

Ohio Crisis Intervention Team Program Peer Review

Portage County
CIT Program



© Northeast Ohio Medical University, 2024



**CRIMINAL JUSTICE
COORDINATING CENTER**
of EXCELLENCE
A NEOMED CCoE



NAMI
National Alliance on Mental Illness

Ohio

The State's Voice on Mental Illness

Contents

Participants	4
Introduction.....	5
Executive Summary.....	6
Peer Review Process	8
Ohio Core Elements	9
Portage County CIT Program Background	10
Crisis Response System	11
CIT Program Review – Law Enforcement	13
1. Policies and Procedures	13
2. Patrol Coverage.....	14
3. Officer Selection.....	14
4. CIT Officer Identification	15
5. Law Enforcement Coordinator	15
6. Information Sharing and Data Collection	16
7. Receiving Centers: Emergency Services.....	16
CIT Program Review – Mental Health	17
8. Policies and Procedures	17
9. Service Linkage and Outreach	17
10. Mental Health Coordinator	18
11. Program Monitoring and Data Collection	18
12. Receiving Centers: Emergency Services.....	19
CIT Program Review – Training	19
13. CIT Training Courses	19
14. Advanced Training and Refresher Training.....	20
15. The CIT Patrol Officer Training Course is for Experienced Law Enforcement Officers.....	20
16. Training Must be Delivered at Minimal Cost to Law Enforcement Agencies	21
17. Training Must be Locally Focused on the Participants' Criminal Justice and Crisis Response System.....	21
18. Training Must Focus on Practical Knowledge and Skills to Respond to a Person in Crisis..	22
19. Training Must be Grounded in Adult Learning Principles	22

20. Training Must be Provided by those Prepared to Instruct Law Enforcement and Other Public Safety Personnel.....	23
21. Evaluations of CIT Training Courses.....	23
CIT Program Review – Coordination.....	24
22. Agency Coordinator.....	24
23. Program Coordinators	25
24. CIT Steering Committee.....	25
25. Prioritizing Law Enforcement Ownership	26
26. Maintaining Partnerships and Sustaining CIT Programs.....	27
27. Ensuring Advocacy Participation	27
28. Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.....	28
29. CIT Program Awareness.....	28
30. Recognition and Honors.....	29
31. Community Expansion and Statewide Contribution.....	29
Next Steps Worksheet	31

Participants

Christopher Bowling, MS. Ed.

Public Safety/CIT Consultant
Commander (ret.) Columbus Division of Police
Former and founding agency CIT Coordinator and
CIT Program Coordinator – LE, Franklin County
Peer Review Facilitator

Jessica Hartman, MPH, CHES

Executive Director, NAMI Wood County
Wood County CIT Coordinator – ADV
Peer Reviewer

Robert Kasprzak

Manager of Community Engagement
Mental Health & Recovery Services Board of
Lucas County
Former CIT Program Coordinator – MH
Peer Reviewer

Joe Parkin, BS, MS

First Responder Liaison
Crossroads Health, Mentor, OH, Lake County
CIT Program Coordinator – MH/LE
Peer Reviewer

Josh Bartholomew

Police Officer
Streetsboro Police Department
CIT Program Coordinator – LE

John Garrity, Ph.D.

Executive Director
Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County
CIT Program Coordinator – MH

Gina Greenhalgh

Data Analyst and Project Coordinator
Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County
CIT Program Coordinator – MH

Karyn Kravetz

Associate Director
Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County
CIT Program Coordinator – MH

Introduction

A Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) is an agency or organization that provides a specific service (law enforcement, service provider, etc.) that formally and through written policy has integrated concepts of the CIT Model and the Ohio CIT Core Elements into their organizational structure. A CIT program is comprised of agency CITs. These CITs are organized to sustain a continuous community partnership between agencies representing law enforcement (LE), mental health (MH), behavioral health providers, local mental health and other service boards, the criminal justice system, advocacy (ADV) organizations, families, and those who use behavioral healthcare services. This partnership is designed to facilitate better outcomes when first responders are called to interact with a person in crisis. That person is often in crisis due to unmet mental health needs. However, the person may also be in crisis due to unmet behavioral health needs such as substance use disorders and other life stressors, or a combination of issues and needs.

Communities that establish CIT programs do so based on the following goals:

- ✓ 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.

CIT programs that volunteer to participate in the Ohio CIT Program Peer Review demonstrate a commitment to achieving these goals. The Peer Review focuses on a program's efforts to develop their CIT program based on the Ohio CIT Core Elements. This interdisciplinary and collaborative learning process is coordinated by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Center of Excellence (CJ CCoE) with the support of NAMI Ohio. Through this review, we hope to strengthen community partnerships and deepen our understanding of CIT, which will ultimately positively impact the lives of people in our community experiencing mental health crises.

Executive Summary

The Portage County CIT Program participated in an Ohio CIT Program Peer Review from March to June 2024. Participants included Portage County CIT Program members and peer reviewers who are or were CIT program coordinators from other Ohio CIT programs.

The review is designed to help the Portage County CIT Program determine their current level of development in each core element and provide guidance for the next steps in their growth. While the main objective is to help the program achieve the goals of Ohio CIT programs, the review's ultimate purpose is to positively impact the lives of people experiencing mental health crises in their communities.

The Peer Reviewers used a standards rubric based on criteria from each core element in the *Core Elements of Ohio Crisis Intervention Team Programs*. The standards rubric can be found in the *Ohio Crisis Intervention Team Program Peer Review Guide*. The standards are:

Not Practicing

A CIT program, their CITs, and *relevant agencies* within the program area are not achieving the core element based on the criteria and there is no supporting evidence, or it is unknown.

Emerging Practice

A CIT program or *one or more relevant agencies* within the program area are beginning to achieve the core element based on the criteria. "One or more" means one to fifty percent.

