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Great Lakes ADA Center

Suspects/Offenders' Issue Series

Disability Awareness Training: A Train the Trainer Program for First Responders

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>> Kathryn Walker: Hi, everyone. Welcome to The Arc's National Center on Criminal Justice and Disability webinar. Before we begin our presentation, I'd like to cover a few rules, especially for those of you that are new to WebEx. Because there are so many of you, all participants are in listen‑only mode. at the time during the presentation, if you need help, you can post your question in the chat box. There will with be time for questions at the end. If you want your question to stay private, please type private before your question and we won't mention your name.

You can also email questions to NCCJDinfo@thearc.org. The webinar is being recorded and will be posted on our website. We'll send you an email letting you know when it's available. During the presentation, we'll ask you to answer questions to help document your involvement for our funders. You will receive a session evaluation after the webinar. Please take five minutes to complete and send it to us. This webinar is funded by the United States Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance. Thank you for your participation. The webinar today is the seventh of NCCJD's monthly webinars and features David Whalen, Public Director for First Responders Disability Awareness Training, and John Askey and Patrick Mann.

>> Leigh Ann Davis: Hello, everyone, I am the Program Manager. I just wanted to take a few seconds to welcome you to today's webinar, and thank Dave Whalen for being our speaker today. Dave has been just a wonderful asset to our project, and I just wanted to take a few minutes to say thank you to him for being our speaker today, and we look forward to hearing everything you have to share. He's been involved in this topic for many years, and brings a great deal of expertise. And I know that you will have some really good questions for him, so, please feel free to jump in with questions. You can type them in the chat box at any time. I hope we have good discussion afterwards. So, thank you for being here, Dave and, and thank you to all of our participants, as well.

>> Kathryn Walker: All right. Now before we welcome our presenters, we want to start with a couple of questions. Again, this is to help us report to our funder what you guys are taking away from this. The first polling question we have asks, what factors are most challenging for law enforcement when it comes to incorporating new training into their department? I think I opened the wrong polling question. You guys can go ahead and participate in this poll, if you see that on the right‑hand side of your screen.

What factors are most challenging for law enforcement when it comes to incorporating new training into their department? You can check all that apply here. You can check more than one answer. All right, last question. As recognized by the U.S. Attorney General's Office, the most discriminated‑against population in America is? All right, thank you, everyone, for your participation. I'm going to pass it off now to our wonderful presenters.

>> David Whalen: Four years ago, we received a grant from the New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council to develop first responder disability awareness plans. A first responder is law enforcement, firefighter, emergency medical services, and 911 operators. We have developed a train the trainer program for law enforcement. Firefighter/EMS is combined, and we're developing 911 operator training. Today, we're going to talk about how to train law enforcement for proper response to persons with disabilities. Accompanying me, Captain Patrick Mann. 28 years of service for Captain Mann, the training coordinator for the buffalo Police Department. He has gone through the training program. He is now a trained officer in disability awareness training. He'll talk about his plans in a little bit.

Also joining me, Chief John Askey. Town of Amherst, one of the largest in New York, 120,000 residents. This is the town I reside in. I chair a committee on disability, as well. Chief Askey has been a big help ‑‑ both Captain Mann and Chief Askey have been a huge help. This is an ongoing process. We developed training almost 2 1/2 years ago, but we continue to find more ways to improve, to enhance, and to provide better education and tools for officers in their everyday challenges. We will only focus today on law enforcement. We will not be focusing on firefighter, EMS, or 911 operator's training, although very essential just the same.

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>> David Whalen: We're going to start you off with some cases that can become very challenging for law enforcement that many of you are probably aware of. We have a very wide array of attendees in our training, police departments, disability advocates, parents, individuals with disabilities, service providers. Some of you may be more ahead of the curve in what is occurring out there, but, the concern, nonetheless, is great. Some of you are aware of the Senate hearing on April 29th bringing this topic to a national level of recognition in the United States Senate, which tells you that this is very important.

Challenges we see out there, individuals with autism. A case here that occurred in Virginia. A statement, arrested for epilepsy. A individual had a seizure, and arrested while having a seizure. Deaf man tased for staying in a bathroom for too long. This gentleman also has an intellectual disability. And conversely, some of the challenges relative to victimization, we'll address, as well. This is an incident that occurred south of Buffalo, New York, with a woman who had an intellectual disability, who was tortured to death by her mother and half brother, which brings to light some of these serious issues of abuse, victimization, that can be as horrific as someone losing their life.

