

## Helping Philly Police Officers Deal with Behavioral Health Crises

DBHIDS reached a milestone in April when it trained its 1,000th member of the Philadelphia Police Department in crisis intervention. The Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) is a collaboration between DBHIDS staff, the Philadelphia Police Department, and other stakeholders. Since 1997, DBHIDS has collaborated with the police. Philadelphia's CIT training began in 2006.

The nationally-renowned CIT model began in Memphis, Tennessee in 1988. It is designed to reduce conflict during encounters between police and community members with mental health challenges. CIT training emphasizes the principles of violence prevention, de-escalation and community collaboration.

***"The training actually empowers our officers to respond to any call with more understanding, empathy and respect for the person on the other end."*** - Charles H. Ramsey, Commissioner Philadelphia Police Department

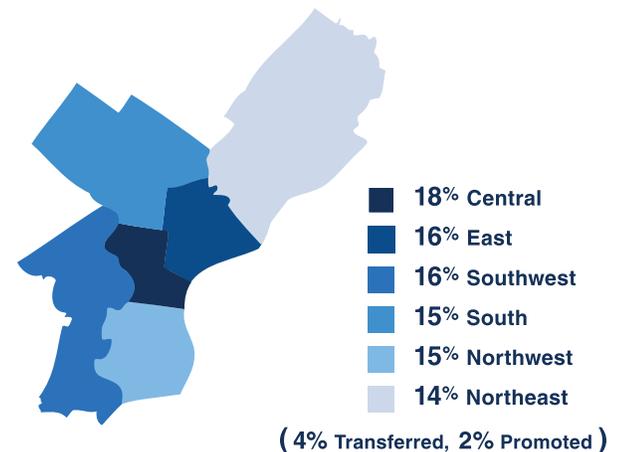
In this rigorous six-day training, the officers are immersed in the world of mental health issues, including de-escalation, Mental Health Procedures Act, mental health court and risk factors to officers.

People in recovery spend a day sharing their stories of living with mental illness with the officers. Training with health care professionals (including doctors who specialize in crises and response center representatives) covers drug and alcohol use and abuse, children and trauma, and senior citizen-specific issues.

The final days of training are dedicated to role playing. Officers try to function while listening to loud voices, so they can understand the experiences of someone who hears voices. Their final drills put the lessons to work, simulating street situations and encounters.

***"CIT is an invaluable resource for Philadelphia Police Officers"***, said Sergeant Joseph Harper, Central Service Detail, Philadelphia Police Department. ***"Too many times officers are in situations when force might be the only option—now we have more effective options for dealing with people with mental health challenges."***

## CIT-Trained Officers by Division



**1140** Phila. Police Dept., **20** Phila. Prison System (Correctional Officers) and **15** SEPTA officers have been trained as of **June, 2011**.

## How it Works

1. The police call taker identifies a 911 call involving a person in mental health crisis. The call taker collects as much information as possible.
2. The call taker notifies the dispatcher that an incident may involve a person in mental health crisis. The dispatcher assigns a supervisor and a CIT-trained officer to handle the assignment.
3. CIT-trained officers will respond to possible incidents dispatched by police radio or requested by other non-CIT officers.
4. CIT officers contact DBHIDS as soon as possible after the incident. The DBHIDS representative gathers information and coordinates appropriate services.