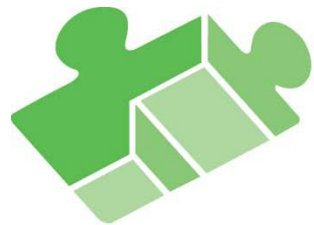


Training Law Enforcement and First Responders About Autism

Jennifer Mahan

Director of Advocacy and Public Policy,
Autism Society of North Carolina

May 19 2014



Autism Society
of NORTH CAROLINA

History

- 2004- Death of Sidney Templeton in Statesville
- Advocacy groups and families pushed for addition of autism information to Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET)
- Joint Legislative Study Committee on AU and Public Safety: recommend Silver Alert, video, info cards/stickers, **additional training**
- Many groups are training. We work in Partnership with CIT (Crisis Intervention Training) programs, NAMI, local first responders.

Trainings last two years

- Identified first responders: 363
- Sample of places: Wilson, Rowan, Carteret, Cabarrus, Forsyth, Buncombe
- Presentations done by ASNC staff who are experienced trainers with direct experience with autism.
- ASNC receives state funding to make training accessible, affordable to first responders

Types of Training

- Autism 101 for law enforcement, fire departments, EMT/EMS, school resource officers
- Distribution of law enforcement video
- Also: “Staying Safe in the Community” for individuals with autism and for families

Content of Training

- What is Autism?
- 4 Areas of Differences:
 - Communication
 - Social Interactions and Awareness
 - Behavior and Sensory responses
 - Thinking and Learning
 - Uses video clip examples of each area
- Approach Strategies w/ video clips

SAMPLE SLIDE: Communication, cont.

- Understand and use language literally
- Difficulty asking for help or clarification
- Indicate they understand when they don't

SAMPLE SLIDE: Social Interactions

- Difficulty understanding the perspective of another
- Difficulty judging personal space
- Difficulty understanding personal property
- Very honest , blunt, accuracy trumps tact

SAMPLE VIDEO CLIP: Social Awareness

- Nicole talks about how her dark glasses, worn to protect eyes from bright light, may be interpreted with suspicion.
- She talks about her actions (straightening items on shelves because they are out of place) cause store clerks to follow, suspect shoplifting.



SAMPLE SLIDE: Helpful Approach Strategies, cont.

- Ease response by NOT requesting eye contact
- Use open ended rather than yes or no questions
- Use written communication or pictures
- If person is overwhelmed, tired or under stress give “chill” time if possible

Approach Strategies Training Exercise

- Two longer video clips:
 - Scenario #1 (shown)
 - Scenario #2
 - Intended to show different ways of interacting.
 - Start discussion on what works, what does not, and how first responder could use suggested strategies.



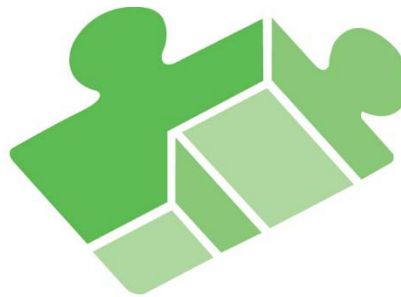
Resources

- Study Committee report 2007:
<http://ncleg.net/Library/studies/2007/st11713.pdf>
- Study Committee report 2008:
<http://ncleg.net/Library/studies/2008/st11741.pdf>
- Autism Society of North Carolina
www.autismsociety-nc.org

Contact Info

- Jennifer Mahan, Dir. of Advocacy & Public Policy
ASNC Raleigh Office
jmahan@autismsociety-nc.org
Tel: 919-865-5068
- Kerri Erb, Senior Director of Programs and Quality
ASNC Raleigh Office
kerb@autismsociety-nc.org
Tel: 919-865-5053

www.autismsociety-nc.org



Autism Society
of NORTH CAROLINA