

Yurok Tribal Police Department, local partners lead Crisis Intervention Team Training

August 7, 2023



The Yurok Tribal Police Department, in partnership with other local law enforcement agencies and public health service providers, is hosting the first-ever Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training in Del Norte County from Monday, August 7th to Friday, August 11th.

The five-day training will be led by the Yurok Tribal Police Department's CIT Coordinator Kelly Johnson, a former senior behavioral health program manager and Licensed Clinical Social Worker. The crisis intervention course will include presentations on a wide variety of topics, ranging from suicide prevention to substance use disorder recovery. Participants will learn how to recognize specific mental health disorders and how to effectively intercede when an individual is in crisis due to an intellectual disability, substance use disorder or neurodevelopmental and neurocognitive disorders, such as dementia and Alzheimer's. Tribal cultural awareness will be another key part of the intensive training. Participants will also walk away with a series of proven de-escalation strategies that aim to direct those in crisis to appropriate treatment facilities.

To reinforce the instruction, participants will engage in role playing exercises involving real-life scenarios.

"The CIT training will improve the collective understanding of crisis intervention across Del Norte County. It will also further catalyze collaboration between law enforcement and behavioral health professionals in the region," said Yurok Tribal Police Chief Greg O'Rourke, who initially proposed the idea of putting on the

training. “Additionally, people with mental health issues, disabilities or substance use disorders are often victims of crime. Connecting those in crisis with the treatment they need will reduce victimization and improve the overall health of our communities.”

The training is open to law enforcement officers, correctional officers, probation officers, dispatchers, behavioral health service providers, and other service providers that interact with people experiencing mental health crises.

The primary training topics include: mental health disorder signs and symptoms, communication, adult systems of care, working with minors, de-escalation, suicide intervention and more.

At the CIT Training, NAMI-Humboldt will facilitate a panel discussion on the lived experience of those who have mental health issues. On a regular basis, law enforcement responds to call concerning people in crisis. The primary goal of the training is to ensure that those who have problems with mental health get the help they need rather than end up in the criminal justice system.

In addition to the Yurok Tribal Police Department, the following law enforcement agencies and public health service providers are organizing the training: Crescent City Police Department, Del Norte County Sheriff’s Office, Del Norte Probation, United Indian Health Services (UIHS), Del Norte Behavioral Health, and National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) - Humboldt.

The Yurok Tribal Police Department plans to put on another Crisis Intervention Team training in six months. The dates have not yet been determined.

The Crisis Intervention Team Training Presenters include:

Chief Greg Allen - Rio Dell Police

Zahra Shine - Two Feathers Native American Family Services

Amanda Ammon - Yurok Tribe

Brie Bennett - Yurok Tribe

Dr. Chris Myers - UIHS

Smithwaters Group - Del Norte Behavioral Health Patients’ Rights Advocates

Kira Morse - North Coast Rape Crisis Team

Jacob Rosen - City of Eureka CARE Team

Wendy White - Redwood Coast Regional Center

Dr. Singh - Del Norte Behavioral Health

Dr. Kishan Lara-Cooper- CalPoly Humboldt

Isabel Fazzone - UIHS

Sgt. Martin Abshire - Retired from CHP

NAMI Lived Experience Panel - NAMI Humboldt

Dr. Firnberg - Del Norte Behavioral Health

Dr. Bayan - Waterfront Recovery Services

Commander LaFrance - Eureka Police Department

For additional information about the Crisis Intervention Training, please contact Yurok Tribal Police Department Crisis Intervention Team Coordinator Kelly Johnson at kjohnson@yuroktribe.nsn.us (707) 457-0742.