



Academic Training to
Inform Police Responses:

Crisis Response and Intervention Training

Instructor Guide



This page is intentionally left blank



Instructor Guide

Developed, written, and reviewed by the following subject matter experts and consultants:

University of Cincinnati

Hannah D. McManus, PhD
Kelly Pitocco, LIS W-S
Amanda M. Shoulberg, MA

Policy Research Associates, Inc.

Colette Scott, MEd
Sam Cochran, MS
Michele Saunders, LCSW
Julie McLafferty, MA
Michael Hatch, MPA

The Arc of the United States

Lewis Bossing, Esq (Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law)
Erica Harris, MS, CHES (University of Cincinnati Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities)
Leigh Ann Davis, MSSW, MPA
Ariel Simms, Esq
Reginald Thomas, MS
Jessica Oppenheim, Esq.

International Association of Chiefs of Police

Kelly Burke
Juliana Palmer, MS
Charlene Heard
Charles Kenniff
Dana Bonnell, MS
Jacqueline Hazzan, MA, JD
Sabrina Fernandez, MPP
Nikole Metz, MA
Rachel Jensen



With special thanks for your leadership and guidance through this project to:

Bureau of Justice Assistance

Cornelia Sigworth, MS

Maria Fryer, MS

Elissa Rumsey, JD

University of Cincinnati

Robin Engel, PhD

Paula Smith, PhD

Policy Research Associates Inc.

Chanson Noether, MA

Dan Abreu, MS, CRC, LMHC

International Association of Chiefs of Police

Domingo Herraiz



This curriculum was supported by Grant No. 2020-NT-BX-K001 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.



This page intentionally left blank.



Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Overview of the Training.....	1
Course Development.....	1
Instructor and Participant Guides.....	2
Module Learning Objectives	3
1. Welcome & Introduction to CRIT.....	3
2. Perceptions & Attitudes on Behavioral Health & Disabilities.....	3
3. Prioritizing Officer Mental Health, Wellness, & Resilience	4
4. Understanding Mental Health Conditions & Mental Illnesses	4
5. Substance Use Disorders	5
6. Trauma & Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	5
7. Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities	6
8. Family & Peer Perspectives Panel.....	6
9. Suicide	7
10. Neurocognitive Disorders.....	7
11. Personal Connections: Site Visits	8
12. Legal & Policy Topics	8
13. Veterans.....	9
14. Working with People Experiencing Homelessness	9
15. Community Resources.....	10
16. Scenario-Based Skills Training – De-escalation Communication Skills.....	10
17. Scenario-Based Skills Training – De-escalation Strategies	11
18. Scenario-Based Skills Training – Verbal De-escalation Scenarios	11



Introduction

Overview of the Training

The purpose of the Crisis Response and Intervention Training (CRIT) is to prepare police officers in their response to people experiencing crises related to behavioral health (BH) conditions and intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). This training is based upon the Memphis Model of Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training. Like the Memphis Model, the CRIT is a week-long (40-hour) curriculum that covers topics related to mental health, substance use, and effective responses to people who experience mental health or substance use-related crises in the community. Research suggests that CIT training is effective in improving law enforcement officers' knowledge of behavioral health conditions, reducing the stigma associated with behavioral health conditions, increasing empathy, and enhancing officers' confidence in their ability to successfully intervene in a crisis.

The CRIT reflects extensions to the CIT training model by incorporating information on IDD and effective responses to people with IDD. Additionally, the CRIT is designed to support law enforcement agencies in their implementation of many different crisis response models—which may include, but are not limited to, Crisis Intervention Teams—and in collaboration with BH and disability service provider partners.

CRIT's overall philosophy is officer safety, public safety, and diversion from the criminal justice system when possible. The goals of the curriculum include: (1) expanding knowledge on mental health conditions, substance use disorders, and intellectual and developmental disabilities; (2) creating connections with people with lived experience; (3) enhancing awareness of community services; (4) emphasizing the de-escalation of crisis situations; and (5) supporting officer safety and wellness.

CRIT is designed as a co-trainer model in which a lead law enforcement instructor and a lead behavioral health instructor or IDD instructor (depending on the content) presents the information. It is also recommended to have a law enforcement crisis response coordinator or other crisis response-trained officer present during the full week of training. This person can help to answer questions and reinforce the training material when participants have questions about how the content relates to their work or bring up safety concerns.

Course Development

The Academic Training to Inform Police Responses is a national initiative designed to (1) raise awareness in the policing community about the nature and needs of people with behavioral



health (BH) conditions and intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD); (2) provide training and resources on BH, IDD, and crisis response; and (3) support the use of evidence-informed, best practices in these responses. Supported by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), researchers from the University of Cincinnati (UC)—in collaboration with professionals from Policy Research Associates (PRA), The Arc of the United States’ National Center on Criminal Justice and Disability (NCCJD), and the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)—work to assist police agencies in the development and delivery of multi-layered responses to people with BH conditions and IDD.

