



**Northwest Ohio CIT Program  
Virtual CIT Patrol Officer Training Peer Review  
November 2021**

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**Organization of CIT Training Peer Review Report**

- A. THE PEER REVIEW PROCESS**
- B. THE CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM MODEL**
- C. NORTHWEST OHIO CIT TRAINING BACKGROUND**
- D. THE CIT PATROL OFFICER TRAINING**
- E. VIRTUAL CIT PATROL OFFICER TRAINING REVIEW**
- F. FUTURE APPLICATIONS, CONSIDERATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

## A. The Peer Review Process

Northwest (NW) Ohio CIT is the 27th program to participate in a CIT peer process review voluntarily. It is, however, the first program to undergo a review with a sole focus on its CIT Patrol Officer Training course. Specifically, this peer review focuses on their effort to conduct a blended learning CIT Patrol Officer Training course. The NW Ohio CIT Program created a virtual course in collaboration with the Ohio Criminal Justice Coordinating Center of Excellence (CJ CCoE). The online and recorded portion of the blended course was created using the SAP Litmos learning management system (LMS) extended by the CJ CCoE. Staff from the NW Ohio CIT Program and the Northeast Ohio Medical University's (NEOMED) Coordinating Centers of Excellence created training block content. Course participants could then attend specific training blocks virtually by watching presenters, presentations, and other video content. NW Ohio CIT conducted six CIT Patrol Officer Training courses and two advanced training courses from March 2020 to the present, while Ohio, the United States, and the entire world dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic, which restricted people from gathering together.

The CJ CCoE and the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Ohio (NAMI Ohio) support this peer review process. The CJ CCoE was established in May 2001 to promote jail diversion alternatives for people with mental illness throughout Ohio. The CJ CCoE is funded by a grant from the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (Ohio MHAS) to the County of Summit Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Services (ADM) Board. The ADM Board contracts with NEOMED to operate the center.

The CJ CCoE works with Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) programs across Ohio to strengthen our collective understanding of the core elements and emerging best practices. One vehicle to accomplish this is through a peer review process. The peer review is a voluntary collegial process of identifying and fusing the best elements of CIT programs from across the State of Ohio and the United States.

This peer review process consisted of:

- Desk Audit
- Video Conference Interview
- Written Report

A video conference call was held on August 10, 2021, including reviewers and these representatives of the NW Ohio CIT Program training subcommittee:

- David Olds
- Melanie White

The reviewers discussed the virtual CIT Patrol Officer Training course during this call. This report addresses these topics in more detail.

A video conference call was conducted on November 8, 2021, as a replacement for the site visit. This video conference call included the reviewers and these members representing the NW Ohio CIT Program:

- David Olds
- Melanie White

This final report synthesizes what the reviewers found after studying the training course, conducting the video conference call, conducting additional research and analysis, consulting with the designated NW Ohio CIT Program training subcommittee members, and conducting the final video conference call.

## B. The Crisis Intervention Team Model

According to CIT International, Crisis Intervention Teams are community-based programs that bring together law enforcement, mental health professionals, mental health advocates, and other partners to improve community responses to persons in mental health crises. CIT is an organizational model that helps coordinate the mental health crisis care system and the criminal justice system. When properly implemented at the local level, the model has core elements that will improve the utilization of essential mental health services and assist with keeping people out of a crisis. The definition of CIT, from CIT International via Usher et al. (2019), is:

- CIT is **community-based** and improves **community responses** to mental health crises. The most visible faces of CIT are CIT officers, but CIT is not a law enforcement program. CIT is designed to bring mental health professionals, advocates, elected leaders, and others to the table to problem-solve and take responsibility for improving the mental health crisis response system—so that police and jails are not the default responders and locations. CIT programs work to build crisis response systems where law enforcement plays a supporting role and responds only when the level of danger or criminal activity warrants such a response. CIT programs also work to strengthen locations in the community where community members can walk in and receive the help they need without contact with the justice system.
- CIT includes **people living with mental illness and their families**. No one has a greater stake in the outcome of a mental health crisis than the person in crisis, followed closely by their family members. These stakeholders also have valuable insight into how the crisis response system works and what helps make it better. Only by engaging individuals with mental illness and their families can we build crisis response systems that people feel confident reaching out to in a crisis without fear of danger or incarceration.
- CIT is based on **partners coming together**. CIT partners are equal decision-makers who solve problems together, bring resources to the table, and hold each other accountable. Mutual commitment, trust, and respect are the bedrock of strong partnerships.

