



# Policing and People with Developmental Disabilities: Emerging Issues in the Field

Presented April 28, 2022

## Webinar Description

In recent years, there has been greater awareness that developmental disabilities may go undetected in individuals who come into contact with the criminal justice system. As first responders, law enforcement officers may encounter people with developmental disabilities or co-occurring conditions (mental health conditions and developmental disabilities) and as such have an opportunity to set the stage for effective interactions with the justice system for this population. Understanding how to interact with people with developmental disabilities—including identification, communication, and de-escalation—can enhance the safety and effectiveness of these encounters. Presented by the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance's Academic Training to Inform Police Responses Initiative, this webinar will provide an overview of this topic from the perspectives of law enforcement and a person with a developmental disability, including emerging issues and practical tips officers can use to respond effectively to this population.

For the webinar recording and slides, please visit the [Academic Training to Inform Police Responses website](#).

## Panelists

- (1) **Chief William Scott**, San Francisco (CA) Police Department
- (2) **Chief Ronald Sellon**, Mansfield (MA) Police Department
- (3) **Russell Lehmann**, Speaker, Author, and Advocate
- (4) **Leigh Ann Davis**, Senior Director of Criminal Justice Initiatives, The Arc of the United States and the National Center on Criminal Justice and Disability

## Webinar Transcript

**Mike Hatch:** Okay, we're gonna go ahead and get started. So on behalf of the Academic Training to Inform Police Responses, I want to welcome you to today's webinar, Policing and People with Developmental Disabilities: Emerging Issues in the Field, with our featured presenters today, Chief William Scott, Chief Ronald Sellon, Russell Lehmann and Leigh Ann Davis. And I will be introducing them in a few minutes here. But before I do that, I want to turn it over for welcome and introduction to Dr. Hannah McManus, our co-principal investigator of the Academic Training to Inform Police Responses from the University of Cincinnati. Hannah?

**Hannah McManus:** Thank you, Mike, and thank you to all of you for joining our webinar today on Policing and People with Developmental Disabilities. My name is Hannah McManus. And in addition to serving as co-principal investigator for the Academic Training to Inform Police Responses, I'm a research associate at the University of Cincinnati Center for Police Research and Policy. This webinar has been made possible through the support of the Bureau of Justice Assistance as part of the Academic Training to Inform Police Responses.

The Academic Training initiative was born out of the recognition that as communities examine how they respond to individuals with behavioral health conditions and developmental disabilities, it's important that we learn from practitioners about best practices in the field and also from researchers who are working to build the evidence base on the effectiveness of those practices.



My colleagues from the University of Cincinnati and I are joined this effort by subject matter experts from Policy Research Associates, The Arc of the United States National Center on Criminal Justice and Disability, and the International Association of Chiefs of Police. Together, our team is building and delivering training, technical assistance, and companion resources that are centered around better practices and crisis response that are supported by research. Our goal is to support law enforcement agencies and their community partners in their responses to people with behavioral health conditions and developmental disabilities and to ensure that these encounters are more effective and equitable, but also safer for both citizens and law enforcement officers.

Today you will be hearing from several presenters who will speak on the topic of law enforcement encounters with people with developmental disabilities, developmental disabilities or co-occurring conditions. These speakers will highlight how understanding effective ways to interact with people with developmental disabilities can enhance the outcomes of these interactions. But before we hear from our speakers, I would like to introduce you to another important partner of the Academic Training initiative. Elissa Rumsey is a senior policy advisor for the Bureau of Justice Assistance. And she joins us today to provide a few opening remarks from the BJA. Elissa?

**Elissa Rumsey:** Thank you so much, Hannah. Good morning to all of you on the West Coast and good afternoon to those of us on the East Coast. I really wanna thank you for taking the time to join us today for what is sure to be a really lively and engaging conversation. So as stated, my name is Elissa Rumsey and I work at the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Assistance, known fairly commonly as BJA. I wanted to share a little bit about what we do here at BJA to give you a sense of what tools might be available to all of you on the audience, including most importantly, some funding opportunities that are available as we speak. So with that said, I strongly encourage you to check out our website, [bj.gov](http://bj.gov). Sign up for our listervs so you can get notices about these funding opportunities.

In addition to funding, we also provide free of charge training and technical assistance. So those of you who work in law enforcement, behavioral health, community, and mental health, you are eligible for all sorts of free training and technical assistance from our office here at BJA. Currently, as I mentioned, we have a number of funding opportunities available specific to law enforcement and community mental health. Apologize, I can't really be sure if anyone could see me right now, but I was just gonna sort of hold up some of our various solicitations, give you a sense of what they look like. Most of them are about 30 pages or so, and they lay out again, numerous funding opportunities that BJA provides directly to law enforcement, state, and local governments, et cetera.

I also wanna thank all of our presenters here today. You can see we have a really amazing group of panelists from across the United States. The chief of police from San Francisco, the chief of police from Mansfield, Massachusetts. We have Leigh Ann Davis from The Arc, a well known expert in the field of disability rights. And then we also have Russell Lehmann, someone who I've recently come to know who is a poet and author. He attended MIT, he's a former high school athlete. I also had a chance to pick up his book recently, which I highly recommend called "On the Outside Looking In." A really engaging read, one of the best books I've read in a long time. So thank you to Russell Lehmann, Chief Scott, Chief Sellon for being here today. And thanks of course, to the University of Cincinnati, Hannah and her colleagues for facilitating this conversation. So with that, thank you so much. And I'll turn it back over to Hannah.

**Hannah McManus:** Thank you, Elissa. Now I'd like to turn things over to Mike Hatch, who is senior project associate for Policy Research Associates, and a moderator, the moderator for the remainder of this webinar. He's going to provide us with a few logistical details, as well as the formal introduction of our speakers. Mike?

**Mike Hatch:** Thank you, Hannah. Before we get started with our speakers, just a couple of housekeeping things to go through. As with any webinar, the disclaimer that we have to read for these. The preparation of this webinar was supported by Grant No. 2020-NT-BX-K001 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention, sorry, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office. Points of views or opinions in this webinar are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official positions or policies of the US Department of Justice. As a reminder, questions, please submit your questions to the presenters in the Q&A pod. The presenters will address as many questions as time presents at the end of the presentation. This webinar is being recorded, and the slides will be disseminated in the following days and the days following the webinar. We also offer ASL interpretation during this webinar. Our ASL interpreters for this meeting are Michelle Johnson and Katie Lambe. And live transcription from Zoom is available. Click the Live Transcript CC, and then select Show Subtitle. Subtitles can be moved within the window and resized. With that, I will introduce all four of today's presenters, and then I will



turn it over to the last person that I introduce, Leigh.

So the first person that I'd like to introduce is Chief William Scott from the San Francisco, California Police Department. Chief Scott was sworn in January of 2017, and he joined San Francisco PD after 27 years with the LAPD. Chief Scott's focus is on community policing with an emphasis on implementing major reforms, especially as it relates to providing service with dignity and respect. One of the first steps of this endeavor was to create a viable and sustainable strategic plan to successfully implement the reform initiatives that were outlined in the Department of Justice's Collaborative Review Initiative performed on the San Francisco Police Department, while at the same time, addressing public safety and reducing crime. These reforms, which included 272 recommendations, focused on five key areas of policing, accountability, bias, community policing, recruitment, hiring, and personnel practices, and use of force. Chief Scott grew up in Birmingham, Alabama, role tide chief, and is married with three children. He attended the University of Alabama with a degree in accounting. He is also a graduate of Senior Management of Institute of Policing.

