I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this standard operating procedure is to establish operational guidelines for the use of the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT). This policy shall apply to all trained personnel with the Harford County Sheriff’s Office.

II. POLICY

To enhance safety and quality of life in the community, The Harford County Sheriff’s Office recognizes the need to bring community resources together to target behavioral health issues. According to the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), law enforcement agencies have partnered with mental health and community partners to develop more compassionate and cost-effective approaches that emphasize providing community-based treatment instead of arrest and incarceration for adults and juveniles with mental illness. The primary goal of the CIT program is to have law enforcement, correctional, and civilian employees with specialized training available to assist individuals in mental health crisis. The primary method of accomplishing this goal is to identify the needs of the individual in crisis and make appropriate referrals to that individual. If it appears to be in the best interest of the community and the individual in crisis, CIT intervention should be considered as an alternative to arresting the individual (assuming law or policy does not mandate an arrest). Adhering to these procedures should further the Agency’s goal of reducing the number of mentally ill individuals entering the criminal justice system. This policy was developed in collaboration with mental health professionals.

The Emergency Operations Center of the Division of Emergency Operations shall dispatch all calls based upon its Protocol Systems.
III. DEFINITIONS

Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) – A team consisting of deputy sheriffs, correctional officers, and civilians who have received specialized training (Crisis Intervention Response Training).

CIT Coordinator – A law enforcement, correctional, or civilian employee of the Harford County Sheriff’s Office designated by the Division or Precinct Commander, who is responsible for all operations related to the Crisis Intervention Team within that commander’s span of control.

Mental Illness – A range of conditions, each with its own specific characteristics; including but not limited to:

- Schizophrenia
- Bipolar disorder (manic depression)
- Major depression
- Schizoaffective disorder
- Panic disorder
- Personality disorders such as (obsessive/compulsive, borderline, etc.)
- Anxiety and phobias
- Co-occurring addiction/mental health disorder
- Other mental and/or medical illnesses which may cause disturbances in thinking, feeling and relating with others or the environment to include persons in crisis and/or suicidal subjects.

Crisis Intervention Training – A specialized course of instruction which provides training to law enforcement and correctional officers on responding to mental health crisis-related calls for service in the community and in the detention center. The Mental Health First Aid program serves as the foundation course for the CIT training. The training curriculum should be reviewed and updated every 3 years (CALEA 41.2.7).
Harford County Sheriff’s Office
Policy #6100: Crisis Intervention Team

6100.1 First Responding Deputy
6100.1.1 Shall secure the scene making it safe for the individual in crisis and other individuals on the scene
6100.1.2 Shall determine if the circumstances dictate that the services of a CIT deputy are still necessary
6100.1.3 Shall prepare to brief the CIT member by gathering all available information.
6100.1.3.1 Information sources should include, but are not limited to the following:
6100.1.3.1.1 Observations of the person’s actions and demeanor
6100.1.3.1.2 Interviews conducted on the scene with family and friends of the individual.
6100.1.3.1.3 Interview with the person focusing on his/her diagnosis, medications he/she is taking, and when he/she had his/her last dose.
6100.1.4 During the interview, deputies should be conscious of any evidence of medical conditions such as medical alert bracelets the individual may be wearing.

6100.2 CIT Deputy/Supervisor
6100.2.1 CIT deputy shall assume the lead role interacting with the individual.
6100.2.2 The CIT deputy shall attempt to resolve the incident by the safest and least confrontational means possible.
6100.2.3 To ensure the least confrontational approach, the CIT deputy shall engage the person in crisis by attempting to speak to the person calmly, slowly, and with compassion.
6100.2.4 The person in crisis, when appropriate, will be referred to community support programs.
NOTE: Given the volatility of situations involving an individual in crisis, the CIT deputy shall continually evaluate the safety of the situation.
6100.2.5 Shall contact the supervisor and, if necessary, the Crisis Negotiations Team (CNT) and Special Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT) should the situation dictate.
6100.2.6 Shall attempt to develop a rapport with the individual in crisis to assist in the interview and interrogation process.
NOTE: If it is necessary for CNT and/or SWAT to be deployed, the CIT deputy shall remain available as a resource for CNT and/or SWAT.
6100.2.7 The tactical commander shall, when practical, insure that a CIT deputy assists with the custody of a mentally ill individual.

