Police Training and Autism

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Why Police and Autism?

- Personal experience
- A growing issue
- Opportunity for improvement
Our Mission

• Leverage data to improve Autism awareness and training within Law Enforcement

• Bring about better, more effective and successful interactions between police officers and those with Autism via improved training and communication
Research Design

- Purposive design
  - Why?
- Sent survey to 8 Utah County police departments
  - 250 surveys sent
  - 60 surveys started
  - 54 surveys completed
  - 22% response rate
  - 9% dropout rate
Hypothesis

We propose the following:

• Police officers do not feel fully confident when interacting with Autistic individuals

• Police officers do not receive ample training regarding working with those who have Autism

• The interactions and overall confidence would be improved by receiving training on the matter and would result in fewer negative incidences
Literature Review

- Last year the NPR conducted a study between police and adults with Autism, citing their ability to follow commands specifically.

- In 2004, Loralee Olejnik wrote an article on how to properly approach and handle Autistic patients.

- In 2006 the OARacle spoke to the necessity of police officers receiving training because of how people with Autism act and react to certain situations.
Survey Structure

- We started with some basic demographic questions
  - Gender
  - Race
  - Tenure within department

- Then we transitioned into the real questions
Demographics

Gender
- 13% Female
- 87% Male

Tenure Within Department
- Less than a year: 3.77%
- 1-5 years: 18.87%
- 5-10 years: 24.53%
- 10-15 years: 26.42%
- 15-20 years: 15.09%
- Greater than 20 years: 11.32%

Race
- White: 87%
- Asian: 2%
- Native American: 2%
- Pacific Islander: 2%
- Other: 5%
### Did you have prior training?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Bar</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>40.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I have had interactions with and without training</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Effects of Training**

**Did you have prior training?**
Physical Traits

What makes the interaction easier?
Current Training

Does your department give training? How often do you receive training?

Most important when interacting

- Abilities
- Absolutely
- Adapt
- Affects
- Age
- Anger
- Approach
- Autistic
- Avoid
- Behavior
- Calm
- Capacity
- Characteristics
- Child
- Cognitive
- Comfortable
- Communication
- Compassion
- Condition
- Connection
- Contact
- Deal
- Demeanor
- Differently
- Difficult
- Disability
- Disorder
- Effectively
- Empathy
- Family
- Find
- Generally
- Guard
- Handicap
- Hands
- Happy
- Identity
- Indicative
- Individual
- Interaction
- Intimidating
- Kind
- Knowing
- Level
- Listen
- Lower
- Meant
- Members
- Mental
- Method
- Nice
- Organic
- Oriented
- Patience
- Patient
- People
- Persons
- Physical
- Portray
- Processes
- Reactions
- Remains
- Remembering
- Responses
- Safety
- Showing
- Situations
- Size
- Slowly
- Speaking
- Special
- Stay
- Symptoms
- Things
- Unpredictable
- Upset
- Visually
- Understanding
- Ununderstanding
Conclusion

On a scale of 1-10 rate your department’s training in regards to Autism
Conclusion Continued

Our data shows that police officers generally lack the confidence and training required to effectively handle interactions with Autistic individuals.

The next step is for those departments who participated to decide how they will leverage this data – our recommendation is improved training, working directly with professionals who deal in mental conditions.
The End

Questions?

For more info on Autism call 866-366-3361