Our next speaker is Chief Ron Sellon, who is the proud father of with disabilities, passionately committed to improving services. And is the police chief for the town of Mansfield, Massachusetts, where he has held that position since 2013. He's a military veteran who holds a bachelor's degree in law enforcement, a master's degree in public safety administration, and a Juris Doctor law degree. Chief Sellon is a licensed attorney, a graduate of the FBI National Academy session 245, and Police Executive Research Forum session 65. He sits on the board of directors of the Bristol County Police Chiefs Association, and is currently the first vice president of the Metropolitan Law Enforcement Council. He currently sits on the executive board of the IACP as vice president, treasurer, having previously been a member of the Human and Civil Rights Committee.

Next up is Russell Lehmann. Russell is an award-winning and internationally recognized motivational speaker and poet contextualizing autism, mental health, disabilities, and the overall human condition. His words have been featured in the USA Today, LA Times, NPR, Yahoo! News, Success Magazine, and archived in the Library of Congress. Russell is also a contributor for Psychology Today. A graduate of MIT's Leadership in the Digital Age course, Russell sits on the national board of directors for The Arc, and is a council member for the Autism Society of America. He has also been the youth ambassador for the mayor of Reno, Nevada, and a member of Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, as well as the Nevada Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorder. Russell showed signs of autism as a newborn. However, he was not formally diagnosed until the age of 12 after suffering through five weeks in a lockdown psychiatric facility. His new book, "On the Outside Looking In" recently hit bookstores nationwide, and is in fact, the second book that Russell has authored.

And last, but certainly not least is Leigh Ann Davis. Leigh Ann is the director of justice initiatives at The Arc of the United States. She directs The Arc's National Center on Criminal Justice and Disability. She oversaw the development of NCCJD's signature training, Pathways to Justice, and passionately works to establish NCCJD and The Arc's 650 chapter network as the go-to place for information and training on justice and disability. As The Arc's subject matter expert on the topic of justice and IDD, she provides consultation to federal and non-profit agencies and has provided guidance to White House officials. Her mission is to ensure that people with intellectual developmental disabilities have a platform and the training they need to advocate for themselves, especially as citizens who are overrepresented in the criminal justice system. I will turn it over to Leigh Ann to go through our learning objectives. Leigh Ann?

**Leigh Ann Davis:** Thank you, Mike, and thank you all for being here today. I'm very hopeful that once you get through this webinar, you are going to have some great ideas, tips, strategies, and new thinking about how to respond to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. And again, a big thank you to our panelists who are joining us as well. So I just wanna go over some of our learning objectives for today. One key thing that we want to take away is really understanding the importance of why law enforcement training is so needed. So we'll start with a realistic case scenario that can really lay the groundwork for that. We are going to be looking at key tips in these areas, including assessing a situation, identifying if someone may have a disability, how to communicate with that individual, and then some tips for deescalation. And then last, we'll finish it with exploring some emerging issues that involve law enforcement in this community specifically.

So I wanted to get started, as I said, with a case scenario, and we're going to watch this brief video. This is regarding a person with autism and this, his dad, Adam Wolf, talking about a situation that occurred. And then we're going to open it up to the panel to get some first reactions to it. And then also ask some of the questions that you see here on the slide as well. So let's go ahead and play the



video, please.

**Video Transcript:**

[Adam Wolf] I've told people I'm pro-police, but I'm not pro-abuse. There's a very fine line when it comes to that.

[Cheryl] That's why Adam Wolf is so upset about the encounter, his 17 year old son, Preston, had with police yesterday afternoon. He was just standing there with his scooter when the police showed up.

[Cheryl] You can see him following police instruction when told to sit down. When the officer tried to cuff him, he tried to run away.

[Adam Wolf] For a child with autism, who doesn't like to be touched, that officer felt the need to grab him and throw him to the ground. And then after he had him on the ground, he climbed on top and he punched him in the face.

[Cheryl] Police say there was a reason for the officer to stop the teen.

[Katie Cardona, Police Representative] Vacaville officers responded to a report of a potential stabbing or an assault with a deadly weapon reported to be a knife or a pipe.

[Cheryl] According to police and Preston's father, the teenager got into a scuffle with the 16 year old boy. That teenager apparently called authorities.

[Katie Cardona] We understand the video on social media is very difficult to watch. When responding to a 911 call regarding a potential stabbing or an assault with a deadly weapon, officers were unaware at that time that this male suspect was a special needs individual.

[Cheryl] Preston's father says, things need to change.

[Adam Wolf] Not all cops are bad, but there are bad apples in every bunch. And the behavior that I saw in that video is disturbing, it's sickening, and it should've never happened.

[Cheryl] The officer involved in the encounter is still on the job as the investigation continues. Cheryl Hurd, NBC Bay Area news.

**Leigh Ann Davis:** Okay, so just with that as sort of an opening to why it's important to have training on this topic, I think I'll start with you Chief Sellon. I know that this is something that we had talked about previously as we prepared for the webinar today. But just from a parent's perspective too, I know that you probably have some ideas around the need for training. And this is one example.

**Chief Ronald Sellon:** Yeah, thanks, Leigh Ann. As you know, as we talked about before, my family had a similar incident. And again, in the conversations that I ultimately ended up having with the command staff of that organization, it spoke to the need for awareness training. It spoke to the need for the training with regards to de-escalation and recognition of the fact that, merely because someone isn't responding to you or reacting in a way that you immediately want, it's not necessarily because the fact that they're resisting or they are opposing what it is that you're asking them. They may have a sensory issue. They may have a learning disability. They may not merely understand. And what it comes down to for me is that, to Chief Scott's credit, the emphasis on community policing is critical in this arena, because the more you invest in community policing, the more you're gonna know your community. The more you know more about your community, the more connections you're gonna to have, the higher likelihood of the officers knowing, and being able to identify who is, who has disabilities.

**Leigh Ann Davis:** Thank you so much for that. And along that same lines, I know Chief Scott, you and I had talked about that too. And as a parent yourself, I mean, just, do you have any general thoughts about the video and the need for police training, seeing how situations like this can happen, and how training could make that different?

**Chief William Scott:** Yes, thank you. And good morning, everybody. I just wanna echo Chief Sellon's comments as well, because awareness is key. You heard the officer in the video speak to the officer who encountered that young man was not aware that he had developmental disabilities or intellectual disabilities. And oftentimes without the training, that awareness or the likely of that awareness taking place is greatly minimized. So awareness is key, but awareness doesn't happen without the training. So they go hand in hand. And we really do have to emphasize that awareness and training and the training can all be internal. For us, we work with our



local Arc and we've developed actually autism training with Arc here in San Francisco, The Arc of San Francisco. And it was instrumental in, really, I think, getting us to a better place with our community policing and our awareness. And the last thing I'll add is, once we implemented that training, a lot of officers who have either people in their family or children with disabilities came forward, and then that became really a force multiplier of the training itself, because they can tell their personal stories, and they have a better understanding of the issue because they live with it every day like myself. So I think they go hand in hand.

