

CIT Topic Rationale Sheet

Presenter Outline

1:00 – 1:30 Consumer Perspectives

Topic: Consumer Perspectives

Why is this topic relevant to the CIT Program?

1. Officers do not often get to hear the success stories of consumers in recovery, only when they are in crisis.
2. The stories of consumers in recovery can reduce the stigma associated with mental illness.
3. How consumers deal with stress and what they need when they are in crisis will help officers re-think their de-escalation approaches.

Proposed learning objectives to prepare the officers for encounters?

1. Increase students knowledge on the lived experience of mental illness and how it affects care takers.
2. Increase empathy among the students about living with a mental illness
3. Increase student's awareness of verbal and nonverbal de-escalation skills that facilitate the resolution of a crisis situation from a consumer's perspective.

Outline for Consumer Presentation

1. Tell us about your illness and how/when you first learned about the diagnosis.
2. Describe as best you can what it is like living with the illness- how it effects you, medications you take, side effects, etc.
3. Describe what stresses you out and how you deal with stress when it gets really bad.
4. Describe some of the encounters you have had with law enforcement? What was happening and what did the officers do well and not so well when working with you?
4. What does recovery mean to you and what do you hope for when you think about your own future?

Presentation Notes:

Try to recruit a consumer who has done some public speaking before and is comfortable telling their story. Additionally, a consumer who is in recovery and has had an encounter with law enforcement (or incarceration) within the last few years is ideal.

Prior to the presentation, ask the individuals what would make them more comfortable in telling their story. Sometimes having a planning committee member or family member sit alongside the person is helpful if needed.

Introduce the individual to the officers and let them know the courage it takes to tell your story. Remind the officers about confidentiality as part of the introduction.