



OHIO CIT NEWS



Spring 2024

Purple Harmonicas

By: Alan Johnson, NAMI Ohio

Whether you look at it from the perspective of someone with mental illness or from law enforcement, Crisis Intervention Team training works. Just ask David Olds, a former police chief and Northwest Ohio CIT Coordinator, or Evan Curtin, a Springfield man who had dozens of run-ins with police and is now a CIT instructor.

“It’s an absolutely better way of doing things,” Olds said. “It has undoubtedly saved lives...I hear of officers every day talking people out of suicide, getting them off bridges, de-escalating people with guns in their hands. I know in my heart it works.”

Curtin struggled with mental illness for 18 years during which time he had 50 run-ins with law enforcement in a dozen states, survived a high-speed suicide attempt and 30 hospitalizations. But for the last eight years, Curtin has been teaching law enforcement and dispatchers about how to de-escalate situations like those he faced. “This was rough stuff; it nearly killed me,” Curtin said. “Now that I am on the other side, it’s pretty freeing. I get the respect that I wanted when I had mental illness. And many officers come back to me and say, ‘I used what you said, and it worked.’”

The National Alliance on Mental Illness of Ohio (NAMI Ohio) has been a longstanding CIT partner of more than 15 years. Since the start of Ohio CIT Support and Expansion, NAMI Ohio has distributed



Luke Russell, Executive Director

NAMI Ohio

approximately \$1 million in grant funds that supported 260 Ohio CIT Patrol Officer training courses, 167 advanced, refresher and related courses, provided 122 law enforcement scholarships, 244 lived experience stipends, eleven CIT peer reviews, and sponsored three CIT state conferences and award ceremonies.

“NAMI Ohio represents all individuals and their families with mental illness, and this includes all those over-represented in the criminal justice system. We know at the time of crisis it is vital to divert folks to treatment versus incarceration, and this starts with our first responders. “The CIT program in Ohio is the gold standard because our partners at NEOMED, local NAMI Affiliates and law enforcement agencies, and state partners have made this model a priority. The training course is not only important to local communities, but also in reducing stigma and building awareness among those keeping us safe every day,” stated Luke Russell, Executive Director of NAMI Ohio.



Evan Curtin with his mother, Peg Stephens

The training has given officers the tools to recognize and respond appropriately to mental health crisis scenarios, provided skills to de-escalate potentially violent situations, reduced officer time spent in rehabilitation, court, and internal investigations, reduced incidence of use of force, produced overall cost savings, and resulted in fewer injuries of citizens and law enforcement, as well as reduced incarceration and prosecution.

Olds has seen great improvements resulting from extensive CIT training in the six Northwest Ohio counties he covers - Seneca, Sandusky, Wyandot, Erie, Ottawa, and Huron. Moreover, he has the numbers to prove it. In those counties, reports show that 95 to 98 percent of cases involving law enforcement involvement with a person with mental illness do not result in arrests. Instead, people end up in voluntary transportation to an emergency room or psychiatric hospital. "The majority of the cases are not arrests. They can go to the hospital to get the help they need." During his tenure as police chief in Upper Sandusky from 2009 to 2017, Olds said he was "looking for something a little different for de-escalation to train officers to do it better."

He heard about CIT from a friend in Toledo and sent some officers from Upper Sandusky to take the training. "What sold me on CIT," Olds said, "was I had an officer who had 23- or 24-years in. He came to me one morning and asked about the stuff that teaches people to talk to people with mental illness. It was more of a gut feeling that the winds were changing that we had to do something different in law enforcement," he said. Olds was seeing more mental health-related calls, including suicides and people who could be violent if not approached with care. "We weren't trained in it at all...There were injuries to them and injuries to us and more use of force complaints."

Olds has since conducted four training academies and seen about 85 officers undergo training. "I went from a position of not knowing what it was about to a 100 percent buy in within a couple weeks because it works."

Curtin was on the other end of law enforcement for nearly two decades as he traveled a long road across many states as his mental health steadily declined. Not all encounters with police were bad, however. He recalled being pulled over in Michigan when he reacted angrily to the officer. He was on the verge of being arrested when a supervisor arrived. The supervisor proceeded to search Curtin's vehicle, suspecting his erratic behavior was the result of drug use. He found a guitar, a trombone case and several purple harmonicas Curtin used as a traveling musician.

"Purple harmonicas! That's cool," the supervisor said.

"He made a human connection with me," Curtin said. "Within moments, I was calm, and nothing happened. They took me to a mental health facility."

It's known as The Purple Harmonica Incident in CIT training classes that Curtin and his mother, Peg Stephens, have done together for the last few years.

"It's the perfect example of de-escalation that happened even before CIT was created," he said.

To learn more about NAMI Ohio, their affiliates, and their advocacy work in Ohio, please visit [here](#).

Evan Curtin and Peg Stephens will be featured speakers at the upcoming Ohio CIT Conference on April 10, 2024.