So, we understand that officers have challenges, and officer understand that they have challenges, hence the reason we develop what we're doing. I should state further, too, our program here has an advisory council, which the Captain and Chief also sit at. It includes all disability representatives, people active within the spectrum of their disability. So, for instance, the person who represents the blind community, she is blind, sits on the National Federation of the Blind New York State Chapter. New York State self‑advocate present. We have first responders sitting on this, as well as service providers, parents of people with disabilities, and staff members from the university.

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>> David Whalen: Why does law enforcement need disability awareness training? 50 to 80% of officers are with a person with a disability. That stat comes from the department of justice. As recognized as the highest level of justice in this country. At least half of an officer's day is encountering a person with a disability. One of the things I've found, many officers initially might question that number. Once we get about a quarter of the way through the training, they realize, wow, I guess that number is legitimate. So, we highly stress to law enforcement the need to go through the training and obviously, have an understanding of it, because at least half of their day is going to be in that statistic.

Quite frankly, with a lack of awareness, we've had police suspected sued, bad public relations, or even death of a person with a disability. I'm sure people are aware of the tragic death of Rob, to name one person. We have many other incidents we're aware of. Rest assured, there's no officer in the country that wants that as an end result. Because of a lack of understanding and awareness, it has not brought this training or information to their attention. We could have some bad end results.

And then, from the victimization standpoint, again, noted, a person with a disability is seven times more likely to be a victim of crime. If you go deeper into some statistics, they say 72% of females with an intellectual disability are sexually assaulted or abused, 30% for males. Again, some horrific numbers relative to the victimization and abuse. The significance is, officers are not always going to empower a person who may be doing something considered criminal. They will encounter victims, but will pose differently relative to investigations and questions, and we want to be sure the officers are trained in how to receive, or retrieve, information most accurately so the person who is a victim, their rights are upheld down the road, and into the judicial process.

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>> David Whalen: So, encounters. Where would a police officer encounter an individual, a victim of a crime, as we just stated. An offender. We'll talk about individuals with developmental disabilities. If you've been following the stories relative to law enforcement response to people with disabilities, a week or so ago, USA Today had an article on mental health and law enforcement's role with that, which is not necessarily appropriate relative to not receiving other services, say, crisis or mental health. Many people with mental health are in the presence of law enforcement, although the a crime was not necessarily committed.

For them to be attended to their needs, the support not out there. Someone what runs away from a residence, say, someone with autism. A confused citizen, intellectual disability, dementia. A medical emergency. Quite frankly, individuals with disabilities may have a higher incidence of medical needs. My son's friend, who has a physical disability, three times in 11 months was hospitalized with a need for emergency medical services to be at the house. Many of those 911 calls, officers accompany that call, and have insight that could better assist the EMT or the firefighter.

Witness to a crime. I think that's ‑‑ the officers can talk about the challenges that go with witnesses. Captain Mann has a case he'd like to share with you, relative to a individual who witnessed a homicide.

>> Patrick Mann: We developed some leads. An individual came in to confess to the crime. In talking to the individual, he had information only the perpetrator would know. The guy that came in to confess to the crime wasn't the actual suspect. The suspect encouraged this individual, who had several disabilities, intellectual and others, that the suspect was encouraging him to confess. He figured if that guy got caught, he wouldn't. Our detectives did the investigation, found it wasn't this guy, even though he admitted that he was there and he did it.

And the right suspect was arrested. But, this isn't just a single incidence. This is multiple instances where things like this happen.

>> David Whalen: Domestic violence and abuse. Again, we've talked a lot about that. Domestic violence, not necessarily ‑‑ but in other areas, you find in individuals with certain disabilities, at the wrong end of it, unfortunately. Calls for caregiver request for assistance, the 911 call goes out and says, I need help with my son or daughter. Again, for some of you who follow this field and topic more closely, you've probably been exposed to that. On our website, which I'll show you at the end of the presentation, we have many incidents of law enforcement. Some of those come from a call from a caregiver, parent, family member. Conversely, we have service provider agencies and group homes who may also challenge ‑‑ be challenged by behaviors and call 911.