**Leigh Ann Davis:** Absolutely. Thank you, Chief Scott. And I'm wondering too, Russell, from your perspective how this scenario could go differently, what would've been more of an effective response from your perspective as a person living with autism?

**Russell Lehmann:** Yeah, I mean, great question. I think, you know, obviously we don't have much audio on that video clip but, the one thing I would say is dialogue in whatever form of communication that might mean. When I'm having a meltdown, I have had a lot of meltdowns in public and I've had very close calls with police in the past and in the recent past as well. So just watching that video was very triggering for me because one of my biggest fears is being shot by police. I have to live with that every day, because when I have a meltdown in public, just because people can't tell I have a disability because it's invisible, people think I'm this kind of crazed maniac who's just walking around and crying and having a meltdown on the floor. They don't ask questions, right? They just come to that conclusion based on face value. But I always say what you do not see is oftentimes more important than what you do see. So I would just encourage all police officers, sheriffs to ask themselves, what am I not seeing here? What might be some context behind the situation? Can I ask the question that might inform me to that context I might be missing out on? Because let's be honest, you know, every time I've had police call on me, the police didn't deserve to be there, they should have been somewhere else. We are wasting their time. We are wasting my time. Obviously in this video, there was cause for concerns, so different matter, but it all goes back dialogue. Easy, yes or no questions, 'cause individuals with autism, they have a hard time processing information when they're having a meltdown or in any kind of stressful scenario. So again, sincerity, communication, and compassion. Yeah, you can still be a police officer, but be a compassionate police officer. That's the biggest ask I have for those on the force is just be a little more compassionate and to be able to validate me, and see the struggle and suffering in my eyes in those moments, will help me be able to help them better.

**Leigh Ann Davis:** Sorry, good points. I forgot I was muted. Thank you for just kind of providing the opening and setting the stage for what we'll be talking about today. And just to note, in case you missed it, we do have a panel of one person who has autism, Russell, and then Chief Sellon and both Chief Scott are parents of children with disabilities. So I'm just so grateful that you bring that lens to this topic.

I am trying to click to the next slide and it's not letting me. So Julie, I don't know if you can help with that. [Background noise- [Man] I've told people.]

There we go, thank you. So I do just wanted to give sort of an overview of what we're talking about when we say intellectual developmental disabilities. I know it can be difficult to know what the differences are between mental health disability, and then sometimes we use cognitive disability and there's a lot of terms out there. But I want to provide some basic terminology from the disability field in case you are new to it. So developmental disability, sometimes you might see the DD, is an umbrella term that includes many diagnosis, all that start before age 22, and this is a lifelong disability. So there's no cure for a developmental disability. And it's really more of an umbrella term because it includes people that may have a physical disability and not have an intellectual disability. So it's much broader when you're thinking about types of disabilities that this could fall under.

Now, if we look at the next one called intellectual disability, this occurs also before the age of 22. There's also no cure. And it includes functioning and adaptive behaviors. But the key difference here is that anyone with an intellectual disability, their cognition is affected. So the cognitive piece of that, it's important to understand that if you're working with someone that has an intellectual disability specifically, they may need different types of accommodations or supports. And to understand that there is a difference too, between these types of disabilities and mental health disability. And we actually will share a resource about that, that you can get off of the Academic Training website a little bit later. But there is something called co-occurring disability too, where people can both. And we know that people with intellectual or developmental disabilities are more likely to have a mental health disability compared to the general population. So that's something important to keep in mind.





And then when it comes to the number of people impacted by intellectual disability, we know that between 1 to 3% of Americans have an intellectual disability. And some of the more common diagnosis that you may have heard about is autism, Down Syndrome. There's also Fragile X syndrome, and fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. And if you want more information on that, please feel free to contact me later or look this information up on our website. I wish we could go more into this, but given our time, I'm gonna move on and explain to you why it's so important that we have training on this topic, specifically for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

We know that people with these types of disabilities face the highest risk of victimization rates. And we get this data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics that looks at different types of disabilities and shows that those with cognitive do face the highest rates. And within that umbrella of cognitive disability are people with Down Syndrome, autism, dementia, learning disabilities, intellectual disability, and traumatic brain injury. So this data is pretty broad in terms of what we're looking at. But what I think it really helps us discover is that this is a population that can be much more at risk for getting into the criminal justice system. And I'm going to go ahead and look at the next slide, because not only are they at risk as victims, they're also at risk as suspects or defendants.

This data also from the Bureau of Justice Statistics shows that 2 and 10 prisoners and 3 and 10 jail inmates reported having a cognitive disability specifically. Again, we're seeing a theme because this is the most commonly reported type of disability. This really helps us key in, and thank goodness we have this data to show us that this is a population that we really want to understand as much as possible, know how to respond to, and understand what kinds of supports we can provide, especially when we have common interactions with people with disabilities.

And I'm sharing this from an International Association of Chiefs of Police model policy on IDD which is available online. And we've got the link there. This is an opportunity for us to think about what are the most common types of interactions people with IDD may have? And we know that they are often used by others to carry out criminal activity. They can be highly suggestible and easy to manipulate. They may often report suspicious or out of the ordinary behavior. So what might be an ordinary behavior for someone with autism, for example, stimming, might seem very out of the ordinary to others. And so a citizen may just report that because they're not sure about what's going on. There could be disturbances, wandering is another issue, and as well as seizures. So I wanted to pause here and just get some feedback from the panel. Are these some of the common interactions that you have seen before? And is there anything on here that you have seen fairly common that is not already on this list? We could continue our pattern, and Chief Sellon, do you wanna start?

**Chief Ronald Sellon:** Sure. So yeah, there's obviously with regards to the common interactions to wandering. Again, it all comes back to awareness and it all comes back to training, whether it be ALEC training, whether it be training through other organizations like KultureCity that specializes in sensory awareness training for first responders. It begins in that regard. But then it also, as I pointed out earlier, it has to do with knowing your community and connecting with, for instance, in Mansfield, we have a Special Education Parents Advisory Council, which basically works through our school systems. And working with them to identify who the children are and which children do have disabilities, so that in the event that they do want, we can establish.

**Leigh Ann Davis:** All right, great. Thank you. And Chief Scott, did you have any thoughts on this one as well?

**Chief William Scott:** Yeah, yes, I do. And I would add, those are fairly common for us as well. And again, probably Chief Sellon and I will continually reemphasize awareness and training 'cause those the first keys. But I would add the one thing that can exacerbate those common interactions. And that's when there is types of substance disorder or whether it be alcohol or some type of medication, or some type of illegal substance, narcotics, that can really take those common interactions and elevate them to a much higher level, so. And in San Francisco that is an issue for us that we have to deal with. And when possible, still awareness is a key, but then you have to also deal with the common signs of those types of intoxication or whatever, if there's drug use that are in play. And they're not independent as we would all probably agree to. I mean, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, sometimes have those issues with substance disorders. So we really have to be careful when we approach those subjects, because it can really elevate a situation. And then you still have to deal with working through the IDD, the intellectual and developmental disability issues. So it makes it more complex. And that's something that I do think we're working at too because we deal with that quite often, that we're working at to be better at. But there's, I think a lot of training in front of us in terms of combining those two worlds. I mean, right now we have an opioid crisis in this country and it goes across all walks of life. So that's something that I would like to flag for the group and definitely discussions that we need to explore further, I believe.