- CIT focuses on **responses to mental health crises**. CIT is not just about how law enforcement responds to mental health crisis situations. It also addresses how mental health professionals and other supports are involved in crisis response. CIT examines how systemic problems—like outdated policies or a lack of services—contribute to crisis situations and develops solutions to these systemic challenges (p. 4).

### **The Goals of a CIT Program**

- To improve safety during law enforcement encounters with people in crisis, for everyone involved.
- To increase connections to effective and timely mental health services for people in mental health crises.
- To use law enforcement strategically during crisis situations – such as when there is an imminent threat to safety or a criminal concern – and increase the role of mental health professionals, peer support specialists, and other community supports.
- To reduce the trauma that people experience during a mental health crisis and thus contribute to their long-term recovery (Usher et al., 2019, p. 5).

CIT International explains that the CIT Model is designed to fit the needs of many different types of communities. Ultimately, the success of a community’s CIT program will be based on the following from Usher et al. (2019):

- **An ongoing commitment from leaders** of your local mental health system, law enforcement agencies, and mental health advocacy organizations.
- **A network of relationships** among criminal justice & mental health professionals, mental health advocates, and other community members and leaders.
- **An understanding of your community-wide response to crisis situations**, including mental health services, emergency responders, law enforcement, and other resources that can help people during a crisis.
- **Building the infrastructure to strengthen your crisis response system and sustain your program** - including the creation of CIT specific policies and procedures, information sharing and data collection.
- **A training program for law enforcement officers and dispatchers** that prepares them to respond safely and compassionately to people in crisis and helps them link people to essential mental health services.

- **A commitment to ongoing improvement and engagement with partners.** Every community has an opportunity to improve, whether it be advocating for better access to essential mental health services, expanding training to other populations, or reaching out to support new CIT programs in another community (p. 6).

### **Crisis Intervention Team Core Elements**

The CIT Core Elements describe a fully developed CIT program. Keep in mind; partnerships are the first core element of CIT because they are the foundation of everything else. As a community progresses, they can strengthen their crisis response system incrementally as a long-term goal. Law enforcement training is only a step toward developing a CIT program, not the end goal. Crisis Intervention Teams are robust programs containing ongoing, operational, and sustaining elements. Compton et al. (2011) identify the following elements and categories.

#### **Ongoing Elements**

1. Partnerships: Law Enforcement, Advocacy, Mental Health
2. Community Ownership: Planning, Implementation & Networking
3. Policies and Procedures

#### **Operational Elements**

1. CIT: Officer, Dispatcher, Coordinator
2. Curriculum: CIT Training
3. Mental Health Receiving Facility: Emergency Services

#### **Sustaining Elements**

1. Evaluation and Research
2. In-Service Training
3. Recognition and Honors
4. Outreach: Developing CIT in Other Communities (p. 27)

## C. Northwest Ohio CIT Program Training Background

The six-county region encompassing Sandusky, Seneca, Wyandot, Erie, Ottawa, and Huron Counties (NW Counties) covers 2,368 square miles and has a total population of 308,535. They share the same crisis care system, with Firelands Regional Medical Center as the in-patient facility for mental health crises. Before the existing merged training, Sandusky, Seneca, and Wyandot counties operated as a single region for mental health training. In January 2018, Erie and Ottawa counties asked to be included. Huron County later joined with them to create a single six-county training region for CIT training. The NW Ohio CIT Program's goal is to provide five CIT Patrol Officer Training sessions per year.