Recent Ohio CIT Course Graduates

Mahoning County completed a CIT Patrol Officer Training Course in October 2023



Trumbull County completed a CIT Patrol Officer Training Course in November 2023



Champaign and Logan Counties completed a CIT Patrol Officer Training Course in December 2023



Recent Ohio CIT Course Graduates

Clark, Greene, & Madison Counties completed a CIT Training Course for Fire/EMS Professionals in January 2024



Montgomery County completed a CIT Training Course for Public Safety Telecommunicators in January 2024



Medina County completed a CIT Patrol Officer Training Course in February 2024



Recent Ohio CIT Course Graduates

Preble County completed a CIT Patrol Officer Training Course in February 2024



Tuscarawas County completed a CIT Patrol Officer Training Course in February 2024



Allen, Auglaize, & Hardin Counties completed a CIT Patrol Officer Training Course in March 2024



Recent Ohio CIT Course Graduates

Hamilton County completed a CIT Patrol Officer Training Course in March 2024



The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) held seven (7) 40-hour CIT classes between January 2024 and March 2024

Coordinated by the Corrections Training Academy.



Coordinated by the North Central Correctional Complex.

Coordinated by Mansfield Correctional Institution.



Recent Ohio CIT Course Graduates

The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) continued



*Coordinated by the
Corrections Training
Academy.*

*Coordinated by Lorain Correctional
Institution.*



*Coordinated by London Correctional
Institution.*

OHIO CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM (CIT) CONFERENCE



KEYNOTE: COMMUNITY COLLABORATION, A BEST PRACTICE APPROACH TO CRISIS RESPONSE

Ernest (Ernie) Stevens, CSG Justice Center, The Council of State Governments



AFTERNOON PLENARY: Mom, Me, and CIT: A Mother and Son's Lived Experience with Mental Illness and Law Enforcement

Evan Curtin and Peg Stephens

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

- CIT in jails and prisons
- PST self-care
- De-escalation for public safety telecommunicators and law enforcement
- Collaboration between law enforcement and mental health agencies
- Panel Discussion: law enforcement agency/jurisdiction collaboration
- And more...

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2024
9:00AM-4:00PM**

QUEST CONFERENCE CENTER IN COLUMBUS

We are excited to announce this year's Ohio CIT Conference at The Quest Conference Center in Columbus! In addition to the Ohio CIT Awards ceremony, the agenda features two keynote speakers and a range of breakout sessions tailored for CIT coordinators, law enforcement, corrections, and public safety telecommunicators.

Join us for the full-day conference at just \$35!

Click [HERE](#) to register today.

Lunch will be provided.

REGISTRATION CLOSING ON MARCH 27, 2024

Upcoming Trainings and Events

Spring 2024 CIT Coordinator Meeting

May 20, 2024

10AM-2PM via zoom

Join the Criminal Justice Coordinating Center of Excellence, NAMI Ohio, and Ohio CIT Coordinators for the Spring Ohio CIT Coordinators Meeting. Ohio CIT Coordinators are encouraged to attend this virtual meeting. It is an opportunity to learn about CIT work, updates, and initiatives happening around the state with other CIT Program Coordinators, law enforcement CIT Coordinators, and other partners.

[Click here to register.](#)

Ohio CIT Coordinator Course

June 24, 2024, 8AM-4:30PM

State of Ohio Library

This training provides CIT coordinators with tools, materials, and knowledge to enhance their agency's CIT or CIT program. It covers the CIT Model and the Ohio CIT Core Elements and how to use them to develop a comprehensive CIT and CIT program. Experienced CIT coordinators from across the state will present their programs and experiences implementing the CIT Model and the Ohio CIT Core Elements.

This training is designed for new and experienced CIT coordinators. We strongly encourage county program coordinators and law enforcement agency coordinators to attend. The training also covers elements of a law enforcement CIT and how those agencies operate within their local CIT program.

Details about registration will be provided soon.

Public Safety Telecommunicator Training of Trainers

October 7-8, 2024

State of Ohio Library

This training will be held over the course of two days. The goal of this course is to enable local CIT programs to provide specialized training to public safety telecommunicators and by doing so increase the number of CIT communities in Ohio who are providing specialized training to public safety telecommunicators. This course will provide CIT trainers with the tools, materials, and framework needed to facilitate CIT training for public safety telecommunicators in their community. On the second day, participants will facilitate a portion of a presentation and receive constructive feedback. Attending both days is required to receive a certificate of completion.

Details about registration will be provided soon.

Upcoming Trainings and Events

Online Training Opportunity – QPR for Law Enforcement

The Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) Institute provides an online QPR for Law Enforcement training. This certificate training is designed to provide the skills and techniques needed in suicide prevention for those working in law enforcement. This training is completely online and takes about 3 hours to complete; however, individuals can stop and start the training as the training platform bookmarks progress. Registration is on a first come first served basis.

Please instruct law enforcement officers to register for the training [here](#). Upon registration, officers will be provided a code to access a CJ CCOE training slot.

To learn more about QPR for Law Enforcement training, please [click here](#). If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Mekal Banyasz.
@ mbanyasz@neomed.edu

In Case You Missed It...