**Leigh Ann Davis:** That is a great point, Chief Scott, and I'm so glad you raised that because that's something we have to talk about needing more research on, is this crossover of people with intellectual developmental disabilities who are also addicted to substances or use substances. Do we have enough resources to do the types of research and know the kinds of treatment that really are accessible to this population? So I'm so glad you raised that. Thank you.

And then Russell, I didn't know if you had anything to add to this one as well.

**Russel Lehmann:** I would just chime in to Chief Scott's point of kind of recognize the distinction between what might be use of drugs, or what might be otherwise for me, like stimming behavior when I have... Again, most of my encounters, traumatic encounters in public with police have been when I have a meltdown in public. And a form of stimming when I have a meltdown is I'll either pound my chest or hit myself in the head because my brain is inflamed and the mental agony is so much that I'm not hitting myself to be violent, or I'm not hitting the ground to be violent. I would rather have a distraction of the physical pain rather than what's going on up here. So oftentimes when I do train officers and I describe to them the worst of my meltdowns, I would ask them, well, what would your first thought be if you saw someone acting in such a behavior? And they often say, I would think you were on some kind of drug. And again, when I have a meltdown, the amygdala flame when you have autism, you're in a constant state of fight or flight. So there is that appearance that you are running on adrenaline. So just to be able to kind of learn more about the substance abuse and again, what might a meltdown might consist of in regards to autism would be very beneficial for preventing any unnecessary, stressful and traumatic encounters.

**Leigh Ann Davis:** Great, thank you for that. So let's now go to, we're in a situation where an officer actually comes into contact with someone that they think might have an intellectual or developmental disability. And I know one of the things we talked about together previously is what would be that first step? And Chief Scott, I know you raised the need to really, before we even think about identification, think about assessing the situation. So do you wanna just speak to the importance of situational awareness, especially as it relates to this population?

**Chief William Scott:** Yeah, absolutely. Thank you, Leigh Ann. And I just wanna thank Russell for his comments because hearing that really kinda really put into, I think, a very tighter and more succinct context of what I was trying to say. So Russell, thank you for that. So on this issue, assessing this situation, again, going back to training, in San Francisco, and I think many departments do what we're doing in terms of crisis intervention training, or we may call it crisis response training in some departments. But really the fundamental concept is to slow things down so you have more time to assess. We use the concepts time and distance, get time and distance. You know, Russell's example where how he copes with whatever he's dealing with and the pounding on the head, a lot of officers might think that that's a sign of some type of substance usage or whatever. But if you are able to put yourself in a tactical position to slow things down and not over commit, open a line of communications, you have more time to have that dialogue with a person to get an understanding of what's going on. And then we have to be good listeners. And that's a part of our training. Police officers are trained to take command of situations, particularly chaotic situations. And sometimes that taking command and getting control of the situation can really overshadow the need to listen to what people are saying. And we have to be able, as we take command of a chaotic situation, and try to ensure everybody's going to be safe, we have to listen. So slowing it down, keep some separation, time and distance are things that really in policing today that many departments, including ours have gone to. And what we are seeing is better outcomes, much better outcomes. In San Francisco outcomes with those types of calls of people in crisis, rarely result in use of force because we've implemented that specific mode of training, is called crisis intervention training, which is in total about 50 hours of training. It's a lift to get everybody the department training, but it's something that we're committed to because we're seeing the better outcomes, we're seeing better interactions. And it is worth every hour of training and every dollar that we invest in it.

**Leigh Ann Davis:** Thank you so much. And asking that all important question, what's really going on? And I think one of you already mentioned that. But having that mindfulness of awareness and building that into these interactions is so important. So let's say that we've assessed the situation and now we're moving on to identification. So we're thinking there could possibly be a disability. So these are some tips for identification that officers can think about when it comes to this population specifically. And I wanted to see... Chief Scott, I know we had talked about under stress that it can be harder for people with intellectual disability to respond. So has that been something that you've seen yourself or are these identification tips something that you have used before?

**Chief William Scott:** Yes, yes. Both questions I will answer yes. I mean, even in my personal life with my own son and I have of other



people in my family with disabilities. Under stress, it makes the situation, I believe on both sides, more stressful. And in terms of my son, when he is under stress, he has difficulty communicating. So, as a parent, I have to kind of back off sometimes and take the temperature down a little bit. And again, that's a part of awareness. And I think my training at work helped me with that. But at work I've been in that situation many times. And if you can afford yourself the luxury of time by using the proper tactics and keeping a distance where you don't have to react, where you're not put in a situation where you have to react or overreact, it does give you an opportunity to assess those tips, the identification tips that you have on the screen here. And we have to also understand that. And I know, Leigh Ann, you and I talked about technology and how important that is to this issue and with autonomy. I mean, many particularly adults with disability who have the technology, whether it be a cell phone or some type of assistive technology, listening devices, officers, sometimes in the spirit of keeping themselves and others safe, for instance, will make people drop what's in their hands because we're taught, the hands are what kill, right? So if you see something in the hands and you're not sure what it is, and let's say it's a cell phone, and I would go back to my son, I mean that cell phone is his lifeline. So without knowing that if I'm an officer and I approach somebody like him and tell him to drop their cell phone or put their cell phone, or somehow I confiscate that cell phone, it's going to elevate that situation. And being able to communicate and understand number one, that you're dealing with a person with intellectual or developmental disabilities, and they may need assistance through those types of technologies is really, really key. And for an officer, we have to be more patient. Again, the tactics are everything. We have to have some consider on using those types of tools and technology to communicate better and to lead us to better outcomes. So I think all those things are key, but it all goes back to awareness, creating space to have a conversation, and then making that proper assessment.

**Leigh Ann Davis:** Great, thank you Chief Scott. And I'm wondering too, Chief Sellon, if these types of identification tips, if these have come in handy for you, or maybe if there's even something missing on here.

**Chief Ronald Sellon:** You know, Chief Scott just gave us a lot to discuss and correct when it comes to ALEC training. Oftentimes what I find is that, and again, I just wanna throw this out there that we use the phrase law enforcement a lot, but I think that that's a bit of misnomer because I think that that really narrows the field of exactly what it is that we do. And our job, it comes back to what our job is. And generally what some people believe. And this is the philosophy that I'm trying to stay out of our profession is that they believe our job is merely to show up, demand compliance with the law and then disappear. And the reality is, is that our job is to produce outcomes for people that make their lives easier. And that means at times, what we need to do is take a look at our own basic response model, the culture of the organization, whether or not we're establishing training that really emphasizes things like, listen, give the person space. I tell police officers that, what's the first thing that you are gonna do when you show up to a barricaded hostage situation? You're gonna create space and you're gonna slow the situation down, allow everybody to calm down. I said, so why not simply do the same exact thing when you're dealing with every other person that you interact with? What do you have to lose by creating space and slowing the situation down and allowing yourself and that person, the opportunity to recognize each other as human beings? And quite frankly, the intricacies that come along with that and identifying whether or not that person has an intellectual or developmental disability that you can (indistinct), that you can again, tweak your response to be a little bit more nuanced to the situation.

