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Contact: 405-248-9232
405-248-9233

Agency Receives Federal Grant to Support Law Enforcement Crisis Intervention Training

The Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS) has received a federal grant to support law enforcement crisis intervention training (CIT). The department delivers CIT training throughout the state, and has trained approximately 1,900 Oklahoma law enforcement officers from 170 different agencies. Awarded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) the grant provides \$121,000 per year, for up to five years, to support training expansion, coordination and outreach.

CIT is a national, evidence-based law enforcement intervention training to aid in responding to situations involving mental health crisis. It promotes officer safety and the safety of the individual in crisis. Once trained, officers work in partnership with local mental health providers, families, advocacy organizations and others to improve community crisis response and overcome stigma.

“Our law enforcement partners have played an important role in helping to improve statewide crisis response,” said ODMHSAS Commissioner Carrie Slatton-Hodges. “CIT training has been a valuable tool to help divert individuals experiencing mental health crisis away from jail and into appropriate mental health treatment settings.”

Officers participating in CIT training receive instruction in situations unique to mental health response. It is more than just a first-responder training in that it helps to train officers in community partnership and problem solving. Research shows that communities utilizing the CIT model have higher success rates in resolving serious crisis situations. The program has been cited as helping to reduce inappropriate incarceration of people experiencing mental illness and providing relief to an overburdened criminal justice system.

CIT is one of the many innovative programs developed to improve community response to behavioral health crisis. ODMHSAS encourages individuals in need of assistance, or persons, families and loved-ones concerned about others, to reach out for help.

To find nearby services, Oklahomans can dial 211 from anywhere in the state and receive assistance with accessing local behavioral health support. You may also visit www.odmhsas.org and use the department’s treatment service locator to find care. Services are available without charge for those who qualify, on a sliding scale or through insurance including Medicaid.

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