Histories

*Crisis Intervention Team (CIT)*

The first CIT was established in Memphis in 1988 after the tragic shooting by a police officer of a man with a serious mental illness. This tragedy stimulated collaboration between the police, the Memphis chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the University of Tennessee Medical School and the University of Memphis to improve police training and procedures in response to mental illness. Today, the so-called “Memphis Model” has been adopted by hundreds of communities in more than 35 states and in countries abroad.

The CIT training program is a 40-hour intensive training program that includes basic information about

mental illnesses and how to recognize them; information about the local mental health system

and local laws; learning first-hand from consumers and family members about their experiences;

verbal de-escalation training, and role-plays. In addition, two important key components of the program include building community collaboration and consumer and family involvement

Studies have shown that the CIT model has proven to be very effective in a number of important ways including a reduction in officer and civilian injuries, reduction in use of force incidents with persons with mental illness, consumer deaths and tragedy for the community. In addition, CIT officers learn how to link people with appropriate treatment, which has a positive impact on fostering recovery and reducing recidivism. Studies have also shown that CIT has helped reduce arrests of persons with mental illness, assists in diverting people away from the criminal justice system to the mental health system, builds community collaboration and reduces officer stigma and prejudice towards persons with mental illness.

*Mental Health Response Team (MHRT) and Crisis Intervention Team (CIT)*

The Mental Health Response Team of the Cincinnati Police Department was established in June of 2002 as a result of the 2001 Collaborative Agreement. One of the first mandates of the agreement was for the police department to form “a cadre of officers” who would be the first responders to all calls involving persons with mental illness. The Cincinnati Police Department and Mental Health America of Southwest Ohio teamed up to create a task force to design and implement the 40-hour training. The first MHRT training programs were conducted in June of 2002 with 90 officers completing the intensive training.

Like the Memphis CIT training program, the MHRT training program is a 40-hour program designed to train officers to more effectively recognize and respond to individuals who may be mentally ill and are in crisis. Also like the CIT program, since its inception, the Cincinnati Police Department has seen a reduction in officer and civilian injuries, a reduction in use of force, an increase in referrals to mental health services and a dramatic increase in collaboration between the law enforcement and mental health communities.

Since those first training programs in the summer of 2002, over 1,000 Hamilton County criminal justice professionals have completed the CIT/MHRT training, representing street patrol, dispatch, supervisors, Homeland Security, US Air Marshalls, Sheriff’s Office and nearly every police department in Hamilton County. In November of 2007, the Cincinnati Police Academy made the MHRT training a part of the academy curriculum becoming one of the first major cities in the U.S. to incorporate this kind of training into its program.

CIT/MHRT is the merger of the of these two programs brought about by the efforts of Mental Health America of Northern Kentucky and Southwest Ohio, the Hamilton County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board and a committee of individuals committed to public safety. The program participated in the Ohio Peer Review process in 2011 where program strengths and weaknesses were identified. And in 2012, the Hamilton County CIT program received the 2012 “CIT Program of the Year” award from the State of Ohio, presented by Attorney general Mike DeWine. Also in 2012, the program received a technical assistance grant from the Ohio Criminal Justice Center Coordinating Center of Excellence to continue furthering the development of the program as a leading program in the State of Ohio.