**Leigh Ann Davis:** Absolutely, thank you so much for that. And Russell, did you have anything to add on this one as well?

**Russell Lehmann:** Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I think, when it comes to identification, body language says a lot, right? I think we really need to be more aware of the individual's body language and our own body language, if you're a police officer, right? I think standing over somebody when, you know, if I'm having a meltdown and an officer stands over me, well, that's probably not the best thing, right? Try to picture yourself in their shoes. That connection through empathy of when you have a stressful moment as an officer or anybody on the scene, how would you like to be treated, right? So space is a big one. If I'm on the ground having a meltdown, or just sitting on a curb, put yourself on my level, crouch down. Obviously, gimme some space. But again, it's about that human connection. You wanna start feeling like you're again, sincere in being there. And again, like what Chief Scott said about his son and the cell phone, you know. I can picture myself with certain inanimate objects that mean a hell of a lot to me because they bring me comfort. And in a heightened moment of stress, if the cop told me to, if I was holding my pillow, right? I just like comfort pillow. If they told me to drop that, I wouldn't be able to drop it. I really wouldn't. Even if I was cognizant fact that I might get hurt if I didn't, I still would not do it because it means that much to me. So again, just taking into awareness, the totality of the situation and how do we do that? We go in being curious about a situation, leaving our preconceived notions behind, obviously taking training and education into account. But





always being curious, always asking questions, whether it be to yourself or the individual to make the most sense out of the situation at hand.

**Leigh Ann Davis:** That's excellent. And I think that's a great lens to use as we think about identification. And I just wanted to mention them. The first one we talked about was difficulty communicating or expressing themselves. That might be something you see. We already mentioned easily influenced. People may want to hide their disability as well, and even make real effort to cover it up. And that can be really a difficult situation when you're trying to help someone and trying to know what their needs are. But one of the things you can do, and we'll talk about that in a minute, but you don't have to ask specifically about, do you have a disability? But you can say, how can I help you? Or what do you need? And you can get to some of the same kinds of responses in terms of just knowing what that person needs first and mentioning that. Someone may be unresponsive. I think Chief Sellon, you mentioned that some may actually run away from the police altogether, and that can really look not good. So, considering why is this person running and may not make eye contact. But I do wanna mention that this is a case by case. You can't say everyone with a disability is going to fit in these categories every time. But we just wanna provide some general understanding around this so that officers can get an idea of what they might wanna look out for when they're thinking someone may have a disability.

We all also included in this slide, some questions that that can be asked to get, again, to that question such as, is there anything you wanna tell me? Or ask, have you been in special education classes? How does the person support themselves? For example, you ask, do you receive SSI? And then asking about the identification card, but that is very... You want to be very careful with that to make sure that the individual feels safe about getting that card out and that they know nothing's going to happen. We know in the disability field that when people with disabilities have been trained around using these cards, they may go ahead and grab for something and the officer doesn't know what they're going for. So we try to make sure that both sides are trained about how to use these kinds of tools. And then some more tips for communication now that we're kind of went from identifying to communicating. A lot of these, you have already mentioned, actually, in terms of taking that extra time, speaking slowly and clearly using that simple language, and picture symbols, communication boards. Chief Scott, you already brought up the technology. So looking at the apps that can be used for that as well. It's important to ask if a support person is available. And I know that already the chapters of The Arc have been raised in both of your communities. And then assisting in filling out forms as needed. And making sure that whenever a person is coming in contact with the system, whether it's an officer or going into the police stations, or wherever they're going, that they're provided those accommodations and supports that they need. I'm just wondering Chief Sellon, on this one, you had talked about before that it's important to provide these kinds of supports. You wanna just mention anything on this slide specifically?

**Chief Ronald Sellon:** Yeah, so in specific, I would just also add the fact that a call on local disability agencies like the local chapters of The Arc. I can tell you that The Arc of Bristol county here in Massachusetts, The Arc Noble County can be incredibly helpful for us. But I would also suggest strongly that agencies begin creating co-responder programs that help them fit solutions to these problems on a broader scale. And by that, I mean going to create, and when you do, create a bond program. Find an organization that is local, find an organization that is regional, and then find an organization that is national, that can almost act as compounders and filters and expand resources. Because your local chapter is going to have much more hands on local. So for instance, around our area, we have the Doug Flutie Foundation which has been incredibly helpful in getting certain technologies for children that have a habit of running away, and facilitating getting resources to families. We also have The Arc, and then there are other organizations as well. But each one of those, having that local, regional, and then national organization that you partner with expands your scope of resources. And it also expands the network of subject matter experts that you can bring in to inform your first responders so that when they do respond, they have somebody that they can reach out to on any given point.

**Leigh Ann Davis:** All great points, thank you. And that actually leads well into what you all have already discussed today, but this all important tips for de-escalation. So, we've kind of gone through assessing the situation. And then we talked about identifying, if someone might have an intellectual or developmental disability. We touched on communication tips. And so now we're at that piece of looking at de-escalation, if something has escalated. How do we start to address that for people with IDD specifically? And some of the things that we had talked about before were identifying triggers. If something might be a trigger for someone and applying that situational awareness. Also thinking about how you can use the environment to your advantage, and then as well as the training and education piece that you've all talked about. So I'm wondering Chief Scott about the situational awareness or how to use the environment to your advantage. Did you wanna speak to any of those?



Oh, you're on mute. Wait, we can't hear you. There we go.

**Chief William Scott:** I'm sorry. Good, thank you. [**Leigh Ann Davis:** No problem.] Thank you.

No, what I would add to, and this is something that Chief Sellon mentioned as well is support persons. So support, because many, many people with intellectual disabilities or development disabilities, oftentimes whether it be a family member or a friend, or they're in an environment where there is a support network, oftentimes they will have a support person. And part of the recognition that, number one, that we're engaging and we're encountering a person with intellectual disabilities or developmental disabilities, part of that training is, that they do oftentimes have a support network. So whether that support person is on scene or can be reached by telephone or is close enough where they can come in and help support that person, that's a really important component of de-escalation. And oftentimes in policing, we try to oftentimes sterilize the situation, and the less people, the more you have to deal with. But it is counterintuitive to how we train actually. In this situation, we really have to kind of go against our training. For many of us, anyway, at least when I came in, that's how I was trained. We have to go against that intuition and bring in others to support this situation and support the person that we're encountering. It can be very, very effective and very helpful. And as the Chief said, we do this oftentimes with barricaded situations, if we can do it. And there's rules of the game and engagement when we do use a support person. But I think that can be very helpful. And then the other thing I would say in terms of tips for de-escalation, we talked about technology, but we haven't yet talked about ambulatories for people with physical disabilities and developmental disabilities that cause physical aids to be needed. Oftentimes that can be a trigger. And if you recognize that, for instance, if somebody has, let's say a walking mobility device that an officer says, oh, this can be used as a weapon, which is not uncommon. And so that's taken away. That can be enormous trigger. And we have to recognize those things. And oftentimes once the situation is static, and we understand that there are no weapons, no guns, no knives, or the person is not going to use that mobility device against us or anybody else, we have to consider, well, they need it, let's give it back to 'em and let's de-escalate 'cause that piece is really an easy piece. And we see that oftentimes with mobility devices. And I offer that up for part of an ongoing model that should be included in our training, in our conversations.

