

WEST PALM BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

III-6 CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM

EFFECTIVE: 01/01/2005

CALEA Standards: 41.2.8

CFA Standards: N/A

I. PURPOSE: This policy is to establish guidelines for members assigned to the Crisis Intervention Team by outlining specific training and deployment procedures.

II. DEFINITIONS:

A. Crisis Intervention Team (C.I.T.) - A group of officers trained to handle situations involving the mentally ill in crisis.

B. A Crisis - could consist of a person having delusions, refusing to take prescribed medications, erratic behavior, causing a disturbance, talking to themselves or other activity or behavior that causes alarm or concern to a reasonable person.

C. Crisis Intervention Officer - An officer trained to deal with mentally ill individuals in a disturbance/crisis event.

III. OBJECTIVES:

A. Pre-arrest diversion of the mentally ill from the criminal justice system

B. Providing law enforcement with the tools needed to handle encounters with mentally ill persons.

C. Delivery of proper care for the individual in crisis through a collaboration of mental health and criminal justice systems.

IV. MENTAL ILLNESS:

A. A range of conditions, each with its own specific characteristics, including but not limited to:

1. Schizophrenia
2. Bipolar disorder (manic depression)
3. Major depression
4. Schizoid-affective disorder
5. Panic disorder
6. Obsessive-compulsive personality disorder
7. Borderline personality disorder or
8. Other mental illnesses as defined in the DSM-IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders as published by the American Psychiatric Association, most current edition) that can cause disturbances in thinking, feeling, and relating with others or the environment.

V. CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM COMMANDER/COORDINATOR:

A. The Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Commander will be designated by the Chief of Police.

B. The team shall also have a CIT Training Coordinator to assist with administrative and operational activities.

VI. TEAM MEMBER SELECTION:

A. Members of the Crisis Intervention Team will be sworn members of the Department who have volunteered to serve on the team. The selection of members for the Crisis Intervention Team will be made by a committee composed of the CIT Commander, CIT Training Coordinator and any other member of the team assigned to serve on the committee by the CIT Commander. All selections for CIT will be approved by the Chief of Police.

B. The following traits may be considered when selecting an applicant to fill a vacancy on the CIT.

1. Communication skills
2. Active listening skills
3. Ability to work well under pressure
4. Ability to maintain a positive attitude under stressful conditions
5. Ability to absorb verbal abuse without negative responses
6. Ability in exercising good judgment and decision-making skills

VII. TRAINING:

A. Each member will be required to attend a basic 40 hour CIT training class. With the approval of the CIT Commander, the CIT Training Coordinator shall be responsible for scheduling all training sessions

B. The CIT Commander or designee will maintain a log of all training conducted involving team members. The log will include a list of:

1. Type of instruction
2. Instructor
3. Location
4. Date
5. Time
6. Attendees.

C. A copy of these records shall be provided to the Training Section for inclusion in the member=s Training File.

D. CIT training is mandatory. If a member is unable to attend training, he/she must notify the CIT Commander or designee as soon as possible.

1. Repeated absences from training shall result in the member=s removal from the team.

VIII. UTILIZATION OF A CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM MEMBER:

A. When available, a Crisis Intervention Team member shall respond to all calls or incidents involving a confirmed or suspected mentally ill person in crisis.

B. The CIT Commander will provide Communications and the Shift/Unit Commanders with a list of all current CIT members. The daily schedule submitted to communications shall have the names of CIT members on duty.

1. Communications may refer to the list for dispatch or may request a CIT officer over the radio.

C. The Hostage Negotiations Team will be deployed to incidents involving the mentally ill that meet the criteria in SOP IV-26

D. Members of the Crisis Intervention Team may be dispatched as first responders prior to the arrival of the Hostage Negotiations Team.

IX. OFFICER ON SCENE:

A. The first CIT officer on the scene shall be responsible for the entire call or incident, to include dialogue with the mentally ill person, determining appropriate action to be taken and all necessary paper work. Other officers on the scene shall provide necessary backup as needed. The CIT officer shall maintain responsibility for the call or incident unless otherwise directed by a supervisor. The supervisor then takes full responsibility of the scene and must submit a report to the CIT Commander before the end of the shift.

B. In all cases, the Crisis Intervention Team member will complete the Crisis Intervention Statistical Form and submit the form with copies of any supporting paperwork to the CIT Coordinator. This form is not to be included with any incident report or submitted to the Records Section.

C. Crisis Intervention Team members will be dispatched where the mentally ill consumer, family or a recognized agency specifically request a CIT trained officer.

X. DISPATCH PROTOCOL:

A. The call taker will ascertain as much information as possible with regards to weapons, violent tendencies, types of mental illness, co-occurring disorder (alcohol or drug abuse), name of person in crisis, names of any prescribed medications, local doctor/psychiatrist name, history of suicide attempts, and any other information as available.

B. If the initial call to Communications indicates the person involved suffers from a mental illness, an on duty CIT member will be dispatched.

C. If the call event describes the situation as threatening/tense or unstable circumstances, the nearest CIT officer shall be dispatched along with cover units.

D. When no CIT officer is available (citywide), the appropriate number of officers will be sent to the call. The dispatcher is to advise the responding units that no CIT units are available. The first officer(s) on the scene of a mental disturbance where a CIT officer(s) is not available for that response will weigh the situation based on the information and circumstances as presented and/or known. If in a situation that the officer reasonably concludes that a CIT officer(s) is necessary, the scene officer(s) will request the dispatcher to clear a CIT officer. The dispatcher, in accordance with the officer's request, will contact the closest CIT officer that is available to clear and dispatch the CIT officer to the requested scene.

E. CIT shall not be dispatched on any overdose call (intentional or accidental) that has occurred where the individual is not reported or diagnosed as having a mental illness, and the individual is not violent/combative. Unless the call takes place in the CIT Officer's assigned area.

F. CIT shall not be dispatched if the individual is being transported to a medical facility on a voluntary basis, or the caller is requesting transportation to a mental health facility.

G. A CIT Officer may volunteer to handle a call that he/she believes it to be CIT in nature. The CIT officer may know the person to be mentally ill, knows the location to be a residence / outpatient home of the mentally ill.

H. A request for a CIT Officer outside the parameters of this section should be brought to the attention of a CIT Field Supervisor for Approval, if none available then the Field Supervisor in that District should be contacted for approval.

XI. REFERENCE:

- SOP # IV-25 Swat Team Function
- SOP # IV-26 Hostage Negotiations

Delsa R. Bush, Chief of Police

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History: SOP # changed to III-6 on 01/01/2005
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Job Title Task Files: Operator, Shift Commander, Training Sergeant, Patrol Supervisor, Hostage Negotiations Commander