This peer review team was asked to observe and evaluate the novel delivery of the CIT Patrol Officer Training course implemented by the NW Ohio CIT Program. The NW Ohio CIT program's decision to move to a virtual platform was driven by two factors. First and foremost, the 2020 unprecedented health pandemic restrictions made it challenging to deliver in-person training. This pandemic imposed fundamental logistical challenges to hosting an in-person, live training where individuals from a large, six-county region could be brought together in a single location. The NW Ohio CIT Program had not been able to provide the training course for approximately six months. The conversion to a virtual platform allowed the CIT training course to be held while following COVID-19 restrictions. Secondly, both convenience and scheduling benefits were discovered. The program covers a six-county area, and it is often difficult for attendees in more rural areas to attend the in-person training. Virtual delivery of the training course allowed attendees from more distant locations to participate and provided agencies more flexibility with staff scheduling. The NW Ohio CIT Training Subcommittee, with the assistance of the CJ CCoE, developed an innovative virtual learning modality using the Zoom video conferencing platform, the Litmos Learning Management System (LMS), and in-person training for its CIT Patrol Officer Training course. The first training session using this technology took place in September 2020. The peer reviewed session, delivered in July 2021, was the fourth one provided using the blended learning method. It was also the fourth iteration of the blend as more training blocks were emplaced into the LMS.

Zoom is a video platform that enables communication needs, including meetings, chat, phone, webinars, and online events. Litmos is a user-centered, cloud-based LMS used to plan, implement, and assess a specific learning process. By utilizing this technology, the NW Ohio CIT Program delivers its CIT Patrol Officer Training course to a maximum of 26 patrol officers and other first responders across the six-county region per training session. The attendees are provided with a training bag containing computers pre-loaded with the Zoom client and information to access the Litmos LMS. The bag also includes training manuals, an audio player pre-loaded with the "Hearing Distressing Voices Simulation" MP3 file (with headphones), and a medication set consisting of a 7-day medication pillbox with multiple-colored candies to simulate the complex medication needs of those with a mental illness. The medication set was not used as an activity in the hybrid course and was provided as an example for participants.

Each participant takes the training course at a chosen location (work, home, etc.). Most of the CIT Patrol Officer Training course is provided using the Litmos LMS. The remaining modules were provided via Zoom. The final day of training, which includes de-escalation role plays and graduation, was held in person. Eventually, all modules except for risk assessment and field trips, and the de-escalation role plays will be on the Litmos LMS. Having most modules on the Litmos LMS will help to provide training across the entire six-county area, especially to small jurisdictions.

## D. THE CIT PATROL OFFICER TRAINING

### **Traditional Delivery of the CIT Patrol Officer Course**

Operational and Sustaining elements of CIT programs include training team members in their specific CIT role. The most predominant training is the CIT Patrol Officer Training course. Typically, the training session is delivered in person and 40 hours across consecutive days. The training consists of didactic/lecture sections on behavioral health topics and experiential blocks such as ride-alongs with treatment providers, on-site visits to several mental health facilities, intensive interaction with individuals with a severe and persistent mental illness and individuals with a substance use disorder, and a scenario-based de-escalation skills training (role-plays). Local subject matter experts with experience working with first responders instruct or present on various topics identified as key elements for CIT training. These elements include mental health-related information, crisis resolution skills and de-escalation training, and access to community-based services. The instructors are from both the mental health and criminal justice systems.

### **Current Practices for the Delivery of CIT Training**

In addition to the core components listed above, the University of Memphis CIT Center and the Ohio CJ CCoE have provided guidance on the current practices for delivering CIT training for patrol officers. The CIT training curriculum should be developed and delivered in partnership between the local mental health treatment system, advocacy partners, and law enforcement jurisdictions. The overarching goal of a CIT training course is to provide law enforcement officers with the practical knowledge, information, resources, and skills to effectively solve problems and foster positive outcomes when responding to incidents involving individuals with a mental health concern or crisis. Those trained should know and demonstrate how to align their communication behaviors to engage a person in crisis. Effective communication with a person in crisis is an integral part of CIT training courses.

The CIT training goal is achieved when officers exhibit:

- Enhanced knowledge of mental health-related topics,
- Understanding of the laws protecting individuals with disabilities/mental health disorders,

- Improved de-escalation and crisis resolution skills,
- Ability to refer individuals with a mental health disorder and their families to the appropriate resources and information for services and follow up,
- Reduced stigma, and
- Cultural sensitivity.

