



POLICE RESPONSE TO MENTAL ILLNESS

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When responding to calls for service involving persons with mental health issues, officers can face some of the most challenging and difficult situations. Officers are often required to make decisions in a matter of seconds regarding issues that may have been building for days, weeks or even years. To make sound decisions in these circumstances, it is crucial to recognize the signs and symptoms that could indicate a person is suffering from mental health issues or developmental disorders.

To successfully interact with those with mental illness, physical or developmental disorders, it's important to educate yourself in the behaviors, characteristics and traits that uncover these issues.

This course gives officers an introduction to some common mental illnesses as well as social and developmental disorders including autism. Students will also be presented with strategies that could enhance decision making, effectively assist with your approach and help provide you with the skills to better understand those afflicted with these issues.

Topics we'll cover include:

- **Commonly diagnosed mental illnesses including depression and PTSD**
- **Recognizing symptoms of developmental disorders**
- **Autism awareness**
- **Stop, look, listen – slowing the approach to persons with mental illness and cooling the temperature of the contact**
- **Strategies for gathering information during mental health calls**
- **Developing a resource list for persons with mental illness**