

Letter to Mental Health and CIT Subcommittee
From Lt. Ryan Morgan, Fairfax County Police Department, Planning & Research Bureau

I have thought about a few things that would likely make the new CIT program a success and I wanted to share them with you in hopes they may assist with the mental health subcommittee:

- The first thing needed is the ability to brand and advertise CIT. To accomplish this task. We could use current technology: website, Channel 16, YouTube, radio. The police department even used to advertise at the movie theater during that down time between when you arrive and the previews start. I'm sure I'm missing a bunch of other available options.
- The community needs to know they have access to officers with CIT training. If a call is received and it sounds like a mental health call, our dispatchers should be thinking of CIT officers as a resource.
- The police department and CSB should form closer partnerships with organizations such as NAMI, who not only understand the breadth and scope of mental illness, but have resources necessary to further our training.
- CIT officers should have some sort of insignia that makes them stand out from other officers. In some departments, a pin of some sort is proudly displayed on the uniform.
- There needs to be a training budget for the CIT program. Some people have the gift of teaching to police officers. Some presenters bring with them unique credibility police officers can relate to and better appreciate. These presenters are generally engaging and motivated. They also cost a few dollars if we want to use them on a regular basis.
- There are good presenters from the CSB. These extra tasks however do hinder the employee from doing their normal job especially if they are going to be asked to return on multiple occasions to train officers. There is likely a cost associated with the extra work load.
- Funding should be appropriated to further the CIT efforts: model departments have CIT officers who follow up independently or with the assistance of CSB at locations that generate a high number of calls-for-service. These house calls of sorts are an effective means of checking on the vulnerable population and help build trust.
- If the grant is approved, the assessment center will go a long way to minimize unnecessary restraint and the ability to quickly provide mental health services.

I hope this information helps a bit. I'm afraid I can't put a dollar figure on these extra services. I just know the services would go a long way.

I wish I could be there tomorrow evening, but I am stuck with a prior commitment.

Respectfully,

Ryan

Lieutenant Ryan Morgan
Fairfax County Police Department
Planning & Research Bureau