Practicing

A CIT program or *most of the relevant agencies* within the program area are achieving the core element based on the criteria. "Most" means more than fifty percent.

Exemplary Practice

A CIT program, its CITs, and *all the relevant agencies* within the program area are achieving the core element based on the criteria. "All" means one hundred percent.

The Core Elements of Ohio CIT Programs and this assessment are organized into four categories:

- Law Enforcement
- Training
- Mental Health
- Coordination

On the next page is a summary describing where the Peer Reviewers believe the Portage County CIT Program is in their development of the CIT Model and the Ohio CIT Core Elements. Readers are encouraged to explore this document further to see explanations for the reviewers' assessments and suggestions for the next steps for each core element.

Standards Rubric Key

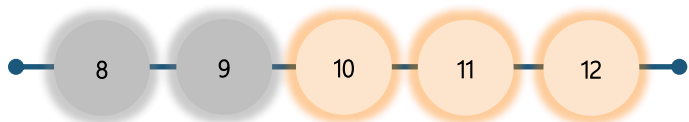


This visual representation shows the Portage County CIT Program's practices in comparison to each of the 31 core elements for Ohio CIT programs using the standards rubric found in the *Ohio Crisis Intervention Team Program Peer Review Guide*.

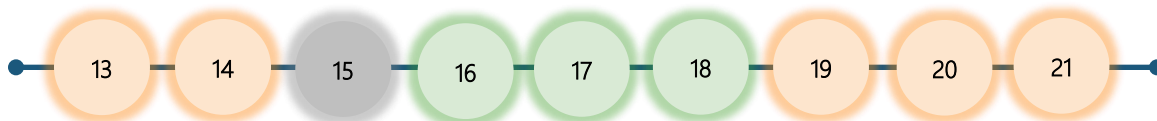
Law Enforcement



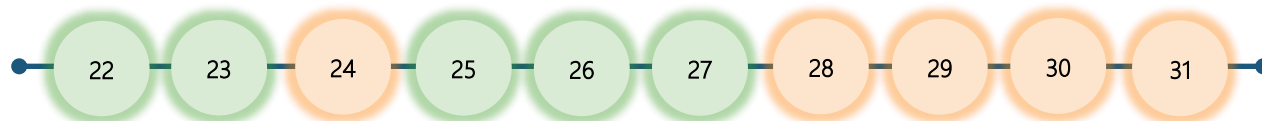
Mental Health



Training



Coordination



The Portage County CIT Program is commended for participating in this peer review to further their understanding of the CIT Model and the Ohio CIT Core Elements. We hope this process allows community partners to come together to discuss the future of their CIT Program and crisis response system, further build partnerships in their community, and foster greater community ownership.

Documents and materials referenced in this document can be found on the CJ CCoE website at: <https://www.neomed.edu/cjccoe/cit/>

Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Programs: A Best Practice Guide for Transforming Community Responses to Mental Health Crisis can be found on the CIT International website at: <https://www.citinternational.org/>

Peer Review Process

The review was undertaken to assess the program's level of development of the Ohio CIT Core Elements. It consisted of four phases and took around three months to complete.

Phase 1

Organized Program members
Attended a video conference
Peer Review Questionnaire
Provided supporting evidence

From March through May 2024, the CIT Program organized its members for their participation, learned about the process, completed the Peer Review Questionnaire, and provided documentation.

On June 11, 2024, a video conference was conducted to clarify information and provide reviewers with further background about the CIT Program.

Phase 2

Attended a video conference
Provided clarifying information

Phase 3

Reviewers assessed the Program
Created draft report

From April through June 2024, reviewers assessed the CIT Program against the Ohio CIT Core Elements and created a draft report.

In June 2024, the draft report was completed, and the reviewers met for an on-site meeting with CIT Program members on June 25, 2024.

Phase 4

On-site meeting took place
Report was finalized

After the on-site meeting, the report was updated to reflect current information, provide further clarification, or resolve discrepancies. Once finalized, the report was released to the CIT Program and published on the CJ CCoE website in the Ohio CIT Program Peer Review section.

Ohio Core Elements

The Peer Review is derived from the CIT Model and the Ohio CIT Core Elements. In the *Core Elements of Ohio Crisis Intervention Teams Programs*, 31 core elements are identified for CIT programs to implement and develop. They are organized into four categories: Law Enforcement, Mental Health Boards and Service Providers, Training, and Coordination. These core elements guide programs in achieving the goals of Ohio CIT programs.

Law Enforcement

1. Policies and Procedures
2. Patrol Coverage
3. Officer Selection
4. CIT Officer Identification
5. Law Enforcement Coordinator
6. Information Sharing and Data Collection
7. Receiving Centers: Emergency Services

Mental Health

8. Policies and Procedures
9. Service Linkage and Outreach
10. Mental Health Coordinator
11. Program Monitoring and Data Collection
12. Receiving Centers: Emergency Services

Training

13. Agency Coordinator
14. Program Coordinators
15. CIT Steering Committee
16. Prioritizing Law Enforcement Ownership
17. Maintaining Partnerships and Sustaining CIT Programs
18. Ensuring Advocacy Participation
19. Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
20. CIT Program Awareness
21. Recognition and Honors
22. Community Expansion and Statewide Contribution

Coordination

23. CIT Training Courses
24. Advanced and Refresher Training
25. CIT Patrol Officer Training Course is for Experienced Law Enforcement Officers
26. Training Must be Delivered at Minimal Cost to Law Enforcement Agencies
27. Training Must be Locally Focused on the Participants' Criminal Justice and Crisis Response Systems
28. Training Must Focus on Practical Knowledge and Skills to Respond to a Person in Crisis
29. Training Must be Grounded in Adult Learning Principles
30. Training must be Provided by those Prepared to Instruct Law Enforcement and other Public Safety Personnel
31. Evaluations of CIT Training Courses