Although, maybe a different topic area, or discussion for another time. That is not always encouraged. You're calling for law enforcement assistance, they need to do their job even though the result you're looking for, like, someone being handcuffed, or the need for law enforcement to be involved in ways that they're trained to be involved with challenging behaviors might not be what we want to see as an end result. If you make that call, that might be what happens.

Public transportation. 25% of Americans who use public transportation have a disability. So, in the Buffalo area, we have the transportation authority. We have our law enforcement entity that is involved in dealing with people who use public transportation, as well any other officers that might be called to a bus, subway, what have you. One‑fourth of people on public transportation have a disability.

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>> David Whalen: Just to point out statistically what the U.S. census tells us, we basically ‑‑ our country, one out of five Americans has a disability. You see, 19.3%. In the state of New York, 20.6%. If you look at each state, it pretty much rides between 18% and I believe the highest state in the country is Alaska with 22%. But, one out of five Americans have a disability, as you can see here. Almost 10% have a physical disability, 5% mental, and almost 4% have a sensory disability.

This makes it the largest minority in the country. We go back to one of the questions, as recognized by the U.S. Attorney General's Office, what is the most discriminated population in America. It is people with disabilities. So, we have the highest office in the country, relative to law enforcement jurisdiction noting that the disabled population is the most discriminated against. All this ties in relative to disability awareness training, and what officers need to be aware of in their interactions.

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>> David Whalen: The chapters in our program are this. What we're going to do throughout this course, this webinar, is inform you of what we provide within our program here and how it works. And the Chief and Captain will get more specific with that, towards the end of the program. Training law enforcement, the challenges. You had a question you were asked on that. If you answered all of the above, you were correct. But we'll talk about what we do here with this.

I should note that we've been doing disability awareness training for 12 years. I've done about 500 trainings. All trainings, are customized to meet the audiences needs. As I stated, we have firefighter/EMS training, about 40% different than the law enforcement training. The challenges an officer faces are different than a firefighter or EMT. We want to be specific to their needs, and not go too much longer. Conversely, we understand that, for instance, we can train on autism for seven hours, but, officers will talk about challenges that go with longer hours and training within their departments.

We are addressing all the areas specific within each disability in our training program that an officer would have to encounter, and what he or she would need to know relative to proper response. We, within our program, have brought in subject matter experts. So, every section you see here was worked on and developed, for all intents and purposes, with an individual who is ‑‑ either has a disability, or is a subject matter expert on the disability.

(New slide.)

>> David Whalen: We have, continuing here ‑‑ I'm going to go back a bit, I didn't read that, I apologize for anyone who might have challenges in seeing the screen. Our chapters are autism, ADHD, blind/low vision, deaf/heard of hearing, dementia, intellectual disability, learning disability, physical disabilities, Tourette syndrome, discrimination and inclusion, abuse and victimization, person‑first language, speech impairments, outreach, or how to properly outreach to the disability community, and mental health.

Now, I should note, New York State, within the basic course, I'll let the Chief and Captain talk more about the basic course, we have 14 hours in mental health. In New York state, we have two hours of persons with disabilities. We don't feel that's enough. We also feel, within the basic course, there's a lot the crew is learning. I'm going to let the Captain and the Chief talk about the basic course, and how law enforcement gets trained.

>> John Askey: Thanks, Dave. Right now, there's ‑‑ we'll talk about two different kinds of training. The initial recruit training sets the stage. Then, obviously, the ongoing training. I would say they're probably ‑‑ may not be getting enough, but, they're getting close to all you can put in the initial training, only because there are a lot of other things they have to cover. Defensive tactics, defensive driving, whatever the topics are, there's lots of them. The officers in New York State get approximately 640 hours of training. That does include 14 hours of mental health training, and two hours with regard to disabilities.

I looked through the syllabus to refresh myself. It's been years since we've gone through the academy. There are a lot of things that touch on disabilities. Maybe not directly, but, they have some application. Classes in communications, formal law, hygiene, there are opportunities for us to hear about how they are serving the disabled community, or how they could serve it better. I agree with Dave completely. We can do more in the academy, and we need to do more and more as we develop the officers throughout their career if we're going to provide the kind of service we all want to provide.

>> David Whalen: Captain, I know you trained some in the basic course in county law enforcement.

