

**REPORT OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES**

**Feasibility and Requirements
for Utilizing the Specialized
Training Program of the New
River Valley Crisis Intervention
Team (CIT) Program**

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



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Reporting of Crisis Intervention Team Development in Virginia

The Memphis Police Department pioneered the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) in 1988 in response to an incident that resulted in police shooting a 27 year-old man who had a mental illness. The Memphis CIT was created for the purpose of creating a collaborative community effort to join the police, mental health professionals, and the community to develop a safe approach to mental crisis events. The model has proven so successful, that CITs are being structured nationwide to duplicate the Memphis model. The DCJS Standards and Training Section was not able to discover alternative crisis intervention models that demonstrated any greater success or utility in other states, and that this particular model has the benefit of a long-standing successful pioneer program in Memphis, Tennessee.

Law Enforcement Services has worked closely with the New River Valley Crisis Intervention Team program staff in preparation to assist the two Bureau of Justice Assistance Grant sites, Mt. Rogers Community Services Board and Charlottesville/Albemarle County areas, to provide consultation to aid in developing their Crisis Intervention Team model programs. The New River Valley Crisis Intervention Team program staff will provide three 40-hour CIT training sessions in November 2006, January 2007, and March 2007 to train a total of 75 police officers, mental health professionals, and community members. In the training, police officers will learn how to recognize a mentally ill person in crisis and how to defuse the crisis. A mentally ill person may rapidly deteriorate if incarcerated, becoming more frantic and violent, thereby generating added criminal charges.

The Mt. Rogers Community Services Board and Charlottesville/Albemarle County CIT staff have coordinated with Dr. Randolph DuPont and Major Sam Cochran, founders of the Memphis CIT model, to consult with Memphis CIT staff in providing a "train the trainer" program to support the ongoing training of new officers in their own localities, as well as providing initial consultation and technical assistance to any additional sites that might begin a CIT project based on the New River Valley model. The CIT model consists of several core elements from the Memphis model, in addition to the 40-hour training for police officers. CIT sites will be assisted in recognizing the need for and creating programs that include these elements. The training component consists of 40 hours of training, broken down as to the attached report.

The benefits of implementing a CIT program extend to mental health consumers, mental health professionals and law enforcement officers. CITs provide an opportunity to build collaborative community relationships that allow for law enforcement officers to be more efficient and effective in performing their job functions, immediate crisis response to mental health consumers, and provides established procedures for mental health professionals in crisis situations. The result is decreased victimless crime arrests, decreased use of restraints due to violence, a decrease in officer injuries, officers become better trained in the use of de-escalation techniques, an increase in officer appreciation by the community, and

the cost savings of processing fewer individuals through the criminal justice system. Cost savings efforts also extend to the localities that establish a CIT, as it utilizes the trained CIT officers and existing mental health professionals in the successful program, the New River Valley CIT, to mentor and counsel new program professionals in the Mount Rogers Community Services Board CIT.

NEW RIVER VALLEY CIT TRAINING LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Unit 1: Orientation to CIT Concept and Awareness of Mental Health Issues

- Officers will be introduced to MHANRV's CIT staff and review the schedule for the weeklong training.
- Officers will gain an understanding of the history, goals, and expected outcomes of a CIT program, and the inception and structure of the NRV-CIT program.
- Officers will gain an understanding of the mental health issues of confidentiality, stigma, and consumer rights.
- Officers and CIT Faculty will complete all paperwork for ensuring client confidentiality throughout the week of training.

Unit 2: Introduction to Clinical States

- Officers will become acquainted with the three types of psychological disorders.
- Officers will learn to recognize the symptoms and behaviors associated with different psychological disorders.
- Officers will come away with specific strategies to use when handling an individual experiencing a mental health crisis.

Unit 3: The Continuum of Care for Persons with Mental Illness

- Officers will gain an understanding of how society has historically responded to mental illness.
- Officers will learn about the current Biopsychosocial Perspective for the treatment of mental illnesses.
- Officers will learn about the various inpatient, outpatient, and consumer/family support options that make up the ideal continuum of care for person with mental illness.

Unit 4: Introduction to Psychopharmacology

- Officers will be introduced to the various classes of psychotropic medications.
- Officers will learn to recognize the most common psychotropic medications and learn how these medications can help a person with mental illness.
- Officers will learn about the side effects and potential abuse of psychotropic medications.

Unit 5: Consumer and Family Issues

- Officers will gain an understanding of what it feels like to live with serious mental illnesses through presentations by a consumer, a spouse and a parent of an individual with psychiatric disorders.