Portage County CIT Program Background

In April 2006, the Portage County CIT Program began training law enforcement in the CIT Patrol Officer Training Course. Since then, their training courses have graduated over 390 team members. They have trained law enforcement officers in all agencies within the county. They have delivered the following types of training:

- CIT Patrol Officer Training Course
- Refresher CIT Training

Their current CIT steering committee is comprised of 18 community partners representing:

- Advocacy
- Individuals with lived experience
- Behavioral Health
- Law Enforcement
- Elected municipal leaders
- Members of the judiciary

The Portage County CIT Program is currently coordinated through the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County. The CIT program coordinators are:

- John Garrity, Ph.D., Executive Director, Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County
- Karyn Kravtitz, Associate Director, Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County
- Gina Greenhalgh, Data Analyst and Projects Coordinator, Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County
- Officer Josh Bartholomew, Streetsboro Police Department

The Portage County CIT Program is involved with several CIT-related initiatives. They include:

- Regularly scheduled CIT steering committee meetings
- Law enforcement information sharing and data collection
- Ongoing training for officers
- Recognition and honors for program members

Portage County is involved with other behavioral health initiatives. They include:

- Quick Response Team (QRT)
- Stepping Up
- Responder Resilience Program
- Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS)
- Handle with Care
- Ohio Resilience through Integrated Systems (RISE)
- Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team for first responders

Crisis Response System

Portage County offers a continuum of crisis services in their community to alleviate immediate psychological distress and engage people in treatment. These services include, but are not limited to:

Someone to talk to

Crisis phone lines (24/7)

- 988 (operated by Townhall II)
- Helpline (330) 678-HELP (operated by Townhall II)
- Coleman Access (330) 296-3555
- Kent State University Hotline (330) 672-2487 (IMPACT)

Emergency communications centers (7)

- Aurora Police Department
- Kent State University Police Department
- Kent Police Department
- Mantua Police Department
- Streetsboro Police Department
- Ravenna Police Department
- Portage County Sheriff's Office

Someone to respond

Law enforcement agencies (15) – All agencies participate in CIT:

Aurora Police Department	Northeast Ohio Medical University P.D.
Brimfield (Twp.) Police Department	Portage County Sheriff's Office
Garrettsville Police Department	Portage Park District
Hiram Police Department	Ravenna Police Department
Kent Police Department	Streetsboro Police Department
Kent State University Police Department	University Hospital - Portage Medical Center
Mantua Police Department	Police Department
Mogadore Police Department	Windham Police Department

Somewhere to go

Receiving centers (2)

- Coleman Access (by Coleman Health Services)(Currently not 24/7)
- University Hospitals-Portage Medical Center

Portage County also provides an array of ancillary services and programs to support people living with mental illness and their families. These services and programs include:

Behavioral Health

Case management
Inpatient care services
Peer support centers and programs
Veterans programs
Food programs
Unhoused persons programs and shelter
Youth programs
Income support programs

Criminal Justice

Court specialty dockets
Jail reentry programs
Probation programs
Veterans programs
Outpatient treatment programs

CIT Program Review – Law Enforcement

1. Policies and Procedures

Not Practicing

- No law enforcement agencies have CIT-specific policies and procedures



No proof was presented that any LE agency or emergency communications center (ECC) has adopted CIT-specific policies and procedures. From the documents presented, some agencies have crisis response policies.

Next Steps:

Participating LE agencies should adopt CIT-specific policies. Policies, procedures, and regulations will assist officers and public safety telecommunicators (PSTs) in their day-to-day operations, inform them of the expectations of their agencies, provide guidance with decision-making, and establish sustainability within the agencies. LE agencies are reminded that policies created by a vendor can and should be tailored to the agencies' needs and practices, especially those policies related to crisis response and operating a CIT. CIT-specific policies include topics such as:

- A statement that the agency is committed to sustaining a CIT and ongoing collaboration with stakeholders
- CIT role-based training for select patrol officers and all PSTs
- CIT officers will be dispatched to calls involving persons experiencing a crisis when available and appropriate
- The identification of a CIT coordinator to manage the operations of the CIT and act as the liaison with community partners, including those in the applicable CIT program
- The assignment of identifiable CIT officers within the agency so that they are available to be the primary responders to people experiencing a crisis at any time
- Use of a Crisis Intervention Contact Sheet or similar document/process to document interactions with persons in crisis
- Requirements that the agency continually evaluate the CIT and make changes in response to collected data to improve outcomes and mitigate safety risks to agency personnel and the public

The *Crisis Intervention Law Enforcement Policy Guide (CIT Focused)* can assist with policy development. It can be found on the CJ CCoE website.

2. Patrol Coverage

Not Practicing

- No law enforcement agencies have a published policy equitably distributing CIT officers



No proof was presented that any LE agencies study their service call data to distribute their CIT officers. LE agencies have not designated specific officers as primary responders to people experiencing a crisis. None of the provided policies reference practices specific to this core element.

Next Steps:

LE agencies that actively participate in training should adopt policies that address how their agencies equitably distribute select CIT officers. If an agency has a “train all officers” philosophy, it should designate specific officers to serve as specialists and place language about the “train all” philosophy into policy. Designating all patrol officers as primary responders to persons in crisis is counterproductive to using specialists and is not encouraged.

3. Officer Selection

Not Practicing

- No law enforcement agencies have a review, selection, and recommendation process to identify potential CIT officers as specialists



No information was provided to show that any LE agency has a review, selection, and recommendation process to identify CIT officers as specialists. No provided policies reference any practices specific to this core element.

Next Steps:

LE agencies that actively participate in training should adopt policies that address how their agencies identify when an officer is ready to attend CIT training. If an agency has a “train all officers” philosophy, it should designate specific officers to serve as specialists. Designating all patrol officers as primary responders to persons in crisis because they attended CIT training is counterproductive to using specialists and does not promote repetition and proficiency.

