



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

news release

Oct. 16, 2018

Law enforcement training focuses on addressing mental health crises

Thirty-five law enforcement officers and mental health service providers from agencies across the county are participating 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. CIT gives law enforcement officers and administrators tools to identify major mental health disorders and other disabilities when working in the field. These tools can help to 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 are leading this week's training. Some of the topics include how bias can affect an officer's approach to someone in crisis as well as techniques that keep officers and a subject safe during an encounter. Attendees will also take a virtual tour of local mental health services to increase awareness of available resources.

"It's important that law enforcement, mental health service providers and the community work together to understand the signs of mental illness and recognize when people are in need of emergency assistance," said Kelly Johnson, a senior program manager for DHHS's Mental Health branch. "The Crisis Intervention Team continues to see increased involvement from community stakeholders in its effort to improve outcomes for people experiencing mental health crises and improve public safety for everyone."

The Humboldt Chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, Arcata and Eureka Police departments, Humboldt County Sheriff's Office, Zwerdling Law Firm, the Public Defender's office, Probation Department and DHHS collaborated to offer this year's CIT training.

By the end of the training, more than 400 people will have completed the course locally, including representatives from law enforcement agencies, law offices, parks systems, ambulance services, DHHS, tribes and medical facilities.

-# # #-

Follow us on Twitter: [@HumCoDHHS](https://twitter.com/HumCoDHHS) and
Facebook: facebook.com/humcodhhs