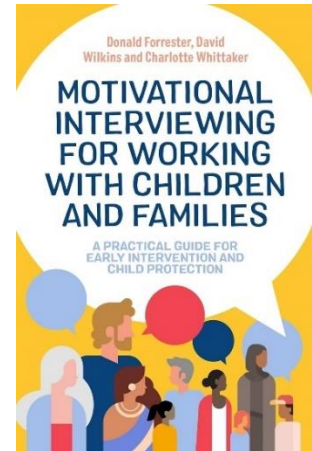
Technical Assistance Sessions

The CJ CCoE hosted two Technical Assistance Sessions to date in 2024, *Designing and Delivering a CIT PST Training Course* and *Highlighting the Role and Responsibility of Behavioral Health Professionals in CIT*. To access the recordings of those sessions and the complete list of CJCCOE Technical Assistance Sessions, [click here](#).



***Motivational Interviewing for Working with Children and Families:
A Practical Guide for Early Intervention and Child Protection***
By Donald Forrester, David Wilkins, Charlotte Whittaker 2021

The potential benefits for adopting a Motivational Interviewing-informed approach are increasingly recognized across multiple professions engaged in supporting change. Motivational Interviewing (MI) is a 'particular way of having a conversation' that is non-confrontational and collaborative. It avoids putting people on the defensive, increasing opportunities for purposeful engagement and thereby increasing chances for meaningful change. But does this non-confrontational and collaborative approach fit with professional responsibilities concerning safety, protection and ensuring court mandates are met? This book addresses those areas, and confidently answers, 'yes – MI fits quite well'. Based on experiences from direct child protection work and built on growing research, the book is divided into three parts. The first and last portions are devoted to reviewing (or introducing) MI and suggesting ways to improve one's skills. The second section focuses on applying the principles of MI to child protection work, which relates very well to all professions that involve a power-differential and may include needs for having very difficult conversations. Early in this section, it is noted that effective workers "...understand the power they have and the authority that goes with it, they feel comfortable with it, and they are committed to using it in a way that engages, respects and empowers the other" (p. 118). This defines this section, and more broadly, the utility of this text. I recommend this book to all professionals that support change, and especially for those that support change in ways that are based on existing protective mandates.



Review provided by Michael Fox, Consultant and Trainer and Research Associate in the Center for Innovative Practices at Case Western Reserve University

"Jacqueline Novak's unapologetic and original comedy is the kind that gives me hope in this business."—AMY SCHUMER



**HOW TO WEEP IN PUBLIC
FEEBLE OFFERINGS
ON DEPRESSION FROM
ONE WHO KNOWS
JACQUELINE NOVAK**

How to Weep in Public; Feeble Offerings on Depression from One Who Knows
by Jacqueline Novak (2016)

If you happened to catch her one woman show on Netflix, *Get on Your Knees*, Jacqueline Novak's memoir is not surprising in that it is filled with brutal honesty about her struggles and approaches to living with depression. Her well-timed comedic wit enduring so many of life's challenges while gripped by the lows of depression is effective in reminding you that we are all doing great.

Review provided by Mekal Banyasz, Research, Grants and Evaluation Manager, CJ CCoE

The use of the lending library and the mailing of materials is free.

We welcome book reviews and recommendations related to mental health, criminal justice, and any intersections relevant to our work to expand our library. Please email your reviews and book requests to Ashley

Eads at aeads@neomed.edu.

Upcoming CIT Patrol Officer Training Courses

Galia, Jackson, Meigs	April 16, 18, 23, 25, 30, 2024
Lorain County	April 22-26, 2024
Portage County	April 15-19, 2024
Butler County	April 15-18, 2024
Hamilton County	April 29-May 3, 2024
Washington County	April 29-May 3, 2024
Paint Valley	May 6-10, 2024
Scioto, Lawrence, Adam	May 6-9, 2024
Montgomery County	May 13-17, 2024
Seneca, Sandusky, Wyandot, Erie, Ottawa, & Huron Counties	April 25, May 2, 9, 16, 23, 2024
Lucas County	June 10-14, 2024
Richland County	June 10-14, 2024
Summit County	June 10-14, 2024
Seneca, Sandusky, Wyandot, Erie, Ottawa, & Huron Counties	July 15-19, 2024
Franklin County	July 22-26, 2024
Hamilton County	August 5-9, 2024
Montgomery County	August 19-23, 2024
Summit County	August 26-30, 2024

Please visit our [Training Calendar](#) for a full list of trainings.

Please advise Theresa Richards @ trichards@neomed.edu of all (CIT Patrol Officer Training, Advanced, Refresher, and Role-Specific) CIT courses planned for 2024.

Don't forget to send photos from your CIT courses and CIT awards to be featured in our newsletter!



Ohio CIT Program Coordinator Contact Information

Note: Information is subject to change

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Registration: Now Open [here](#)

Hotel Reservations: Now Open [here](#)

Be sure to check the conference website [here](#) and the CIT International Newsletter for more announcements and information.



**CRIMINAL JUSTICE
COORDINATING CENTER
of EXCELLENCE**
A NEOMED CCoE