4. CIT Officer Identification

Not Practicing

- No law enforcement agencies require CIT officers in a specialized team to wear an obvious CIT pin or emblem



The LE agency policies that were provided did not mention that CIT officers in a specialized team are required to wear an obvious CIT pin or emblem. Nor was other proof offered during meetings when this topic was discussed. . CIT pins created specifically by Portage County are provided to officers after graduating from the CIT Patrol Officer Training Course.

Next Steps:

LE agencies that actively participate in training are encouraged to adopt policies that address CIT officers wearing a visible CIT pin or emblem. When combined with a marketing strategy informing the public of the pin or emblem's meaning, community members can easily recognize that a responding officer has specific skills and training for responding to people in crisis.

5. Law Enforcement Coordinator

Practicing

- Most law enforcement agencies have a designated person within the agency to coordinate its CIT and liaise with other agencies and partners



The Portage County CIT Program provided a document that identified all LE agencies in their county along with the name of the CEO of each agency and a coordinator/agency contact person's name and contact information. This list appears to identify a person within each LE agency assigned to coordinate the agency's CIT and liaise with other agencies.

Next Steps:

LE agencies should elevate their involvement in CIT by developing policies that formalize the roles and responsibilities of their members. Formally designating a CIT coordinator by name and/or rank or position within a LE agency is an essential step in developing a CIT's organizational structure. Coordinators help align the agency's efforts to achieve the goals for Ohio CIT programs and ensure that each member understands how their efforts contribute to the larger mission. CIT coordinators can assist with policy development and implementation, communication with community stakeholders, and goal alignment.

6. Information Sharing and Data Collection

Practicing

- Most law enforcement agencies share information with program partners about contact with a person in crisis to engage available behavioral health services, and
- Most law enforcement agencies are extracting data from contacts to monitor and assess its CITs and interactions with persons in crisis



The Portage County CIT Program has chosen to work with the CIT Northwest Ohio Program and use their data site to report interactions with persons in crisis. Using a tiered access model, that data site allows law enforcement agencies and other CIT partners to share information and monitor interactions with persons in crisis.

Next Steps:

The LE agencies not identified as sharing data are encouraged to join current data-sharing initiatives and begin sharing information about contacts with persons in crisis with program partners. Including all CIT-focused agencies will allow service providers to engage persons in crisis in available behavioral health services, assess a CIT's interactions with persons in crisis, and evaluate the Portage County CIT Program's overall crisis response.

7. Receiving Centers: Emergency Services

Practicing

- Documentation or data shows most law enforcement agencies' use of receiving centers and community resources



As previously mentioned, the Portage County CIT Program enters data into the data site created by the CIT Northwest Ohio Program. According to program coordinators, this data is used to identify dispositions for service calls involving persons in crisis.

Next Steps:

LE agencies are encouraged to analyze information about officers' use of the emergency hospitalization process (AKA "pink slipping"). By reviewing information about when officers are taking persons in crisis into custody per ORC §5122.10, the LE agency and the CIT Program can better determine if transports to receiving centers were necessary or if improvement strategies are needed to redirect those who do not need to be immediately transported to other resources. This information should be distributed to the appropriate community partners in a format that describes outcomes and is easily understood.

CIT Program Review – Mental Health

8. Policies and Procedures

Not Practicing

- No service providers have published CIT-specific policies and procedures



No documentation was provided to show that the Mental Health & Recovery Board, service providers, or other behavioral health partners have CIT-specific policies and procedures.

Next Steps:

The Mental Health & Recovery Board, service providers, and other behavioral health partners are encouraged to develop policies specific to a CIT and how they participate in the CIT Program. Their policies should focus on their involvement in CIT, interactions with LE personnel, and monitoring related activity. The Mental Health & Recovery Board is encouraged to develop a formal agreement between Program partners to outline the terms and details of the Portage County CIT Program. A Memorandum of Understanding or Agreement (MOU/MOA) should be designed for Program partners to express a genuine commitment to their collaboration and set the groundwork for agency policies and procedures. This collaboration may require multiple MOU/MOA documents. Receiving centers should develop policies and procedures specific to LE transfers of persons in crisis to them for care. For those agencies providing service linkage and outreach from LE agencies, their processes should be formalized in writing and provided to the CIT Program. The CIT Patrol Officer Training Course should cover all mental health policies and procedures.

9. Service Linkage and Outreach

Not Practicing

- No relevant service providers have policies and procedures to prioritize service linkage and follow-up to persons in crisis that have had contact with law enforcement



No documentation was provided to show that service providers have policies specific to service linkage and outreach to persons in crisis who have had contact with law enforcement.

Next Steps:

Service providers that provide linkage and outreach to persons in crisis are encouraged to develop policies and procedures that prioritize linkage and follow-up to persons who have had contact with law enforcement, specifically where potential continued criminal behavior is involved.

10. Mental Health Coordinator

Emerging Practice

- One or more service providers have a designated person within their agency to coordinate and liaise with other agencies and partners



The Portage County CIT Program responses on the Peer Review Questionnaire indicate that four of the service providers that are CIT partners have a designated person within those respective agencies to coordinate and liaise with other agencies and partners.

Next Steps:

MH service providers that do not have a designated person or coordinator should identify that position. All service providers can elevate their involvement in CIT by developing policies that formalize the roles and responsibilities of their members. Formally designating a CIT coordinator within a MH agency is an important step in developing a CIT's organizational structure. Coordinators help align the agency's efforts to achieve the goals for Ohio CIT programs and ensure that each member understands how their contributions support the larger mission. The coordinator's responsibilities include policy and procedure development, data collection, program implementation and monitoring, and receiving center coordination with LE agencies. They should sustain contact with other CIT stakeholders to help coordinate LE's role within the crisis response system, contribute to accurate program evaluation, and assist with training.

