



**Western MA CIT-TTAC Newsletter** **Issue No.0001**

**Welcome to our First Issue!**

The Western MA Crisis Intervention Team (WMCIT) Program which is funded solely by Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) is a community partnership of law enforcement, mental health and addiction professionals, individuals who live with mental illness and/or addiction disorders, their families, and other advocates . It is an innovative first-responder model of police-based crisis intervention training to help persons with mental disorders and/or addictions access medical treatment rather than place them in the criminal justice system due to illness-related behaviors. It also promotes officer safety and the safety of the individual in crisis.

CIT is a program that provides the foundation necessary to promote community and statewide solutions to assist individuals with a mental illness and/or addictions. The CIT Model reduces both stigma and the need for further involvement with the criminal justice system. CIT provides a forum for effective problem solving regarding the interaction between the criminal justice and mental health care system and creates the context for sustainable change. Research shows that communities that prescribe to the CIT Program model, have higher success rates in resolving serious crisis situations.

**From the Desk of the CIT-TTAC Coordinator – Nicola Howe, MSW**

Since joining the Western MA CIT-TTAC we as a team have embarked on a journey to advance the trainings we provide and increase collaboration efforts with our Law Enforcement Officers (LEO), other first responders and the community. An important goal of CIT is to reduce the number of times that people spend interacting with police and increase connections to mental health services. This is only possible with a fully integrated crisis response system so that mental health services can be the initial access point, whenever appropriate. We here in Western MA have two functioning Crisis Response System (BHN & CSO) and the Jail Diversion Program Grants that funds the Co-Response Model. That is not enough to meet the needs of our community. It is the goal of this CIT program to reach all the First Responders who would like to be trained in Crisis Intervention so that this is an additional tool to assist our mentally ill, addiction and DDS population.

Since March 01, 2022, we have continued our training efforts in training our first responders around Western MA and has developed our newly Enhanced De-Escalation Training which was successful. We have reduced the use of training folders and purchased iPads to assist with live training. This is facilitated through BHN’s marketing team who have developed a web page for our training needs. ([www.bhninc.org/cit](http://www.bhninc.org/cit)). On the website participants can re-visit their trainings and refresh themselves as well as a wide gamut of mental health resources are available. Also, in the upcoming trainings, site visits (Crisis, TLR, Cole’s Place) during training will be reconvened so that First Responders can have firsthand knowledge of some of the services that are provided in the community.

There are numerous presenters who assist with these trainings on a yearly basis from many other agencies as well as DMH and NAMI. As part of our appreciation, we will be hosting a dinner on December 09, 2022, to say thank you and support continued collaborative efforts. In addition, the WMCIT-TTAC will be launching its Steering Committee. This Steering Committee will reflect our communities and those groups who have a vested interest in the development of a CIT program. A steering committee may include members of local government, judiciary, law enforcement, mental health, including VA Medical Center or VA Outpatient facility, corrections, and advocacy groups to name only a few.

Thanks to everyone and the journey continues.

## News Highlights

[988 Lifeline Update](#)

[A Hidden Gem: How HCBS Can Support the Behavioral Health Crisis Continuum](#)

[Redefining Crisis Stabilization](#)



## Training Tips and Best Practices

[CIT Best Practices](#)

[Suicide Prevention State Resources](#)

[Crisis Intervention De-escalation Steps](#)

[The Teen Brain in Crisis and Partnering with Law Enforcement](#)

[Homelessness and Crisis: Who Will Answer the Call?](#)

[What is Schizophrenia?](#)



## Upcoming Trainings

### 40 Hour CIT Trainings

October 17 – 21, 2022  
Springfield, MA

November 14 – 18, 2022  
Springfield, MA

[Click Here](#) to sign up.



Western Massachusetts CIT-TTAC  
Behavioral Health Network

[www.bhninc.org/cit](http://www.bhninc.org/cit)  
[CIT.TTAC@bhninc.org](mailto:CIT.TTAC@bhninc.org)