

# Central Mass CIT-TTAC

## Spring Newsletter Edition

Monday, May 4, 2026

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# Community Relations Liaison Issues Letter to Central Mass Stakeholders.

CIT's update letter to our stakeholders provides insight into the work we have been engaged in, along with current and future objectives.

“As we transition into the spring season, we remain focused on our continued work of delivering essential trauma-informed training to first responders throughout Central Massachusetts. Aiming to grow our training program by developing new working partnerships with the 60+ police agencies in the catchment area. Providing technical assistance in areas like policy development to reflect innovative approaches for enhanced police response.”

- Luis Portillo Reyes

## 14th Law Enforcement & Mental Health Conference

The Massachusetts Department of Mental Health will facilitate The 14th annual Law Enforcement & Mental Health conference. Taking place on June 14, 2026 over at Boston College. This is a wonderful opportunity for professionals in law enforcement and mental health to gain insight into recent developments in tactical negotiations, legal and risk-based decision-making during well-being checks, breakout sessions, and listen to various speakers.

Registration deadline is May 15, 2026

For questions regarding the conference, contact

Alison Perry  
Alison.dufault@bc.edu

# May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Every year throughout the month of May we recognize the importance of mental health. Raising awareness to reduce stigma and the promotion of resources in our communities. 1 in 5 people in the United States is living with a mental health diagnosis. Demand for mental health services has grown rapidly within the past five years. Through advocacy and education we are raising awareness on this important matter.

Chronic stress and trauma remain significantly high in the law enforcement profession. Promoting essential initiatives like confidential counseling, development of peer support, and wellness programs is already making a difference. Though considerable work to make these services ubiquitous remains a challenge. At CIT we strongly believe officer wellness is paramount and will continue to raise awareness.

Resources :

- Onsite Academy - Westminster, Ma 978-874-0177
- McLean Hospital's The LEADER Program - 617-855-3141
- Copline - 1-800-267-5463
- 988
- Massachusetts Behavioral Helpline

# Who is Taking Care of You?

**By: Lisa M. Kapacziewski, LSW**

Mental health. What is it? We all hear about it, but do we truly know what it is? *Mental health is a state of emotional, psychological, and social well-being that influences how individuals think, feel, act, and cope with life's stresses.* In other words, we all have mental health, good, bad, or otherwise. We've all been taught to take care of our own basic needs...we need to shower, wear clean clothes, brush our teeth, eat, go to the doctor to stay physically healthy...all obvious things that each and every one of us do day in and day out routinely, like clockwork.

If we are so skilled in meeting our own basic needs, why haven't we learned to meet our own basic mental health needs, to check in with ourselves every once in a while; to ensure that we have the mental preparedness to manage the daily stress that working in public service brings us. Why? Because if you are in this line of work, I guarantee you are a Helper and a Fixer. Helpers and Fixers were taught to do for others before doing for themselves. It has been ingrained in us from the beginning of time, to do what is best for the greater good; that we are tough and can handle anything. We were not taught to take a beat and check in with ourselves, if anything, we were taught that mental health is a sign of weakness, and if we did decide to check in with ourselves that we should be doing so when no one else is looking. Sounds pretty healthy, right? No wonder burn out in public service is the highest it has ever been. In law enforcement specifically, it is reported that over 53% of police officers report experiencing burnout, with over half frequently considering leaving the profession. Chronic stress affects 80% of officers, and they face nearly double the rate of PTSD, depression, and suicide compared to the general population (*Drew, J.M., Sargeant, E., & Martin, S. (2024).*)

Progress has been made in recent years since COVID and all the talk on social media, reducing stigma and bringing mental health awareness to the forefront. Society speaks more openly about mental health struggles, burnout, and self-care. We hear about it at work. We are told to practice self-care and to spread the word about mental health to those we serve. We have implemented programs and now have more resources to offer the people we interact with...of course we do, because we are Helpers and Fixers and Helpers and Fixers have the answers to everything - if we do not, we are going to find those answers for you. However, many of us who work in public service are still not accessing any of those services and taking care of ourselves. We have higher workloads, staffing shortages, more complex cases, you name it. It all builds up and if we do not put ourselves and our own mental health needs first, we cannot help anyone, never mind ourselves.

I am here to tell you that we all need to get our acts together and put ourselves first, or even second, or we will not be able to continue the work that we do safely and effectively. If we do not safeguard our own mental health, over time all those stressors build up, going ignored and overlooked and we find our own mental and emotional storage depleted. If our own cups are empty, we have nothing else to give.

### 3 Tips on Elevating your Mental Health

1. **Spend Time outdoors** - With warm weather finally here, get outdoors as much as possible. Research shows being outdoors in nature can have “improved cognitive function, brain activity, blood pressure, mental health, physical activity, and sleep.” According to a 2021 study published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health.
2. **Exercise** - No surprise here right, but many people are falling short on getting sufficient exercise. There are many benefits to regular exercise, boosting your mental health is one of them. When you engage your body in physical endurance your brain releases chemicals like serotonin and dopamine. These neurotransmitters help us by regulating our mood and allow us to think more clearly.
3. **Hydration** - The human brain is 75% water, when we are dehydrated our cognitive function is impacted. We may have difficulty concentrating or remembering things. Consider hydrating throughout the day to allow for the brain to clear waste and regulate mood. With warmer weather, dehydration can occur pretty quick.