11. Program Monitoring and Data Collection

Emerging Practice

- One or more service providers collect and analyze data relevant to their interactions with a person in crisis, either transferred or referred to them by a law enforcement agency



The Portage County CIT Program responses on the Peer Review Questionnaire indicate that two service providers collected and analyzed data. Documentation was provided that identified one service provider's attempts and successes at outreach after LE referrals.

Next Steps:

The steering committee is urged to begin developing strategies that encourage more service providers to begin collecting data relevant to interactions with a person in crisis, either transferred or referred by a LE agency. Collected and analyzed data can help identify trends and patterns, improve accountability and transparency, and provide a clearer understanding of LE's interactions with persons in crisis.

12. Receiving Centers: Emergency Services

Emerging Practice

- Individually or collectively, a receiving center(s) is operating most of the time
- No receiving center(s) have published procedures to receive people in crisis from law enforcement officers and then safely, efficiently, and quickly transition those in crisis to care and assessment



One receiving center is open 24/7, and another is open daily from 7 AM to 11 PM. These centers receive persons in crisis for evaluation from LE officers or other first responders. No information was provided that either has published procedures to receive persons in crisis from LE officers and then safely, efficiently, and quickly transition those persons in crisis to care and assessment.

Next Steps:

The steering committee is urged to develop strategies that encourage receiving centers to participate more fully in the Portage County CIT Program and develop procedures relevant to receiving persons in crisis from a LE agency.

CIT Program Review – Training

13. CIT Training Courses

Emerging Practice

- Regularly provides the CIT Patrol Officer Training Course



The Portage County CIT Program regularly provides the CIT Patrol Officer Training Course. It is provided at least twice yearly. It is usually 40 hours in length and is delivered on successive days. Since the initial training in 2006, approximately 391 sworn officers in Portage County have been trained, and all agencies have participated. The CIT Program provided a CIT Patrol Officer Training Course session that spanned five successive Mondays to attract officers from smaller agencies. The CIT Program is contemplating an annual repeat of such a course session.

Next Steps:

The CIT Program is encouraged to broaden the CIT Patrol Officer Training Course based on their training needs and develop and deliver a role-based CIT PST Training Course. The CIT Program is also encouraged to develop a multi-year training plan to provide comprehensive CIT role-based training. This plan should be reviewed annually.

14. Advanced Training and Refresher Training

Emerging Practice

- Has provided refresher training but not regularly



The Portage County CIT Program provided a two-day, 16-hour refresher training session in May 2023. This training included topics such as de-escalation, emergency hospitalization, CISM, Autism, IDD, and lived experience panels. There is no record of previous or subsequent refresher training sessions, and advanced training sessions have not been provided.

Next Steps:

The CIT Program is encouraged to design a multi-year training plan incorporating advanced and refresher training. The plan should increase the complexity of the training over a select number of years. Training sessions should be based on a needs assessment from collected data, input from past participants, feedback from participating agencies, and other relevant community factors and feedback.

15. The CIT Patrol Officer Training Course is for Experienced Law Enforcement Officers

Not Practicing

- The CIT Program does not have a selection process to determine eligibility for officers to attend the CIT Patrol Officer Training Course



Participating LE agencies and the Portage County CIT Program do not use a selection process to determine the readiness of officers to attend the CIT Patrol Officer Training Course. No documentation or commentary was provided to the contrary.

Next Steps:

The CIT Program and participating LE agencies should adopt policies that address when officers will attend the CIT Patrol Officer Training Course. Selected officers should be experienced volunteers primarily assigned to the patrol function. LE agencies adopting a “train all” philosophy should create and implement readiness standards to determine when it is best to send their officers to the CIT Patrol Officer Training Course. When policies identifying readiness are adopted, the learning experience is enhanced, active engagement increases, and the impact of the training on participants' skill development and application in real-world contexts is maximized.

16. Training Must be Delivered at Minimal Cost to Law Enforcement Agencies

Practicing

- No training fees are charged to attend CIT training courses



No training fees are charged to attend CIT training courses offered by the Portage County CIT Program. Funding for these courses does not come from instructional fees.

Next Steps:

The CIT Program should explore whether funding concerns hinder some LE agencies from further participating in CIT role-based training courses and other program functions. If attending costs are found to prevent participation, the CIT Program should explore available funding sources to reimburse LE agencies for sending staff to CIT role-based training and related activities.

17. Training Must be Locally Focused on the Participants' Criminal Justice and Crisis Response System

Practicing

- Team members attend CIT training courses related to their criminal justice and crisis response systems, and
- Locally sourced instructors instruct team members



The Portage County CIT Program instructs those attending role-based training courses on their criminal justice and crisis response systems. Most instructors are locally sourced and experienced in the local conventions and methods within the area served by the CIT Program. One trainer from the Akron Police Department is brought in for a lengthy period on the morning of the first day of the CIT Patrol Officer Training Course for a session titled "Crisis Intervention Team."

Next Steps:

CIT Programs should strive to locate and install trainers from the area served by the program. The Portage County CIT Program should continue to seek and install trainers who operate within the area served by the CIT Program. In addition, all participating agencies should develop policies and procedures specific to CIT, implement them, and incorporate them into their role-based training courses. The CIT Program is encouraged to add depth to their roster of instructors to prevent burnout, account for potential turnover, and provide more training. The CIT Program's steering committee should develop strategies to build and sustain instructor development and involvement.

18. Training Must Focus on Practical Knowledge and Skills to Respond to a Person in Crisis

Practicing

- Most training courses include role-specific instruction on interacting with persons in crisis, and
- Most training courses include role-specific crisis scenarios and practicum ("role plays")



The Portage County CIT Program's CIT Patrol Officer Training Course provides instruction on interacting with a person in crisis, and officers are provided three to three-and-one-half hours to practice what was taught in scheduled role-plays. Instruction on assessing a person's mental state, emergency hospitalization, relevant legal issues, and identifying crisis response system resources and how to navigate them is also provided.

