

GOALS OF CIT

- End crisis using de-escalation techniques
- Less need for the use of lethal force
- Reduction in injuries to mental health consumers
- Reduction in officer injuries
- Reduction in emergency room recidivism
- Jail Diversion
- Reduction in civil litigation
- Improvements in community relations

BENEFITS OF CIT

- Crisis Response is immediate
- Arrests and use of force decrease
- Officer injury rates during crisis events decline
- Under-served consumers are identified by officers and provided with care
- Officers are better trained and educated in verbal de-escalation techniques
- Decrease in liability for health care issues in the jail
- Cost savings

ABOUT US

The Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) program is a community partnership of law enforcement, mental health professionals, mental health consumers and family member advocates. CIT's goal is to help persons with serious mental disorders access medical treatment rather than placing them in the criminal justice system for illness-related behaviors.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

National Suicide Prevention Line

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

1-800-SUICIDE

National Youth Crisis Hotline

1-800-442-HOPE (4673)

NAMI- Huntsville

(256) 534-2628

WellStone Behavioral Health

256-533-1970

Huntsville Hospital

256-265-8123

Veterans Crisis Line

1-800-273-8255

Teens! Stressed Out?

Text 256-722-8219

Crisis Services Helpline

256-716-1000 or 1-800-691-8426

<https://www.csna.org/>

<http://www.211connectsalabama.org/>

HUNTSVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM



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THE TEAM

Approximately 40% of persons suffering from serious mental illness will be arrested at least once during their lifetime. It is imperative that progressive law enforcement agencies find a better way to serve the mentally ill in our community other than a jail cell.

The Huntsville Police Department (HPD) has a dedicated team of Crisis Intervention Officers who work tirelessly to build strong community partnerships and compassionately connect those affected by mental illness with resources and services. By working together with the families and care-givers of those who are suffering a mental health crisis, we can empower them with real-world solutions that literally change lives for the better.

Officers trained in the tenets of community based policing enable us to build trust between the mentally ill and law enforcement, which is crucial to achieve a positive outcome in a crisis situation. It is our desire to help, not to punish.

“The reality of this problem is that no one party or individual or institution created it, and it requires a collaborative of all the traditional or nontraditional partners to fix it. Law enforcement can’t do it alone, courts can’t do it alone, providers can’t do it alone; but working together, they can substantially improve the system and the lives of people they are trying to help.”

— Judge Steve Leifman, 11th Judicial Circuit of Florida, Miami, Florida

WHAT IS CIT ?

The Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) is an effective law enforcement training and response program designed for first responders who handle crisis calls involving people with mental illness. The CIT training is designed to:

1. Provide supportive measures and an “on-the-job-tool” that can be used by law enforcement personnel to enhance and maintain officer, consumer, and public safety.
2. Provide intervention strategies and alternatives to assist in directing individuals with mental illness to the appropriate healthcare systems during crisis contacts and reduce their involvement in the criminal justice system.



WHY CIT ?

Research shows that those afflicted with some form of mental illness are many times more likely to encounter law enforcement. It is important for officers to be able to recognize the difference between the symptoms of a mental health crisis versus deliberate evasive or combative behavior. The officer’s degree of training will dictate his/her approach to, engagement of, and interaction with these individuals. The extra training CIT officers receive can help to facilitate the likely-hood of positive incident resolution for both the officer(s) and the individual(s) in crisis, as well as any bystanders.

THE FUTURE OF CIT

Law enforcement has traditionally been the first responder in any crisis situation, and no doubt this will continue to be the case. Over the years – and particularly in the past decade as traditional mental health institutions have shut down in favor of community placements – it has become obvious that special strategies are needed when a person with a mental illness is in crisis. A community based partnership has proven to be an effective way to provide the best services to those affected by mental illness. It is, indeed, an idea whose time has come.