



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

## news release

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### Crisis Intervention Team training provides increased knowledge of mental illness

Nearly 30 law enforcement officers and mental health service providers from agencies across the county participated in a five-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.

CIT gives law enforcement officers and administrators tools to use in the field to identify major mental health disorders and other challenges, such as substance use disorder, intellectual disabilities and neurodevelopment and neurocognitive disorders like dementia and Alzheimer's. These tools can help de-escalate a crisis and divert those experiencing behavioral health crises 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 had the opportunity to take a virtual tour of local mental health programs to increase awareness of available resources.

DHHS Behavioral Health Senior Program Manager Kelly Johnson said, "I'm honored to work collaboratively with our stakeholders to train law enforcement, Behavioral Health staff and other community providers to effectively interact with people experiencing behavioral health crises with dignity and respect from a trauma-informed lens. I'm so proud of this team and the work we do together."

The Humboldt Chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, Arcata, Eureka, Rio Dell and Yurok Tribal Police departments, the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office, Humboldt County Probation and DHHS collaborated to offer this year's CIT training.

Following this training, more than 550 people have completed the course locally, including representatives from law enforcement agencies, law offices, parks systems, ambulance services, DHHS, tribes and medical facilities.



From left, Humboldt County Behavioral Health Board member Tim Ash, Eureka Police Sgt. Leonard LaFrance, Rio Dell Police Chief Greg Allen, DHHS Senior Program Manager Kelly Johnson, Arcata Police Sgt. Heidi Grozsmann, Humboldt County Chief Probation Officer Shaun Brenneman, Humboldt County Sheriff's Correctional Capt. Duane Christian, Yurok Tribal Police Chief Greg O'Rourke, Humboldt County Undersheriff Justin Braud and Eureka Police Assistant Chief Brian Stephens and Chief Todd Jarvis celebrated the nearly 30 people who graduated from this year's Crisis Intervention Team training.

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