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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Minnesota Crisis Intervention Team Launches New Hybrid Training Format

June 30, 2020, Woodbury, MN — Minnesota Crisis Intervention Team (MN CIT) announces today it has launched a new hybrid training class format for their 40 Hour Crisis Intervention Team Certification Training course. Traditionally, the in-person course is a 40-hour POST approved course with classroom sessions, guest speakers, panel discussions, and training scenarios utilizing professional actors to make the simulations as real as possible. MN CIT recently completed their first hybrid class with great success.

“When COVID hit, we realized we needed to cancel our classes to help keep everyone safe. As time went on, we knew that providing this training was critical for the first responder community, especially as people were staying home and may be unable to get the mental health care they needed. Our team worked hard to pivot our training model and build a hybrid format so we can continue to provide this important training during this time,” said Michael Peterson, Executive Director for MN CIT. He went on to describe the collaborative effort the organization used to find a solution, “We worked with our staff, presenters, actors, and the POST Board to find a way to continue to deliver our unique CIT training during times of social distancing requirements.”

The course usually runs Monday through Friday with a mix of classroom lectures, guest speakers, professional presenters and several rounds of scenario training utilizing professional actors. The scenarios are as close to real-life situations where the students use the skills and information they learned throughout the week. Coaches help guide the scenarios and make sure everyone walks away with key learnings from each scenario. In order to minimize contact, the organization changed the format to a hybrid model including pre-recorded sessions mixed with live online sessions for the classroom portions. The scenarios continue to be performed in person over two days, however changes have been made to minimize contact. “One important change we made is to keep the groups together, instead of rotating actors for the scenarios. This minimizes the number of people each person comes into contact with over the two days,” explained Jerry Hutchinson, Training Director for MN CIT.

The organization is planning to continue using their hybrid model at least through the end of August for classes currently scheduled. The organization is monitoring government updates and guidelines and will adjust training as needed. “We look forward to being able to return to full in person training, however we are very pleased to be able to offer an alternative platform in order to continue our training” Jerry Hutchinson added.

Crisis Intervention Training has been mandated by the Minnesota POST Board for all law enforcement officers. Besides CIT training, Minnesota CIT also offers an 8-hour Mental Health Awareness Class and an 8-hour Bias and Cultural Awareness Class, both also POST approved.

Minnesota Crisis Intervention Team is a non-profit organization whose CIT training is based on the nationally recognized Memphis Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) model, which promotes the use of verbal de-escalation skills before using force when confronting a mental health crisis. CIT training has been proven to dramatically decrease the risk of injuries or death to both officers and those suffering from mental illness. Learn more at www.mncit.org.

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