

# Crisis Intervention Team Core Elements

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## SECTION 1

### CIT Model Core Elements: Summary

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*The Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) is an innovative first-responder model of police-based crisis intervention with community, health care, and advocacy partnerships. The CIT Model was first developed in Memphis and has spread throughout the country. It is known as the “Memphis Model.” CIT provides law enforcement-based crisis intervention training for assisting those individuals with a mental illness, and improves the safety of patrol officers, consumers, family members, and citizens within the community.*

*CIT is a program that provides the foundation necessary to promote community and statewide solutions to assist individuals with a mental illness. The CIT Model reduces both stigma and the need for further involvement with the criminal justice system. CIT provides a forum for effective problem solving regarding the interaction between the criminal justice and mental health care system and creates the context for sustainable change.*

#### *Basic Goals:*

- *Improve Officer and Consumer Safety*
- *Redirect Individuals with Mental Illness from the Judicial System to the Health Care System*

*In order for a CIT program to be successful, several critical core elements should be present. These elements are central to the success of the program’s goals. The following outlines these core elements and details the necessary components underlying each element.*

### **CORE ELEMENTS**

#### ***Ongoing Elements***

1. Partnerships: Law Enforcement, Advocacy, Mental Health
2. Community Ownership: Planning, Implementation & Networking
3. Policies and Procedures

#### ***Operational Elements***

4. CIT: Officer, Dispatcher, Coordinator
5. Curriculum: CIT Training
6. Mental Health Receiving Facility: Emergency Services

#### ***Sustaining Elements***

7. Evaluation and Research
8. In-Service Training
9. Recognition and Honors
10. Outreach: Developing CIT in Other Communities

**SECTION 2**  
**CIT Model**  
**Core Elements: Outline**

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***Ongoing Elements***

1. Partnerships: Law Enforcement, Advocacy, Mental Health
  - A. Law Enforcement Community
  - B. Advocacy Community
  - C. Mental Health Community
2. Community Ownership: Planning, Implementation & Networking
  - A. Planning Groups
  - B. Implementation
  - C. Networking
3. Policies and Procedures
  - A. CIT Training
  - B. Law Enforcement Policies and Procedures
  - C. Mental Health Emergency Policies and Procedures

***Operational Elements***

4. CIT: Officer, Dispatcher, Coordinator
  - A. CIT Officer
  - B. Dispatch
  - C. CIT Law Enforcement Coordinator
  - D. Mental Health Coordinator
  - E. Advocacy Coordinator
  - F. Program Coordinator (Multi-jurisdictional)
5. Curriculum: CIT Training
  - A. Patrol Officer: 40-Hour Comprehensive Training
  - B. Dispatch Training
6. Mental Health Receiving Facility: Emergency Services
  - A. Specialized Mental Health Emergency Care

***Sustaining Elements***

7. Evaluation and Research
  - A. Program Evaluation Issues
  - B. Development Research Issues
8. In-Service Training
  - A. Extended and Advanced Training
9. Recognition and Honors
  - A. Examples
10. Outreach: Developing CIT in Other Communities
  - A. Outreach Efforts

## SECTION 3

### CIT Model Core Elements: Detailed

#### *3.1 Ongoing Elements*

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#### **1. Partnerships: Law Enforcement, Advocacy, Mental Health**

##### **A. Law Enforcement Community**

###### *Participation and Leadership within the Law Enforcement Community*

*Central to the formation and success of CIT is the role of the law enforcement community. Trained CIT Officers are able to interact with crisis situations using de-escalation techniques that improve the safety of the officer, consumer, and family members. In addition, the law enforcement community is able to provide care and help to consumers by transporting individuals in need of special treatment to appropriate facilities. It is also critical that all law enforcement participate in the formation of CIT and engage in all elements of the planning and implementation stages. Often those involved in the formation of the CIT program will become or help select the CIT coordinator for a particular law enforcement agency. The two main components within the law enforcement partnership are the operational Crisis Intervention Team within a law enforcement agency and general criminal justice system participants.*