To inform the development of the CRIT curriculum, the Academic Training Initiative brought together subject matter experts in law enforcement, behavioral health, disabilities, curriculum development, and evaluation. This course was developed by drawing upon many resources, research findings, publications, subject matter expertise, and examples of training for law enforcement across the United States.

Instructor and Participant Guides

This ***Instructor Guide*** is meant to guide trainers in their preparation to teach this course. The course is organized by module as presented in the CRIT Curriculum Matrix. Please note that the days are scheduled to begin at 8:00 am and end by 5:00 pm, with a 1-hour mid-day lunch break. This schedule may be altered for your agency and your community.

It is important to note that breaks are not built into this curriculum (i.e., the PowerPoint slide deck does not include slides that say “break”). Individual instructors should schedule 10-minute breaks when appropriate. It is important to keep the needs of participants in mind. Frontline officers do not typically sit all day. It is important to take frequent breaks to keep the participants engaged.

Videos, audio stories, and case studies may be substituted with local or more current material available to instructors. Part of what will make this course a valuable learning experience is the consistent updating of material—especially videos and audio drawn from news sources. Ask your local behavioral health and/or disability professionals who are serving as instructors to provide alternate case studies if you wish. The idea is to provide material that will speak to the officers in your community and emphasize issues that speak to them and make them think.

The participants in the course should receive a printed or electronic version of the ***Participant Guide***—a companion piece to this Instructor Guide. The Participant Guide should include the module learning objectives and the module slides with space for notetaking. This will allow participants to follow along with the instructors throughout the week.



Module Learning Objectives

1. Welcome & Introduction to CRIT

Time: 60 minutes

Slides: 16

Purpose: This module sets the stage for the 40-hour Crisis Response and Intervention Training (CRIT). It introduces the lead instructors and the classroom participants to one another, sets expectations for the week of learning, and presents the basic concept of police-mental health collaboration (PMHC) in crisis response. This module also discusses issues related to the high prevalence of people living with mental health (MH) conditions and those with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in the criminal justice system.

Learning Objectives:

Upon completing this module, participants should be able to:

1. Define Crisis Response and Intervention Training;
2. Explain the need for crisis response training and programs;
3. Identify the role of law enforcement in crisis response; and
4. Describe police-mental health collaboration (PMHC) in crisis response and identify core elements of effective PMHC.

2. Perceptions & Attitudes on Behavioral Health & Disabilities

Time: 70 minutes

Slides: 21

Purpose: This module provides the opportunity for participants to consider common perceptions and attitudes related to people with behavioral health conditions (including mental health and substance use disorders) and disabilities and consider how those perceptions and attitudes may impact their interactions with these individuals. It presents information on the development of perceptions and attitudes and how they might be changed. It also introduces the topic of disability and highlights core values for officers to consider in their responses to people who experience a crisis in the community. In sum, the purpose of this module is to encourage participants to think about the diverse communities they respond to and interact with and emphasize the need for an open, understanding mind to best support these communities through crisis response.

Learning Objectives:

Upon completing this module, participants should be able to:



1. Discuss commonly held beliefs that people may have toward people with behavioral health conditions and developmental disabilities;
2. Explain where perceptions and attitudes come from and how they can perpetuate stigma and discrimination;
3. Explain how to adapt perceptions and attitudes to promote effective crisis response; and
4. Describe SAMHSA's Recovery Values and the Developmental Disability Community's Values and Culture.

3. Prioritizing Officer Mental Health, Wellness, & Resilience

Time: 50 minutes

Slides: 18

Purpose: This module discusses topics related to officer mental health and wellness and provides training participants with strategies to support mental wellbeing throughout their career.

Learning Objectives:

Upon completing this module, participants should be able to:

1. Describe how stress manifests itself in the body and how it displays in oneself and peers;
2. Identify risk factors and recognize warning signs of officer suicide;
3. Identify and use strategies for building officer resilience; and
4. Access available officer mental health and wellness resources.

4. Understanding Mental Health Conditions & Mental Illnesses

Time: 160 minutes

Slides: 30

Purpose: This module introduces participants to information on mental health conditions and mental illnesses and increases participants' understanding of mood disorders, psychotic disorders, and anxiety disorders, as well as their signs and symptoms. Mental health disorders specific to children and youth and their associated symptoms and behaviors are also presented in this module. The role of medication in the treatment of people living with mental illnesses is discussed.

