Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Program: Montpelier and Washington County
CIT Program

• A Brief History of Mental Illness and Treatment
• What is CIT? (*CIT Training and CIT Program*)
• Who are the Stakeholders Involved in CIT Planning?
• Who is Trained and What Does the Training Consist of?
• How is a CIT Program Established?
• What Happens Once CIT is stood Up?
A Brief History of Mental Illness and Treatment

• De-institutionalization of mental illness began in 1955\(^1\)

• In 1955, there were 558,239 severely mentally ill patients in the nation’s psychiatric hospitals. In 1994, this number was decreased to 71,619\(^1\)

• As society transitioned to community-based treatment models, people with mental illness who were in crisis were (are) all too often unnecessarily incarcerated

• In 2018, a report by NPR’s KCUR found County Jails in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago to be the largest institutions providing psychiatric care in the U.S. \(^2\)

• A 2019 article reported while Vermont has a high rate of access to mental health care, it has a high incidence of mental health conditions with a growing rate of suicide. The same report also estimated over 24 million individuals experiencing a mental health illness are going untreated\(^3\)

• In Montpelier, from 2016 to 2020, there were 590 calls for service initially identified as mental-health related (this does not include calls in which MPD later learned of an underlying mental health-related issue)

• In 2019 and 2020 alone, there were 237 calls for service initially identified as mental-health related (again, this does not include calls in which MPD later learned of an underlying mental health-related issue)
What is CIT (Crisis Intervention Team)?

• September 24, 1987, 27-year-old Joseph Dewayne Robinson was shot and killed during an incident with the Memphis Police Department. NAMI challenged mental health-related crisis responses and Maj (Ret.) Sam Cochran, led a community stakeholder effort of training and response to those in mental health crisis. CIT was born and is often referred to as the “Memphis model.”

• A Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) program is more than first responder training. It is a community partnership of law enforcement, mental health, medical and addiction professionals, individuals who live with mental illness (and/or their families), and other advocates who forge a response model that promotes access to treatment rather than entry into the criminal justice system.

www.citinternational.org
What is CIT (Crisis Intervention Team)? Cont.

Basic Goals of CIT are:
1) Improve the safety of officers and the person in crisis
2) To help persons with mental disorders and/or addictions access medical treatment rather than place them in the criminal justice system due to illness related behaviors

Research and Benefits of CIT are:
1) Efficient crisis response times
2) Increase in jail diversion for those with mental illness
3) Continuity with community providers
4) Significantly decreased injuries among police officers
Who are the Stakeholders Involved in CIT Planning?

• Individuals and Families w/ Lived Experiences
• Mental Health Professionals
• Resource and Advocacy Organizations Such as NAMI
• Medical Professionals
• Fire and EMS
• Police
Who is Trained in and What Does the Training Consist of?

• Designed for Police Officers, EMS and Dispatchers
• 40-hour training: Community involvement, de-escalation emphasis and skills, empathy building, scenario-based training, behavioral health components
• Agencies must ensure access to less-than-lethal options when use of force may be necessary: Less-than-lethal policies should reflect best practices that emphasize de-escalation and the preservation of life
How is a CIT Program Established?

• A CIT Steering Committee is Formed with Primary Stakeholders
• Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) Mapping of the Existing Crisis Response System
• Build the Infrastructure
• Plan and Deliver Officer and First Responder Training
• Sustain and Grow the Program
What Happens Once CIT is stood Up?

• Public can request CIT-Trained Officers
• Responding Officers Assess: a) whether a crime has been committed, b) determine if the person’s behavior indicates that mental illness may be a factor, c) ascertain whether the person appears to present a danger to self or others, d) use skills to try to safely de-escalate situations involving someone who is behaving erratically or is in crisis. These are procedures MPD currently practices.
• Emphasis on community options and resources other than police as a primary response
• CIT does not eliminate the necessity of a law enforcement response
Questions?