>> Patrick Mann: I would agree, there's a lot of cross‑referencing. I know specifically, when we talk about searching individuals, the issue of searching individuals with disabilities is always part of it, because, you know, you've got to realize that, people with disabilities also fit into, unfortunately, sometimes our suspects and perpetrators, which have to understand, as the Chief said, communication and communicating with people. There is a lot of cross‑over in that area.

>> John Askey: One more thing, that's probably fairly common across law enforcement agencies. I would like to emphasize, what you learn about the training that Dave's organization presents, it allows the full spectrum of disabilities are addressed. And that doesn't happen in the basic academy, that doesn't happen in officer training. What this training the ‑‑ service provides is an opportunity to cover all the broad spectrum of disabilities, and that's important. They get little bits and pieces, a lot of stories, a lot of good training, but, until we receive this training, we haven't covered all the bases.

>> David Whalen: Thank you. One of the pieces we took about the outreach bullet, that we want to connect what we do, we connect the law enforcement department, the police departments, I should say, with their local community. So, while this training is designed to be done by a trained officer, and I'll have the Captain and Chief talk about is that, it's important they understand how to make easy connections with the community in their area.

What we find is, once those connections are made, officer have a comfort level working with people from the blind community, people from the autism community, and even encouraging them to bring in individuals to come in and train with them, as a co‑presenter. We'll talk a little bit more about that towards the end.

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>> David Whalen: I just want to give out a couple of disabilities that do not that in the developmental disabilities spectrum, but, to understand the challenges across all disabilities. Note here, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. If you can't read the bars, I'll go across. The first one, going left to right, if you see the higher bar, that is individuals with ADHD, the lower bar, a control group. Multiple arrests. Convicting, multiple convicted and incarcerated. So, just to note that, here is a disability between ADHD and learning disability, that are, in this country, the two most arrested disabilities ‑‑ that's probably not the best way to put it.

(New slide.)

>> David Whalen: The two disabilities, or groups of individuals with disabilities that are arrested in this country. If you note here, the skills most often affected, reading, writing, listening, speaking, reasoning, and doing math. The impact of learning disability without supports or services ‑‑ it's key to note, it's not people with disabilities in these numbers, but, without the proper supports and services. Parents who don't understand the child has a disability, have never received those supports. Educators who don't recognize the child or young adult's learning disability, that never properly progress in the education system.

If you look at the bottom bullet, 31% of adolescents without support will be arrested three to five years out of high school. One‑third will be arrested three to five years out of high school. It's very important to note that a, across the disability spectrum, when we talk about disability with officers, we need to make sure they hear all disabilities, and not just a specific one. We also need to keep in mind, in many disabilities, comorbidity, or a tertiary or secondary disability. For instance, a learning disability, ADHD, up to 50% comorbid.

Those are two distinct disabilities, but they pose challenges. We want to educate officers these disabilities exist, and this is what they're encountering and how to understand. So, specific to our audience and to the services that The Arc and the National Center for Criminal Justice and Disability provide, intellectual disability and the law.

(New slide.)

>> David Whalen: Individuals will experience difficulty at each stage of the process. That's from the initial encounter with an officers, right through to booking, jail, if they're going to county jail overnight, into the court system. We've had discussion on ‑‑ many discussions exist on mental health court. There's 384 of them in the country. We need to take a good look at court and support in the judicial system relative to defender courts. In the Buffalo area, we have a program run by Alternatives to Incarceration, strictly for individuals with disabilities, working with the Buffalo Police Department. Often, they don't understand their legal rights.

I'm just going to ask the officers to explain Miranda, and what legal rights would be, and what happens when they first encounter any person who might be considered a suspect or a perpetrator.

>> John Askey: Well, every state is a little bit different. In New York State, there's levels of encounters. Four levels, I won't go into specifics. But a policeman can walk up to anybody in this state. If they have a reasonable suspicion, that escalates the encounter and they're able to ask questions about why you're here, or doing what you're doing. Do you possess any weapons, drugs, something of that nature. In the area of probable cause, you could make an arrest. Police officers have to be careful and make sure they don't overstep their bounds when encountering citizens. It's easy to do with a member of the disabled community.

>> David Whalen: Can you just explain the Miranda Law and rights?

>> Patrick Mann: That's the rights given to everyone. One of the misunderstandings is, we don't have to read it to everybody arrested. The only time we read it is if we're going to question them. A lot of people want to talk. If somebody is talking, it's not necessary for us to give them Miranda rights. They make spontaneous admissions. Numerous rights are read, and people still talk.