**Leigh Ann Davis:** Excellent, excellent point. Thank you so much for raising that because the disability community folks have often said that's a part of them. The advice that is needed and for that to be taken away, it can cause real concern. So that is a great point that you raise. And whether a person has a physical disability or an intellectual developmental disability, we know that people who are more prone to need those kinds of things. So it really does apply to people with disabilities across the board. And I think the more that we can speak to those issues and look at how people with disabilities in general need these types of accommodations, the more kind of a universal approach we can take to the topic overall. So I'm so glad you raised that. Thank you for that. And then Russell, I think that this is probably something you're familiar with, the triggers.

What in your mind would really be helpful in terms of de-escalation from your viewpoint?

**Russell Lehmann:** Yeah, from my viewpoint, I'd love if every police officer, every CIT team, every fire fighter, social worker that is on the scene has some kind of kit in their car, you know, whether that be a soft ball I could squeeze when I'm having a meltdown or essential oils, or a pair of headphones that I might not have on me at the moment. Keep like a sensory kit in your vehicle so you can help de-escalate a situation. Also speaking from my own personal perspective, individuals with autism are much more likely to have mental health comorbidity. So in terms of mental disabilities, when I have a meltdown, my OCD comes into play, my depression, anxiety, PTSD, and all those will come into play too in the background, so to speak. So if I can have a squeezey ball so I can squeeze in a certain number of times so my OCD comes down a little bit, and it's used as a stim, that will help me soothe myself, right? And so there are various ways you can de-escalate the situation. And again, you can also ask the individual about their hobbies. There are certain things that most individuals on the spectrum take great comfort in certain things with whether it's a TV show, whether it's a phone, whether it's my pillow, right? Things that will bring them almost instant comfort in the moment of stress, whether that's showing them a picture of their favorite cartoon character, or playing one of their favorite songs on your overhead speakers. There's many things that can help ease the situation at hand until you get perhaps another person on the scene, such as the individual's mom or a local disability agency, or just a CIT team.

**Leigh Ann Davis:** Great tips. And I saw in the chat, everyone saying what a great tip. So yes. And we have seen these kinds of sensory kits really come onto the scene in terms of being something that's been useful. I would love to see us do some research on that and see



what types of responses are really the most effective when it comes to encounters with police. So maybe that's something we should think about as a research agenda in the field to add to. And then Chief Sellon, I know this was one of the key points that you raised just around the environment, how to use the environment to your advantage, and the importance of police executives to really support this. So I was hoping you might speak to those issues.

**Chief Ronald Sellon:** Yeah. So I think that any situation, obviously culture begins at the top and it depends on what you reinforce, right? So there's a number of things. First of all, it has to do with who you hire. Second of all, it has to do with what you value. And third of all, it has to do with also supporting those initiatives. So, if you say, we're gonna emphasize de-escalation, we're gonna emphasize de-escalation, but yet you don't put your money where your mouth is. I think it was, you know, once upon a time President Biden said, if you wanna show me where your priorities are, I'll just show me your budget and I'll show you where your priorities are. And realistically, it comes down to, you know, it starts at the top. It has to do with the culture, it has to do with what your office, what your executives promote and what they emphasize. So if you spend all of your time sending all of your cops to SWAT training or you spend more time on the range, then you do in ALEC training, or with an organization like KultureCity and other various sensory awareness training situations, then you're doing yourself a disservice as an executive.

**Leigh Ann Davis:** And on that note, when you say ALEC, do you all explain what ALEC training is? Or do you remember what it stands for?

**Chief Ronald Sellon:** Yeah, so ALEC training is autism. (Leigh laughs) Any of the acronyms you wanna throw out while we're here?

**Leigh Ann Davis:** Autism Awareness for Law Enforcement.

**Chief Ronald Sellon:** I believe it's Autism Law Enforcement Education Coalition training, or something. I'm almost positive that that's what the less word is for.

**Leigh Ann Davis:** Can you just tell us a little bit more about it?

**Chief Ronald Sellon:** Sure. So ALEC training is essentially, it's training on recognizing both the elements of various intellectual and developmental disabilities, as well as giving officers tools to identify individuals that they are encountering that their non-compliance, again, and I'm gonna keep harping on this. Their non-compliance is not related to a...

**Leigh Ann Davis:** I think we may be losing sound or am I the only one? Can everyone...

**Russell Lehmann:** I can't hear him either.

**Leigh Ann Davis:** Uh-oh! Chief Sellon, I think we're...

**Chief Ronald Sellon:** Sorry.

**Leigh Ann Davis:** You wanna try again?

**Chief Ronald Sellon:** Yeah, so do you hear me now?

**Leigh Ann Davis:** Yes

**Chief Ronald Sellon:** Okay, so sorry about that. Training is essentially, it's giving officers the tools to be able to identify when people have intellectual or developmental disabilities and then giving them the ability to recognize that, and then also alternative responses that they can apply in those situations.

**Leigh Ann Davis:** Thank you. I know you've mentioned a few really good resources, so I wanna make sure people hear what those are. And then of course, we can provide that. If you have questions for any of the panelists, we can follow up and provide any of these resources for you as well. And thank you. Someone may have put it in the chat. So it's always great to have people helping out in the chat as well. So now that we talked about the steps, this is one of the things that we've provided through our Pathways to Justice training through the National Center here. It was a wallet card that we provided after going through the training that law enforcement would get to think about how to spot, what is often a hidden disability and three steps to consider. One is to look deeper. So it's everything you all said, you know, pause, if you can, and look deeper and think about could there be a hidden disability, 'cause they're not necessarily identified by behaviors. They're identified by behaviors and not appearance. And then secondly, to slow down and to



call a supervisor or support person, if possible. And then ask yourself what is really going on here? How could disability be playing a role? So a lot of it is just that awareness of considering how someone's cognition, or the impact of how they experience their surroundings could be playing a role in how you're interacting with them. And it seems like as officers that can be really hard when it's so fast paced and you're having to make decisions so quickly. So I'm wondering if you could just speak to these different steps. Is this something you think would be helpful for officers to use? Is there something missing here? And is this realistic, to have officers to be able to look deeper, slow down and ask themselves these questions? And it could be that it's not necessarily doing it right there in the moment, but through training, have this ready to go and be thinking about this before, you know, an officer is in a situation involving someone with an intellectual disability. So Chief Scott, you wanna start?

**Chief William Scott:** Sure. Sure. Make sure I'm not muted at this time. I think it's a great list and I think it's a great start. One thing that I would add maybe between, or in number two, as far as slow down, before you call, I mean, as a part of implementing training, we have to train officers to ask the question to the person. Do you have a support person? And I mean, I know it goes without saying, you gotta figure out how to get that information first. But I think in terms of training and routinizing this type of response, asking the question as to whether a person has this support, staff person is a necessity because many, and I'll go back to my personal situation with my son. I don't think he would offer or volunteer that situation in a context of him and encountering a police officer. He would probably be too scared or stressed out, even though he's been around policing all his life. So it doesn't necessarily scare him in that way. But I think in an interaction, if he's in a car and we're not there, his parents or siblings and he's stopped, I don't know that he would say, can you call my support person? So asking the question, I think is vital to getting to that point. So I would add that.

