In an effort to improve responses to mental health crises, law enforcement officers in Missouri have received crisis intervention team (CIT) training. A first responder model, CIT aims to bring together law enforcement, health care practitioners, and mental health advocates to effectively address the needs of individuals in crisis. The training consists of techniques for assisting those struggling with mental illness, substance abuse, and suicidal thoughts, such as de-escalation and connecting people with treatment options. According to Randy McIff, a Columbia police officer who is certified in CIT, law enforcement officers are increasingly required to respond to mental health-related calls. “Now, in policing we’re asked to do a lot more than just be a police officer,” he said. “We’re on the front lines . . . We’re asked to do everything from social work . . . to being a police officer to getting people with mental illness the resources they need.”

**Spark Extra!** Read more about suicide prevention in [law enforcement](http://www.sprc.org/settings/law-enforcement) settings.

Links within this resource