As Dave said, there is cases where a lot of people don't understand their legal rights. And there's probably a higher percentage of people with some sort of disability, where they don't understand their legal rights. Even if Miranda is read to them, they still make statements or admissions.

>> David Whalen: So, a major concern with individuals who are in the disability community relative to disability and understanding law. The third bullet, an attempt to please authority, may confess even if they're not guilty. As Captain Mann talked about, the situation where he had an individual admitting to a homicide who did not do it. In that same breath, they choose to appear bad to hide the disability.

There was a case I did training, an officer talked about a gentleman who was asked to help clean out ‑‑ move, in essence, help us move today. We're moving, house‑moving, making up, filling the van. They give him 20 bucks. Towards the end of the move, he was walking down the stairs with a TV in his hand. He was encountered by two police officers. The gentleman ‑‑ the individuals who asked him to assist were on their way, they had cleaned out an entire house. Here this gentleman was standing there, with a TV, not knowing he was robbing a house. Many, many instances we have that we're looking to address.

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>> David Whalen: Encounters and response relative to intellectual disability. A lot of times, the victim, we talked about the victims stats earlier. With an intellectual disability, that goes up higher, ten to 12 times the victim of a crime, someone with an intellectual disability. The agency that provides alternatives to incarceration, I asked for a list of clients they work with. They noted everything from rape and sexual assault to robbery. It is certainly ‑‑ the possibility that someone with an intellectual disability may be committing grievous crimes.

85% of individuals with an intellectual disability will be in the mild range, which will be an IQ between 55 and 69. These many individuals can function in the community independently, for the most part. But, when challenges come relative to either being confronted by the perpetrator, or, being in situations like a store where they're not quite sure, some individuals might not be quite sure of how to pay for something, and might not do it appropriately.

Domestic issues, as we talked about. However many individuals will be connected with a service provider, may reside in a group home. I want everyone to note we developed this training with the thought we might have law enforcement in the audience, as well as disability advocates and people from the disability community. As you see here, for our police officer audience, there is service providers, ARCs, The Arc sponsors this program, service providers may be able to assist or work with officers if they have questions.

We encourage officers to use support staff or families for those individuals who may be a little more challenged when it comes to a domestic issue of victimization, where they were possibly a victim. Or, even if they were considered to be an offender, but, the offensive might not be understood, like going into a store and taking a candy bar, putting it in their pocket, not with the intent to steal, but, with the intent to get a candy bar.

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>> David Whalen: Autism, again, people pose many challenges just the same. Elopement, the person has escaped. The attraction to water. Overstimulation, and the importance of officers understanding that their uniforms, a crowd of officers, or EMTs or firefighters could be challenging. Signers, lights, things like echolalia, an officers might think is rude. Lack of recognition that the person is a first responder, maybe walking away or not responding. How is that going to go over with most police officers? Not well if they're not trained.

If they are trained, they can recognize autism soon enough. avoidance of touch, no real fear of danger. Walking on busy roads, into traffic, going towards water when maybe they can't swim. High pain threshold, the importance of proper restraints. People with autism die being restrained face‑down, with a weakness in trunks, that would be of issue.

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>> David Whalen: The victimization numbers we've talked about a few times already. Often victimized repeatedly by the same victim. They're not aware they're being victimized. We had an incident in my agency a few years back, where the individual was being sexually assaulted by bus drivers but didn't know it. Was going along with it for six months, until the person figured out it shouldn't be taking that long for her to get home.

Officers are usually the first one to interact. When you call 911, many times, a police officer shows up first. Never assume that they suffer less injury than other crime victims. We do not do a good job in supporting them relative to trauma, psychological injury, when it comes to victimization and abuse. Probably the biggest key on here relative to officer education, communication by the officers, often heightens the anxiety. We want to get information as quick as possible, the first one on the scene is the officer, they can get the information.

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>> David Whalen: There's a federal law that we must adhere to. These six bullets are exactly what it says in the ADA relative to law enforcement. If you read this, the Chief and Captain knows, this is what we do with everyone who might be in need. But, what we encourage officers to do and really stress with them, they need to remember this relative to people with disabilities. Receiving a complaint from someone who's blind may be a different challenge relative to the witness and the questions you're going to ask, or interrogating the witnesses.