Next Steps:

The CIT Program should evaluate if the amount of time for role-plays provided to officers and others who attend the CIT Patrol Officer Training Course is sufficient. The schedules provided showed a four-hour block at the end of the last training day that mentions a working lunch, scenarios, and graduation. That time may be insufficient, depending on the number of officers attending, although current numbers appear to allow completion. The schedule also shows a two-and-one-half hour block for de-escalation skills and "pink slips." Within the presentation materials, court decisions are also shown by title on one slide. The CIT Program should evaluate if this amount of time is sufficient to cover skills and the progressively complex legal issues arising from court decisions and opinions about persons with "diminished capacity."

19. Training Must be Grounded in Adult Learning Principles

Emerging Practice

- One or more role-specific training courses have their topics sequenced in a carefully considered manner, or
- One or more role-specific training courses have goals and learning/performance objectives



A review of the three schedules for the CIT Patrol Officer Training Course provided by the Portage County CIT Program indicates that training topic sequencing was considered and implemented. Topics appeared to be delivered in a sequential manner that is conducive to learning. However, no overall training goals were provided, and no objectives were provided or included in topic presentation materials other than cursory objectives in one presentation.

Next Steps:

The CIT Program's steering committee should continue to evaluate the sequencing of topics within their training courses to ensure they are appropriately sequenced to be most impactful.

Goals should be developed and articulated for each role-based course, and performance objectives should be created and articulated for each course topic to guide instructors in creating and delivering the various course topics and assist evaluators in determining if training goals and objectives are met.

20. Training Must be Provided by those Prepared to Instruct Law Enforcement and Other Public Safety Personnel

Emerging Practice

- Instructors' materials and content are reviewed, or
- Pre-class meetings take place with instructors to ensure they are effective at content instruction



The Portage County CIT Program responses on the Peer Review Questionnaire indicated that instructors' materials and content are reviewed before training. No other information was provided as evidence specific to this core element.

Next Steps:

The CIT Program is encouraged to develop a training subcommittee. This subcommittee can review instructors' materials and their ability to deliver them to a role-specific audience. The subcommittee can also work with instructors to enhance other areas of their training and abilities, including understanding the roles and culture of those attending the training course. The CIT Program should put their practices in writing related to how they coordinate, prepare, and support their instructors. Formalizing these practices will help future program coordinators learn how the training program operates and assist with sustaining and advancing current training practices.

21. Evaluations of CIT Training Courses

Emerging Practice

- Training course evaluations are conducted (level 1), or
- Training course topic evaluations are conducted (level 1)



The Portage County CIT Program uses surveys to obtain Kirkpatrick Level One (Reaction) feedback from training participants. Evidence was provided for three CIT Patrol Officer Training Course sessions and a refresher training session for patrol officers and others delivered in 2023. No blank evaluation forms were provided. Four evaluation summaries were submitted. All summaries identified the following possible ratings: poor, fair, good, excellent, or no response. Participants were asked about materials, audio-visual aids, interactive learning, facilities, and if course objectives were met. Each topic and its instructor(s) received a single rating using the

same ratings as those for the entire course. Open-ended feedback space was apparently included for responses about what the participant found most effective and least effective about the entire course since comments were recreated on the summaries.

Next Steps:

The CIT Program should add items to their reaction-level surveys to gather information about the instructor independently of the topic presented. The current instrument appears to ask a single question about both, which can lead to confusion about what has been evaluated. This confusion may be detrimental if training designers and managers must determine if the material or instructor needs additional review. Open-field feedback can provide information about poor instructors or material, but it must be extracted. Peer reviewers noted comments on a 2023 summary that more role-based instruction is needed. Adding quick-to-answer items may have revealed more feedback about particular topics. Attendee feedback should continue to be shared with instructors. Evaluation summaries should continue to be shared with all Program partners, agency leaders, and steering committee members.

The CIT Program should consider conducting Kirkpatrick Level Two (Learning) evaluations. These evaluations could come from using pre-tests and post-tests to determine increased knowledge. Items can be created to gauge attitude changes and see if attendees have learned to interact differently with persons in crisis in the future. Level Two evaluations can be accomplished using skills checklists during the role-play scenarios to determine if attendees are applying their training. The checklist should contain all the elements and desired behaviors for a successful interaction with a person in crisis and should be rated as either "pass" or "fail."

CIT Program Review – Coordination

22. Agency Coordinator

Practicing

- Most agencies have a designated coordinator in the program



The Portage County CIT Program provided a document identifying the names of LE contacts/coordinators. Responses on the Peer Review Questionnaire indicated that four non-LE agencies had designated coordinators.

Next Steps:

LE and MH agencies should develop policies specific to CIT and define the coordinator position. Participating agencies that have not designated a coordinator should do so to oversee and manage their CIT activities, including liaising with other agencies and partners within the CIT Program. The CIT Program steering committee should educate LE and MH leadership on the CIT Model and the Ohio CIT Core Elements and commit to their role within the CIT framework.

23. Program Coordinators

Practicing



- The program has a coordinator in at least two of the three disciplines

Four program coordinators have been identified for this peer review. One is the LE coordinator for the Portage County CIT Program. Three are identified as being MH coordinators. An advocacy coordinator is not identified.

Next Steps:

Ensuring sustained participation with program coordinators in all disciplines is critical for a CIT program. To foster active engagement, the CIT Program should strive to find and install a coordinator to represent advocacy, even if that person can only commit to part-time coordination.