Beyond the key elements, each county's CIT training elements are unique. They should include and describe all local conventions or methods that impact CIT officers where they work, including policies and procedures for responding to mental health crises. CIT training courses must contain all the core elements applicable to the local crisis response system, such as mental health receiving facilities and mobile crisis response. CIT training courses should also include segments about navigating local resources and accessing those resources based on policy and procedure. The CIT training courses should also include the intersection with the local criminal justice system. It has been recommended that a CIT program include training elements that focus on local needs. For example, a focus on substance use trends, veterans' specific needs, or other topics on specialized populations in the local area. Due to the emphasis on local resources, participants must attend training in the county or counties where they operate. Instructors should be sourced from the local systems whenever possible since they will understand the systems and function.

CIT training courses must incorporate the adult learning concepts of tapping into prior experience, revealing perspectives that impart new meaning to previous experiences, and connecting learning with reality to create meaning. Methods of ensuring adult learning include:

- The creation of learning/performance objectives for the overall course and each topic,
- The sequencing of topics in the course in a carefully considered manner,
- Instructional scaffolding that is based on the knowledge and skill levels of the attendees (in this case, scaffolding refers to varying instructional support methods provided to attendees),
- The use of relevant and timely stories, videos, vignettes, interactions, and other materials, and
- The use of technology to capture the attendee's attention, provide performance support, and help the attendee understand how to apply what has been learned back on the job.

### **Research on Virtual Learning**

Virtual learning has become increasingly popular over the last few years and is likely here to stay. Virtual learning can be described as any learning using computer software, the internet, or both. With the increase in virtual learning platforms, research has started to emerge to evaluate the effectiveness of this method.

A review of the research shows that there are benefits to virtual learning. A meta-analysis of 50 studies contrasting virtual and in-person learning found that adult students in online conditions

performed modestly better, on average, than those learning the same material through in-person instruction (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

There are distinct differences between in-person learning and virtual learning. With in-person learning, the instruction is synchronous or done at the same time. All instructors and students are present with in-person learning. That is not necessary with virtual learning since it can be done simultaneously or at the student's own pace. With in-person classes, instructors usually deliver knowledge and then assess the understanding of that knowledge later. With virtual learning, instructors are seen more as facilitators of learning — helping their students understand the material through provided online materials. Both in-person learning and virtual learning have advantages and disadvantages.

### **Advantages and Disadvantages of Virtual Learning**

There are several advantages to virtual learning. One significant benefit of virtual learning is that travel time is eliminated since students can learn at their location, making the training more accessible to those living farther away. Learning at the student's locations is particularly beneficial for the NW Ohio CIT Program since it covers six counties. With the virtual CIT training course, rural counties in the catchment area could participate without driving a long distance every day, making the training more accessible to all law enforcement jurisdictions.

There are disadvantages to virtual learning. One of the disadvantages is that attendees must be motivated and good at time management. Without these skills, attendees can get behind on their learning, get distracted, and not absorb what has been instructed. Evidence is beginning to suggest that a lack of in-person interaction may make it more challenging to concentrate and stay focused during an entire day of virtual learning (Stanford News, 2021). According to Stanford News (2021), virtual platforms are contributing to fatigue or “burnout.” This “burnout” is due to the excessive amount of intense close-up eye contact, constant viewing of a self-reflection on the screen, a dramatic reduction of mobility, and an inability to read and interpret gestures and nonverbal cues naturally.

A significant component of CIT training is relationship building between the mental health system and law enforcement. With the use of virtual learning, developing relationships across the two systems can be problematic. When a module was presented live on Zoom with the presenter, attendees had the opportunity to ask questions and engage in discussion with the presenter or content expert. However, if the module was in Litmos and the presenter/content expert was not immediately available via Zoom, a course coordinator handled questions from the attendees after the module was completed. This varied the engagement attendees had with a content expert and may have limited their ability to have clarifying or follow up questions answered during the training experience. While the NW Ohio CIT Program does have tenured course coordinators, they are not content experts on all materials presented in the training. The virtual training can take away from some of the social and team-building aspects between the attendees and mental health staff that happen in the in-person training. According to Forbes Insight (2009), 85% of

individuals surveyed reported building more substantial and more meaningful business relationships during in-person meetings and conferences. Additionally, a study by Harvard Review found that 95% of individuals surveyed believed that in-person meetings were a key factor in successfully building and maintaining long-term business relationships.

