

EXPANDED COURSE OUTLINE  
REGULAR BASIC COURSE  
LEARNING DOMAIN 37  
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

**Effective date of outline: February 15, 2017**

I. LEARNING NEED

Peace officers must understand the laws affecting, and the peace officers responsibility to protect, the rights of people with disabilities.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- A. State the intent of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
  - 1. To eliminate discrimination against individuals with mental and physical impairment.
  - 2. Not to exclude any qualified individual from benefits of services, programs or activities
- B. Recognize the role of peace officers when interacting with a person with a disability
  - 1. Applying culturally responsive community policing principle
  - 2. Reducing stigma
  - 3. Increasing and maintaining peace officer and public safety

II. LEARNING NEED

In order to make appropriate decisions regarding intervention strategies, peace officers must be able to recognize, based on behavioral cues and other indicators, people with intellectual/developmental disabilities.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- A. State the intent of the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Service Act (*Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 4500 et. seq.*)
  - 1. Maximize services available throughout the state.
  - 2. Prevent the dislocation of people with developmental disabilities from their home communities.
  - 3. The services are coordinated statewide through regional centers
- B. Define the term developmental disability
  - 1. Developmental disability manifest before an individual attains age 18
  - 2. Continues or can be expected to continue indefinitely.
  - 3. Constitutes a substantial disability for that individual (Welfare and Institutions Code 4512 (a).
- C. Recognize general behavioral indicators associated with all developmental disabilities
  - 1. Confusion and disorientation
  - 2. Slow response to commands/directions/questions
  - 3. Slurred speech and /or other speech disorders

4. Muscle control difficulty
  5. Seizure disorder
  6. Lethargy
  7. Self-endangering behavior
  8. Inappropriate responses to a situation
  9. Lack of awareness of dangerous situations
- D. Recognize behavioral indicators specifically associated with the following developmental disabilities:
1. Intellectual Disability (including Down Syndrome)
  2. Cerebral Palsy
  3. Autism Spectrum Disorder
  4. Epilepsy
- E. Recognize appropriate peace officer response(s) during field contacts with people with the following developmental disabilities:
1. Intellectual Disability (including Down Syndrome): approach calmly, be patient, use simple language, speak slowly.
  2. Cerebral Palsy: Do not assume person is mentally retarded or under influence of alcohol or drugs. Look at behavioral characteristic, watch for sign of fatigue, determine if the person uses prescription medications, ask person if they need assistance and allow person to suggest appropriate manner of assistance
  3. Autism Spectrum Disorder: Observe from a distance. Approach from a stranger may result in agitation, screaming or screeching. Be observant, Remain calm, speak in normal tone, do not rush the person, do not touch unless necessary
  4. Epilepsy: Look for medical bracelet, do not restrain them, move object out of way that could harm them, cushion person's head, keep people away, turn person's head to the side, and never put any object in the mouth.
- F. Recognize the cause and nature of intellectual/developmental disabilities
- G. Discuss the referral process and state/local resources available to people with intellectual/developmental disabilities

### III. LEARNING NEED

In order to make appropriate decisions and serve those with physical disabilities, peace officers must be able to recognize indicators of people with physical disabilities.

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- A. Recognize behavioral indicators specifically associated with the following neurological disorders, including:
1. Acquired
  2. Traumatic

- B. Recognize appropriate peace officer response(s) and methods of communication during field contacts with people who are:
  - 1. Affected by traumatic disorders
    - a. Neurological
    - b. Traumatic brain injuries
  - 2. Affected by dementia and stroke
- C. List the types of mobility assistance equipment and devices
  - 1. Canes
  - 2. Walkers
  - 3. Crutches
  - 4. Braces
  - 5. Prosthesis
  - 6. Motorized scooters
  - 7. Wheelchairs
- D. Recognize behavioral or other indicators that may lead an officer to identify a person as being:
  - 1. Blind or visually impaired
  - 2. Deaf or hard of hearing
- E. Recognize appropriate peace officer actions during field contacts with people who are:
  - 1. Blind or visually impaired
  - 2. Deaf or hard of hearing
- F. Discuss additional laws that protect the rights of people with physical disabilities, including:
  - 1. Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504
  - 2. Right of way (Vehicle Code Section 21963)
  - 3. White Cane Law (Civil Code Section 54.4)
  - 4. Service Animals (Penal Code Section 365.5 et. seq.)
- G. Discuss the referral process and state/local resources available to people with physical disabilities

#### IV. LEARNING NEED

In order to make appropriate decisions regarding intervention strategies, peace officers must be able to recognize, based on behavioral cues and other indicators, people with mental illness.

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- A. Define the term mental illness
  - 1. Is a term used for a group of disorders causing severe disturbances in a person/s thinking, feeling, and ability to relate to others. A person affected by a mental illness usually had a substantially diminished capacity for coping with the ordinary demands of life.