- 1) Law Enforcement: CIT Operational Component
  - Police Department
  - Sheriff's Department
- 2) Law Enforcement: Criminal Justice Partnership Component
  - Corrections
  - Judiciary  
*Public defender, State Attorney, Judges, Probation/Parole*
  - Crime Commission/Public Safety Commission
- 3) Law Enforcement: Policy Development Component
  - Law enforcement command staff
  - Training and Standards

## **1. Partnerships: Law Enforcement, Advocacy, Mental Health**

### **B. Advocacy Community**

#### *Participation and Leadership within the Advocacy Community*

*Participation from the Advocacy Community is critical to the success of CIT. This partnership provides strong support from passionate and dedicated people whose goal is to improve the quality of life for individuals affected by a mental illness. Leadership roles should develop in the form of liaisons that help voice the support, ideas, and concerns of consumers and family members. This aspect of CIT brings the program to life by adding insight from those directly affected. This important partnership should be established early in the planning process and should continue as an ongoing operational element of CIT.*

1) **Consumers/Individuals with a Mental Illness**

*The personal accounts of individuals with a mental illness greatly enhance the planning process, officer training, and on-going support for CIT. Officers are able to gain an improved understanding and more realistic view of mental illness through these first-hand presentations. As a result, the involvement of individuals with a mental illness in the development, implementation, and ongoing sustainability of CIT is essential.*

2) **Family Members**

*Due to their first-hand knowledge and experience in dealing with mental illness, family members have a great deal to offer CIT. Family members also have much to gain from CIT, as the program encourages treatment instead of incarceration. In both the development and implementation phases of building a CIT program, this interdependency allows family members to provide direct guidance and assistance to the planning process, training and community education. Therefore, the involvement of family members is a critical hallmark of the CIT program.*

3) **Advocacy Groups**

*Advocacy groups may consist of family members, consumers, friends, and/or other individuals or groups that advocate for important issues surrounding mental illnesses and aim to improve the quality of life for those affected. Partnerships with advocacy groups, much like the partnerships with consumers and family members, are critical to the success of CIT. They provide strong support systems not only for members of the community, but also for law enforcement and mental health communities, as well as consumers. Advocacy groups may help by providing a voice for individuals with a mental illness; they also assist family members and consumers by providing services and guidance.*

### **3) Advocacy Groups (continued)**

*Below is a list of some of the advocacy groups that have been critical to the initial development of CIT programs across the nation.*

- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)**  
*NAMI is a nonprofit, grassroots, advocacy organization whose mission is to eliminate mental illnesses and improve the quality of life for those who are affected. NAMI members consist of consumers, family members, and friends of individuals with a mental illness. [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)*
- **National Mental Health Association (NMHA)**  
*NMHA is a nonprofit organization that seeks to address all aspects of mental health and mental illness. NMHA works to improve the mental health of all Americans through advocacy, education, research, and service. [www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org)*
- *Many other advocacy groups have participated in the initial development of CIT programs throughout the nation. These groups include those representing individuals with mental illness, as well as those representing local and state government, mental health agencies, and the judiciary.*

## **1. Partnerships: Advocacy, Law Enforcement, Mental Health**

### **B. Mental Health Community**

*Participation and Leadership within the Mental Health Community*

*The mental health community plays an important role in the successful implementation, development, and ongoing sustainability of CIT. These professions provide treatment, education and training that result in a wide dissemination of knowledge and expertise to both individuals with a mental illness and patrol officers undergoing CIT training. This partnership is essential to maintaining access to the health care system and quality treatment.*

