

Implementing the Crisis Intervention Team

Committee Structure

Steering Committee - Systems, Information, and Curriculum Subcommittees

In order to successfully implement a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) program, a steering committee comprised individuals who represent CIT should be formed. This steering committee should be a reflection of your community and those groups who have a vested interest in the development of a CIT program. A steering committee may include members of local government, judiciary, law enforcement, mental health, including VA Medical Center or VA Outpatient facility, corrections and advocacy groups to name only a few.

Subcommittees

Subcommittees formed from the steering group serve as the driving force behind this development. CIT subcommittees provide for an understanding of the overall crisis systems and separate fact from fiction while providing detailed information and recommendations to the CIT planning committee. The process creates cohesion and understanding within the partnerships that comprise the CIT program. The three subcommittees are:

- Systems Subcommittee
- Information Subcommittee
- Curriculum Subcommittee

The Systems Subcommittee:

The Systems subcommittee focuses on designs and services of the different crisis systems in existence. The goal is to create a working flowchart of the current crisis system. The infrastructure of each system should be examined. Services relevant to each component of the system should be identified. Services charted should include: emergency health care, community mental health crisis care and the current system of law enforcement crisis response. The subcommittee should use the flowchart to review strengths and weaknesses within each system. Consideration should be given to the following:

- 24 hour availability
- Linkages with other crisis services
- Staffing appropriate to the level of crisis presented
- Capacity to provide services
- Barrier to appropriate dispositions
- Source of current funding
- Need for additional funding

The Information Subcommittee:

The Information subcommittee focuses on data necessary to determine the volume of crisis related calls for a given area. Documentation and systematic cataloging of information is critical for evaluation and future recommendations regarding the CIT program and crisis services. Ideally, members of law enforcement, mental health, and advocacy representatives should be a part of this subcommittee. Cooperation with relevant agencies is important to ensure information is interpreted and analyzed correctly. Examples of information needed may include:

- Law enforcement overall call volume
- Law enforcement calls related to mental illness crisis events
- Mental health crisis service demands
- Emergency health care service demands related to behavioral crisis events
- Jail arrest rates related to behavioral crisis events
- Jail census rates for individuals with mental illness
- Prison census rates for individuals with mental illness
- State commitment utilization rate
- Law enforcement transportation provided for individuals with mental illness

The Curriculum Subcommittee:

An integral part of any 40-hour CIT training course is the course curriculum which serves as a guide for training. Ideally, mental health professionals should be at the forefront of this effort, as mental health expertise is needed to determine the proper structure and content of training. However, the CIT Coordinator should have an important leadership role to allow for practical implementation of the recommendations. A Curriculum subcommittee should also include membership of those with an advocacy perspective, especially those with a personal perspective on mental illness. Those constructing a curriculum should ensure that local mental health agencies are heavily involved in a 40-hour training course and should determine which individuals could adequately teach a given subject related to mental illness. As part of this evaluation process, subcommittee members should examine the credentials, knowledge, and teaching abilities of a potential instructor. Additionally, prospective instructors should be able to successfully communicate with officers and have a sense of the culture of law enforcement prior to teaching at a 40-hour course. It is highly recommended that faculty ride with officers prior to teaching their course.

In addition to a detailed curriculum, the subcommittee should design a CIT training manual comprised of outlines, articles, schedules and any other documents which could assist trainees in learning the material taught during a 40-hour course. At the conclusion of a 40-hour course, a graduation ceremony with certificates and CIT pins is strongly encouraged.