Arresting, booking and holding suspects. Someone with a seizure disorder who needs medication, but it's not respected. We've had major issues with people who perished in jails, because medication wasn't considered a priority. Operating 911 centers. The whole reason we developed the 911 operators training, that will be a train the trainer. The ability for the 911 operator or dispatcher to accurately give information to the officer.

And we're also providing them talking points so they can stay on the line with the officer, prior to the EMT arriving, as they have questions. Providing emergency medical services, and enforcing laws. Anything you want to add relative to this slide? Okay.

(New slide.)

>> David Whalen: The objective is to sensitize and educate as many officers as possible for the disabilities they will encounter. Impact, the ability to have staying power are essential, to provide resources to ensure ongoing education and awareness. I'm going to ask the Captain and Chief questions relative to this. Disability training provides a base understanding to the injustice of individuals with disabilities, whoever is in the office, in this case, specific to law enforcement.

It breaks down barriers, and allows people to understand the injustices. It provides information to gain more knowledge on the disability community. Where do I outreach? I didn't know there was an association, the Alzheimer's Association, where the chapter was. I didn't know there was an Erie County Down Syndrome support group. And there's self‑advocacy, and people that my police officers can work with and learn what they might need from us. Many officers, we talk to and train, are not aware about things relative to get an interpreter.

One of the things we say to officers is, we don't want officers enforcing the law, but, they find themselves breaking the law. We want to connect people to the disability organizations. So, for those of you that are in the webinar, it's important that you have a presence with officers, as well, in the community. By staying power we mean, by training a police department today, that's not going to give them enough information to walk away with and feel comfortable relative to ongoing education they might have gotten something in the one‑, two‑, three‑hour session, however, they're not getting much out of it, no one to turn to to ask more questions. Providing resources is essential.

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>> David Whalen: I'm going to go back and forth with the Chief and Captain, we talked about the academy and the basic course. Sworn officers, gentleman, if you could talk about how to train them and how that works relative to your department. Captain Mann, I'm going to defer to you, one of the largest police departments in the state. How does that work?

>> Patrick Mann: We set aside a certain amount of time. There are 750 officers. The main thing the departments look for are unity. Training is important, but, unfortunately, it falls into what departments want the response to be. So, training is a challenge to sworn officers. They are allowed X amount of hours per year. There's numerous times we set up training, and what ends up happening is, there is an event in the city that the officer's training gets cancelled.

It's constantly catch‑up for the department to get everybody trained. There's an accreditation standard for New York State, and I believe, Chief, is it 21 hours?

>> John Askey: Yes, that's the minimum.

>> Patrick Mann: But it's a challenge to get up to the 21 hours at times. It depends on what's going on in the environment, what your man power is to get that time.

>> John Askey: To add on to that, not only is it a challenge to meet the training in general, but, as the year goes on, the best‑laid plans meet with reality. You are affected by what's happening nationally or locally in your town or city. We had training agendas and ideas we wanted to accomplish before 9/11. When it hit, every department had to get better at assisting with homeland security and making sure we had gas mask training and training related to that. Again, after the Columbine and the unfortunate things that happened in our schools, priorities in training turned to schools. Everyone is doing emergency deployment, and there's an awful lot to do, and generally not enough hours and funds to get it all done the way that you'd like to.

>> Patrick Mann: The bottom bullet point, unfortunately, it's the flavor of the month. After 9/11, it was antiterrorism awareness, which everything else you wanted to train went to the back. Then, it was the white powder anthrax, which we had to be aware of more WMD‑type things. Most recently, with the upsurge in fatal overdoses, it's training on that that everybody's pushing now. In New York State, the State Department of Homeland Security is pushing out law enforcement survival kits for the officers based on military experience of how to handle problems.

These things come up, and these are hot topics. The things you want to get to seem to get pushed further back. They don't go away, but, it's a matter of trying to get them scheduled.

>> John Askey: We wanted to talk about, how do you get around this. This is the reality, how do you best achieve the objective of providing this critical training? And the flexibility for me, is the key. Having, having the ability to have train the trainer, as part of this program that we've undertaken. It allows us, something's happening at a particular time of year, or day, the training can be postponed and picked up at the different time of day, different time of year, or gotten to by in‑house trainers. That's something that Dave's training has provided for our department.