#### **1) Providers, Educators, Practitioners, and Trainers**

- Professionals  
*Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Physicians, Social Workers, Counselors, Pastoral Counselors, Alcohol/Drug Counselors, Educators, Trainers, and Criminologists*
- Public, Non profit & Private Agencies; Institutions; & Universities  
*Hospitals, Mental Health Centers, Emergency Intake Facilities, Universities, Colleges, and Medical Schools*
- Trainers  
*Local professionals and agencies are encouraged to provide instruction during CIT training voluntarily as a service to the community. This is strongly suggested in an effort to minimize the training costs for local law enforcement agencies.*



## **2. Community Ownership: Planning, Implementation & Networking**

*Communities both large and small are seeking solutions to crisis issues and situations. Community collaborations and partnerships are essential to this effort. Additionally, it is important to establish community ownership, which may be described as a dedicated investment that individuals within the community have in the CIT program. Individuals and organizations within the community must have a stake in the initial planning stages; the implementation of the CIT program and its training curriculum; and ongoing feedback in order to maintain, improve, and ensure the success of CIT. Also, local professionals and agencies, who dedicate their time without charge to assist in training the patrol officers, help to increase the sense of community ownership for CIT.*

### **A. Planning**

- 1) Advocates
- 2) Citizens
- 3) Consumers/Individuals with a Mental Illness
- 4) Family Members
- 5) Government
- 6) Judiciary
- 7) Law Enforcement Community
- 8) Mental Health Community

### **B. Implementation**

- 1) Leadership from Law Enforcement, Mental Health, and Advocacy Community
- 2) Training Curriculum

### **C. Networking**

- 1) Feedback
- 2) Problem Solving

### **3. Policies and Procedures**

*Policies and procedures are a necessary component of CIT. They provide a set of guidelines that direct the actions of both law enforcement and mental health officials. Due to the large number of stakeholders in CIT, it is important that these guidelines be designed by all those affected. Within the law enforcement community, policies exist in order to provide guidelines regarding how to properly transport consumers and how to develop an infrastructure through a system of partnerships and inter-agency agreements. These law enforcement policies address the actions of both emergency dispatchers and CIT patrol officers. The emergency dispatchers identifies the nearest available CIT Officer to respond to the crisis. The CIT Officer then responds to the crisis event and leads the intervention. CIT Officers should be allowed to integrate their wide range of law enforcement training when handling CIT calls. Within the mental health community, policies exist in order to provide guidelines regarding how to handle referrals from CIT Officers. The mental health community also plays a key role in training and feedback for the CIT program. The role of the advocacy community in policies and procedures are often more informal but involve the critical element of networking and feedback for the overall program.*

#### **A. CIT Training**

- 1) Inter-Agency Agreements
- 2) Size and Scope

*The number of trained CIT officers available to any shift should be adequate to meet the demand load of the local consumer community. Experience has shown that a successful CIT program will have trained 20-25% of the agency's patrol division. There are differences that exist between large urban communities and small rural communities. Smaller agencies may need to train a higher percentage of officers. Ultimately, the goal is to have an adequate number of patrol officers trained in order to ensure that CIT-trained officers are available at all times.*

*All dispatchers should be trained to appropriately elicit sufficient information to identify a mental health related crisis.*

#### **B. Law Enforcement Policies and Procedures**

- 1) Dispatch Policies and Procedures

*The nearest CIT Officer is identified and dispatched to the crisis event.*

- 2) Patrol Policies and Procedures

*Policies that maximize the officer's discretion are critical. In addition, a policy should address the issue of the lead CIT Officer, who guides the resolution of the crisis event.*

### **3. Policies and Procedures (continued)**

#### **C. Mental Health Emergency Policies and Procedures**

##### 1) Law Enforcement Referral Policies

*The policies in place should allow for a wide range of inpatient and outpatient referral sources in order to accommodate law enforcement agencies with a CIT program. Barriers that prevent officers from accessing immediate mental healthcare for an individual with mental illness should be eliminated. This should be a priority as important as any other in the CIT process. In addition, policies should be set to ensure minimal turnaround time for the CIT Officers, so that it is less than or equivalent to the turnaround time in jail.*

