

Lucas County CIT Peer Review Summary

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BACKGROUND: *The Criminal Justice Coordinating Center of Excellence (CCOE) desires to work with CIT Coordinators across Ohio to strengthen our collective understating of the core elements and emerging best practices within CIT. One vehicle of doing just that is through a “Peer Review Process”, a voluntary, collegial process built on identifying and coalescing the best elements of CIT programs.*

The Peer Review Process consists of four phases: a Self Assessment conducted by the county under review, a Desk Audit that provides detail on the program and training curriculum, a Site Visit by a team of reviewers, and a written report summarizing the reviewer’s observations.

The Lucas County Program should be congratulated for volunteering to undergo the Peer Review Process. A pre-site review telephone conference was held on June 17, 2010 between Renee Gerome, Michael Woody, and Robert Kasprzak (CIT Coordinator/MHRS board of Lucas County). A Site visit was conducted on June 30, 2010 by the Review Team (identified above) and the following CIT Planning Committee members: Robert Kasprzak (CIT Coordinator/MHRS Board of Lucas County) Tim Goyer (MHRS Board), Marcy Dvorak (NAMI), Captain Taylor (Toledo Police Department), Melissa Quick (MHRS Board), and Janet Rose (Recovery Council).

This report is a synthesis of what the reviewers found after conducting the review process and is organized to highlight Strengths and Suggestions related to the training curriculum and the CIT program. The ultimate test of the benefit of this Peer Review Process will be if the report and resource matching done via the CCOE helps Lucas County strengthen their program. We hope it does.

INTRODUCTION: *When meeting with the Lucas County Planning Committee, the reviewers thought it important to set the tone of the onsite review process by discussing the purpose and role of the Core Elements. While there is a lot of variability across CIT development (which is good for innovation), the Core elements can provide direction for communities to positively assess their CIT program. While most developing CIT programs go through common growth stages, three common areas of tension are the length of trainings, who gets trained (voluntary or mandatory), and how the de-escalation/role play blocks of the training are taught.*

The reviewers noted that their goal is not to assign where Lucas County is in their program fidelity, but rather use the Core elements to have the county assess its own program development. To illustrate this, the reviewers provide a handout (The CIT Pyramid) depicting the typical path that CIT program development can take (see Attachment #1). As CIT develops beyond training and into a full fledged diversion/risk reduction program, the essential elements can become more formalized with written policies, procedures, protocols, data collection, and evaluation processes that help build a solid foundation that can better position the program to weather funding and leadership cycles. It is within this program development context that the Peer Process can provide observations on the County's program, highlight their strengths, and, through the CCOE, help to bridge the connection between the county's needs and CIT resources that exist across the State.

When asked where the group would rate the county on its CIT program development, generally consensus was that Lucas County provides training but beyond that does not have a lot of the program elements (data collection, policies/procedures, etc) nor currently the authority to implement immediate policy change. It was noted that the Lucas County Mental Health & Recovery Services Board (MHRSB) has experienced a lot of major changes, including the merging of two separate boards and a changing set of CIT Coordinators at the mental health and law enforcement agency. Finally, the group acknowledged their strong CIT history and expressed a real desire to recapture some of the excitement and support for growing the CIT program.

CIT PROGRAM STRENGTHS

The County's Self-Assessment identified three strengths: 1) *CIT has been offered since 2001 and more than 300 officers, first responders, campus security, park security, and correction officers have completed the training.* 2) *The CIT training was developed by a curriculum expert and it was adapted from the Memphis Model. It has received positive feedback from attendees.* 3) *CIT is well received in the community. Mental Health providers and group home operators use the service when they have a client in crisis.* The following are strengths noted by the Review Team.

1. **Program History-** In 1999, The Lucas County Mental Health Board and the local National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) organization began discussions on developing and implementing a crisis intervention training program for Lucas County. Their research lead them to the nationally recognized Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training developed by the Memphis Police Department. Representatives from the County went to Memphis, TN and participated in a CIT Training and, later, experts from Memphis assisted Lucas County in developing their CIT Training. Lucas County should be commended for being one of the first county's in Ohio to offer a CIT training in their community.