24. CIT Steering Committee

Emerging Practice



- A CIT steering committee is identified, and
- Most of the disciplines have representatives

The Portage County CIT Program has created a steering committee with representation from all three disciplines. By doing so, the Program benefits from diverse perspectives that greatly enhance the quality of its outcomes. The Program also schedules meetings with an agenda to facilitate open communication and stakeholder collaboration, producing minutes of those meetings. This proactive approach ensures that all involved parties stay informed, exchange valuable insights, and collectively contribute to the ongoing success and refinement of the Program. This consistency not only enhances coordination but also fosters a sense of shared responsibility and commitment to the Program's overarching goals. The CIT Program has not established a chairperson to coordinate and facilitate meetings, activities, and other efforts.

Next Steps:

The steering committee is urged to establish and formalize their operational practices. Beyond regular meetings, the committee should establish long-term objectives and develop strategies that actively engage community partners. The committee should develop written guidelines outlining:

- A chairperson to coordinate and facilitate meetings, activities, etc.
- Their goal or purpose
- Persons and positions needed, along with the disciplines they represent
- Regularly scheduled meetings and special meetings, if needed
- A process to determine who will oversee meetings, agendas, and discussion items

While doing so, they are further urged to enhance their documentation of initiatives and activities, ensuring that meeting minutes are thorough and easily accessible. Creating well-defined agendas, establishing action plans and goals, and diligently tracking progress toward those objectives are important. Consideration should be given to forming subcommittees dedicated to training, crisis response system navigation, and program evaluation.

A well-structured CIT steering committee provides an environment of collaboration, inclusivity, leadership, and structured decision-making. This approach enhances the likelihood of developing and implementing successful CIT strategies that address community needs while empowering and supporting individuals and families affected by the issues being addressed.

25. Prioritizing Law Enforcement Ownership

Practicing

- CIT Program actively engages most participating law enforcement agencies about their CIT strategies.



The Portage County CIT Program responses on the Peer Review Questionnaire indicate that the CIT Program actively engages all participating LE agencies and has regularly scheduled meetings with LE agency coordinators. A document about one meeting in early 2024 was produced.

Next Steps:

The CIT Program is encouraged to prioritize establishing and implementing strategies to get investment and participation from LE leadership or other influential community leaders. Getting this investment can also be enhanced by recruiting a prominent person in the community who influences leaders and decision-makers. Strategies can be found in Chapter 2 of *Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Programs: A Best Practice Guide for Transforming Community Responses to Mental Health Crisis*. The CIT Program is encouraged to keep documenting these activities in meeting minutes or other records beyond the single meeting identified.

26. Maintaining Partnerships and Sustaining CIT Programs

Practicing



- Assessment and improvement strategies are used, and
- Record keeping practices are in place

The Portage County CIT Program responses on the Peer Review Questionnaire indicate that assessment and improvement strategies are used, and record-keeping practices are in place. There is no specific documentation to support this claim. Steering committee minutes show some comments that appear to assess particular program elements.

Next Steps:

The CIT Program is encouraged to allocate time to developing assessment, improvement, and sustainability strategies. These strategies could include formalizing the operational practices of the steering committee, leadership succession planning, and enhanced record-keeping practices. So that the CIT Program does not regress, successful CIT strategies, lessons learned, and knowledge gained should be managed and passed on. Regression avoidance can come from mentoring, workload distribution, robust documentation methods, and knowledge management plans.

27. Ensuring Advocacy Participation

Practicing



- People living with mental illness and their family members participate in training, and
- Advocacy leaders participate in training and program coordination

The Portage County CIT Program ensures advocacy participation. Representatives from NAMI Portage County participate in their steering committee. Advocacy leaders and persons living with mental illness and their family members also participate in training CIT members for their roles within their CITs. The peer reviewers recognize that formal advocacy organizations within the CIT Program are sparsely staffed.

Next Steps:

The CIT Program is encouraged to allocate time to ensure advocacy participation through succession planning, identify critical positions and individuals, and create a learning and development process that can be repeated and evaluated. Persons with lived experience and family members can be added to the steering committee to augment formal advocacy representatives.

28. Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Emerging Practice

- Strategies are being developed to recruit, include, and empower team members who bring different perspectives and backgrounds to the program



The Portage County CIT Program responses on the Peer Review Questionnaire indicate that strategies are being developed to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) for team members who bring different perspectives and backgrounds to the Program. There is no documentation to support that claim.

Next Steps:

CIT Programs should ensure that they accurately reflect the populations they serve. The Program should consider dedicating CIT steering committee members or establishing a subcommittee to explore ways to measure their DEI success and strategies to sustain and advance efforts within their program. CIT programs rich in DEI practices can experience a better understanding of community needs, increase trust and engagement, and develop better ways to target and allocate resources more effectively.

29. CIT Program Awareness

Emerging Practice

- Strategies are in development about how to request and identify CIT officers



No information or proof was provided that strategies are in place to request and identify CIT officers. One flyer that was provided mentioned CIT officers and their training. Some commentary about CIT on the Portage County Mental Health and Recovery Board's website discusses CIT training.

Next Steps:

The CIT Program is encouraged to develop and implement awareness strategies for community members to request and identify CIT officers, and to inform the community about CIT, its benefits, and how the community can interact with CIT members. CIT programs are more impactful when community members know how to identify and gain access to CIT officers and other services encompassing their crisis response system. Trust plays a vital role in cultivating effective relationships between the community and members of the crisis response system, and the CIT Program is encouraged to enhance and fortify this bond.

30. Recognition and Honors

Emerging Practice

- The program regularly recognizes and honors their CIT members, or
- One or more law enforcement agencies regularly recognize and honor their CIT members



The Portage County CIT Program regularly recognizes a CIT Officer(s) of the Year. In 2023, a CIT Champion of the Year and a Dispatcher (PST) of the Year were also awarded. No information or proof was provided to show that LE agency CITs recognize and honor their CIT members.

