



CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL MENTAL ILLNESS RESPONSE PROGRAM



In response to a growing emphasis on law enforcement interactions with mental health consumers, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) established the Mental Illness Response Program (MIRP) unit in early 2014. The MIRP unit coordinates and is responsible for the Crisis Intervention Behavioral Health training to both uniformed and non-uniformed CHP employees. The MIRP unit draws its knowledge from a partnership between law enforcement officers, mental health advocates and consumers. To meet departmental training needs, the MIRP unit has developed a 4-phase approach to training. The following is a breakdown of those phases:

Phase I – Presented to every employee of the CHP. This 8-hour training was broken down into five sections providing an introduction into the following topics:

- Public contact and officer safety – an overview of the types of mental illness, developmental disorders, acquired neurological disorders, and best practices on interacting with mental health consumers in crisis.
- Communication – an introduction into a communication for de-escalation techniques: Tone, Atmosphere, Communication, and Time (aka T.A.C.T.).
- Suicide/suicide by cop – discussion on suicide awareness, warning signs, minor negotiation skills, and how to deal with a suicidal individual.
- Appropriate actions – what is the best course of an action after dealing with a mental health consumer (e.g., arrest, detain, release, or refer to appropriate resources).
- Resources and documentation – how to find appropriate resources and properly document the contact and if needed acquiring and filling out required mental health forms.

***This phase has been completed.**

Phase II – Presented to every CHP uniformed manager (lieutenant and above). This 4-hour training block emphasized creating relationships within the respective CHP commands region. Also included were the Department's expectation of management and officers when dealing with the consumer in crisis and local resources.

***This phase has been completed.**

Phase III – Presented to sergeants/officers at the Area level. Due to the accessibility of county resources, universal training for this phase would have been inadequate. Each individual Area office reviewed mental health resources available to them using a Mental Health Service Resource Guide and a standardized checklist. The resource guide provides CHP personnel area appropriate resources for mental health care services. By utilizing the resource guide, Area personnel are able to build partnerships with mental health advocates and consumers within their respective jurisdiction. Due to the varying resources by Area, this training took up to 12 hours to complete.

***This phase has been completed.**

Phase IV – This is a 20 hour advanced skills training block that will be delivered to all sergeant/officers. In preparation for the 20 hour Mental Health Intervention Training, over 100 uniformed personnel of all ranks, statewide, attended a 40-hour train the trainer course presented by the MIRP unit. These trainers will provide sergeants/officers the necessary tools to successfully negotiate encounters with mental health consumers. The training focuses on a deeper understanding of how mental disorders manifest and affect the consumer and surrounding people. It is not our intention to provide training to the level of a clinician. Sergeant/officers who interact with mental health consumers should be able to better identify and implement effective conflict resolution and de-escalation techniques.

***This phase commences in March 2016.**

CURRENT PROGRESS:

The MIRP unit is coordinating the development of curriculum for training public safety dispatchers, nonuniformed law enforcement staff, and other agency civilian personnel to recognize mental health consumers in crisis. This training will provide personnel with the tools necessary to provide a higher level of service to mental health consumers.

In anticipation of the Department's purchase of force option simulators, the MIRP unit officers are receiving Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) certified instructor training. This training will enable them to instruct POST accredited classes. The MIRP unit officers are currently instructing in several facets of departmental training, to include:

- Field Training Officer (FTO) training (required by law to be 4 hours for the training officer and 10 hours for the trainee during break-in – effective August 2016).
- Drug Recognition Evaluation (DRE) training (4 hours).
- Cadet Training (required by law for POST to include 15 hours of crisis intervention training in the core standards of the CHP Academy – effective August 2016).
- First Line Supervisor Academy (FSA) – newly promoted sergeants (2 hours).
- Sergeants Forum – briefing for established sergeants and nonuniformed managers on upcoming trainings and current direction of the Department (1 hour).
- Middle Manager Training Course (MMTC) – lieutenants and above (4 hours).

The CHP recognizes the relationship between law enforcement and the mental health community must continue to grow and develop in order to provide the highest level of safety, service, and security to the people of California. The CHP continues to collaborate with our mental illness advocates and community outreach groups. This includes but is not limited to the following:

- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) – the nation's largest mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for millions of Americans affected by mental illness.

- Council on Mentally Ill Offenders (COMIO) – a council that is focused on identifying and promoting integrated, cost effective strategies to:
 1. Divert persons with mental health needs from the criminal justice system.
 2. Improve first responder training for encounters with persons with mental illness.
 3. Prevent youth with mental health needs from becoming involved in the juvenile justice system.

- California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) – provides member counties a flexible, efficient, and effective administrative/fiscal structure focused on collaborative partnerships.

- County Behavioral Health Directors Association of California (CBHDA) – assures the accessibility of quality, cost effective, culturally competent behavioral health care for the people of the State of California by providing the leadership, advocacy, and support to public behavioral health programs.

- California Institute for Behavioral Health Solutions (CIBHS) – working to help health professionals, health organizations, and purchasers of health services improve the lives of people with mental health and substance use disorder challenges.

- Words to Deeds – leaders from the criminal justice and mental health systems work together in an effort to end the criminalization of individuals with mental illness by supporting proven strategies that promote early intervention, access to effective treatments, a planned reentry, and the preservation of public safety.

The Department recognizes the need and importance for the CHP to become the statewide leader in Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training. This will be carried out by providing a standardized training for officers and dispatchers statewide much like the CHP Drug Recognition Evaluator and the Accident Investigation Programs. The need for consistent and standardized training of officers and dispatchers statewide is essential for all agencies interacting with mental health consumers. These interactions would have a greater chance for a successful outcome if personnel were uniformly and adequately trained in mental illness recognition.

FOCUS FOR THE FUTURE:

The CHP recognizes the need for standardizing statewide CIT training. Other law enforcement agencies’ cooperation is crucial for a successful statewide CIT training. California has approximately 500 law enforcement agencies of various sizes statewide that lack resources to provide CIT training for their personnel. With the CHP as the leader in law enforcement, our vision is to collaborate with other law enforcement agencies to ensure every law enforcement officer, dispatcher, and nonuniformed personnel statewide are uniformly trained. The CHP’s uniformed training policy and procedures statewide afford a unique opportunity to be a liaison for the standardization of CIT training.

The CHP is dedicated to the success, outcome, and continued development of CIT training. The MIRP unit is developing a method to track the statistics/cases/contacts when officers respond to calls involving mental health consumers. This information is vital to officer safety training

statewide. Often on a daily basis, a majority of these contacts are resolved with positive outcomes. It would be beneficial for the CHP to compile statewide statistics on all law enforcement interactions with the mental health consumers, thus enabling law enforcement to reach a higher level of service.

Without hesitation, the CHP has elected to take charge and pledge to remain at the fore front of this necessary and critical training. We strive to be the leader in California as the gold standard in law enforcement response to mental health consumers in crisis.