



School Resource Officer Disability Awareness Training

Disability Awareness Training (DAT), through its **Law Enforcement Disability Awareness Training Department**, has created **SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER Disability Awareness Training** with the intent to educate and sensitize SROs to equality and disability issues within the diversity spectrum and how to properly and appropriately respond to students with disabilities (IWDs). Training is customized for SROs and includes, but is not limited to, challenging behavior, etiquette and interaction skills, recognition and identification of disabilities, proper response, and the federal laws that address that define special education and safeguard students with disabilities.

The Missouri School Board Association was the catalyst to creating this unique program, funding a comprehensive statewide School Resource Officer training, believed to be the first of its kind in the nation. DAT Law Enforcement Disability Awareness Training was introduced to Missouri officers in 2017, with an approval rating of 97% excellent/very good. DAT, in collaboration with the association and veteran SROs, has developed a state-of-the-art program that includes tools, resources, and disability-specific and community supports and services contacts.

BACKGROUND

First Responders Disability Awareness Training was a collaborative effort between DAT and Niagara University whereby the two came together and received a grant from the New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council to create police officer, Firefighter/Emergency Medical Services, and 9-1-1 Telecommunicator DAT. This led to the creation of what is still the nation's only comprehensive disability awareness training for the professions. It is nationally recognized as the nation's leader in Law Enforcement Disability Awareness Training. Our programs address the most prominent disabilities, customized for each discipline.

It is widely recognized that everyone needs disability awareness training, and this could not be more prolific than in law enforcement, where confusion and uncertainty cannot exist. DAT takes this seriously, knowing that professionals require, and desire, discipline-specific curriculum. NU has created its programs with direct input from Missouri and New York SROs and the associations that represent them, disability advocates and agencies, and persons with disabilities.

School Resource Officer DAT is customized training to include disability-specific probation videos, outreach strategies and community resources and agencies to connect with, the Americans with Disabilities Act and specific cases, and law enforcement-related tools and resources that can be utilized with probationers and built into plans.

- Content includes, but is not limited to, disabilities defined specific to children and adolescents, etiquette/interaction skills, person/identity first language, community resources, trauma and trauma-informed care, emergency planning and preparedness, Special Education, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Disability content includes autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disability, Tourette syndrome, ADHD, learning disabilities, oppositional defiance disorder, conduct disorder, emotional disability, blind/low vision, deaf/hard of hearing, epilepsy/seizure disorder, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, traumatic brain injury, and physical disabilities.

The program is built off the following premises:

1. Every disability has unique characteristics and features, and within each are varying ways of how they present. No one will present the exact same way as the next.
2. The Recognize-Identify-Approach-Interaction-Response (RIAIR) Model allows school resource officers to be confident in response to persons with disabilities, clearing up confusion as to why a person presents a certain way.
3. Communication barriers are a major challenge for all police officers. Understanding how these present and best practices in overcoming them are crucial, having an understanding of how to communicate and use of the tools to assist are necessary for a productive response.
4. Proactive education and awareness are imperative in avoiding inappropriate response. Reactive response jeopardizes persons with disabilities and can put the student and the SRO in unfortunate circumstances.
5. When understood, the ADA provides guidance that ensures compliance with federal law through accurate response to matters where it comes to play while IDEA gives guidance on how the Special Education process works. School Resource Officer Disability Awareness Training will be offered as a Train the Trainer program through the Missouri School Board Association.

For more information or to be a host, please contact
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