

Ask the Chief....

“What type of training do officers have to deal with inmates suffering from Mental Health Disorders?”

I asked Sgt. Michelle Prather, one of the jail’s shift commanders, to comment on such training. Here is what she explained regarding treating Mental Health issues.

Many officers and supervisors have attended Crisis Intervention Training (C.I.T.) through Beacon Health. The 40 hour training class is held at Beacon Health, Mentor, Ohio two times per year. The class consists of police officers, correction officers, fire fighters, hospital personnel, first responders, or any individual dealing with the public on a day-to-day basis.

Crisis intervention refers to the methods used to offer short term, immediate help to individuals who have experienced an event that produces mental, physical, emotional and behavioral distress. (<https://www.acs.edu.au/info/psychology/counselling/crisis-counselling.aspx>)

Crisis Intervention training covers many areas within the mental health spectrum including, but not limited to: ADHD, Anxiety Disorders, Bipolar Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder, Depression, Eating Disorders, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, Schizoaffective Disorder, and Schizophrenia.

During Crisis Intervention training, personnel interact with people that have experienced or recovered from mental health crisis and with family members who have cared for loved ones with mental illness.

Trainees are also afforded the opportunity to see, hear and feel what it’s like to have Schizophrenia. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0vvU-Ajwbok>) Training personnel wear earphones and are assigned tasks to complete while hearing imaginary voices that give commands or comments to the individual.

Scenario-based training on responding to the various types of crisis is conducted at the end of the 40 hour class with the assistance of mental health counselors, and volunteers. This allows the trainees to practice their learned skills, in common crisis situations, and receives immediate feedback from the instructors and classmates.

For more information of Crisis Intervention Training (C.I.T.) visit: (http://www.namiohio.org/mental_health_programs/CIT)

Frank Leonbruno

Chief Deputy, Lake County Sheriff’s Office
104 East Erie Street, Painesville, Ohio 44077
www.lakecountyohio.gov/sheriffoffice

