

# Central Florida **C**risis **I**ntervention **T**eam

*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.

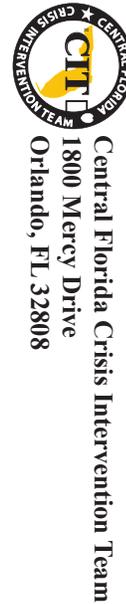
## Central Florida CIT Partners

Apopka Police Department  
Center for Drug-Free Living  
Department of Children and Families  
Eatonville Police Department  
Edgewood Police Department  
Florida Hospital  
Lakeside Alternatives  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
Maitland Police Department  
Mental Health Association  
Ocoee Police Department  
Orange County Corrections  
Orange County Sheriff's Office  
Orlando Police Department  
University of Central FL Police Department  
Winter Garden Police Department  
Winter Park Police Department

*For more information about CIT, call*

**407-875-3700**

**407-254-7470**



## Central Florida Crisis Intervention Team



*Using Effective Police  
Intervention With  
Individuals Who Are  
Mentally Ill*