**Leigh Ann Davis:** Thank you so much. And Chief Sellon, is there anything you would add to it or any thoughts on it?

**Chief Ronald Sellon:** Yeah, the one thing I would also add is that when you're looking at helping and assisting officers in spotting hidden disabilities, I can't emphasize enough the value of having a social worker on staff within a police department that's working with police officers, and also an embedded mental health clinician that is working with the officers. Because the more time that they spend, even just riding around in a patrol car, those officers are gonna learn things through osmosis, just by talking to both of those type of individuals. And adding them to the roster of a police department and helping facilitate the response overall is going to make your response model as a police executive, more effective in the long run.

**Leigh Ann Davis:** Great points. Thank you so much for that. And the last part we wanted to end on was some emerging issues. So thinking about the future of policing and how it intersects with people with this type of disability, and these are some of the key points that we had raised previously, as we spoke together about it. One, I think Chief Sellon, this was your point around community policing and co-response programs, which you just mentioned. But did you wanna go over some of these key points that you had raised?

**Chief Ronald Sellon:** Yeah, sorry about that. So I had a second to try and find the mute button. Again, it has to do with the evolution of community policing and co-responder programs. I believe that, oftentimes it's a misnomer in our profession, that community policing is what we do between calls for service. When the reality is, is that community policing should be the absolute driving force behind your entire operation model. And identifying your core constituents in your community, which is any group of people that meet on a regular basis or of particular needs, establishing relationships with those core constituencies. And then basically establishing, I like to say a more multi-tiered disciplined and nuance response model that can actually is a little more tailored to the needs of the communities once you get a better idea of who you have in your community, I'd also add the fact that adding a therapy dog to our SRO model has been incredibly helpful as well. I could tell you that, my own son has a hard time with transitions. And obviously kids in the morning have a very, very difficult time transitioning from home to school. And that Bentley, our therapy dog is generally available at every bus that is dropping kids off and at the drop off in the morning. And I can tell you that he has made on one hand, kids days start off easier. And then secondarily, as the day goes on, he's an excellent engagement, I don't wanna call him a tool, but he's an excellent engagement tool the facilitates kids actually approaching our SROs. And talking to them and petting Bentley but he's also available with stuff like that. The other element I would say is, when it comes to officer wellness, it's implementing these type of changes are going to help officers long-term mental health as well because the officers I tell you, oftentimes get frustrated when they don't have resources to help them solve problems that they face regularly.

**Leigh Ann Davis:** Great points. Thank you so much. And I noticed in the chat, someone said therapy cats too. So we don't wanna discriminate between dogs and cats. Cats can also be very helpful in the situations. I don't know how easy it is to take them with you



when you're going out, but that's something to think about. And then Chief Scott, I know you had mentioned the piece of technology. Was there anything else you wanted to add here on this point?

Oh, you're muted. You're still muted.

**Chief William Scott:** I'm sorry. Yeah, nothing else to add on technology. I think it covers the gamut of the things that are emerging. Particularly, the locative technology really important. As was said earlier in the presentation wandering is an issue and that locative technology and it's so available now. I mean, you can go to your local retail store, Costco, you name the place, and whether it be the eye tags or other technologies, is so available now. I think we really do ourselves well to take advantage of that when it comes to dealing with some of the encounters with intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities.

**Leigh Ann Davis:** Great, thank you. And I was actually going to mention the issue of wandering and technology because we're working on a project right now with the International Association of Chiefs of Police which I will mention right now. Did you see how I did that? So through the Kevin and Avonte's Law, that was enacted in 2018, it provides funding to law enforcement and public safety agencies to implement locative technologies with regard to children and also adults who wander. And so, we've got the website here if you're interested to learn more about the technology that is currently being used. One of the roles that we play at The Arc of the United States is to make sure that we bring the concerns just around autonomy, in making sure that people with disabilities do have their own autonomy, can make decisions, are supported in making decisions around whether or not that they want to use a tracking device once they've become adults.

And so these are some of the interesting things we're talking about right now, and we're going to have a webinar, I believe it's May 9th on this topic. So let us know if you're interested in that. Briefly wanted to mention one our training. Our kind of signature training is called Pathways to Justice. And what this does is provide a one day training that's completely focused on people with intellectual and developmental disability. And we create a disability risk sponsor team as a first step. And work with that team to provide a one day training at your location, and then provide ongoing technical assistance once a plan is in place about how to address maybe specific issues in your community on that. Throughout the country, we have 15 disability response teams in 12 different states, and we are continuing to provide training, and so grateful for the Bureau of Justice Assistance who provided the seed money to start this way back in 2013. And I wanted to go ahead and let you know about some other resources available for download.

So I think we mentioned these earlier, but if you go to the [www.informedpoliceresponses.com](http://www.informedpoliceresponses.com), you will find these two pagers, so nice and short. One is focused on mental health conditions and developmental disabilities. You know, why is important to know the difference between the two. And Chief Scott, you just gave me an idea. We should have one around substance use as well. So maybe we'll pick that one on the list 'cause that's a great one. But that kind of provides an understanding of the two different disabilities side by side, but also knowing that they can be co-occurring.

And then the second one that we created is called Developmental Disabilities: What Law Enforcement Officers Need to Know. So a lot of this, probably what you've heard today, you'll see in this resource document that can be useful for training purposes and just to have handy. And this is the project today that brought you this webinar. And if you want to see more of our resources, not only the two pagers we just showed you, but other resources as well, you can go to the websites here. And as we wrap up, though, I wanted to give everyone an opportunity to sort of give their final takeaway or what would be your key takeaway that you would like for everyone to hear from you today about this topic.

And Chief Scott, you look unmuted. So I'm gonna start with you.

**Chief William Scott:** Well, first of all, I really wanna thank you Leigh Ann and everybody that helped put this together because this is really important work. And the one of the take aways, although I don't know if any of us said the word, it's been talked about and talked around, it's collaboration. This is a collaborative process. And I go back to, I think what we all have said, is that it takes not just the police department changing training and culture and those things, but we really have to open ourselves up as police officials and executives to the thoughts and ideas of our respective communities, and then work together to make this as good as we can make it in terms of how we interact, how we encounter, how we deal with it, 'cause the bottom line, I think what we all want is good outcomes, good communications, people to be safe. So I'm gonna stress my final thought to just reiterate the need for collaboration is more than it ever has been before, particularly for our world, for those of us that have decided to make policing our lifelong profession.





**Leigh Ann Davis:** Excellent. Thank you so much, Chief Scott, and it is hard to believe we didn't use that word. I don't think we did yet. So that's a perfect word to keep in our minds as we think about working with local agencies and people with the developmental disabilities themselves. That collaboration piece is so, so important. So Chief Sellon, what do you got for us?

**Chief Ronald Sellon:** So, I'm gonna piggyback on the good Chief Scott's statements with regards to collaboration. And I'm gonna also add outreach because what we're talking about here, often times when you're talking about people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their family units, by the way. They are oftentimes the people with the least amount of free time to be able to look for resources for themselves and for their family members. They're also most likely the least likely to reach out to you. Because I can't tell you how often in my career I've heard from work colleagues that well, if so, and so needs help, they'll call us. No, they won't. It's up to us to identify who they are in our communities.

