

## **Crisis Intervention**

Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) is a first responder approach to safely and effectively address the needs of persons with mental or behavioral health issues. The purpose of CIT is to get people in touch with health care or substance use services and divert them from the criminal justice system if appropriate. CIT is a community partnership consisting of law enforcement, mental health and substance use disorder professionals, persons living with mental health issues and/or substance use disorder, their families, and other advocates. CIT was first developed in Memphis and has spread through the country since 1988.

The main goals of CIT are to improve officer and consumer safety and redirect persons with mental health disorders and/or substance use disorder to health care treatment rather than the criminal justice system.

CIT is a 40-hour training held in various places across Montana throughout the year. During the week-long training, officers do many scenario-based trainings, meet with people living with mental illness and addiction, and visit the Montana State Hospital in Warm Springs. The training is intense and the officers return with a better understanding of de-escalation and are able to identify when someone is in crisis and may need additional health care resources rather than jail.

Sheridan County has limited behavioral health services. However, we are working to improve that. The Sheridan County Behavioral Health Coalition was recently awarded a grant to help with services in our community. The grant allowed us to purchase tablets so there is a telehealth option for people who are unable to see a provider face to face. We will soon start the process of hiring a Peer Support Specialist for Sheridan County, through Eastern Montana Community Mental Health Center; the grant pays for the advertising of this position. These resources go hand in hand with CIT.

Our Sheridan County resources include:

Gina Aasheim, a licensed clinical professional counselor (LCPC) at Turning Leaf Counseling.  
406-765-1277

Sheri Hilyard, a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) and a licensed addiction counselor (LAC) located in the Courthouse. 406-765-2550

If you have any questions about CIT or our local resources, please contact Sheriff Heidi Visocan at 406-765-1200. For questions about the Sheridan County Behavioral Health Coalition contact Joan Nelson at [scbhcoalition@nemont.net](mailto:scbhcoalition@nemont.net).