And also, the database of information on the website, part of the program, lends support for the officers for their entire career. That's critical for us to have the flexibility, the initial training to be flexible, and support it through publications and WebEx. This disability awareness training has provided that for us.

>> Patrick Mann: One of the nice things about having dedicated trainers, you may not necessarily schedule training, but, no matter what you're training, you can cross‑reference the material with information you have. Everything seems to cross‑reference in law enforcement.

>> David Whalen: One of the things we've addressed, too, gentleman, is the need for ongoing training that's required by, say, the state and federal government, and things that are mandatory. Just so everyone knows, our program is not mandatory in the state of New York. We've had discussion on that. It's a very delicate topic amongst anyone you talk to, once you make it mandatory. Not only will it affect the second‑to‑the‑last bullet, overtime and budgets, all of a sudden the department in Buffalo, 750, Chief Askey has one of the largest departments in the state, 153 officers in the town of Amherst, to be able to train those departments, is not just a one or two‑day process. Scheduling, in and of itself, is hard. How do you train law enforcement? We have to get to questions.

(New slide.)

>> David Whalen: You meet with the police chief and the sheriff, the administrator in charge. You'll find the training coordinator, for Buffalo, Captain Mann and I have worked on that. But, there's training coordinators. Pretty much every department has them, right?

>> Absolutely.

>> David Whalen: You don't want to rush the training. It is a process it's not going to happen in the next couple of weeks, to get on to a schedule will take time. We want to connect with community resources, so we're not just training. This is how we've done our programs, so locally people are aware. Those of you who are disability advocates know we prefer people with disabilities to do training. It's never going to work in the police department, relative to getting them all the information and getting them all trained, all 750 officers in Buffalo, even our smaller departments of 20 to 30, correct? Is that a challenge for even smaller departments?

>> Patrick Mann: Sometimes smaller ones don't have the flexibility that the bigger departments do.

>> John Askey: You take two people off the road in a small police department, sometimes that's a problem.

>> David Whalen: We developed a trainer network to have people from the disability community to co‑present with the officer. You need to be eclectic. We want to go across the disability community to train on one disability topic, is that leaves others out. And that doesn't always work. Sometimes, we get one that goes into training a police department. So, we want to respect law enforcement's time, because to say I'm going to go train someone on Tuesday morning from 9:00 until 10:00, in a couple weeks, it's probably going to be very difficult. Then, again, we support, as they talked about, the train the trainer program, allowing them to own it and do it.

>> John Askey: One of the most important points is, ideally, you'd like to have the individuals with disabilities training. Having an impact on the officers, and getting some real perspective to what's happening. We aren't saying it's not a good idea to have the disabled individuals involved, but, due to the time constraints, you're not going to be able to have someone from every disability be there and cover the legal aspects, the policy, the experience that fellow police officers provide. There's value in having law enforcement instructors.

I can't give all the reasons in the time span here, but, it's generally a certified police instructor that provides training in everything we do. I would advocate for, certainly, involvement from individuals with disabilities, who also have perspective. But to think the training can be done exclusively by individuals with disabilities probably isn't realistic.

>> David Whalen: In our program, we built in video. The training is done by people with disabilities through videos, directly, specifically for law enforcement. We actually have different videos. We're probably running out of time, Kathryn, so, we close with our information here.

(New slide.)

>> David Whalen: And if you ever have an opportunity, you can go to our website. Did it come up? Okay, I hope it came up. I hope everyone's looking at their website.

>> Kathryn Walker: Not yet. If you want to do the share button at the top of your screen.

>> David Whalen: Okay.

>> Leigh Ann Davis: Actually, I can see it.

>> David Whalen: Oh, you could?

>> Leigh Ann Davis: Yes.

>> David Whalen: So, here is our website, that anyone can access. You can see the information we have. Here who we are, who we're affiliated with. We also do things with relative emergency preparedness. You can download and take many of the information that we have here. We continue to work on it. If you want to work with law enforcement, fire, EMS, if you have comments, good, bad, ugly, we want to hear about it. If you want to work with first responders to train, we are going national with our program. Arkansas has signed up, that will be the second state.

We're in conversation with Vermont and New Jersey, as well, Alaska interested. I'm going to stop here and take questions you can see here, we have a plethora, you can take a look yourself. And you can also see our upcoming trainings, where we will be. These are all booked right now, and we have more that we're booking. Kathryn, do you want to take it away?

