



Connie Beck, Director  
Social Services | Public Health | Behavioral Health

## news release

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Oct. 26, 2021

### Crisis Intervention Team training aims to improve participants' knowledge about mental illness

Forty law enforcement officers and mental health service providers from agencies across the county participated in a four-day Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training to learn strategies to better respond to people experiencing mental health crises.

The Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) has been collaborating with law enforcement agencies and other community organizations to hold the state-certified CIT trainings since 2007. Due to COVID-19, this is the first training of its kind to be held locally since October 2019.

CIT gives law enforcement officers and administrators tools to use in the field to identify major mental health disorders and support individuals in crisis. These tools can help de-escalate a crisis and divert those suffering from mental health challenges away from the criminal justice system and into treatment.

Law enforcement professionals, service providers and nationally recognized experts led this week's training where participants learned tips on how to recognize when a person is experiencing a mental health crisis, what specific mental health disorders look like and how they may influence an interaction between an officer and someone in crisis. Participants were also taught techniques that can keep officers and subjects safe during an encounter and took a virtual tour of local mental health programs to increase awareness of available resources.

Kelly Johnson, a senior program manager for DHHS's Behavioral Health Branch, said, "In light of everything that is going on with police reform, CIT is more crucial than ever. Locally, during the pandemic DHHS Behavioral Health has seen an increase in requests from law enforcement for co-response of behavioral health professionals to assist with mental health crisis calls. Collaboration between Behavioral Health and law enforcement is essential to meeting the needs of our community."

The Humboldt County Chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), Arcata and Eureka Police departments, the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office, the Public Defender's Office, the District Attorney's Office, Humboldt State University and DHHS collaborated to offer this year's CIT training.

Following this training, more than 500 people have completed the course locally, including representatives from law enforcement agencies, law offices, parks systems, ambulance services, DHHS, tribes and medical facilities.



DHHS Behavioral Health Senior Program Manager Kelly Johnson, Arcata Police Sgt. Heidi Groszmann, Eureka Police Sgt. Leonard LaFrance, Yurok Tribal Police Chief Greg O'Rourke, Humboldt County Probation Officer Kallianne Turner and Humboldt County NAMI Chapter President Lea Nagy.

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