2. CIT Support/Response from Law Enforcement- It is impressive to review the historical comments/feedback of former CIT attendees. It is clear, overall, that law enforcement personnel appreciate the CIT training and find value in its impact on their daily work activities. Most impressive is the large percentage of Toledo Police Department personnel who have gone through the training, along with the identification of a Toledo Police Department officer who acts as a liaison between the police department and the CIT team.

3. NAMI of Lucas County clearly provides strong support for the CIT program as evidenced by their active involvement from the very beginning when the idea of training was first being discussed to its ongoing involvement with the CIT Training committee.

CIT TRAINING STRENGTHS

1. Site Visits- A significant portion of the CIT training week is devoted to site visits (approximately 20%). These visits allow the law enforcement personnel to interact with people who have a mental illness who are not in crisis. It is clear by the feedback of previous CIT participants that these opportunities do allow the officers to see the mentally ill population in a different light. The opportunities include site visits to homeless shelters, a mental health based school, group homes, and a consumer programming site.

2. Consumers and NAMI play a very active role in the training curriculum. Officers have the opportunity to interact with consumers and family members throughout the training week and many positive comments are made about these opportunities in the feedback received by participants in post-evaluations.

3. Officer Experiences- the CIT curriculum includes a training block in which Toledo Police Department CIT Officers share their experiences of what it is like to be a CIT Officer and how the CIT Training has changed their work with the mentally ill population. This training block provides an opportunity for attendees to *see the connection* between the CIT training and their real-life police work. Making this connection is important in order for CIT to have a positive impact on the community.

4. Development of a CIT Pre- and Post-Test Tool and Use of a Formal Evaluation. Lucas County has used a formal evaluation process at the end of its CIT training week to seek feedback from the participants. A large amount of data has been gathered and highlighted in their *Crisis Intervention Team 2001-2009* booklet that highlights officer response to the CIT training and shows areas of improvement for future trainings. In addition, prior to the last CIT training, the CIT Coordinator developed a pre- and post-tool to gather information from the participants regarding their beliefs and knowledge of mental illness. This tool can be of great benefit to the CIT presenters who can tailor the information shared to meet the needs of the participants. In

addition, the format of the evaluations also nicely capture pre-post information to show knowledge acquisition from the training.

CIT PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS

The County's Self-Assessment identified three areas that could be improved: *1) Enhance the data collection across Lucas County. It can be used to modify and improve the curriculum and subsequently it can improve the outcomes between officers and clients. Data can also be used to influence elected officials, key stakeholders, mental health providers, and the media. 2) Increase awareness of the program. If more citizens across the county become aware of CIT it could be requested more often and before a situation escalates into a full blown crisis which could possibly bring injury to the person or the law enforcement officer. In addition, increase awareness to new social service employees. 3) CIT Recognition. If we could draw positive attention to the service and the law enforcement officers who respond to people in crisis it would build the trust of spouses, family members, neighbors, and/or co-workers.* The following are recommendations made by the Review Team.

1. Consider ways to increase participation in CIT by ALL of the county's enforcement departments. The Toledo Police Department has strong buy-in to the CIT program as evidenced by its high percentage of officers who have completed the CIT training over the past 9 years. It is recommended that the CIT Committee increase outreach efforts to all of the other departments in the county to achieve a better balance of CIT training across the county.

2. Tracking of CIT graduates. More than 370 law enforcement personnel have participated in CIT training in Lucas County since its inception in 2001. These numbers are impressive, but the CIT committee currently has no data indicating how many of these officers still work in Lucas County or how many officers have had the opportunity to use the skills learned in CIT when dispatched to a call. It is recommended that Lucas County develop a county-wide data tracking system to monitor the ongoing impact of CIT in its county.

3. Review the feasibility of incorporating Advanced CIT training in the County. The county has trained a large number of law enforcement personnel throughout the county and may want to consider developing advanced/refresher trainings focused on strengthening specific skill sets of the officers.