Research has shown that another drawback of virtual learning is the reliance on a stable internet connection, which may not always function as needed. This instability can result in attendees not hearing or missing parts of the training. Attendees involved in virtual learning must also be computer literate to work with the programming and solve any computer-related issues that might occur. A lack of computer literacy may decrease full engagement in training.

Another disadvantage to virtual learning is the measurement of participation. The lack of direct in-person interaction can stifle communication between the instructor and the student and between the students in training. Since it is difficult to gauge participation, engagement, and understanding in a virtual environment, virtual learning must create moments to encourage participation. The NW Ohio CIT Program did create opportunities for questions after each virtual training segment. However, not being able to ask immediate questions throughout the training segment may decrease the attendee's engagement and make it difficult to determine if the attendees understand and grasp the training topics.

### **Blended Learning**

The U.S. Department of Education's (2010) review of virtual learning also found that the learning experience was more positive when virtual instruction was collaborative or instructor-directed vs. online attendees working independently. It was further suggested that virtual learning is enhanced by giving attendees control of their interactions with media and prompting attendee reflection, such as providing exercises to trigger learning activity and thinking. The NW Ohio CIT Program training increased the collaborative learning environment by having the attendees participate in a question-and-answer section immediately following virtual training segments with the instructor or coordinator when those segments were not from live instructors. The instructor or coordinator could better gauge the students' engagement, understanding, and interest by having a question-and-answer session after the virtual training segments when instruction was recorded.

To overcome some of the barriers related to virtual training and meet the CIT training core elements, the NW Ohio CIT Program utilized a blended learning method. Blended learning can be defined as education that combines online/virtual educational materials and opportunities for in-person interactions. Research has shown that instruction combining both virtual and in-person elements has a more considerable advantage than utilizing purely in-person instruction or purely online/virtual instruction. (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

## E. Virtual CIT Patrol Officer Training Course Review

As previously noted in this report, the NW Ohio CIT Program should be recognized and commended for its unprecedented and innovative efforts to continue CIT training. They pivoted from their regular in-person delivery and worked with stakeholders to create an e-learning version of its CIT Patrol Officer Training course under less-than-ideal conditions. This alternative delivery was developed rapidly using various virtual platforms, and those platforms, the Litmos LMS and Zoom videoconferencing, have been identified and discussed. The Litmos LMS contained recorded video, professional and semi-professional video, and other e-learning features. Zoom was used for virtual instructor-led training (VILT), the delivery of at least one video recording, and attendee engagement.

The delivery of the entire CIT Patrol Officer course via e-learning is revolutionary because it is rarely done. It is not supported by those who created and continue to support CIT, such as the CIT Memphis Center and CIT International, and is instead discouraged. However, both organizations took this stance without considering a substantial issue preventing in-person learning, such as the current pandemic. There is also a lack of research to show that attendees have a similar experience using e-learning instead of the standard in-person training course. The NW OH CIT Program displayed leadership under adverse conditions to create this method of CIT training delivery with no other models or versions as reference.

## **Technology Interaction**

Information is limited about how attendees interacted with course technology and their reaction to this technology and delivery method. The evaluation responses for the July 19-23, 2021 training session only referred to connectivity issues, module length on some modules, an inability to begin some modules at the point where attendees stopped it for one reason or another, and inaccurate completion time estimates for some modules. All attendees did not experience connectivity problems, and the reported issues appeared to be location-specific. A few comments were made about too much clicking needed to move between slides within the Litmos LMS. No information is available about difficulties encountered logging into and using the Litmos LMS or Zoom for the first time, if applicable. Data is also lacking for comparison between an in-person delivery of the course and a virtual (e-learning) delivery. The NW Ohio CIT Program training managers stated that they provided participants with pre-loaded laptop computers, which may have reduced technology-related issues except for connectivity. In addition, the Coordinating Centers of Excellence LMS specialist was engaged throughout the process to help attendees with problems getting logged into the LMS and navigating the LMS.

## **Course Content**

### Learning Objectives

Learning objectives are necessary for any training course and identify performance or what the attendee can do after the training. In this course, student learning objectives (SLOs) were created for each training day and organized by topic. Eighty-two SLOs are listed, with 22, 20, 16, 20, and 4 SLOs on each consecutive training day. The last day includes the practicum. A method of learning evaluation must accompany each SLO. This evaluation can be completed using an embedded learning check, a cognitive test question, or a practicum element. A practicum is

scheduled for the final day to evaluate some of the SLOs. There is also a “CIT Pre-training Survey” found within the provided documents that partially serves as a pre-test and a pre-course evaluation. During a virtual meeting, the course coordinator identified that the survey is used before and after the course.