Learning Objectives:

Upon completing this module, participants should be able to:



1. Define mood disorders, psychotic disorders, and anxiety disorders in adults, and impulse control and disruptive disorders in children and youth;
2. Describe some signs, symptoms, and behaviors you may see in people living with the above disorders;
3. Identify some strategies to use when responding to a person living with these disorders; and
4. Describe the role of medication in the treatment of mental illnesses and medication-related considerations for law enforcement.

5. Substance Use Disorders

Time: 80 minutes

Slides: 32

Purpose: This module will introduce participants to substance use disorders and their signs and symptoms and discuss effective approaches for intervening with those under the influence of substances.

Learning Objectives:

Upon completing this module, participants should be able to:

1. Define substance use disorders;
2. Describe behaviors associated with these disorders;
3. Discuss the extent that individuals with mental health conditions and developmental disabilities also have substance use disorders; and
4. Discuss effective approaches to intervening with individuals under the influence of substances.

6. Trauma & Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Time: 65 minutes

Slides: 23

Purpose: This module provides a greater understanding of trauma, the adverse effects that traumatic stress can have on a person, and how traumatic stress can manifest differently in different people. Specific emphasis will be given to understanding Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), its signs and symptoms, as well as intervention strategies for responding when someone experiencing traumatic stress or someone with PTSD may be experiencing a crisis.

Learning Objectives:

Upon completing this module, participants should be able to:



1. Define trauma;
2. Describe the prevalence of trauma;
3. Explain the adverse effects traumatic stress can have on a person in the short- and long-term;
4. Define PTSD;
5. Describe traumatic stress reactions/symptoms and how they may appear to an officer on-scene; and
6. Describe approaches that law enforcement officers can use when interacting with someone demonstrating traumatic stress symptoms.

7. Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities

Time: 120 minutes

Slides: 31

Purpose: This module introduces participants to intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), their characteristics, how to recognize them, and tips for responding more effectively as an officer.

Learning Objectives:

Upon completing this module, participants should be able to:

1. Understand the basic characteristics of IDD;
2. Describe at least three strategies to identify potential IDD;
3. Name at least four common interactions with law enforcement; and
4. Use effective communication skills when interacting with a person with a disability.

8. Family & Peer Perspectives Panel

Time: 110 minutes

Slides: 2

Purpose: The Family and Peer Perspectives Panel is intended to be an opportunity for participants to hear personal stories from people living with behavioral health conditions and intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Stories often include details about barriers to accessing services, positive and negative interactions with law enforcement, and feelings about the stigma and bias related to behavioral health conditions and disabilities. The goal is to have participants learn directly from those with lived experience. Family members or others who support people with behavioral health conditions and disabilities can be a helpful addition to the panel, but they should not replace the perspectives of those with behavioral health conditions and disabilities.

**Learning Objectives:**

Upon completing this module, participants should be able to:

1. Discuss the experience of people with behavioral health conditions or IDD from their perspectives;
2. Identify at least one barrier people face to accessing behavioral health and disability services;
3. Identify at least two areas of concern when individuals with behavioral health conditions and disabilities interact with law enforcement in the community; and
4. Identify at least three strategies for more effectively communicating and interacting with those with behavioral health conditions and IDD.

9. Suicide

Time: 75 minutes

Slides: 20

Purpose: This module introduces the risk factors and warning signs for suicide. Additionally, intervention strategies to help prevent suicide are discussed.

Learning Objectives:

Upon completing this module, participants should be able to:

1. Name warning signs of suicidal behavior; and
2. Know what to say to someone whom they suspect may be experiencing suicidal thoughts.

10. Neurocognitive Disorders

Time: 50 minutes

Slides: 20

Purpose: This module introduces participants to neurocognitive disorders and the symptoms and behaviors associated with these disorders.

Learning Objectives:

Upon completing this module, participants should be able to:

1. Explain the effects of dementia;
2. Describe the symptoms associated with Alzheimer's disease;
3. Describe the symptoms of traumatic brain injury;
4. Describe the symptoms of delirium; and
5. Identify appropriate responses to incidents involving individuals living with neurocognitive disorders.



11. Personal Connections: Site Visits

Time: 210 minutes

Slides: 2

Purpose: The Personal Connections module involves site visits. Site visits should be designed to help training participants build positive relationships with people with behavioral health conditions and intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Site visits can support classroom learning by giving officers an opportunity to engage with people with lived experience and learn about service and advocacy organizations in their community.

Learning Objectives:

Upon completing this module, participants should be able to:

1. Describe at least two things they learned from their interaction with those living with behavioral health conditions, IDD, and co-occurring conditions;
2. Describe two changes to their approach when responding to someone with mental health conditions, IDD, and co-occurring conditions; and
3. Identify at least two ways that interactions with people with mental health conditions may differ from interactions with those with IDD.

