

READING POLICE C.I.T. PROGRAM

Updated 2/1/21



C.I.T. (Crisis Intervention Team) 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. The C.I.T. Model was first developed in Memphis in 1988. The C.I.T. “Memphis Model” is now used across the USA. The Reading Coalition has been working with the Reading Police to implement the model over the last three years.

KEY PARTNERS: The Reading Police is implementing the C.I.T. program with the support of Coalition staff, Metro Boston C.I.T., RESPOND Inc. and C.I.T. International.

STEERING COMMITTEE: The RPD C.I.T. Training & Follow-up Program is overseen by Lieutenant Christine Amendola of the Support Services Division, Lieutenant Richard Abate of the Detectives Division, Reading Coalition for Prevention & Support Director Erica McNamara, Community Services Officer Kristen O’Shaughnessy, and Reading Coalition for Prevention & Support Outreach Coordinator Samantha Salkin.

TRAINING EFFORTS: The first step in C.I.T. is to engage officers in a formal 40 hour intensive training to enhance best practices in responding those dealing with mental health challenges. We are proud to report that Reading Police now has twelve C.I.T. Trained Officers including: Lt. Amendola, Lt. McKenna, Sgt. Jones, Sgt. Silva, Sgt. Santasky, Sgt. Martel, Officer Lee, Officer O’Shaughnessy, Officer Craven, Officer Fontes, Officer Graciale, and Officer Costa. Several dispatchers are scheduled for an upcoming C.I.T. training. We will continue to send officers and dispatchers as classes open.

FOLLOW-UP PROGRAM: The second step in C.I.T. is coordination of local resources and a designated follow-up program for those that required the Reading Police through 911. The C.I.T. program was brought to Reading to address an identified gap in outreach efforts. The CIT model offers a proactive outreach method in which services are offered to individuals without requiring the individual to seek services for themselves. This eliminates a barrier to care by informing people of the resources available to them and supports individuals in understanding and utilizing existing supports.

As part of the CIT program, Officer O’Shaughnessy communicates with Patrol Officers and reviews the RPD Logs and identifies cases requiring follow-up. Officer O’Shaughnessy refers cases involving domestic violence to the RESPOND, Inc Domestic Violence Counselor stationed

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part-time at RPD. Cases requiring Elder Services are referred to the Elder and Human Services Team. Calls involving mental health or substance use are referred to the Coalition.

After an incident where the Reading Police respond to a mental health or substance use related call for service, Coalition staff reach out to involved individuals and work with them to assess what supports are needed and then work to connect the individual with the necessary resources. Coalition staff also work with individuals to identify any barriers to seeking care. Barriers might include lack of food, safe housing, or health insurance; previous negative experiences with the health care system; inability to physically access a treatment center; lack of readiness to seek support; etc. Once barriers have been identified, Coalition staff will work with the individual to address those barriers so that the individual can access mental health or substance use treatment when they are ready to do so. Coalition staff does not provide clinical treatment but instead assists individuals in need to identify and access appropriate clinical support.

In a situation where a juvenile is involved in a call for service, Coalition staff coordinate with the Reading Police Department School Resource Officers and Reading Public School staff to ensure that the juvenile and family are offered all the supports available to them both inside and outside of school.

Medford HUB Collaboration: Additionally, the C.I.T. program works with the Hub Team based in Medford. The Hub Team utilizes a multi-agency approach to support individuals with complex needs that require support from several different government and community entities. Representatives from roughly 20 different organizations attend the weekly meetings and work together to develop coordinated response plans to support high-risk individuals and connect them to services. These weekly meetings allow organizational representatives to connect with each other face-to-face and coordinate services to quickly and efficiently serve individuals in acute need. Representatives from the Reading PD C.I.T. Program are able to attend the Medford Hub Team to present cases and receive guidance and support from local agencies and service providers.

RESULTS: Between January 1, 2020, when the Reading PD C.I.T. Program began, and December 31, 2020, Coalition staff has contacted 240 individuals in order to provide information on mental health and substance use disorder support and treatment services.

Some notable C.I.T. successes include:

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- Assisting an adult male acquire health insurance so that he could access substance use treatment after he overdosed at his parent's home in Reading
- Connecting an adult female with Department of Mental Health and Eliot Community Services to support her in managing a chronic mental health condition with support from members of the Medford Hub Team
- Connecting parents of an adult male struggling with substance misuse with community support groups to help them manage their stress around parenting a child with an addiction
- Supporting an adult daughter in accessing mental health support for her mother after her mother attempted suicide
- Coordinating with School Administrators and Guidance Staff to support several juveniles and their families who are struggling with mental health crises or substance misuse
- Connecting numerous Reading residents with the INTERFACE Referral Service so to assist them in accessing mental health care

For more information on the program, please contact Erica McNamara, MPH, Director, Reading Coalition at emcnamara@ci.reading.ma.us.