Selection of Training Blocks

The course schedule for the reviewed session is found in figure #1.

*Figure 1: Curriculum/Schedule for CIT Patrol Officer Course Session July 19-23, 2021*

Northwest Ohio CIT Training Center (CIT) CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM Training Academy July 19-23, 2021 ONLINE ACADEMY Curriculum/Schedule					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Jul-19	Jul-20	Jul-21	Jul-22	Jul-23
8:00 AM	Welcome & Introductions <b>Zoom</b>	Mid-Brain -- Module 1 <b>Litmos (YouTube video)</b>	CIT Legal Block -- Module 1 <b>Litmos</b>	Trauma and Children <b>Litmos</b>	Review of Academy and De-escalation <b>Live</b>
8:30 AM					
9:00 AM	Why CIT -- Module 1 and Module 2 <b>Litmos</b>	Excited Delirium -- Module 2 <b>Litmos</b>	Judge Brad Smith <b>Litmos</b>	Recognizing Special Pops/ Autism & MRDD <b>Zoom</b>	Verbal Techniques & Practicum, Role Plays <b>Live</b>
9:30 AM					
10:00 AM	Pyramid of Communication -- Module 3 <b>Litmos</b>	Kenn Bower and Dual Diagnosis -- Module 3 <b>Litmos</b>	Poverty and Mental Health <b>Litmos (PBS Frontline video)</b>	Aging and Mental Health <b>Zoom</b>	
10:30 AM					
11:00 AM	Introduction to Psychiatric Illness -- Module 4 <b>Litmos</b>	Introduction to Psychiatric Meds -- Module 4 <b>Litmos</b>	Community Treatment Advocacy Resources <b>Litmos (Pick 5 of 11)</b>	Recognizing and Responding to Suicide <b>Litmos</b>	Evaluations and Graduation <b>Live</b>
11:30 AM					
12:00 PM	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:30 PM	Introduction to Principals of De-escalation -- Module 5 and 6 <b>Litmos</b>	Risk Assessment & Firelands Overview <b>Zoom</b>	Field Trip Panel -- Case Managers, Consumers, and Peer Recovery Coach <b>Zoom</b>	Suicide in the Ranks and Recognizing PTSD <b>Zoom (VILT)</b>	Review of Academy and De-escalation <b>Live</b>
1:00 PM		ADDICTION - Is It a Choice? <b>Litmos</b>		Meeting the needs of our Vets - "COMBAT" DVD <b>Zoom (Video)</b>	
1:30 PM					Discussion
2:00 PM					
2:30 PM	Documentary DVD Out of the Shadows -- Module 7 <b>Litmos (Video)</b>	Active Listening, LOSS & EAR Models and De-escalation <b>Litmos</b>	Resources Bingo & Discussion	Debriefing & Role Plays	Evaluations and Graduation <b>Live</b>
3:00 PM	Who is NAMI -- Module 8 <b>Litmos</b>		Debriefing & Role Plays		
3:30 PM		Debriefing		Ernie & Joe HMW <b>Litmos (Video from HBO)</b>	Also "911 Call Activity" <b>Litmos</b>
4:00 PM	Also "911 Call Activity" <b>Litmos</b>				

The added comments in red identify the platform used to deliver the training blocks and, in some cases, specify a method of delivery to include in-person activities, movies, recordings, and virtual instructor-led training (VILT). The use of the term “live” means that attendees conducted these sessions in-person with role players, instructors, and coordinators. Information is lacking about topic selection, especially topical areas involving addiction without a co-occurring disorder and poverty. Data is also lacking about the sequencing of training blocks. This virtual training version schedule is likely to mirror the in-person version, and the same data may be lacking about in-person training.

### Presenter Evaluation

Attendees evaluated individual presenters within open-text fields of the evaluation instruments. No Likert-scaled questions were found specific to presenters. Evaluations of presenters and delivery methods were combined into a single question titled “presentation and delivery.”

