



Outstanding Ohio

Exemplary practices within
Ohio Crisis Intervention Team Programs

© Northeast Ohio Medical University

contact:
cjccoe@neomed.edu
330.325.6861



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INTRODUCTION

In 2000, Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) began in Ohio when the Summit County CIT Program and the Lucas County CIT Program started training police officers in CIT concepts for crisis response. Soon after, the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) began allocating funding to the support and expansion of CIT throughout Ohio through the establishment of the Criminal Justice Center of Excellence (CJ CCoE) in the department of Psychiatry at Northeast Ohio Medical University, aimed at providing technical assistance and coordination to CITs and CIT programs. Today, nearly every county in Ohio has an active CIT program.

CITs and CIT programs strive to sustain and further develop their teams and programs through the implementation of the CIT Model and the Ohio CIT Core Elements. The framework of the CIT Model and the key principles of the Ohio CIT Core Elements serve as the foundation and guide for teams and programs working to achieve the goals for CIT programs in Ohio. These goals are to:

- Improve the safety of everyone in situations when law enforcement officers interact with persons in crisis.
- Improve outcomes when law enforcement officers interact with persons in crisis.
- Increase understanding of, accessibility to, and improve responsiveness by the local crisis response system.
- Divert persons in crisis from the criminal justice system to treatment alternatives when possible.
- Transform the local crisis response system to use law enforcement officers as first responders only when there is an immediate or imminent threat to safety or a serious criminal concern.

Over the years, CITs and CIT programs have continued to improve their methods, implementing innovative practices and strategies to take their teams and programs to the next level. These strategies can go beyond the ordinary to improve their community's responses to persons in crisis and to divert people living with mental illness from the criminal justice system. This document serves to highlight these outstanding practices, with the goal of inspiring other CITs and CIT programs to pursue a similar path of community ownership and ongoing improvement. By showcasing them, we hope to inspire CITs and CIT programs to continuously raise the bar and find innovative ways to support people living with mental illness.

Since its inception in 2009, examples of exemplary practices have been collected through participation in the Ohio CIT Program Peer Review. The Peer Review is a voluntary evaluation process connecting members from a CIT Program with experienced CIT professionals from other Ohio CIT programs acting as reviewers. The Peer Review focuses on the CIT Program's implementation and development of the Ohio CIT Core Elements. It is a process designed and constructed to help a program determine its current level of development in each core element and provide guidance for the next steps in its growth.

Ohio CIT Core Elements

The newly constructed core elements have been organized into four categories and are later discussed in detail. They serve as guidance for law enforcement, mental health, and advocacy partners to achieve the goals of Ohio CIT programs. They should be used as additional direction to implement the ongoing, operational, and sustaining elements of the CIT Model.

Law Enforcement

- Policies and Procedures
- Patrol Coverage
- Officer Selection
- CIT Officer Identification
- Law Enforcement Coordinator
- Information Sharing and Data Collection
- Receiving Centers: Emergency Services

Mental Health Boards and Service Providers

- Policies and Procedures
- Service Linkage and Outreach
- Mental Health Coordinator
- Program Monitoring and Data Collection
- Receiving Centers: Emergency Services

Training

- CIT Training Courses
- Advanced and Refresher Training
- CIT Patrol Officer Training Course is for Experienced Law Enforcement Officers
- Training Must be Delivered at Minimal Cost to Law Enforcement Agencies
- Training Must be Locally Focused on the Participants' Criminal Justice and Crisis Response Systems

- Training Must Focus on Practical Knowledge and Skills to Respond to a Person in Crisis
- Training Must be Grounded in Adult Learning Principles
- Training must be Provided by those Prepared to Instruct Law Enforcement and other Public Safety Personnel
- Evaluations of CIT Training Courses

