



CENTRE COUNTY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

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Warden

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1/22/13

Nominee: Centre County Crisis Intervention Team

Chief Officers: Tracy Small, CIT Coordinator; Natalie Corman, Director of Adult Services; Troy Hosterman, MH/ID/EI-D&A, Sergeant Rob Glenny and Officer Travis Park, Ferguson Township Police Department; Detective Chris Weaver, State College Police Department; Shannon Quick, Universal Health Services Inc.

The Centre County Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) was formed in 2010, when 8 individuals from local police, the county Correctional Facility, and county Adult Services attended a "Train the Trainer" session. CIT officers are trained in an initial 40 hour course to learn how to help individuals experiencing a Mental Health Crisis. The program is designed for the following:

- To improve interactions between law enforcement and persons with mental illness
- To prevent the inappropriate restraint, incarceration, and stigmatization of persons with mental illness
- To reduce injury to officers, family members, and individuals in crisis, and
- To link individuals with mental illness to appropriate treatment and resources in the community

The CIT program has been a benefit to the entire community of Centre County, improving the correctional facilities and promoting the objectives of the 21st Century Committee Best Practices Awards program.

The Centre County Correctional Facility has, to this date, 10 trained CIT officers. The skills learned in training have helped inside the facility by giving another tool with which to maintain order, de-escalate problems, and help individual inmates make their re-entry goals. All staff within the facility are encouraged to seek assistance from a CIT officer when an inmate is experiencing a mental health crisis. This helps to stabilize the facility by reducing the number of violent incidents, calming the inmate, and identifying areas where additional assistance for the inmate is needed.

The CIT program works to improve data quality by collecting statistical information on those individuals assisted by a CIT officer. The data sheets give a method to collect demographic information to measure the scope of a previously unmet need. The information collected also assists specific individuals by keeping a flow of information open to the Centre County MH/ID/EI-D&A office. Some individuals assisted by CIT officers qualify for assistance or community services, but had never been connected to those resources.

The CIT program assists in community awareness efforts. In 2011 and 2012, CIT officers had a booth at the local American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's Out of the Darkness Walk. Many CIT officers and their families raised money and walked at the event. CIT officers also participate in the yearly Skills' Candlelight Vigil held in May for Mental Health Awareness Month. The vigil is held in honor of those reaching for recovery, celebrating wellness, and for those learning to live with mental illness.

The CIT program works as a jail diversionary program for the specific population of individuals with Mental Health issues. It inherently reduces the jail population through diversion. The following agencies have trained CIT officers working toward this goal:

- 6 local police agencies
- Magisterial District Judge
- Pennsylvania State Police
- Centre County Adult and Juvenile Probation and Parole
- Centre LifeLink EMS
- Mount Nittany Medical Center Security
- PA Board of Probation and Parole
- Emergency Communications Center Dispatchers

With a wide range of participation, the CIT program encourages collaboration between many county agencies that were not previously connected. In addition to the above listed agencies, CIT brings together MH/ID/EI/D&A, Adult Services, Office of Aging, Children and Youth Services, and Domestic Relations Section. It also formed strong relationships with public and private organizations that can assist in its training goals. Each initial training class has been taught by individuals from the Meadows Psychiatric Center, psychologists from the Veteran's Association and Pennsylvania State University Psychological Services, Juvenile probation, County Office of Aging, National Alliance for Mental Illness, and even individual consumers who live with mental illness.

An example of the type of positive change that the CIT program brought about involves a local program, Out of the Cold. In Centre County, local churches created the Out Of the Cold program where individuals with no place to go can sleep inside and not be left on the streets. The CIT program acted as a liaison with local law enforcement to manage issues arising from this initiative. One problem that was quickly evident was the people had nowhere to go in the daytime when the Out Of the Cold locations were not open. Local law enforcement received calls from businesses that did not wish to have people loitering waiting for the night's location to open. By working with both sides, a list of daytime resources was compiled and distributed. This meets a specific need within the growing community, keeping this group of people from having negative encounters with police that often ended in citations for disorderly conduct or trespass.

Centre County Crisis Intervention Team has been a very valuable resource for the Centre County Correctional Facility and the county residents. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Submitted by: Warden Richard C. Smith, MS, CCHP

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