>> Kathryn Walker: Sure, thank you, guys, for a great presentation. So, right now I'm going to start reading questions from the chat box. Let me get my video feed back, too. So, be ready to submit your question if you have one. If your question is not answered during the live event, we'll be sure to follow up with you by email. The first question that we have is, can you make any recommendations for how parents of a significant disability can build a constructive relationship with their local police department as a preventative measure?

>> Patrick Mann: I would say, meet with the police department. A lot of our contacts with people are in the heat of the moment, unfortunately, responding to a 911 call. So, with kind of a busy environment, with someone trying to explain what's going on, it's kind of difficult. So, I guess it would be proactive rather than reactive.

>> John Askey: I'm thinking back to one of our meetings, not that long ago. The association, we talked about the idea, there's a responsibility on the part of the disabled individual to reach out to the police department. It's our job to serve you, but, there's a responsibility of all citizens to let us know how we can serve you better. I would agree with outreach on both sides.

>> David Whalen: You'll see, if you see the video, one of the parents we have talking about it, she states, she has contacted her police department. In a police department, if you don't get the answer at your first try ‑‑

>> John Askey: You work your way up the ladder to the chief's office if you have to. They're going to put you on the radar.

>> Kathryn Walker: All right, thank you. We have a couple of questions. I'm going to condense them to one. People are curious about what audiences you cover, specifically, whether school resource and corrections officers are trained.

>> David Whalen: Great question. The first group I ever worked with, the New York State Juvenile Association, I'll be there at the end of August again. When I mention we customize the training, we do that more within law enforcement response. So, we are in the process of developing a corrections officer training. They're not first responders, we want to make sure it's exactly what they need. I'll spend the day in jail to learn about how that operation works.

We've begun communication with the New York state corrections department. What we're doing is using our law enforcement training. They have all the areas, the officers we train, in law enforcement, police officers we're training, need everything that we've shown you. We are able to use that template, and now customize that, per group. We're developing a training just for security officers, for people who work security, who are not police officers.

It's very important to give people exactly what they need. If you start going down a road that loses their attention, some law enforcement officers you can lose their attention pretty quickly, and you might not get it back.

>> Kathryn Walker: Thank you, this is a tough one from the Q&A box. Please give feedback for a trend where adults with developmental disabilities who are sexually assaulted are being interviewed in children's advocacy centers.

>> Patrick Mann: I know we have a child advocacy center, but, we have a standalone sex defense unit. And I'm not familiar with how they question. I know they're very well‑trained in how they question, but, that one, I'm not aware of.

>> John Askey: We can speak to western New York, we have a center like the Captain mentioned, but, that doesn't preclude us from conducting investigations. We tailor the interview to the individual that we have. If there's an individual with a disability, sexual assault, we do the interview at our headquarters in an appropriate area.

>> David Whalen: We'll follow up on that. One of the things I want to stress, we've come across areas like this one, we will address that at our program here, and we will take it to state and national levels. So, for anyone who has any questions or concerns, and this sounds like more of a concern than a question, we will certainly take a look at addressing it. And we will go to the other as we need. I want people to keep in mind, I've been in the disability field for a long time. I'm the father of a child with a disability. I'm a disability advocate. And the law enforcement partners, as you can see here with the Chief and Captain, are working with us.

We have a very close relationship. And I'll say this, they want to do it right. Some of the concerns sometimes with people, they see the police officer as someone that is an arm's‑length away. Most of my audience has been individuals who truly care, and are responding to our program in a very positive way. Your input is what's going to make it better.

>> John Askey: That's a great point. This is occurring in western New York ‑‑ if it is, let us know. I know the District Attorney's Office will be open to any suggestions for improving their process. So, thank you for letting us know about that concern.

>> Kathryn Walker: All right, thank you. And so we're right at the 2:30 mark. I wanted to make sure that everyone knows that had web address listed down here, the First Responders is not the correct web address. I just posted, frdat.niagara.edu. So, just so everyone can see the materials. We have our next webinar coming up the last Thursday in August, August 28th, Alternatives to Incarceration.

You guys can sign up at the same place you signed up for this one. And you can contact us at NCCJDinfo@thearc.org. I know we didn't get to all your questions today, but, these gentleman will be able to follow up with you via email. Thank you to our presenters, that was wonderful. Don't forget to register for our next webinar, and we'll see you guys next month.