## ***3.2 Operational Elements***

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### **4. CIT: Officer, Dispatcher, Coordinator**

*Individuals within the law enforcement community primarily consist of CIT Officers, Dispatchers, and a CIT Coordinator. The following core element addresses the personnel required to effectively operate a CIT program.*

#### **A. CIT Officer**

*Officers within a patrol division should voluntarily apply for CIT positions. Each candidate then goes through a selection process, which is assessed according to the officer's application, recommendations, personal disciplinary police file, and an interview. Once selected, each of the CIT Officers maintains their role as a patrol officer and gains new duties and skills through the CIT training, serving as the designated responder and lead officer in mental health crisis events.*

- 1) Voluntary
- 2) Selection Process
- 3) Patrol Role
- 4) CIT Role
- 5) CIT Training and CIT Skills
- 6) Safety Skills

#### **B. Dispatch**

*Emergency dispatchers are a critical link in the CIT program and may include call takers, dispatchers, and 911 operators. The success of CIT depends on their familiarity with the CIT program, knowledge of how to recognize a CIT call involving a behavioral crisis event, and the appropriate questions to ask in order to ascertain information from the caller that will help the responding CIT Officer. Finally, dispatchers should know how to appropriately dispatch a CIT Officer. Dispatchers should receive training courses (a minimum of 8-16 hours) in CIT and additional advanced in-service training.*

- 1) CIT Training
- 2) Familiarity with CIT
- 3) Recognize Call as CIT Crisis Event
- 4) Ask Caller Appropriate Questions
- 5) Dispatch Nearest CIT Officer
- 6) Additional/Advanced In-Service Training

## **4. CIT: Officer, Dispatcher, Coordinator**

### **C. CIT Law Enforcement Coordinator**

*The CIT coordinator is part of the law enforcement community and acts as a liaison by maintaining partnerships with program stakeholders in order to ensure the success of CIT. The coordinator's involvement with CIT should start from the beginning and continue through the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages. The CIT coordinator provides support to CIT officers through training and feedback. The qualifications should include leadership ability and experience as a law enforcement officer. The job responsibilities include program development, training coordination, and maintenance of relationships with community partnership. The CIT coordinator also is a point of contact with the law enforcement agency for the community and brings stability to the program.*

### **D. Mental Health Coordinator**

*The mental health coordinator is part of the mental health community who provides leadership and serves as a liaison with the advocacy and law enforcement communities. This position may be established or developed informally. When it is left as an informal liaison there may be several individuals who serve this function. It is important that each of them work with the overall community effort. This position has a significant operational component involving the training, curriculum and the function of the receiving facility or receiving facilities*

### **E. Advocacy Coordinator**

*The advocacy coordinator is part of the advocacy community, which includes advocates, family members, and individuals with mental illness. As with the mental health coordinator, the position may be established or developed informally. When it is left as an informal liaison there may be several individuals who serve this function. It is important each of them work with the overall community effort. This position often involves the operational components such as training, curriculum and ongoing problem solving.*

### **F. Program Coordinator**

*Multi-agency CIT programs may have a need for a Program Coordinator who is largely responsible for the day to day logistics of inter-departmental communication, data collection and management, records keeping and scheduling training. This person should be familiar with the roles of three primary components of the CIT program and comfortable and effective in communicating in all three environments. Much of the role of this person will be diplomatic in nature. They may have additional duties in identifying and securing sustaining programmatic resources.*

## **5. Curriculum: CIT Training**

*The CIT program is an innovative national model of police-based crisis intervention with community mental health care and advocacy partnerships. Police officers receive intensive training to effectively respond to citizens experiencing a behavioral crisis. Patrol officers already have training and a basic understanding of the proper safety skills. Officers are encouraged to maintain these skills throughout the course, while incorporating new de-escalation techniques to more effectively approach a crisis situation. It is important that the individuals from the mental health, law enforcement, and advocacy communities play a critical role in the training curriculum in order to bring experience, ideas, information, and assistance to the CIT Officers in training. Additionally, all training faculty are encouraged to complete the 40-hour comprehensive course and participate in a ride-along in order to fully understand the complexities and differences that exist between mental health care and law enforcement.*

