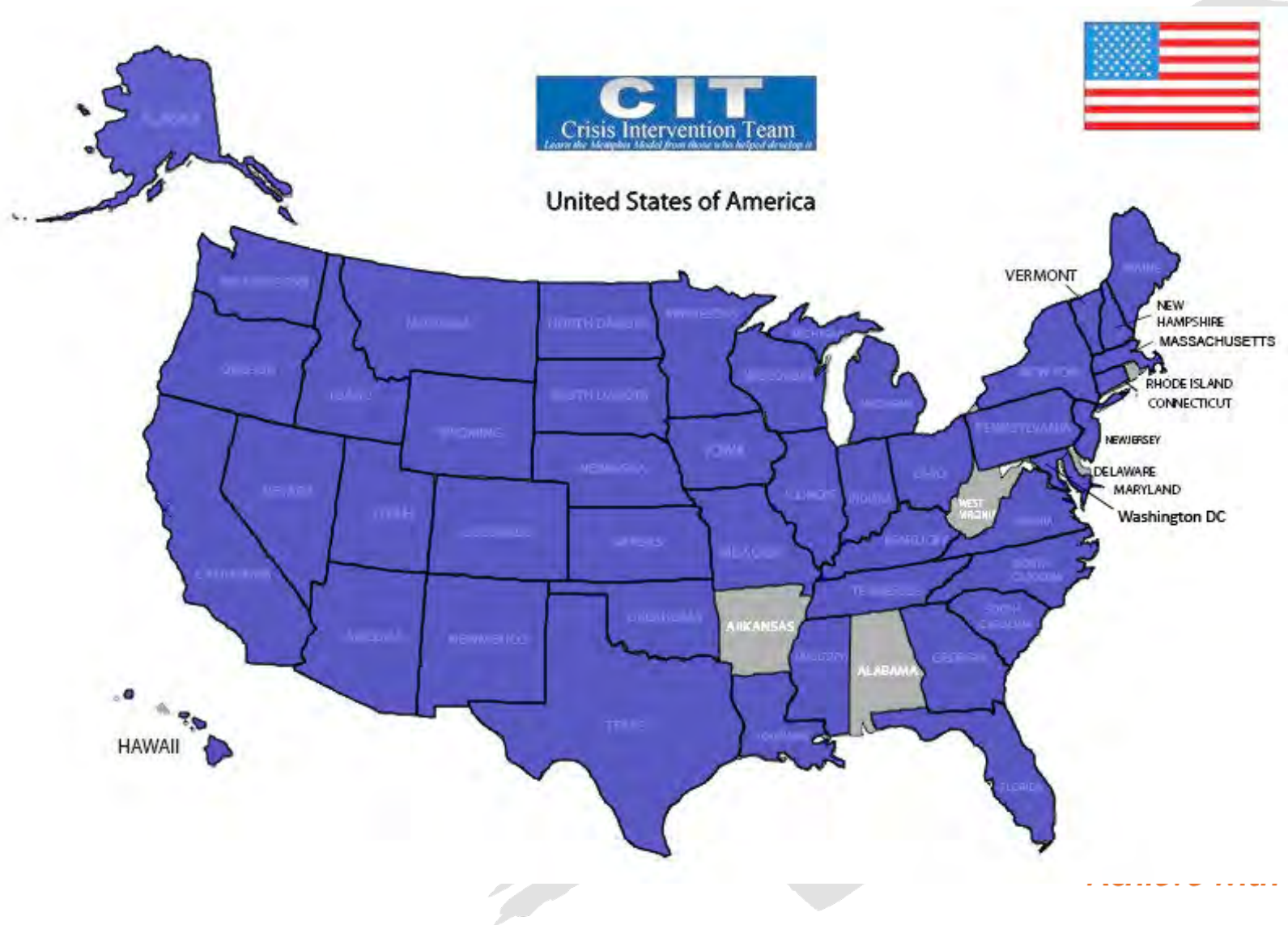
- Signs and symptoms of mental illness
- Interaction with individuals and families
- Verbal de-escalation skills
- Role plays
- How to connect a person to mental health services

CIT Outcomes

A proven track record of success:

- Fewer injuries during crisis situations
- Fewer arrests of people with mental illness
- More connections to treatment
- Trust and engagement of the whole community

2800 CIT programs in 47 states and DC



Lessons Learned: Partnership

CIT is successful because it fosters genuine, long-term partnerships between mental health agencies, law enforcement agencies and individuals and families affected by mental illness.