Coordination

- Agency Coordinator
- Program Coordinators
- CIT Steering Committee
- Prioritizing Law Enforcement Ownership
- Maintaining Partnerships and Sustaining CIT Programs
- Ensuring Advocacy Participation
- Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- CIT Program Awareness
- Recognition and Honors
- Community Expansion and Statewide Contribution

Examples of Outstanding and Exemplary Practices

E.A.R. Model - Engage, Assess, Resolve and the Loss Model

Core Element: Training

Hancock County CIT Program

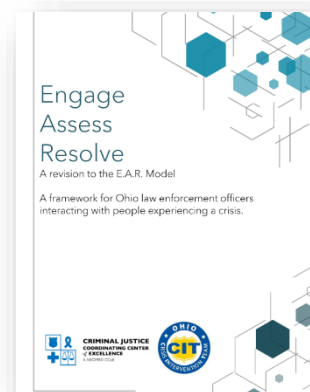
Conceived by Paul Lilley from the Hancock County CIT Program, Engage, Assess, Resolve, or the E.A.R. Model, is a framework for use by law enforcement when responding to people experiencing a crisis. The framework provides guidance for each objective an officer is attempting to accomplish:

- Safety of everyone involved
- Early recognition of a crisis
- Effective communication
- Assessing the state of a person in crisis
- Resolving the situation using the best option available

The accompanying Loss Model provides guidance within the E.A.R. Model to recognize signs and symptoms of a person experiencing a crisis. Instead of attempting to diagnose, an officer can observe a person's behavior along with other indicators to determine the type of crisis the person is experiencing and adjust their response accordingly. Crises are categorized into four types, a loss of hope, reality, control, or perspective.

In 2023, these concepts were updated and published in *Engage, Assess, Resolve – A revision to the E.A.R. Model* by the CJ CCoE. This updated version to assist law enforcement officers interacting with people experiencing a crisis can be found on the CJ CCoE website.

This exemplary practice serves as an example of innovation in crisis response strategies tailored specifically for law enforcement. It promotes expanding law enforcement's understanding of crisis response and provides a practical approach for officers when interacting with people in crisis. It also reinforces that officers should utilize their observations and information from interactions with a person in



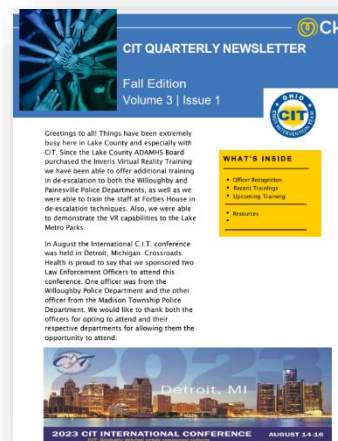
crisis to guide their response, as opposed to trying to discern a diagnosis for the individual.

CIT Quarterly Newsletter

Core Element: Coordination

Lake County CIT Program

The quarterly newsletter produced by the Lake County CIT Program serves as a consistent and valuable channel to communicate with their CIT officers, community partners and stakeholders, keeping them informed and engaged. Its regular publication ensures that everyone stays abreast of program updates, training information, and community resources. By providing articles recognizing CIT members and success stories, the newsletter not only disseminates beneficial program information but celebrates their members and highlights the challenging work they do.



This exemplary practice serves as an example of strengthening connections and continuous learning. It promotes the importance of communication and commitment to a strategy that not only informs but also inspires, creating a stronger, more connected CIT program.

CIT Trained Officers as CIT Trainers

Core Element: Training & Coordination

Montgomery County CIT Program

Using CIT officers as trainers in the CIT Patrol Officer Training Course has proven immensely beneficial for the program. These officers volunteer to lead various training topics, including Family Perspective, Interacting with Persons in Crisis, Personal Wellness, and Crisis Scenario and Practicum. Teaming up with mental health professionals, they offer practical insights and real-world examples, drawing from both their experiences as law enforcement officers and as parents of children with mental health challenges. This provides a unique perspective, bridging the gap between law enforcement duties and personal experiences with mental health issues.

