

DUTIFUL MINDS

Information for Ohio's CIT Graduates

It's all about partnerships

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Anatomy of a CIT Officer

Definition: A law enforcement officer who volunteers to go through 40 hours of highly intensive training that will enable them to deal more safely, humanly, and effectively with persons that have a mental illness, and may be in crisis.

Characteristics: A law enforcement officer who really meant it when they told the appointing authority that the reason they wanted to become an officer was that **they wanted to help people**. This officer has shown maturity when dealing with people and has built up some experience on the job. The officer who volunteers to go on 3 times as many crisis calls (one-fourth of the patrol division may need to be trained to have 24 hour coverage) is willing to go above and beyond the call of duty. This officer will have good communications skills and be intelligent. They may be more educated than other officers, or have a family member who is mentally ill. Their heart will be in the right place. They will always be able to think tactically, realizing that these can be very difficult, challenging, and dangerous calls.

A Typical Day for the CIT Officer: The officer is assigned to the Patrol Division of their agency. They may work any shift in the 24 hours of the day. They may have a partner, but more than likely they work alone. The Detail will show that they are "CIT". This way the Dispatcher can easily find them when the need arises.

Since they completed their 40-hours of CIT training they have been receiving approximately 3 times as many "Crisis" calls. After all, **they are the experts!** If they have been a CIT officer for awhile, most of the crisis calls they go on are familiar to them. They have been there before. They have probably built up some rapport with the person in crisis and their family. Things will go much more smoothly since it's not a stranger or perceived "badge heavy" cop coming to the door.

The CIT officer may take the person in crisis (after de-escalating them) to a psychiatric emergency services facility or hospital. Most likely this will be a voluntary admittance. The officer may sign some paperwork once there to ensure that the person in crisis does not change their mind and leave before they are evaluated.

A CIT officer in a true CIT Program will handle any and all calls that other patrol officers handle. They will however, go above and beyond and take extra calls – those involving persons in mental crisis! The officer usually will not receive extra compensation and may be called "a sucker" by some shortsighted fellow officers. This will not distract the CIT officer from doing the best job that he/she knows how to do in helping people.

The CIT officer, more than likely, will rise through the ranks faster than non-CIT officers and will become life-long supporters of programs that teach those in law enforcement how to "just talk to people the way you would like to be talked to".

All officers that deal more regularly with persons in mental crisis should be trained and have ready access to less-lethal weaponry. This just makes common sense. The CIT officer will be very judicial in using these extra "tools" on their duty belt. This officer will go through refresher and advanced courses on a regular basis and will probably attend special functions sponsored by such groups as The National Alliance on Mental Illness, Alcohol, Drug Abuse & Mental Health Boards, and other community support agencies that want to recognize the dedication shown to the community by these giving individuals.

(Composed at the request of the Council of State Governments by Michael Woody)

Ohio 2007 Officer of the Year Award

At this years annual Ohio Department of Mental Health Forensic Conference **Lt. Joseph Marhulik** of the Warren City Police Department in Trumbull County received the "CIT Officer/Coordinator of the Year Award". Joe attended the CIT training in Summit County in 2002 and worked very hard to help bring CIT to his community. About his passion to do this Joe states is three-fold: "Over my career I had seen law enforcement just making arrests and taking most mentally ill people to jail. In my opinion this never really solves the problem. One of our goals should be to help people solve their own problems. I believe that a police officer's most used skill and the skill that should be the best is Interpersonal Communications. The ability to

talk, gather information and allow people to solve their problems. The perceptions that mentally ill persons are “crazy” and have “super human strength” are still in the law enforcement community. The CIT training breaks down the barriers. It gives officers an understanding about the mentally ill and the mental health system in the community. I also believe that the police officer should never jeopardize their safety. But, a good communicator can talk to people and still be safe.

The second part of my passion is through personal experience. I had two family members who have experienced mental illness. My philosophy is that I treat people the same way I would want my family treated by the police, with understanding and respect. Mental illness is a sickness that can be treated if people can get help.

Lastly, my wife had worked as a Psych nurse at Trumbull Memorial Hospital. While visiting her I was able to see that the mentally ill were just in need of help. If nurses are able to be safe and do their jobs, why can't law enforcement?"

Lt. Marhulik follows in the footsteps of **Sgt. Michael Yohe** of the Akron P.D., **Lt. Steve Noftz** and **Officer David Malawista** of the Ohio University P.D., and **Lt. Chris Bowling** of the Columbus P.D. in receiving this award.

3rd Annual National CIT Conference a Success!

More than 1150 people attended this year's National CIT Conference held in Memphis, Tennessee, the birthplace of CIT! Ohio was well represented in the following presentations:

Building on Collaboration: Ohio's Adaptable Approach (a panel discussion by Dr. Mark Munetz, Michael Woody, Betsy Johnson, and Joe Krake)

Engage-Access-Resolve: How adopting a De-escalation Model can strengthen your CIT program (Paul Lilley, Matt Kinsinger, and Julie Betts)

From the Street to the Jail: Adapting CIT Training to Corrections Settings (Lt. Ryan Kidwell, Pam Kasiorkiewicz, and Paul Lilley)

Just look at how CIT is growing nationally – 2005 – 1st National Conference held in Columbus, Ohio; 675 people in attendance. 2006 – 2nd National Conference held in Orlando, Florida; 750 people in attendance.

The 4th Annual National CIT Conference is scheduled to be in Atlanta, Georgia in either September or October of 2008!

Upcoming CIT Classes Being Offered

Franklin County – week of September 17th (contact Lt. Chris Bowling, Columbus P.D.)

Fairfield County – week of September 17th (contact Joel Carter at Fairfield Municipal Court)

Lucas County – week of October 1st (contact Ginger Bass at Lucas County ADAMH Bd.)

Medina County – week of October 1st (contact Lt. Travis Colonius at Medina County Sheriff's Office)

Wayne/Holmes County – week of October 22nd (contact Amy Anderson at NAMI of Wayne & Holmes County)

Stark County – week of October 22nd (contact Carole Vesely at carolev@circstark.org)

Mahoning County – week of October 22nd (contact Michele Petrello at mpetrella@mahoningmentalhealth.org)

Coshocton/Noble/Perry/Guernsey/Morgan/Muskingum County – week of October 29th (contact Dan Arter at 740-455-0700)

CORE OUTCOMES OF CIT

1. Lower incidents of injury to officers and others
2. Fewer repeat calls for service of patrol officers with mental health consumers
3. Enhanced working relationship of patrol officers with county crisis workers
4. Increased involvement of family and friends of the consumer as a crisis response alternative
5. Increased knowledge of community resources available to the consumer and family members which may assist in recovery

Need Articles

This is your newsletter. Please send us information of interest to CIT graduates. We would love to have officer success stories, training tips, awards, recognition, news articles, and etc. and/or any other tidbits of information that would benefit our CIT Officers. After all, the program needs “Feeding & Nurturing”. CIT Officers are the “Knights in shining armor” for all those who suffer from mental illness and their loved ones.

Questions or suggestions can be directed to the editor, Michael S. Woody, CIT Specialist, State of OhioCCoE/CJ 330.896.4001 or michael.s.woody@earthlink.net