



**OKLAHOMA SHERIFFS'
ASSOCIATION**

TRAINING • TECHNOLOGY • TRADITION
SUPPORTING THE SHERIFFS OF OKLAHOMA SINCE 1991



**OKLAHOMA
Mental Health &
Substance Abuse**

**SPONSORED BY THE OKLAHOMA SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES**

INTERACTIONS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

CLEET: 21-2264

Ret. Master Sergeant Cory Sutton, Oklahoma Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services
Traci Sutton, Speech-Language Pathologist, M.S., CCC

OBJECTIVE:

Whether realized or not, law enforcement and other first responders serve the autism community on a daily basis and often in high-stress situations. A practical understanding of the disorder can mean the difference between safety and harm. This course is designed to first help officers and first responders recognize when a citizen may be on the autism spectrum. The training then provides "scenario-based" instruction to assist officers with practical application in the field through a balance of factual information, interaction tips, and de-escalation strategies.

INTRODUCTION:

On a daily basis, law enforcement officers encounter a multitude of individuals in emergency situations. Police are trained to respond to a crisis situation with a certain protocol, but this protocol may not always be the best way to interact with people with autism. Because police are usually the first to respond to an emergency, it is critical that officers have a working knowledge of autism and the wide variety of behaviors people with autism can exhibit in emergency situations. Teaching first responders the signs of autism is an important first step toward preventing unfortunate situations that may result in injury, lawsuits, disciplinary action, or even death.

Many individuals on the spectrum also suffer from one, or more, mental health issues. According to recent research, young people with autism who have serious psychiatric problems stand a ninefold greater chance of having an encounter with the police than do others on the spectrum. Moments of crisis can dramatically affect a person's mental health and how they are able to comprehend what is happening to them and around them.

Further:

- **By age 21, 1 in 5 youth with autism have been stopped and questioned by police and nearly 5% had been arrested.**
- **As many as 85% of children with autism also have some form of comorbid psychiatric diagnosis, and 35% are taking at least 1 psychotropic medication as treatment.**
- **Individuals on the spectrum with police involvement are more likely to be older, have a history of aggression, live outside the family home, and have parents with higher rates of caregiver strain and financial difficulty.**

Participants leave their sessions with a comprehensive understanding for why autism training is important and how it will play into their daily work experience.



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COURSE OUTLINE:

- What is autism spectrum disorder?
- Recognizing autism spectrum disorder in everyday contacts
- Issues faced by those on the spectrum and the people that care for them
- Wandering and the dangers involved
- Ways to interact with individuals on the spectrum in crisis
- De-escalation strategies
- Interviewing individuals on the spectrum
- Community Policing opportunities and resources
- A panel of individuals whose lives have been directly affected by autism



RECOMMENDATIONS:

In January of 2017, The U.S. Department of Justice encouraged law enforcement (and all criminal justice entities for that matter) to comply more with the Americans with Disabilities Act, specifically Title II, 42USC 12131-12134. Title II requires that individuals with disabilities are given equal treatment in the criminal justice system. <https://www.ada.gov/cjta.html>

The CDC reports that 1 in 54 children and 1 in 45 adults has autism. With this prevalence, it is critical for all first responders to learn best practices for responding to emergency situations involving a person with autism. With this training we hope to provide officers and first responders with a general understanding of this complex disorder and how to be respond and interact with citizens on the autism spectrum.

COURSE INFORMATION:

The course is an 8-hour day. It is accredited through CLEET for 8 hours of continuing education with 2 of those hours being mental health hours. It is free to attend and host the course. Multiple days can be scheduled as well. If there is a need for overnight staying, we request compensation for a room.

Attendance size is not limited; however, we do highly recommend class participation. The only requirements needed are a projector and audio (can provide our own if needed).

QUESTIONS OR SCHEDULING:

For questions or registration please contact the following:

OSA Training Director Kyle Keller
kyle@oklahomasheriffs.org
(405) 471-6049

Agency Contact

Deputy Carey Duniphin
Washington Sheriff's Office
cduniphin@countycourthouse.org
(918) 332-4076

Training hosted by:

Washington County Sheriff's Office

Training site: Tri County
Technology Center
6101 SE Nowata Rd
Bartlesville, OK 74006

Date: June 13, 2022

Time: 8:00am-5:00pm

Cost: \$20 per student

This class has been accredited by the Council on Law Enforcement Education and Training for 8 hours of mandatory continuing education with 2 of those also counting for mental health hours . Regarding any law enforcement concepts, practices, methods, techniques, products, or devices, as might be taught, promoted or otherwise espoused in outside schools or seminars, there is no intent, expressed or implied, that 'accreditation' indicates or in any way conveys 'CLEET approval' of such concepts, practices, methods, techniques, products, or devices, unless such approval is explicitly stated by CLEET.



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8 hours CLEET continuing education hours (2 mental health hours)

Free class for all attendees and to host

Class size is not limited, however we do encourage class participation



Topics include

- What is autism spectrum disorder?
- Recognizing autism spectrum disorder
- How to handle contacts with individuals on the spectrum
- The difference between tantrums and meltdowns
- Interviewing individuals on the spectrum
- Many other areas of interest

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