Next Steps:

LE agencies should develop practices to formally and informally recognize officers and PSTs who positively interact with persons in crisis. Consistent recognition for their challenging and honorable efforts reinforces behavior and commitment and promotes an agency's culture of care. The CIT Program is encouraged to collect and track examples of recognition and honors by their CITs. The CIT Program should publicly share these examples to improve morale, stimulate further program growth, and increase Program awareness.

31. Community Expansion and Statewide Contribution

Emerging Practice

- Non-participating agencies are engaged, or
- Members of the program attend activities at the state level



The Portage County CIT Program responses on the Peer Review Questionnaire indicate that non-participating agencies are engaged. However, no documentation was provided to support that claim. The peer reviewers know that CIT Program coordinators are active at the state level. Program Coordinators have participated in statewide CIT Coordinators meetings, the Ohio CIT Annual Conference and its educational workshops, and technical assistance sessions. The CIT Program is commended for attending state-level activities, contributing their knowledge and experiences, and helping further the collective understanding of CIT in Ohio.

Next Steps:

The CIT Program is encouraged to engage all LE agencies, find ways to prioritize and increase LE's involvement, and foster positive partnerships. The CIT Program should document efforts and strategies in their steering committee meeting minutes and program records. Coordinators and other members of the CIT Program are encouraged to participate in state-level activities and share the knowledge they have gained. With further exposure to the CIT Model and the Ohio CIT Core Elements, members will increase their understanding of CIT and provide valuable guidance to newer members while enhancing their CITs and their CIT Program.

This report was completed by the Ohio CIT Coordinator & Law Enforcement Liaison for the Ohio Criminal Justice Coordinating Center of Excellence in cooperation with the staff of the CJ CCoE, consultants, peer reviewers, and CIT program community partners. For more information or to make inquiries, please contact:

cjccoe@neomed.edu
330.325.6861



Next Steps Worksheet

Law Enforcement

- Participating LE agencies to adopt CIT-specific policies (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,15,22)
- Participating LE agencies to adopt selection/readiness standards for CIT training (3,15)
- Participating LE agencies to formally designate a person to coordinate their CITs and liaise with other agencies and partners – not just a contact person (5,22)

Mental Health

- Participating MH agencies to adopt policies specific to CIT and how they can participate in a CIT Program (8,9,10,11,12,22)
- Applicable service providers to adopt policies that prioritize linkage and follow-up to persons that have had contact with LE, specifically where potential continued criminal behavior is involved (9)
- Increase the number of participating MH agencies that designate a person to coordinate their CITs and liaise with other agencies and partners (10,22)
- Receiving centers to adopt procedures relevant to receiving people in crisis from a LE agency to ensure a safe, efficient, and quick transition to care (12)
- Increase the number of applicable service providers that collect data relevant to their interactions with a person in crisis who has been transferred or referred to them by a LE agency (11)

Training

- Enhance and broaden the current CIT Patrol Officer Training Course as determined by training analysis, evaluation, and needs (13)
- Create and deliver a role-based CIT Public Safety Telecommunicator (PST) Training Course (13)
- Develop a multi-year training plan that incorporates additional role-based training courses along with advanced and refresher training (13,14)
- CIT Program and LE agencies to adopt policies that identify readiness standards for when officers will attend the CIT Patrol Officer Training Course (15)

- Determine if monetary reasons contribute to a lack of participation by LE agencies in CIT initiatives (16)
- Develop strategies to build and sustain instructor involvement (17)
- Develop strategies to locate and install trainers from the CIT Program area (17)
- Evaluate and determine if the amount of time provided to officers for "de-escalation practice/scenarios" in the CIT Patrol Officer Training Course is sufficient (18)
- Evaluate and determine if the amount of time provided to officers for applicable legal issues in the CIT Patrol Officer Training Course is sufficient (18)
- Evaluate the sequencing and structure of topics within their training courses (19)
- Develop goals for their training courses (19)
- Develop performance objectives for each course or topic within a multi-topic course (19)
- Develop a training subcommittee (20)
- Document practices related to coordinating, preparing, and supporting instructors (e.g., pre-review of material, pre-course meetings with instructors)(20)
- Evaluation of training courses – Add questions or survey items to gather information about instructors independent of the material they instruct (21)
- Evaluation of training courses – Add additional questions or survey items about the training facilities and environment (21)
- Evaluation of training courses – Add more targeted questions or survey items to the instrument used
- Evaluation of training courses – Add pre-tests and post-tests (21)
- Evaluation of training courses – Add a skills checklist to role-plays and record in program training records as pass/fail (21)
- Continue to produce a summary report of evaluations for program partners and ensure that instructors and content creators receive feedback (21)

Coordination

- LE and MH agencies to develop CIT-specific policies and define the coordinator position instead of merely using designated contacts (22)
- CIT Program to educate LE and MH agency leadership on the CIT Model and the Ohio CIT Core Elements (22)
- Identify and recruit a CIT Program Coordinator-Advocacy (23)
- CIT steering committee to select and install a chairperson to coordinate and facilitate meetings, activities, and other efforts (24)
- CIT steering committee to enhance/increase their documentation of CIT initiatives and activities (24)
- CIT steering committee to develop written guidelines outlining their CIT Program and its management (24)
- Develop strategies to get investment and participation from LE leadership or other influential community leaders (25)
- Develop and document sustainability strategies, including leadership succession planning, enhancing record-keeping practices, and workload distribution (26)
- Ensure advocacy participation through succession planning by developing a learning and development process (27)
- Dedicate CIT steering committee members or establish a subcommittee to explore ways to measure DEI success and strategies (28)
- Develop awareness strategies for community members to request and identify CIT officers and to inform them about CIT (29)
- Explore funding opportunities to increase awareness campaigns (29)
- LE agencies or agencies in charge of Emergency Communications Centers (ECCs) to develop practices to regularly honor and recognize CIT officers and PSTs (30)
- Further engage all LE agencies and document the efforts and strategies in the steering committee meeting minutes and program records (31)