6100.3 CIT in the Detention Center:
6100.3.1 CIT trained correctional officers and correctional support staff may be utilized in the following manner:
6100.3.1.1 Detection and identification of inmates who display unusual or bizarre behavior at intake.
6100.3.1.2 Detection and identification of inmates who display unusual or bizarre behavior during the initial classification interview.
6100.3.1.3 Detection and identification of inmates who display unusual or bizarre behavior in the housing areas such that they may need mental health services.
6100.4 CIT Reporting

6100.4.1 The CIT report (SO-136) shall be used exclusively by CIT members in the following manner:

6100.4.1.1 As an initial report to document a CIT member's contact with a person in mental crisis when no other primary reportable incident or offense is present.

6100.4.1.2 As a supplement to a primary report that involves a person in mental crisis.

6100.4.2 CIT deputies using the form shall:

6100.4.2.1 Check the block indicating an initial or supplemental report.

6100.4.2.2 Complete all blocks as necessary to include the allied agency (block #54) and allied incident number (block #55) if supporting another law enforcement organization.

6100.4.2.3 Utilize the HCSO supplemental (SO-002) continuation when necessary.

6100.4.2.4 Use Disposition and Situation Found Code appropriate to the call for services (Code 01/A-18) for an initial report, Code 01/A-19 for an Emergency Petition or Code 22 for a supplement.

6100.4.2.5 Forward the completed report through the same submission and approval process as the HCSO incident report (SO-11).

6100.4.2.6 Fax/email a copy of the completed report to the Harford County Mobile Crisis Team at 410-638-8600 or via email: Sed@sheppardpratt.org with cc to the Duty Officer and the CIT Precinct Team Leader.

6100.4.2.7 Forward to the Records Section per policy.

6100.5 CIT Coordinator

6100.5.1 The CIT Coordinator shall be responsible for the following

6100.5.1.1 Collecting data of CIT activations.

6100.5.1.2 Ensuring that CIT training remains current and relevant

6100.5.1.3 Acting as the Sheriff's Office liaison with other agencies involved in the behavioral health system.

6100.5.1.4 Maintaining a current roster of CIT members.

6100.5.1.5 Overseeing the development and implementation of a selection process for CIT members

6100.6 CIT Member

6100.6.1 The selection of new members ensures the continued growth and development of the team.

6100.6.2 The CIT coordinator or his/her designees shall oversee the selection process of new members.

6100.6.3 Upon selection, successful completion of the Crisis Intervention Training course is mandatory.

6100.6.4 Selection criteria may consist of, but is not limited to:

6100.6.4.1 Current assignment (with priority for patrol personnel)

6100.6.4.2 Verbal skills

6100.6.4.3 Disciplinary history review (PARS)

6100.6.4.4 Supervisory recommendations

6100.6.4.5 Time in grade

6100.6.5 Upon successful completion of the Crisis Intervention Training course, personnel are authorized to wear a "CIT" pin.
6100.6.5.1 The CIT pin is recognized statewide by both professionals and mental health consumers as a symbol of advanced training in the area of mental health for first responders.
6100.6.5.2 Personnel of the rank of deputy/correctional officer and above are authorized to wear the CIT pin.
6100.6.5.3 The pin will be worn on the uniform as prescribed by Agency policy.
6100.6.5.4 Civilian employees and sworn personnel not in uniform may wear the CIT pin in a professional location on their shirt, blouse, dress or outerwear.

6100.7 CIT Training
6100.7.1 All entry level recruits and lateral hires shall receive Mental Health First Aid training.
6100.7.2 The Mental Health First Aid training shall be a prerequisite for all CIT deputies and shall serve as the foundation course for the program.
6100.7.3 The CIT basic course shall be comprised of an additional 16 hours of behavioral health training and shall be a prerequisite for CIT members.
6100.7.4 A refresher course shall be provided on an annual basis to all interested personnel.
6100.7.5 The training curriculum shall be reviewed and updated every 3 years (CALEA 41.2.7).

References:


CALEA – 41.2.7