CIT TRAINING SUGESSTIONS

1. Develop a specific training block on Verbal De-Escalation Training. The reviewers noted that there was not a training block devoted to verbal de-escalation training, although it was reported that information related to this topic was provided to the CIT participants on the last day of the training. It is highly recommended that Lucas County devote at least 3 hours of training time to the participants on this topic as it should be one of the fundamental components of CIT Training. It is recommended that this block of training occur on Day 4 and prior to the role play

experience. Resources are available from the CCOE to assist in the development of a more formal verbal de-escalation training block

2. Role Play Block. Lucas County currently allows approximately 2 hours for role play experiences. In addition, officers are not required to role play, only those who volunteer. When asked how many of the officers in the last training (nearly 40 participants) volunteered to role play, the answer was “four.” To truly meet fidelity requirements to successfully completing the CIT training, ALL officers should be required to participate in at least two role play situations each. The Role Play experience should be scheduled on the last day of the training and provides an opportunity for officers to demonstrate new skills or tools they have gained through the CIT training experience.

3. Expand on the learning objectives for the legal block of the training. In reviewing the CIT schedule and manual, there does not appear to be any objectives related to the connection of case law and de-escalation training. The legal standard of deliberate indifference and cursory reviews of some of the defining law suits can help to define CIT as liability reduction training. As important, such case law provides the context for CIT’s less authoritative de-escalation approach and sheds light on the actual de-escalation skills in such encounters (e.g., (Fisher v Hardin and corroboration of unconfirmed suicide/mental illness calls; Griffin v Coburn and application of the force continuum on an unarmed, mentally ill subject; or Byrd v Long Beach as it relates to expectations around verbal de-escalation).

4. Include a specific block on Suicide/Suicide Prevention Training. The *Suicide Call* is one of the most common type of CIT calls an officer will be called upon to respond. It was reported by the committee that suicide information is peppered throughout the week. It is recommended that a specific block on Suicide/Suicide Prevention be incorporated into the training curriculum.

5. Class Size. Lucas County enrolls up to 40 officers in each CIT training. The CIT model recommends that no more than 24 officers participate in each training. It is recommended that Lucas County reduce its class size to 24 law enforcement personnel. The reasoning being that if Lucas County adopts our recommendation that all officers go through at least 2 role-play scenarios time would not give justice to this endeavor if there were more than 24 officers in the class.

6. Class Attendance. Lucas County does not have any specific requirement for attendance at all 5 days of the CIT training in order to graduate from CIT training. Lucas County should develop and communicate specific attendance guidelines. It is recommended that officers miss no more than 2 hours of the training, but consideration can also be given to what training blocks are required or can be covered in some other format if an officer has a legitimate reason to be absent (i.e., required attendance at Court). Just as important, officers should not be allowed to miss the Verbal De-Escalation or Role Play training blocks for any reason to be considered a successful graduate of the CIT program.

Finally, in considering all of these changes the county has gone through that affect the CIT program, it may be beneficial to have the Lucas County CIT participants meet together to reenergize the county's commitment to CIT and develop consensus on how to move forward in growing the program. The group's own assessment on the CIT pyramid can be used as a starting point and the part of the work can develop consensus on what would have to occur to penetrate some of the programmatic levels of the Pyramid and implement some of the suggested changes being recommended in this report.

Part of this planning would be to reach consensus on what the group wants its CIT program to look like, how are problems/issues handled and how this impacts with the roles and responsibilities with respect to overall program oversight and CIT coordination. More specifically, the Lucas County program lacks a certain degree of formality that may impede the group's effort to sustain and grow CIT. The attached CIT Pyramid illustrates the varying degrees of formality that CIT programs may achieve and could be utilized to strengthen the Lucas County program. The specifics of how this is measured is unique to each CIT program and for each program to determine. Specific issues related to defining a CIT call, data collection and reporting, officer selection, CIT tracking of officers, goals related to % of officers trained, CIT officer authority and scene management, a formal way to receive officer feedback on encounters that could then feed future trainings are all areas that can be addressed. This may be accomplished by convening a CIT retreat with key stakeholders to define and reach consensus on how CIT calls will be defined, and ways in which feedback and data can be collected and used to improve the CIT program in Lucas County.

Staff from the CCOE or other CIT Coordinators can be relied on for support, guidance, or facilitation depending on what the county feels it needs. The CCOE can provide the Lucas County CIT team with examples of policies, encounter forms, and other relevant information that may be helpful in making improvements in these identified areas.

Attachment #1- CIT PROGRAM EVOLUTION