### **A. Patrol Officer: 40-Hour Comprehensive Training**

*The 40-hour comprehensive training emphasizes mental health-related topics, crisis resolution skills and de-escalation training, and access to community-based services. The format of a 40-hour course consists of didactics/lectures, on-site visitation and exposure to several mental health facilities, intensive interaction with individuals with a mental illness, and scenario based de-escalation skill training. Experience has shown this is a minimum level of training hours. The material covered is complex. The desired learning outcomes go beyond simple cognitive retention of material. The outcome desired is the retention of behavioral changes learned as part of the training.*

#### 1) Didactics and Lectures/Specialized Knowledge

- Clinical Issues Related to Mental Illnesses
- Medications and Side Effects
- Alcohol and Drug Assessment
- Co-Occurring Disorders
- Developmental Disabilities
- Family/Consumer Perspective
- Suicide Prevention and Practicum Aspects
- Rights/Civil Commitment
- Mental Health Diversity
- Equipment Orientation
- Policies and Procedures
- Personality Disorders
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD)
- Legal Aspects of Officer Liability
- Community Resources

## **5. Curriculum: CIT Training**

### **A. Patrol Officer: 40-Hour Comprehensive Training (Continued)**

- 2) On-Site Visits and Exposure
  - On-Site Visits
- 3) Practical Skill Training/Scenario Based
  - Crisis De-Escalation Training Part I  
*Basic Strategies*
  - Crisis De-Escalation Training Part II  
*Basic Verbal Skills*
  - Crisis De-Escalation Training Part III  
*Stages/Cycle of a Crisis Escalation*
  - Crisis De-Escalation Training Part IV  
*Advanced Verbal Skills*
  - Crisis De-Escalation Training Part V  
*Advanced Strategies: Complex Scenarios*
- 4) Questions and Answers
- 5) Commencement and Recognition

### **B. Dispatch Training**

*All dispatchers receive a specialized course detailing the structure of CIT. The training course also addresses how to properly receive and dispatch calls involving individuals with a mental illness and crisis situations. Additional and advanced in-service training courses should also be incorporated. Topics that are covered in the dispatcher's training course are listed below.*

- 1) Recognition and Assessment of a CIT Crisis Event
- 2) Appropriate Questions to Ask Caller
- 3) Identify Nearest CIT Officer
- 4) Policies and Procedures

## **6. Mental Health Receiving Facility: Emergency Services**

*A designated Emergency Mental Health Receiving Facility is a critical aspect of the CIT Model. It provides a source of emergency entry for consumers into the mental health system. To ensure CIT's success, the Emergency Mental Health Receiving Facility must provide CIT Officers with minimal turnaround time and be comparable to the criminal justice system. The facility should accept all referrals regardless of diagnosis or financial status. Additionally, the facility will need access to a wide range of emergency health care services and disposition options, as well as, alcohol and drug emergency services. Finally, the Emergency Mental Health Receiving Facility is part of the operational component of the CIT Model that provides feedback and engages in problem solving with the other community partners, such as Law Enforcement and Advocacy Communities.*

### **A. Specialized Mental Health Emergency Care**

- 1) Single Source of Entry (or well-coordinated multiple sources)
- 2) On Demand Access: Twenty-Four Hours/Seven Days A Week Availability
- 3) No Clinical Barriers to Care
- 4) Minimal Law Enforcement Turnaround Time
- 5) Access to Wide Range of Disposition Options
- 6) Community Interface (Feedback and Problem Solving Capacity)



### *3.3 Sustaining Elements*

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## **7. Evaluation and Research**

