

# **CRJ 201-POLICING**

**Response to Special Populations**

# **INTRODUCTION**

- Describe police relations with special populations
- Discuss police responses to persons in mental health crisis

# POLICING SPECIAL POPULATIONS

- Those groups that offer unique challenges to police departments
  - Physically challenged
  - Aging population
  - Young people
  - Mentally ill
  - Crime victims
  - Homeless



# POLICING SPECIAL POPULATIONS

- **Physically Challenged:**
  - Visually impaired, hearing impaired, persons with disabilities (wheelchair, developmental disabilities)
- **Aging Population:**
  - Loneliness, dementia, physical disabilities, poverty
- **Youth:**
  - Special considerations? Are they less dangerous?
- **Crime Victims:**
  - Who represents them?
- **Homeless:**
  - What agencies are responsible for their well-being?

# RESPONSES TO PERSONS IN MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

- Deinstitutionalization of the 1960s
- Mental Hygiene Law – allows to be taken into custody
  - Danger to themselves or others
- Police are in a Gatekeeper role between the mental health and criminal justice systems
- Police were not intended or designed to deal with persons with mental illness
- Dangerous and difficult encounters – unpredictable
- One in 10 Americans struggle with mental illness

# RESPONSES TO PERSONS IN MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

Police encounters with the mentally ill:

- Street level
- Mental health facilities
- Private residences

Behavior often involves:

- Bizarre / erratic behavior
- Drunkenness / intoxication
- Aggression
- Destructive behavior
- Attempts at suicide

# **RESPONSES TO PERSONS IN MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS**

Dealing with the mentally ill:

- Minor crimes committed because of mental illness
- Crimes committed for survival
- Serious crimes committed because of mental illness

Use of discretion:

- Transport to the hospital
- Make an arrest
- Resolve without any enforcement action

# RESPONSES TO PERSONS IN MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

## Current options:

- Exclusive police-based responses
- Police and mental health professional responses
- Mental health-based responses

*Review Reading: Discretion and the Mentally Ill*

*Review Reading: Crisis Intervention Team Response*

[Policing Mental Illness](#) – YouTube link

[Memphis Model](#) – YouTube link