Unit 6: Site Visits

- Officers will visit a variety of inpatient and outpatient mental health and substance abuse treatment facilities in the New River Valley.
- Officers will gain an understanding of who is served by each facility and under what circumstances.
- Officers will learn how consumers are admitted and discharged from these facilities and what supports are in place when they leave.
- Officers will gain empathy for persons with mental illness by engaging in one-on-one conversations with consumers.

Unit 7: Site Visit Review

- Officers will discuss their experiences and individual reactions to the various facilities they visited the previous day.
- Officers will have an opportunity to ask questions about the site visits.

Unit 8: Civil Commitment Procedures and Related Issues

- Officers will learn the basic constitutional and statutory bases for due process requirements in involuntary detention and civil commitment actions.
- Officers will learn the legal criteria for exercise of a “paperless” Emergency Custody Order, or for one issued by a magistrate.
- Officers will learn the basic legal procedure involved in involuntary civil commitments from Temporary Detention Orders to dismissal, court-ordered outpatient treatment or inpatient commitment.
- Officers will learn the criteria and procedure for issuance of a Medical Emergency Temporary Detention Order.

Unit 9: Suicide Intervention Skills for the CIT Officer

- Officers will examine attitudes, beliefs and statistics related to suicide.
- Officers will identify levels of suicidality.
- Officers will be presented with recommendations and intervention techniques for use in situations when they encounter a person who may be suicidal.
- Officers will practice intervention techniques by using role play.

Unit 10: Role Playing Exercises (Day 1)

- Officers will practice intervention skills using role-play scenarios involving people experiencing mental health or substance abuse related crises. Difficulty Level: Introductory

Unit 11: Basic Crisis Intervention Skills

- Officers will learn the basic goals of crisis intervention.
- Officers will learn practical communication skills.

Unit 12: Professional Liability & Legal Issues

- Officers will review general civil and criminal liability law in Virginia as it relates to their acts or omissions as law enforcement officers.
- Officers will learn under what circumstances their actions could be considered a violation of the civil rights of mental health consumers.
- Officers will learn the extent of their legal duty to refrain from excessive force in dealing with consumers.
- Officers will learn the extent of their legal duty, if any, to protect mental health consumers or others.
- Officers will learn the extent of their legal defenses or immunities from criminal prosecution or personal legal liability while acting as law enforcement officers.

Unit 13: Verbal De-escalation Techniques

- Officers will be provided with a guide to quickly identify symptoms of a mental health emergency.
- Officers will learn the significance of every aspect of their initial approach when encountering a mental health consumer in crisis.

- Officers will acquire skills to most calmly and effectively communicate with a person experiencing a mental health crisis.
- Officers will learn negotiation skills to work towards resolution while establishing rapport and offering reassurance.

Unit 14: Developmental Disabilities

- Officers will be able to define developmental disabilities and recognize several common diagnoses.
- Officers will gain a better understanding of the associated cognitive, emotional and behavioral challenges of individuals with developmental disabilities.
- Officers will increase their skills for interacting with individuals with developmental disabilities in crisis situations.

Unit 15: Role Playing Exercises (Day 2)

- Officers will practice intervention skills using role-play scenarios involving people experiencing mental health or substance abuse related crises. Difficulty Level: Intermediate

Unit 16: Co-Occurring Disorders

- Officers will be aware of the most commonly available drugs in Southwestern Virginia, how they are used, and the effects of use, intoxication, and withdrawal.
- Officers will be able to list the most commonly seen mental health diagnoses in substance abusing individuals.
- Officers will be able to identify the serious mental health consequences of drug and alcohol use.

Unit 17: Personality Disorders

- Officers will learn to identify behaviors related to various personality disorders.
- Officers will learn about causes of various personality disorders.
- Officers will be presented with cautions and recommendations for use in situations in which they encounter a person who may have a diagnosis of a personality disorder.
- Officers will engage in group discussion of interaction techniques using scenarios involving people with characteristics of personality disorders.

Unit 18: Adolescent Issues

- Officers will learn to recognize and differentiate between normal adolescent behavioral development and interrupted adolescent behavioral development.
- Officers will be introduced to effective crisis intervention skills with adolescents.
- Officers will be introduced to adolescent conflict cycle as well as reasons why professionals become counter-aggressive and exhibit unprofessional behavior.

Unit 19: Community Resources

- Officers will learn about the various inpatient, residential, outpatient, and consumer/family support options available to residents of the New River Valley.
- Officers will learn how to access available resources for consumers whom they are helping.
- Officers will learn how to pass along information on local resources to consumers and their family members, using the “Where Can I Turn?” directory and a wallet-sized resource listing.

Unit 20: Role Playing Exercises (Day 3)

- Officers will practice intervention skills using role-play scenarios involving people experiencing mental health or substance abuse related crises. Difficulty Level: Advanced

