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Assessing Police Perceptions of Mental Illness

Police officers' perceptions of individuals with mental illness were studied. Specifically, the difference between officers with Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training on perceptions was examined. A Likert-type scale with 31 items was used to measure stigma toward individuals with mental illness. Surveys were administered to 118 police officers at the New Haven Police Department in Connecticut to assess attitudinal differences toward individuals with mental illness. Overall, the preliminary data and analysis indicate that there is little difference between officers who have completed CIT training compared to those who have not completed CIT training. The findings suggest that officer stigma toward individuals with mental illness may be greater in certain categories of attitudes than others. The CIT curriculum may need modification to render practical value for police agencies.