

St. Anthony Police and Crisis Intervention Training

by, Officer Jim South

The St. Anthony Police Department (SAPD) has been committed to Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) since 2009 when the department sent its first officer to a 40-hour CIT training. That officer then became a certified instructor through the Barbara Schneider Foundation, which partners with law enforcement, courts, corrections, mental health, social service and health care systems to improve the response to those experiencing mental health crises and to prevent mental health crises.



Minnesota
Crisis Intervention Team

We are currently in the process of having every sworn officer attend the 40-hour CIT class. This is in addition to the required CIT model annual training. Back in 2015, training began with a four-hour de-escalation training for all SAPD staff. This training has since been enhanced to an annual eight-hour training that is taught in conjunction with the department's annual use-of-force training.

The SAPD works with its partners and resources to determine the best outcome for those who may be in crisis. Practical exercises, such as utilizing actors that are representative of calls that officers may respond to while on duty, are included in the CIT training sessions. In addition, professionals from various organizations attend trainings, bringing their knowledge and experience of assisting individuals with mental health needs. This includes psychologists who discuss different diagnoses, Advocacy Groups, Community Planning Groups, Mobile Crisis Response Teams, Mental Health Court Representatives, Developmental Disabilities and Traumatic Brain Injury Professionals, Homeless Outreach Groups, Diversity Specialists, County Human Services, Social Workers, Behavioral Health Specialists, and consumer panel members. The consumer panel members are individuals who have navigated the criminal justice and mental health systems, sharing their stories about what worked for them, and what did not.

SAPD officers have learned to recognize the signs and symptoms of those who are experiencing crisis. We are committed to de-escalating individuals in crisis, learning about their current situation and assisting them in connecting with professionals. We have made a commitment to work with our community partners to find resources for the individuals that our officers encounter on a day-to-day basis for follow up and future needs. This priority has led to a partnership with Northeast Youth and Family Services who assist with getting individuals the assistance they need. The SAPD hopes that by partnering with community organizations like Northeast Youth and Family Services, we can help those that are in need stay out of the criminal justice system. ■