*Evaluation and research can help measure the impact, continuous outcomes, and efficiency of a community's CIT program. More specifically, it may help to identify whether the program is achieving its objectives and should be an ongoing part of CIT. Outcome research has shown CIT to be effective in developing positive perceptions and increased confidence among police officers; providing very efficient crisis response times; increasing jail diversion among those with a mental illness; improving the likelihood of treatment continuity with community-based providers; and impacting psychiatric symptomatology for those suffering from a serious mental illness, as well as substance abuse disorders. This was all accomplished while significantly decreasing police officer injury rates. The following components are being studied within CIT, some currently and others in the planning stages of evaluation.*

### **A. Research and Evaluation Issues**

- 1) Development of Community Consensus
- 2) Improved Law Enforcement Perception of Individuals with Mental Illness
- 3) Increased Confidence in Interacting with Individuals with Mental Illness
- 4) Decreased Crisis Response Times
- 5) Decreased Law Enforcement Injury Rates
- 6) Decreased Citizen Injury Rates
- 7) Improved Health Care Referrals
- 8) Decreased Arrest Rates
- 9) Jail Diversion Impact
- 10) Increased Treatment Continuity
- 11) Improved Treatment Outcomes
- 12) Decreased Psychiatric Symptomatology
- 13) Impact on Recidivism Rate
- 14) Improved Community Perception of Law Enforcement

## **8. In-Service Training**

*In-service training provides CIT Officers with additional knowledge and skills. In-service trainings should be offered regularly for current CIT Officers who have completed the 40-Hour Comprehensive Crisis De-Escalation Training course. The following is a list of several topics that have been used in previous In-service trainings:*

### **A. Extended and Advanced Training**

- 1) Extended/Advanced Suicide Crisis Intervention Training
- 2) Advanced Developmental Disabilities
- 3) New Developments in Psychiatric Medications
- 4) Advanced Verbal Skill Training (*Crisis Hotline*)
- 5) Advanced Scenario Training

## 9. Recognition and Honors

*Recognizing and honoring CIT Officers provides a sense of accomplishment and ownership toward the program. It also gives officers an incentive to continue in their line of work. Recognition and honors can be awarded through local media, newsletters, program websites, or annual banquets. Such honors should be given to CIT Officers who have served the community in crisis situations with exceptional care and compassion, while ensuring the safety of themselves and others.*

### A. Examples

1) Awards

*Departmental commendation for successfully de-escalating a crisis event*

2) Certificate of Recognition

*During monthly advocacy meetings, CIT Officers may be introduced to the community and given a Certificate of Recognition.*

3) Annual Banquet

*CIT Officers may be recognized and honored at an Annual CIT Banquet. The following are examples of the awards that can be given:*

- CIT Officer of the Year
- Precinct CIT Officer of the Year
- Five- or Ten-Year CIT Service Awards
- New CIT Officer of the Year
- Certificate of Appreciation/Recognition
  - For Individuals within the Mental Health Community*
  - For Individuals within the Advocacy Community*
  - For Other Individuals within the Community*

## **10. Outreach: Developing CIT in Other Communities**

*Developing CIT programs in other communities, through partnerships and outreach efforts, will help to ensure that individuals who suffer from a mental illness receive the proper care needed, while increasing the safety of the community, patrol officers, family members, and consumers. Outreach efforts may include the involvement of other local communities in a 40-Hour CIT Comprehensive Training Course. The following are possible outreach efforts:*

### **A. Outreach Efforts**

- 1) **Local Communities/Agency Development**  
*Provide 40-Hour CIT Comprehensive Training Course for local communities and agencies.*
- 2) **Regional Community/Agency Development**  
*Help other communities develop a CIT program and their own 40-Hour CIT Comprehensive Training Course.*
- 3) **Statewide CIT Development**  
*Develop a statewide CIT effort to establish CIT programs in police and sheriff's departments.*
- 4) **Legislative Development**  
*Develop a strong lobbying effort to educate policy makers and help secure adequate funding for program development*