## Past Training Session

### CIT 40 Hr. Training Session - Clark University Police Department

Jan 5 - Jan 9, 2026

The first CIT training of 2026 got underway at Clark University in Worcester, Ma. 19 participants completed 40 hours of trauma informed training. Along with learning about community resources to better support those who may be experiencing difficulty with their mental health. Thank you to Lt. Efrain Diaz for hosting us and making sure we had everything we needed to make this training a success.



CUPD Facebook Page





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Worcester Police Department Officer Angel L. Rivera debriefs with participants after the hearing voices activity.



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Congratulations to the 19 law enforcement professionals who successfully completed their CIT certification.

## **CIT 40 Hr. Training Session - Harvard Police Department**

Feb 16 - Feb 20, 2026

*“Thank you. We’re proud of our partnership with Open Sky and the Central Massachusetts CIT program. It was an honor to host the training at Harvard PD and to support the 14 officers who earned their certification. We look forward to continuing this important work together.” - Chief James Babu, MPA*



Role playing allows participants to practice their de-escalation skills. While also receiving feedback from instructors.



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Bill and Nancy Muszynski share the experience of their son living with schizophrenia. Providing them with tips to better support the individual who may be experiencing a mental health emergency.



Harvard PD comfort dog Franny made a surprise visit at our training session.



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Friday, February 20, 2026  
CIT 40 Hr. Training Session Harvard Police Department

## Meet our new Consultant

The Central Mass CIT-TTAC is pleased to introduce our newest consultant, Kayla Kuchnickil. Having taken an 8 hour CIT dispatcher training, Kayla reached out shortly after the training to express her interest in CIT.

Consultants offer incredible value to our training program by providing us with their rich perspective. Observing our training session and providing feedback that can enhance the overall quality of CIT.

“My name is Kayla Kuchnickil, I have a background in law enforcement, emergency dispatch, and behavioral health. I served as a part-time police officer for seven years and still currently working in emergency dispatch for the past eleven years.

I currently work at Youth Villages, supporting children and adolescents facing suicidal, homicidal, and behavioral challenges. This work has strengthened my passion for helping others and supporting individuals through difficult situations.

I am currently pursuing my Master’s degree in Forensic Psychology at Liberty University.

Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with my family, including my husband, who is a police officer, my step children and our dog Cooper!”

Welcome Kayla!

# Upcoming Training Sessions

## **Beyond the Badge Training with Kevin Lambert**

May 18, 2026

8 - 4

Leominster Police Department

116 Central St.

Leominster, Ma

## **CIT Recertification**

June 5, 2026

8-4

Shrewsbury Police Department

106 Maple Ave.

Shrewsbury, Ma

## **CIT 40 Hr. Training in Bellingham**

June 15-19, 2026

8-4

Bellingham Police Department

30 Blackstone St.

Bellingham, Ma

## **Mental Health First Aid**

June 18, 2026

8-4

Open Sky Community Services

4 Mann St.

Worcester, Ma

To register for any of our training sessions, please visit our website.

- [Www.Openskycs.org/services/cit.html](http://Www.Openskycs.org/services/cit.html)

## By the Numbers

**135** *INDIVIDUALS TRAINED*  
*BY CENTRAL MASS CIT SINCE JANUARY*

**8** *TRAINING SESSIONS*

**6** *HOSTING POLICE DEPARTMENTS*

# Acknowledgments

Our incredible presenters make CIT possible, helping to deliver trauma informed training to first responders throughout our catchment area. The diverse group of presenters bring knowledge, experience, and energy to every training session. They include former and current law enforcement, clinicians, psychologists, and those with lived experience.

Officer Angel L. Rivera  
Nicole Mason, MS  
Amanda DaSilva Rizoli, MSW, LCSW  
Ret. Chief Douglas Wyman Jr.  
Silvia Woodget, M.Ed, LADC I  
Dr. Rachel Schein, PsyD  
Ret. Lt. Marty Baker  
Evis Terpollari  
Elaine Tousigant, LICSW  
Amanda Towers  
Sgt. Jason Consiglio  
Amanda Wirzbicki  
Stephanie Bailey  
Amanda Consigli, MPH  
Ret. Lt. Steve Coyle  
Lisa Kapacziewski, MS  
Kathy Lewis  
Stephanie Adaramola, MA, LICSW, QSW  
Ret. Officer Paul Cyr  
Molly Murphy, MSW, LCSW  
Sean Smith, LICSW, MS-DRL  
Bill & Nancy Muszynski  
Lt. Gregg Sculthorpe

**Thank You!**