12. Legal & Policy Topics

Time: 90 minutes

Slides: 25

Purpose: This module will review federal and state laws, as well as agency policies and procedures, that guide the work of law enforcement. Laws and policies specific to disability rights is the focus here, with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) serving as the foundation for discussion. The goals for this module include:

- Helping participants understand the rights of people with disabilities, including expectations of law enforcement to know and uphold disability rights;
- Emphasizing how officers' use of de-escalation techniques is required by law;
- Reviewing civil involuntary commitment laws and practices, to include discussion regarding the overlap of federal, state, and local rules guiding the removal of individuals from the community; and
- Providing guidance on the use of less restrictive alternatives before placing an individual in custody for evaluation/commitment.

Learning Objectives:

After completing this module, participants should be able to:



1. Discuss the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to include knowledge about the range of individuals identified for protection under this landmark legislation;
2. Describe federal and state laws that affect their interactions with persons with disabilities and those experiencing a crisis, including those perceived to have a disability;
3. Summarize legal obligations when working with persons with disabilities and those experiencing a crisis; and
4. Explain the standards for their state's civil commitment, the responsibilities of law enforcement agencies in the commitment determination process (based upon state and local laws), and when civil commitment may be an appropriate response.

13. Veterans

Time: 45 minutes

Slides: 9

Purpose: The material in this module is a guide. Local trainers from the community/jurisdiction are encouraged to make this module their own by developing new content or refining the content provided.

Learning Objectives:

Upon completing this module, participants should be able to:

1. Explain behavioral health conditions and readjustment challenges that are faced by some veterans;
2. Identify local resources, including resources from the VA and local veterans groups, that can provide services and support to veterans; and
3. Other tailored learning objectives depending upon guest speakers.

14. Working with People Experiencing Homelessness

Time: 45 minutes

Slides: 9

Purpose: The material presented within this trainer's guide provides a framework for content on people experiencing homelessness. Trainers are encouraged to add content to and/or revise this module to tailor the materials to their local jurisdiction and experiences within their community.

Learning Objectives:

Specific learning objectives will be determined by the content added by local trainers and the primary talking points of guest speakers. Still, upon completing this module, participants should:

1. Be knowledgeable of national and local statistics related to homelessness;



2. Understand the diverse risk factors of homelessness in America; and
3. Identify local resources to support people experiencing homelessness.

15. Community Resources

Time: 60 minutes

Slides: 25

Purpose: This module should be tailored to the community/jurisdiction that the training is occurring in. It is meant to inform participants about resources they can use in their community when responding to people experiencing crises. This module should include information about local disability organizations, hospitals, mental health clinics, local advocacy groups, and other relevant resources such as community mental health centers and substance use providers. Bring in guest speakers from the local emergency room and other emergency mental health and substance use services to describe their facilities and organizations or have representatives from the mental health and IDD service systems that are familiar enough with those services to present an overview.

Learning Objectives:

Upon completing this module, participants should be able to:

1. Describe the mental health, substance use, and developmental disability service systems in their state, as well as basic eligibility requirements for services;
2. Identify services that can be of assistance to law enforcement in emergency situations; and
3. Identify services that law enforcement can refer individuals/families for follow-up services (when no immediate intervention is needed after de-escalation has occurred).

16. Scenario-Based Skills Training – De-escalation Communication Skills

Time: 120 minutes

Slides: 39

Purpose: This module introduces concepts and skills relevant to effective communication and de-escalation. It introduces scenario-based training.

Learning Objectives:

Upon completing this module, participants should be able to:

1. Explain why communication skills are important for everyone's safety;
2. Identify guidelines to defuse a potential crisis;
3. Explain how to use active listening skills;
4. Describe what empathy is and why it is important;



5. Describe how tone and body posturing can shape outcomes; and
6. Integrate crisis management skills with officer safety procedures.

17. Scenario-Based Skills Training – De-escalation Strategies

Time: 120 minutes

Slides: 21

Purpose: This module contains de-escalation strategies for officers.

Learning Objectives:

Upon completing this module, participants should be able to:

1. Identify critical de-escalation learning points;
2. Explain the use of Hooks and Triggers in crisis response;
3. Name and demonstrate the Four Plays for verbal de-escalation; and
4. Identify potential escalating factors in crisis situations.

18. Scenario-Based Skills Training – Verbal De-escalation Scenarios

Time: 540 minutes

Slides: 4

Purpose: This module provides the opportunity for participants to practice their verbal de-escalation skills and receive constructive feedback.

Learning Objectives:

Upon completing this module, participants should be able to:

1. Apply newly acquired skills in interactive role-play situations to solidify de-escalation techniques; and
2. Integrate verbal de-escalation skills and strategies with police department officer safety procedures.