### Core Elements

The Ohio “Expert Consensus Document: Core Elements for Effective Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Programs,” in its ninth core element, identifies the minimally required topics for what has become the CIT Patrol Officers Course. The schedule for the reviewed virtual version of this course in Northwest Ohio covers most of the elements. There is no noticeable topic about culture and ethnicity on the subject of mental health. There is no topic about co-occurring homelessness, but co-occurring substance use disorders and developmental disabilities are covered. The movie from PBS Frontline about poverty had some segments about homelessness and how it may lead to mental illness such as depression. This movie was filmed in Ohio and portrayed Ohioans.

## **Participants Engagement with Training**

### Cameras On and Attendee Polling

When attendees engaged with training blocks delivered via Zoom, they were required to turn on their cameras. Turning cameras on helped the coordinators know who was engaged and ensured that attendees were physically present to hear the material. When attendees used the Litmos LMS, they were allowed to turn their cameras off while engaged with material within the LMS, but were required to turn their cameras back on within the open Zoom connection. They were required to respond to questions sent out via the polling feature in Zoom before turning on their cameras. If attendees were not asking questions or showed no responses, one of the course coordinators picked out one or more attendees and asked questions of those attendees to test if attendees knew answers that would have come from the training block.

### Interaction with Presenters and Participant Attention

Minimal interaction with presenters was noticed during the course. When attendees had questions, they could ask a presenter when the session was presented via Zoom. Attendees were able to ask questions of the coordinators after completing training blocks delivered via the Litmos LMS but were not observed asking many questions. Participants’ attention to the material was evaluated based on the use of their cameras and microphones. Cameras were required to be on continuously during Zoom-based presentations and again after the required return to Zoom at

the end of an LMS-based training block for discussion with a course coordinator. Attendee engagement was also evaluated based on the attendees' responses to the Zoom-based polling questions at the end of an LMS-based training block.

## **Evaluations**

The NW Ohio CIT Program used a reaction level questionnaire to obtain evaluation feedback from those who attend its CIT Patrol Officer Training course. Each training day had an evaluation form that asked for input on three elements for each topic presented along with an open field comment section for each topic and an open field comment block at the end of the day titled "overall observations for today." The three elements were "presentation and delivery," "relevance of material to your job," and "I learned something new or helpful." The person providing feedback was asked to enter a score of one to five, with one indicating "strongly disagree/poor" and five meaning "strongly agree/excellent." A score of three is "neutral." The first day's evaluation form contained an open field comment block that asked, "What do you hope to achieve by attending this training?" The fifth day's evaluation form substituted "structure of experience" for "presentation and delivery" as one of the three elements to be scored. The form also contained an open field comment block that asked the rater to list the top three things learned in the class along with any other commentary.

Level two evaluations were conducted within the LMS-delivered segments using knowledge checks and scenarios that required selecting the correct answer. The role-play/practicum on the final day also served as a level two evaluation to determine if learning had occurred.

Reviewers received three sets of level one (reaction) evaluation data. One dataset was for the hybrid course session delivered in July 2021, which peer reviewers directly observed. The other datasets were for in-person course sessions offered in October 2019 and May 2019. The data supplied aggregate Likert scores for the three elements in each topic instructed. Data comparisons could not always be made between topics from the three sessions because they differed. However, most aggregate scores for the same topics were lower in the hybrid session than the two in-person sessions. The range of variance was from -.1 to -1.2. The mode was -.6. Although this information should cause a need to ask more questions, it does not identify a correlation between attendees and hybrid learning. It also does not show that attendees reacted poorly to the hybrid model since aggregate scores mainly were found between four and five. The data are insufficient to draw any conclusions or significant differences between the in-person sessions of this training course and the hybrid session. Evaluators did not receive level two (attendee) evaluation data for analysis.

The NW Ohio CIT Program used an innovative method of in-the-field evaluation to ensure that attendees were interacting with systems as needed and interacting with each other, at least at the respective training sites. The lead CIT law enforcement trainer for the program was sent out daily to two different training sites for half-day interactions with the attendees at those sites. This trainer interacted with attendees at those sites and ensured that technology issues were addressed and solved, that attendees were engaged with the technology and each other, and that lingering questions from attendees were addressed. This trainer also brought qualitative evaluation data back to the NW Ohio CIT Program coordinators in the form of comments made by attendees while the trainer was present.