Partnership and Trust

Ask a Cop: CIT Changes the Way Law Enforcement Respond in a Crisis

Ask a Cop is a new occasional column produced by [NAMI's CIT Center](#), answering common questions about law enforcement and mental health issues. The column is an opportunity to learn about the law enforcement officer's perspective on how officers, providers and individuals and families affected by mental illness can work together to improve crisis responses. To ask a question, please email laurau@nami.org with the subject line "Ask a Cop." Please note that we will not be able to answer all questions or to discuss individual legal cases.

Contributors: *Sr. Corporal Herb Cotner is a 25 year veteran of the Dallas Police Department. He has served Dallas PD as a CIT officer and is the department's Crisis Intervention Mental Health Liaison. Sr. Corporal Cotner is also the Vice President of NAMI Dallas.*

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Sherry Cusumano and Sr. Corporal Herb Cotner

Source: www.nami.org/cit

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Lessons Learned: Getting Buy-In

Pitching the program to police leaders:

- Inform yourself about the police department and their challenges
- Liability
- Community trust and safety
- Time and priorities
- Officer safety!
- Get support from chiefs/sheriffs *and* patrol officers

Lessons Learned: Training

- Keep it simple
- Focus on behaviors and symptoms, not diagnoses
- Build officers' skills and give them a chance to practice
- Give officers instruction on how to refer people for services
- Personal interaction with people with mental illness

NAMI In Our Own Voice

“Perhaps the biggest turning point in my recovery story was three years ago when 30 officers applauded after my first ever presentation in a [CIT] class. One of the officers who had previously arrested me was in that class and we hugged in front of everyone. Since that time I have been proudly involved with the training of more than 250 officers. The biggest shame of my life has been my criminal record—now I get to take my experiences and help save lives in my community.”



Paton Blough, NAMI
Greenville, SC

Lessons Learned: Local Ownership

- Every community is different - different populations, service providers, law enforcement culture
- Law enforcement want tools to make their job easier, but still control over training content and policies/procedures
- Most powerful agent for change - connecting law enforcement with service providers and people with mental illness *in their local communities*

Local Ownership



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Lessons Learned: State/National Support

Local ownership, but still need a lot of national and state support

- Building partnerships, breaking down mistrust is difficult
- Sustainability, data are challenges
- Adapting to changes in leadership
- Building infrastructure to support local programs

Statewide CIT Infrastructure

2800 Programs = 15% of law enforcement agencies



CIT in Ohio vs. New York

Maps source: University of Memphis CIT Center: <http://cit.memphis.edu>

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Lessons Learned: Supporting Officers

- Say thank you at the graduation
- CIT Awards banquet
- Media attention for training and positive outcomes
- Letters of appreciation
- Serve as a resource and partner in problem-solving
- Lunch!

Lessons Learned: Coordination and Planning

- What are your intended outcomes?
- How will you measure them?
- Where are the challenges?
- Who else needs to be involved? (e.g. law enforcement communications, EMTs, other service providers)
- Do policies/procedures need to change?

Make Sure You Know Where You're Going

“You’re investing a lot of money into training for law enforcement. Without an assessment site, it’s more like they are walking into a blind alley with nowhere to go. With the assessment site, law enforcement can see where they are going and everyone can get there more safely.”

– Victoria Cochran, Deputy Secretary of Public Safety, Virginia

Lessons Learned: Vital Role of Advocates

- Bringing partners together
- Promoting and spreading the program
- Staying true to the purpose of the program
- Mutual accountability
- Cheerleaders
- Educating families and individuals about how to interact with police
- Individual and family voice in training and decision-making

Thank you!

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Next Webinar

- Attend the next webinar on **January 29th at 1:30PM EST, “NCCJD’s activities, the Pathways to Justice™ Model, and Q&A with NCCJD staff”**
- Sign up to receive email alerts
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- Share your story and raise awareness

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Questions?

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- <http://fs8.formsite.com/thearcwebinar/form61/index.html>

Next Webinar:

- January 29th, 1:30-2:30PM EST

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