Improving Interaction Between Law Enforcement and the ASD/DD Community
Learning Objectives

Discuss training provided to first responders regarding autism and developmental disabilities.

Discuss options available to help first responders quickly identify individuals and their specific needs.

Review educational opportunities for individuals and family members in the ASD/DD communities.
Perception is Reality

Cop Thought It Was Drugs. It Was a Teen Coping With Autism: Lawsuit

After the teen awkwardly told the officer he … taken regarding disabilities have caused controversy in Buckeye. In program for individuals with autism.

Lawsuit filed over Albion police pepper spraying teen with autism

(FOX 2) - A lawsuit alleges a mentally disabled teen was handcuffed and pepper-sprayed by a police officer in Albion. The …

Wythenshawe Taser use 'unnecessary and unreasonable'

Police who Tasered a man who has autism and bipolar disorder used “unnecessary, unreasonable and inappropriate” force, a High …

BBC | 5d
Law Enforcement is Working to Change that Perception

Police officer and man with autism share moving hug for the best reason
A tender moment between a California police officer and a man with autism has gone viral on social media. On the morning of...

oxborough Police Raise $3,000 For Autism Awareness
oxborough Police presented a $3,000 check to the Kennedy-Donovan Center Monday for Autism awareness.

oxborough Police) ...
Where differences of age, gender, race, culture, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, or socioeconomic status significantly affect behavior analysts’ work concerning particular individuals or groups, behavior analysts obtain the training, experience, consultation, and/or supervision necessary to ensure the competence of their services, or they make appropriate referrals.
What We Know About Training Provided to Law Enforcement in Arizona
Basic training in the police academy

Continuing training through AZPOST and Advanced CIT training

Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training valley-wide
Special Topics: Autism Spectrum Disorders
Additional Trainings - Brief DES/DDD Modules & AZ POST 40-Hour Module
Response & Recognition

COMMUNICATION
May be verbal or non-verbal; May communicate in pictures, sign or written language

OVERLOAD
In crisis, may become easily overwhelmed or frustrated

PROCESSING
May have a delay in responding to questions or directions or may not respond at all.

SENSORY
May attempt to seek or avoid sensory input; i.e., sounds, touch, smells, sights and taste
Interaction Strategies

Tips for Interacting with Individuals with Autism

- Speak slowly with concrete terms.
- Use visuals if needed and when possible.
- Repeat simple questions, but do not fixate on them. If you do not get a response, ask another way.
- Allow time for responses.
- Pair yourself with the delivery of reinforcement.
- Do not attempt to physically block repetitive behaviors as they are often a coping mechanism.
- Be sensitive to sensory needs.
- When available talk with caregivers, get to know the individuals likes and dislikes.
- Remember that each individual with autism is unique and one person with autism may act quite differently from another person with autism.
Resources That Are Available For Families / Caregivers
Programs Available for Quick Identification
The Mesa Police Department's Residence Assistance Program (R.A.P.) is a voluntary program that allows residents of Mesa to provide personal and medical information that could assist first responders when responding to events at their residence or place of business.

The goal of the program is to create a pathway for the community member or their legal guardian to provide information regarding mental health concerns, cognitive issues, or other disabilities, to improve interactions between the affected member and the police officers.
Residence Assistance Program

- Alerts responding officers to let them know a RAP participant lives at the location.
- Directs the officers to review our Records Management System for details.
- Provides officers with helpful information on the individual prior to arrival in an emergency situation.
- Provides detailed information to the Crisis Response Team to assist with additional contacts if necessary.
MedicAlertProgram
Understanding the MedicAlert Program

**Purpose**

Assist first responders and families with wandering emergencies

Helps identify a wanderer through the use of a **FREE** medical bracelet or necklace

Identifies contact information to reunite families/caregivers with missing persons who have been located
Understanding the Medic Alert Program

Two Programs in One

1. MedicAlert® + Alzheimer’s Association Safe Return®
   – Designed for those with Alzheimer’s or related dementia

2. MedicAlert Found®
   – Designed for children and adults with autism spectrum and developmental disabilities
Be Safe the Movie
“Can you afford to leave safety to chance? It is not enough to just train the police about disabilities. Whether we are parents or professionals, explicitly teaching special learners what to do in different situations involving the police is essential for a safe and independent life. BE SAFE gives you indispensable tools to teach teens and adults to be safe.”
Applied Behavior Analysis & Young Adults with Developmental Disabilities
New Opportunities

AHCCCS ABA Policy

Applied Research
Assessment Criterion Vs. Behavioral Fluency (EIBI Treatment VS THE SCIENCE)
Programming Treatment & Generalization

- Behavior Skills Training Package
  - Instructions
  - Modeling
  - Role-Play
  - Feedback
- Natural Environment InSitu Training
  - Formal & Informal Encounters
    - LeBlanc
Target Areas to Consider in Treatment Planning

Reducing Risk

- Teach Safe Use of Public Restroom
  - Variations in Social Rules
- Self-Reporting / Advocacy
  - Inappropriate Touch
  - Bullying
- Personal Space
- Self-Disclosure Techniques
  - Diagnosis Disclosure
  - ID Card
- Calling 911
- Wandering Prevention
- Cyber Crimes
- Abduction Prevention

Right Place At the Wrong Time

- Avoiding Street Crime
- Increases in security
  - Airports
  - Security checkpoints such as government buildings, schools, any secured facility
  - Building entrances
  - School Campus
  - Shopping malls or districts
Safety is Everyone’s Responsibility

- Police agencies are committed to providing training.
- Plan for crisis and include the entire family and treatment team in the plan.
- Use programs to aid in fast identification.
- Notify your local first responders of concerns in your house and register for programs if available.
- Attend events to help individuals interact safely with first responders.
- Ask for a CIT officer when calling 9-1-1.
- Immediately notify first responders when individuals have a disability.
- Remain calm and follow instructions.
Questions?

Det. Amanda Stamps  
Mesa Police Department  
Amanda.stamps@mesaaz.gov

Dr. Diana Davis-Wilson  
Aspen Behavioral Consulting  
diana@aspenbehavioral.com