## F. Future Applications, Considerations, and Recommendations

The purpose of this review was to evaluate the blended learning version of a CIT Patrol Officer Training course that was delivered instead of the in-person version. Except for a few changes, the NW Ohio CIT Program provided the same topics for four of the five training days. The topics were converted from in-person delivery to virtual delivery. As previously mentioned, virtual training delivery has pros and cons, and not all in-person training can be successfully converted to virtual training.

Recommendations in this report are limited to the assessment of virtual training instead of in-person training. The NW Ohio CIT Program used a particular form of blended learning that involved multiple electronic modes and some in-person activities. There is insufficient information to discern whether the blend used in this training session is better than another blend. The NW Ohio CIT Program is already recording more content for LMS delivery instead of virtual instructor-led training (VILT) via Zoom. The lingering question about whether this training or another blend of training is better for attendees remains unanswered.

Virtual learning often results in more consistent messaging when the training has been recorded instead of delivered as VILT. However, attendees are unable to ask questions or personally engage with a recording. In-person instructor-led training and VILT can lead to inconsistent messaging from session to session based on the instructor and the structure of a lesson plan and presentation. In this analysis, messaging appears to be as consistent with the blended learning version of this training course as it does with the in-person version.

Reviewers asked whether there was sufficient data to determine if learning was occurring in the hybrid version of this training course. If level two evaluative data from the role play/practicum sessions showed similar scores or results, then it appears that learning occurred. Learning checks from the LMS cannot substantiate learning since the trainee could not move beyond the learning check until the correct answer was selected. It is unknown if the LMS captured attempts until success for each of the learning checks.

The loss of social learning when converting in-person training to virtual training is a concern. Feffer (2019) describes social learning as taking “advantage of people's innate tendency to learn, whether through formal coursework or other means,” and that it involves “connecting and reflecting afterward to make sense of something through a relevant exchange.” (para. 8). Attendees in an in-person course may discuss issues from training while on breaks or between each other in the training environment. This ability is lost in virtual learning unless the training course includes elements requiring group action or discussion. Other than the course coordinators compelling some students to ask questions, the ability to create conditions for social learning was not observed in the hybrid course. There is some anecdotal evidence provided that attendees were engaged in social learning at individual learning sites, as reported by the CIT lead law enforcement trainer.

The one valid recommendation for both the in-person and blended learning versions of this course is that the level one evaluations must be more robust to allow for sufficient data collection. Level one or reaction level evaluations must include independent survey questions and elements for the overall course, the learning conditions experienced, the course content by topic, and the instructors for the course. This blended learning model appears to use the same three elements for each topic and open fields for whatever the attendee enters. These elements do not coax the attendee into providing good evaluative feedback. It is also recommended that the “neutral” response is removed from the evaluation survey to compel a better response from the attendee.

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Please place your response next to each category listed below based on these ratings: **(1) Strongly Disagree/Poor, (2) Disagree/Fair, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree/Good, (5) Strongly Agree/ Excellent. Note: Use NA for Not Applicable if you did not attend the session.**

Presentations	Rating
<b>Verbal Techniques and Practicum (Role Plays)</b>	
▪ Structure of Experience	
▪ Relevance of material to your job	
▪ I learned something new or helpful	

Comments:

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**Thank you for listing the top 3 things you learned in this class. Explain why each of them is important to you. Thank you for your feedback and any suggestions for improvement. We greatly value and rely on your input! (Use other side of paper if necessary). Thank you!**

Please place your response next to each category listed below based on these ratings: **(1) Strongly Disagree/Poor, (2) Disagree/Fair, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree/Good, (5) Strongly Agree/ Excellent. Note: Use NA for Not Applicable if you did not attend the session.**

Presentations – September 24th	Rating
<b>Field Trip Panel: Case Managers, Consumers and Peer Recovery Coach</b>	
▪ Presentation and delivery	
▪ Relevance of material to your job	
▪ I learned something new or helpful	
Comments:	
<b>Resources Bingo and Discussion</b>	
▪ Presentation and delivery	
▪ Relevance of material to your job	
▪ I learned something new or helpful	
Comments:	