Like Chief Scott just pointed out; collaborate, outreach, and most importantly, develop a culture of empathy and understanding regarding the specific needs to you.

**Leigh Ann Davis:** Excellent, excellent points. Thank you so much. And I love the, when you say it that way, it sounds so proactive. And I think that that's what is important about that is understanding that families or people with disabilities don't necessarily know what to do or, or how to do it, or like you said, don't have time. And thinking about that proactive piece of it is so important. That is really powerful. Thank you.

And then Russell, I think we'll end with you for your final thoughts and takeaways.

**Russell Lehmann:** Yeah, I guess my final thought will... You know, I'm a motivational speaker, I'm a poet. So my final thought is gonna be in the form of a short spoken word poem. I took this from an article I wrote for Psychology Today that I think Julie can drop into the chat, if anybody's interested in reading my article on invisible disabilities and police encounters.

But I'm just gonna wrap it up with a spoken word poem titled "Triggered."

Triggered, don't put your triggers, zero neurotransmitters function when my brain's on fire, rapid snaps fire, officer don't fire. This is my shore circuit court of appeal, that when I short circuit, I'll plead for a deal. Show my hands, I need you to lend me yours. The current hand I've been dealt is raw. Don't make this any worse. I'm in pain. I can't hear your (beep) command to my disdain. I'd explain, but I really can't. I'm on the ground. You say stand up, I don't understand. Back against the wall, my brain's a wall leaving my body unmanned. So here I am hitting myself in the head. While my OCD kicks my ass I'm wishing I was dead. I pound my chest and scream and curse you, you would think I was possessed, but trust me when I say I'm just frustrated at this mess of a life. Here I am again under duress. I'm so over the stress of being placed under arrest by my mind, call it the mastermind 'cause I'm just along for the ride, the Bonnie to its Clyde. Understand that my innocence in no sense is a cause for concern or your self-defense. I may appear in censor at the very least tense. Hell, I may be a public speaker, but right now my autism presents. What I need is just for words, a simple, what can I do? How can I help? Or hey, are you okay? A gentle tone, not too stern. Be sincere in what you say. Keep the question simple so I can respond yay or nay. You see your goal is to get me to sheriff, you have compassion intentions as a copper sheriff. Your training and education will transform the vehicle (beep) necessary. Empathy is a vehicle in which you're training in education will drive us both home instead of down to the station. My apologies.

**Leigh Ann Davis:** That was actually impressive. I don't know that I could have gone that far actually.

**Russell Lehmann:** It's a brand new poem too, and we're running outta time. So I had to rush it. - That was so good.

**Leigh Ann Davis:** You're already getting a lot of comments about how good that was and how creative, and important it is that we use our creativity to bring these messages across from different ways. And we really do thank you, Russell, for the work that you've put in to help just broaden the understanding around these issues. And also in a way that we can sit down and have a conversation about it and do that in a balanced way. So thank you so much for that. And thank you to all of our panelists today for being here and being willing to bring yourself into this conversation, your lived experience as a person with a disability, and as a parent. And I think that that's what really makes the difference, when we start talking about strategy, solutions, and long term, like sustainability around really providing hope in these situations. So we thank you for that. And I think now if we have time for questions, we might have a little bit of time. But I'll hand it over back to, I'm not sure who for Q&A, is that you Mike?



**Mike Hatch:** Yeah, there's about five minutes left. There's a couple questions in here. One is, any tips on gaining buy-in from county departments who are not fully engaged or interested in engaging in, this is specific to CIT training.

**Leigh Ann Davis:** So yeah, I think that's a great question for... Chief Scott, you wanna take that one? How to help with that buy-in piece?

**Chief William Scott:** Sure, I don't know if this is a tip, but my recommendation is be patient and have vision for the long term game, because it is not an overnight process for those cities or departments or counties that are starting from scratch. I mean, for us, it took years to get to where we are and we still have work to be done. So a lot of patience, a lot of collaboration, and I'm gonna go back to that and really have a plan of where you want to get to. I mean, I think it's easier to get buy-in when people can agree upon a common vision and a common goal of where we wanna get to. So it's really important to set that up from the start. What do we want? Better outcomes, better training, better collaboration, better communication, whatever the wants are. If you can create a common vision, you got I think, a better chance of getting there.

**Mike Hatch:** Thanks, Chief. Another question. Ramona Lumpkin asks, are recovery to peer coaches ever considered to assist?

**Leigh Ann Davis:** I love that question. So you're talking about like recovery peer to peer support? I think that's the question. One of the things that we've been talking about within the National Center here is how we can work with mental health field to ensure that people with IDD can be part of responding as well, and can be peer to peer support coaches. So we're looking at how can we work with the existing system within mental health, and bring people with IDD into peer to peer support, and in a way that can get paid for what they're doing as well, providing their expertise, providing what they know, how to talk to people with intellectual developmental disabilities, their own lived experience. And that's something that really isn't happening yet. So for anyone who wants to talk more about that, I'm all ears and looking at how we can bring folks with IDD more to the table around these issues.

**Mike Hatch:** And the final question in our Q&A here is, what are some barriers to training for the officers who are the boots on the ground? And is training process procedures set and enforced by local jurisdictions?

**Chief William Scott:** I can take a stab at that as well. That some of the barriers are time, time constraints. I mean, I don't know of any department that has all the resources that they probably would like to have. And when you have to take officers out of the field to training, it's worth it. Don't get me wrong here. I mean, please hear me clearly, it's worth every second and every dollar we spend on training. But there are pressures with trying to keep your deployment where it needs to provide the basic level of public safety calls to service. And as Chief Sellon said earlier, and we always should be working from a framework of community policing which takes time too, during calls and in between calls, and officers' available time. So training when they're in training, our CIT training alone is 50 hours. So taking an officer out of the field for basically an entire work we convince 'em is a really heavy lifts. So that's one of the barriers. The other, I think, in some jurisdictions, particularly after 2020, and the incident involving Mr. Floyd, Mr. George Floyd, there were a lot of our community partners, at least in our region, in our city, that really had a hard time engaging with police for a while. And that's starting to turn around now, but people were so upset at just that incident. And I think there was a rippling effect, and it really did strain some of our relationships, and relationships that we had had for a long time. So I do see a reset in that, but policing is volatile. These type of incidents happen from time to time and we really have to weather those storms and make sure that we have to take care of those things and address them when they happen. But we have to keep focus on this type of work to make sure that outside distractions don't interfere and cause barrier to this type of important work.

**Mike Hatch:** Thanks Chief and we'll close out with that. And I can't thank all of our panelists enough for taking time out of your day. This has been one of the most informative webinars I've ever been a part of. So I can't thank you all enough for providing your expertise. Russell, you knocked it out of the park, my friend. You did a great job with your poem there. The comments are blowing up in the chat. So nicely done to you. Thank you again to all of our wonderful, amazing panelists. And on behalf of the Academic Training to Inform Police Responses, the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the University of Cincinnati, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, The Arc of the United States, and Policy Research Associates, please move forward, take this training. And hopefully there's a lot of really good information that you're able to get in the chat. There was incredible amount of conversation in there. And this webinar will be available, the recording will be available in the coming days for your review. There was a lot of questions about that. So thank you, everybody. Have a great day.



**Chief William Scott:** Thank you, everybody. Bye-bye.

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