- B. List the categories of mental illness:
  - 1. Thought disorders including schizophrenia
  - 2. Mood disorders including depression and bipolar
  - 3. Anxiety related disorders
  - 4. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
  - 5. Co-occurring/dual diagnosis disorders
- C. Recognize the causes and nature of mental illness
- D. Recognize behavioral indicators that may be generally associated with people affected by mental illness
  - 1. Fearfulness
  - 2. Inappropriate behavior
  - 3. Extreme rigidity or inflexibility
  - 4. Excitability
  - 5. Impaired self-care
  - 6. Hallucination
  - 7. Delusions
  - 8. Disorganized speech, thought patterns or disorientation
  - 9. Depression
- E. Recognize appropriate peace officer response(s) and methods of communication when responding to a call that involves a person with a mental illness
  - 1. Request backup
  - 2. Communicate
  - 3. Do not make threats
  - 4. Be truthful
- F. Discuss the referral process and state/local resources available to people with mental illness
- G. Identify appropriate resolution options

## V. LEARNING NEED

Peace officers must become familiar with the application of *Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5150* in order to determine if an individual is a danger to others, or to himself or herself, or gravely disabled and to determine an appropriate response and resolution option.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVE

- A. Explain the intent of the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act (*Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5150*)
- B. Recognize the authority of peace officers to take a person into custody pursuant to *Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5150*
- C. Recognize behavioral indicators peace officers may use to help determine if a person affected by mental illness is a danger to others, or to himself or herself, or gravely disabled
- D. Recognize the right of individuals who have been taken into custody, pursuant to *Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5150*
- E. Recognize the documentation requirements pursuant to *Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5150.2*

## VI. REQUIRED TESTS

- A. The POST-Constructed Comprehensive RBC test 3.
- B. A scenario test that requires the student to demonstrate proficiency in contacting people with simulated disabilities. At a minimum, the test shall evaluate the following competencies:
  1. Use of force - The ability to distinguish and apply reasonable force options in given circumstances.
  2. Problem solving/ Decision-Making - Analyzing situations and implementing plans to solve problems in a timely manner. Using verbal or physical skills to determine the appropriate resolution to a situation.
  3. Legal authority/ Individual Rights - The identification of laws and constitutional rights governing consensual encounters, detentions, and arrests.
  4. Officer safety - Tactical and situational awareness and response to surroundings.
  5. Communication - The use of effective verbal and non-verbal skills to convey intended meaning and establish understanding.
  6. Stress Tolerance and Emotional Regulation - Maintaining self-control and making timely, rational decisions in stressful situations.

Presenters must use the POST-developed Scenario Test and the POST Scenario Competency Evaluation and Grading Test Forms or presenter-developed forms approved by POST, which minimally include the performance dimensions used for this scenario test.

## VII. REQUIRED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- A. The student will participate in a learning activity that requires self-assessment to determine their own level of experience with, and awareness of, people with disabilities.
  1. The learning activity should provide the student with an opportunity to determine their current level of experience interacting with people with disabilities
  2. The learning activity should serve as a starting point for an instructor-facilitated discussion which addresses fear, myths, stigma, discrimination, bias, cultural factors, media impact and stereotypes concerning contact with people with disabilities.

- B. The student will participate in a facilitated debrief following a series of simulated incidents regarding effective law enforcement intervention techniques with people exhibiting behavior which may be indicative of a physical and developmental disability.

The belief shall minimally address the following topics as they pertain to the contact:

1. The types of behaviors exhibited by the person contacted
  2. Possible causes of the behaviors
  3. Tactical safety measures employed by the responding officer(s), if applicable
  4. Appropriateness of the resolution, referral, or follow-up strategy, if applicable
  5. Use of effective verbal/non-verbal communication skills
  6. Overall effectiveness of the contact
- C. The student will participate in one or more learning activities from the POST-developed *Instructor's Guide to Learning Activities for Leadership, Ethics and Community Policing (December 2005)* or other comparable sources regarding people with disabilities. At a minimum, each activity, or combination of activities must address the following topics:
1. Responsibility of a peace officer to exercise ethical leadership during contacts with people with disabilities
  2. Use of effective communication skills (e.g. empathy, respect and honesty) and problem solving to enhance an officer's efforts to appropriately resolve issues of equal treatment and access to services
  3. Impact of an officer's attitude and actions toward people with disabilities on the community, agency and the officer
- D. The student will participate in an instructor-led discussion evaluating POST-provided video re-enactments depicting law enforcement contacts with people with mental illness, or an equivalent simulation, scenario or video representation provide and addressed by the presenter.

Among the topics which must be addresses are:

1. Any positive or negative behaviors demonstrated by contacting officer(s)
2. Perception of the person with disabilities being contacted
3. Presence of absence of stigma
4. Use of effective verbal/non-verbal communication skills
5. Use of problem solving skills to enhance an officer's efforts to appropriately resolve issues
6. Tactical safety measures employed by the responding officer(s), if applicable
7. Legality of the contact and subsequent actions of the contacting officer(s)
8. Consideration of cultural group history, customs, religious conventions, core values, or other perceptions material to the contact

<u>Description</u>	<u>Hours</u>
POST Minimum Required Hours	<u>15</u>
Agency Specific Hours	<u>          </u>
Total Instructional Hours	<u>15</u>