MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM TRAINING

Sponsored by:
NAMI Alabama,
AUMs’ Alabama Crime Prevention Clearinghouse,
and Co-Sponsored by Otsuka America Pharmaceutical, Inc.

DATE/LOCATION:
April 7-10, 2014
75 TechnaCenter Drive
Montgomery, AL 36117

Register by April 2 at www.aum.edu/acpc

Training contact hours: 21.50
For more information, please call 334-396-4797.

Definition/Background/Goal
The Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) program is a community partnership consisting of law enforcement officers, mental health providers and mental health consumers and family members. All community partners work together to understand mental illness, invest time and effort to avert crisis, work to de-escalate crisis and direct the consumer to appropriate care.

The program is implemented through the law enforcement agencies. The specially trained patrol officers provide these services to mentally ill individuals and their families in times of crisis – 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Because law enforcement officers are generally the first ones called to work with a consumer in crisis it is imperative that the officer understand issues that the consumer may be experiencing as a result of his/her mental illness. The CIT program brings about a new culture to the law enforcement agencies in ways that they view those with mental illness, as well as dealing with other members of society.

The overall goal of the CIT training program is to treat mental illness as a disease, not a crime. CIT officers will receive three and one-half days of specialized training in mental illness, crisis intervention techniques involving role playing, and individual interactions with individuals with mental illness in various stages of recovery so that they will be better prepared to work with the consumer in crisis. The objective is to stabilize the crisis and get the consumer to the appropriate resource for appropriate care. Historically, mentally ill consumers in crisis have ended up in jail. Every year about 800,000 people with severe mental illness are incarcerated in U.S. jails. A U.S. Justice Department study found that 60% of the people with severe mental illness in jail do not get treatment.

The CIT program is a pre-booking, jail diversion program. This means that the officer-consumer interaction does not result in an arrest, and the paperwork report is on the Alabama Uniform Incident/Offense Report. This reduces the number of cases for the Criminal Justice System to address, and it reduces the number of beds needed in our jails. Obviously, the CIT program differs from a mental health court that is a post-booking, jail diversion program. In places that have a mental health court, a judge seeks non-jail solutions, including mental health treatment, for the consumers.

Benefits
The CIT program can reduce the costs of time and money associated with jailing and court proceedings. In addition, there are benefits to each of the partners. For example, proven benefits of the program to law enforcement include:

- decreased number of injuries to the officers
- decreased use of force
- improved use of alternatives to arrest and jail
- decreased time officers spend in the crisis unit (involuntary commitments)
- reduced myths and stigma of mental illness among law enforcement
- improved relationships for officers and community

The benefits of the program for mental health include:

- extended crisis response systems
- increased opportunity for earlier intervention
- improved treatment outcomes

The benefits of the program for the consumer/their families include:

- decreased number of injuries to the consumer
- better relationships between consumers and law enforcement officers
- removed stigma of unnecessary incarceration in local jails
- improved access to treatment
- increased chance that the consumer will receive continuous care