

## WHAT IS CIT?



A Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) is a self-initiated community partnership between local law enforcement, county health services, mental health advocates, and mental health consumers. It is designed to address the needs of mental health consumers who encounter law enforcement during a crisis state. Each CIT is unique, developed in response to the challenges and resources of the community it serves.

Treatment services and specialized housing for individuals with mental illness has decreased over the years, creating a rising demand on law enforcement to help mental health consumers in crisis. According to the [Mental Illness and the Criminal Justice System: A Review of Global Perspectives and Promising Practices](#) (pdf), to further complicate the rising demand, law enforcement interactions with mental health consumers can:

- Take more time than other calls for service.
- Require officers to have special training and skills.
- Depend on the availability of community mental health resources for successful outcomes.
- Have repeated contact with the same individuals who have unresolved mental health needs.
- Involve a person with mental illness committing a minor or “nuisance” offense.
- Become a volatile situation, risking the safety of all involved.

The CIT is an innovative concept that has helped law enforcement and their communities address these challenges with positive outcomes.

A key component of the CIT program is a training course (referred to as a CIT academy) that is generally 32-40 hours. The course is created and delivered as a collaborative effort between local law enforcement and partners.



The overarching goal of a CIT training course is to provide law enforcement officers with the cognition, information, resources, and skills that allow effective problem-solving and promote positive outcomes when responding to incidents involving mental health consumers. This goal is achieved when officers exhibit:

- Enhanced knowledge of mental health-related topics
- Understanding of the laws protecting people with disabilities
- Improved de-escalation and crisis resolution skills
- Provision of referrals, resources, information, and follow up for consumers and their families
- Reduced stigma and assumptions
- Cultural sensitivity and recognition

In order to achieve this goal, CIT training curriculum usually incorporates:

- Didactics and Lectures/Specialized Knowledge
- On-Site Visits and Exposure
- Practical Skill Training/Scenario-Based
- Questions and Answers
- Commencement and Recognition

Visit the [CIT Center's National Curriculum webpage](#) for an example of an expanded course outline.

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SOURCE: California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST)  
<https://www.post.ca.gov/crisis-intervention-team.aspx>