

# Luzerne and Wyoming County Crisis Intervention Training

*Crisis Intervention Team training represents a new approach for dealing with mentally ill individuals who come to the attention of law enforcement. Instead of confronting and arresting a person who shows signs of emotional distress, CIT team members are trained to deal with the situation and direct the person into treatment instead of jail.*

*Based on a model developed in Memphis Tennessee, CIT is endorsed by law enforcement, mental health providers, consumers of mental health services and their families. It represents a major step forward in acknowledging that mental illness is a disease – and recognizing the fact that arrest is not always an appropriate response to someone whose behavior is directly related to symptoms of their disease.*

## **CIT Training**

Success of the program depends on the willingness of officers to participate in an intensive training program which provides information on signs and symptoms of mental illnesses; medication and treatment; suicide assessment and prevention; mental health issues in children and among the elderly; alcohol and drug assessments and issues; and de-escalation techniques. This is done through classroom and role-rehearsal training with mental health providers, clients and advocates.

In-service training continues after the initial 40-hour course. Only selected officers in each department receive this training. They become their department's experts in this area, and will respond, when available, in a situation where intervention with an individual with a mental illness is necessary.

## **CIT Goals**

CIT facilitates getting people with mental illness into treatment rather than jail. CIT increases officer and community safety by designating well-trained staff to respond to situations involving a person with a mental

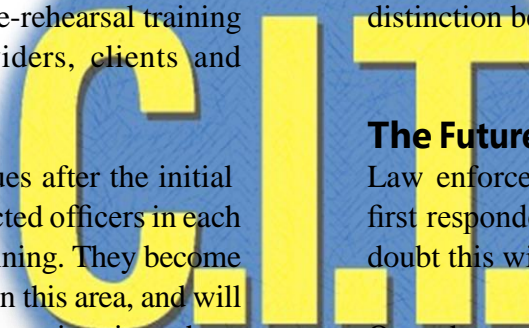
illness. CIT is cost-effective by reducing the number of inappropriate arrests.

CIT reduces concerns among family members and friends of the individual with a mental illness, knowing that there are specially trained police officers that can deescalate the situation. CIT helps reduce the stigma of mental illness when law enforcement makes a distinction between a symptom and a crime.

## **The Future of CIT**

Law enforcement has traditionally been the first responder in any crisis situation, and no doubt this will continue to be the case.

Over the years – and particularly in the past decade as traditional mental health institutions have shut down in favor of community placements – it has become obvious that special strategies are needed when a person with a mental illness is in crisis. A community-based partnership has proven to be an effective way to provide the best services to those affected by mental illness. It is, indeed, an idea whose time has come.



## Luzerne and Wyoming County CIT Partners

Officer Charles Casey, President  
Wilkes-Barre Police Department

Kelly Petherick, Vice President  
Community Counseling Services

Chief Patti O'Donnell, Secretary  
Luzerne Police Department

Paul J. Radzavicz, Executive Director  
NAMI-PA Luzerne/Wyoming County

Steve Barnic  
Northeast Counseling Services

Patrolman Shawn Conti  
Hazleton Police Department

Jeff Drake  
Northeast Counseling Services

Sergeant Joseph Matchko  
Luzerne County Correctional Facility

Mike Ankenbrand  
Luzerne County 911

## CIT WORKS!

- Increased Officer Safety
- Increased Consumer Safety
- Increased Community Safety
- Diversion of Persons in a Mental Health Crisis Away from the Criminal Justice System and Toward treatment
- Establish a Relationship of Trust between Consumers, Families, and Law Enforcement
- Provide Officers Other Options

For further information and upcoming CIT class schedule contact:

Luzerne/Wyoming Counties Crisis Intervention  
c/o NAMI-PA Wilkes-Barre  
100 East Union St.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Suite 6  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702

Phone: 570-371-3844

Fax: 570-371-3846

Email: [wilkes-barre@nami-pa.org](mailto:wilkes-barre@nami-pa.org)



**LAW ENFORCEMENT,  
MENTAL HEALTH  
PROVIDERS, FRIENDS,  
ADVOCATES, AND  
CONSUMERS: PARTNERS IN  
CRISIS IN  
LUZERNE/WYOMING  
COUNTIES**