Using body-worn camera footage to illustrate crisis scenarios, officers allow trainees to witness real-life situations and observe how CIT officers effectively recognize signs of crisis and interact with people in crisis, providing practical examples on how to route them to the most appropriate care. By analyzing these scenarios, trainees can better understand the nuances of crisis response and learn how to navigate situations with empathy and professionalism, enhancing the realism and effectiveness of the training.

Furthermore, officers openly discuss their experience with trauma, emphasize the significance of mental well-being and self-care within law enforcement, and encourage officers to seek support when needed, fostering a culture of understanding and support.

Individuals with Lived Experience as CIT Trainers

Core Element: Training & Coordination

Logan & Champaign Counties CIT Program

Using individuals with lived experience as trainers has provided invaluable insights and benefits for trainees in Logan & Champaign Counties, thanks to the local NAMI chapter's integral role in CIT trainings over many years. Their consistent presence throughout trainings offers a diverse perspective, including people with lived experience, parents of children (youth and adult) with a history of serious mental illness and substance use, mental health challenges, and significant trauma.

They educate participants about NAMI and its resources, empowering CIT officers to share this information during their service calls. Moreover, they share their personal stories of interactions with law enforcement, showing the importance of strategic crisis response by law enforcement while also reducing stigma among trainees.

Their informal conversational presentations aim to foster an environment conducive to open dialogue and questions, facilitating a more engaging and interactive training experience. By sharing their firsthand accounts, they humanize mental health challenges, increasing trainee buy-in and motivation to implement learned strategies effectively. Moreover, their active involvement in reducing stigma surrounding mental illness promotes greater understanding and support within the law enforcement community.

CIT Program Awareness

Core Element: Coordination

Clermont County CIT Program

Trust is paramount in building strong relationships between the community and crisis response system members. In CIT programs, community awareness plays a vital role in improving outcomes. When people know how to identify and access CIT officers and other local behavioral health services, CIT is more impactful and effective. In Clermont County, they utilize a range of awareness strategies, including billboards, handouts, emails, social media, their website, and newsletters, to educate community members.



By promoting CIT and informing the community about their crisis response system and available services, they not only foster trust but also strengthen collaboration between law enforcement and the community. These strategies improve the chances that people in crisis receive the assistance they desperately need promptly and effectively.



Collaborative CIT Steering Committees

Core Element: Law Enforcement, Mental Health Boards & Service Providers, Training, and Coordination

Union County CIT Program

Diversity in CIT steering committees is vital for creating inclusive and responsive initiatives that address the diverse needs and interests of a program and their community. By bringing together individuals from various backgrounds, professions, and lived experiences, committees ensure that a wide range of

perspectives are considered and represented. The Union County CIT Program has representatives from every law enforcement agency in their county, their mental health and recovery board, service providers, their hospital's emergency department, and people with lived experience. With representation from law enforcement, behavioral health, and advocacy, the CIT program has positioned themselves to effectively address the complex needs of individuals in crisis within their community. This collaborative approach not only ensures that CIT initiatives are comprehensive and well-informed but also fosters trust and engagement among stakeholders. By embracing diversity in their steering committee, they exemplify a commitment to inclusivity and responsiveness, ultimately leading to more effective CIT program and support service for all members of their community.

RESOURCES

The Core Elements of Ohio Crisis Intervention Team Programs can be found at:

<https://www.neomed.edu/cjccoe/cit/getting-started/>

Ohio CIT Program Peer Reviews, The Ohio CIT Peer Review Guide, and Standards Rubric can be found at:

<https://www.neomed.edu/cjccoe/cit/peer-review/>

This document was completed by the Ohio CIT Coordinator & Law Enforcement Liaison for the Ohio Criminal Justice Coordinating Center of Excellence in collaboration with Ohio CIT programs, peer reviewers, and the CJ CCoE. For more information or to make inquiries please contact:

cjccoe@neomed.edu
330.325.6861