



Lessons Learned in implementing CIT Training (Hancock County)
(Revised 8/2006)

Pre-Training Planning

Make sure you are familiar with the Core Elements of Cit (http://www.neoucom.edu/CJCCOE/support/CITcoreElements9_2_04.pdf) so you are clear on what your community is getting into and what you should expect from each partner.

Develop a structure that will oversee and take responsibility for the training from start to finish. May communities use oversight or planning committees. Make sure that not only behavioral health and law enforcement are represented on this structure but consumer and family members are represented as well. Their perspectives are critical.

Recruit trainees from law enforcement. Try to limit it to about 24 officers because of role play. (Some counties are training EMT staff, park rangers, hospital and university security, highway patrol). Develop a recruitment process that addresses how and who will be recruited. Some counties interview prospective students, some counties have the officer's submit in writing their interest and why they believe CIT training would benefit them. Officers who want to go through the training and represent both street level officers and their immediate supervisors are ideal.

Find a place to hold the training that is large enough to do the role-playing, has good access to AV, and has access to break-out rooms.

Design a CIT pin for graduates to wear. Publicize this pin with contract agencies and consumer and family groups.

Have your law enforcement and mental health reps on your CIT committee attend area trainings to get a feel for how other communities are implementing CIT, especially critical is the role-playing day of the training.

Seek help from, link-up with, and attend the statewide CIT coordinators meetings

Get copies of other county's training curriculums and handouts before you design your own to get a feel for how other trainings were organized.

Training Issues

Get media involved with CIT. Have them cover the program, invite them to the graduation ceremony, have them do a follow-up story 60 days after training on how officers have used their skills.

Involve trained CIT officers from like/similar counties in your first training to present on the impact that CIT has had with respect to officer safety, civilian safety, and jail diversions.

Design the training so there is as much active learning as possible. Keep in mind that learning retention is greatly affected by instructional approaches. Studies (e.g., Pike 1989) show that after 3 days of learning, we retain:

- 10% of what we read.
- 20% of what we hear.
- 30% of what we see.
- 50% of what we see and hear.
- 70% of what we say.
- 90% of what we do and teach

Design the training so that several different opportunities are provided to hear the stories of consumers and family members, their experiences with law enforcement and their perspectives on recovery.

Provide tangible handouts and summary information that officers can take with them that reinforces the training objectives (e.g., suicide lethality assessment, medications, mental illness symptomology, de-escalation skills). Create CIT reinforcement products on various topics that officers can carry in their pocket, wallet, or patrol car.

Early in the training, be clear and upfront regarding the strengths and weaknesses of both the law enforcement and mental health systems. If you don't have 24/7 access to a range of inpatient, residential and detox beds, note this. If you have a different process/system for screening and hospitalizing adolescents, include this. Part of the education the officers are receiving is how emergency systems operate, how to access them, and where to transport and this is all related to the status of the local system.

Get to teaching the de-escalation skills building process early and reinforce throughout the week as this better prepares the officers for the role-playing. Be as concrete as possible on the specific verbal and non-verbal skills you want CIT officers to learn and display in the role-playing. As much as possible, team up a lead law enforcement facilitator with a mental health professional when teaching the de-escalation skills. Credibility is lost if you rely too much on non law enforcement personnel to teach the de-escalation skills and facilitate the role-playing.

In preparing for the role-play, develop a pool of actors to draw from. Recruit local "actors" if you can by contacting local universities or community theater programs. Try and avoid using officers as actors if they know the students going through the class. Have all the actors meet prior to the training after they have been assigned their role. A general set of instructions (do's and don'ts) for the actors should be provided at this meeting so they know what to expect. If this is your first time to do role-playing, don't do the role-playing by yourself, elicit Woody or another of the officers who have facilitated the role playing before to help teach the skills and facilitate the role-playing. Select a couple of officers willing to "shadow" the facilitator and learn how to teach the skills and facilitate the role playing. Video tape your first year of role-playing to assist future facilitators and actors know what is expected of them..

While role-playing is a good way to test the officer's skill acquisition, you may want to build in a simple, brief pre/post written test on mental illnesses aligned to the curriculum goals around what you want the officers to have learned.

Build in both a formal evaluation and an informal evaluation. The informal evaluation is a loose discussion with the soon-to-be graduating class on how they experienced the training and what would improve future trainings.

Funding

Establish a budget to support the training. CIT training can be offered at a very low cost. We have averaged about \$2,500 to support the training and most of this is for food, printing, and curriculum purchases. One-time expenses included the purchase of the CIT pins and training tools (e.g., Hearing Voices curriculum). Partner with drug companies- you can provide them with recognition and they can feed the officers.

Involve local, regional and state “experts” in the provision of the training so there is little to no cost for presenters.