

Police Training on Autism

An Overview of the HCPD Curriculum



Lt. Bill Chevront, HCPD

Please mute and turn off your camera until Q&A.



Presentation Outcomes

- Review **required police training objectives on autism**
- Discuss **key components** of the training
- Review **scenarios** used in training
- Share information on **911 Address Flagging Program**

Introduction

- 25+ years law enforcement experience
- Commander, Operational Preparedness Division, HCPD
- Instructor, Autism Training
- Instructor, Crisis Intervention Training Program
- Instructor, Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Training
- Former Board Member, Howard County Autism Society
- Supervisor, Project Lifesaver and Rapid Return Tracking Program
- Invited Presenter, Governor's Commission for Effective Community Inclusion of People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities



“The only source of knowledge is experience.”

Albert Einstein



Training Objectives



MPCTC Objectives

- ❖ 9.14 Identify the procedures that an officer should/may employ when interacting with an individual with a disability
- ❖ 9.14.01 Identify the recognizable signs of a person who has Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

HCPD Objectives

- Identify the **key characteristics of autism** and the vulnerabilities commonly associated with autism
- Identify the impact of these key characteristics and **vulnerabilities in a crisis situation**
- Identify **communication and de-escalation techniques** to effectively and safely interact with people with autism in a crisis
- Identify **community partners** to assist with CIT programs, trainings, and proactive safety practices

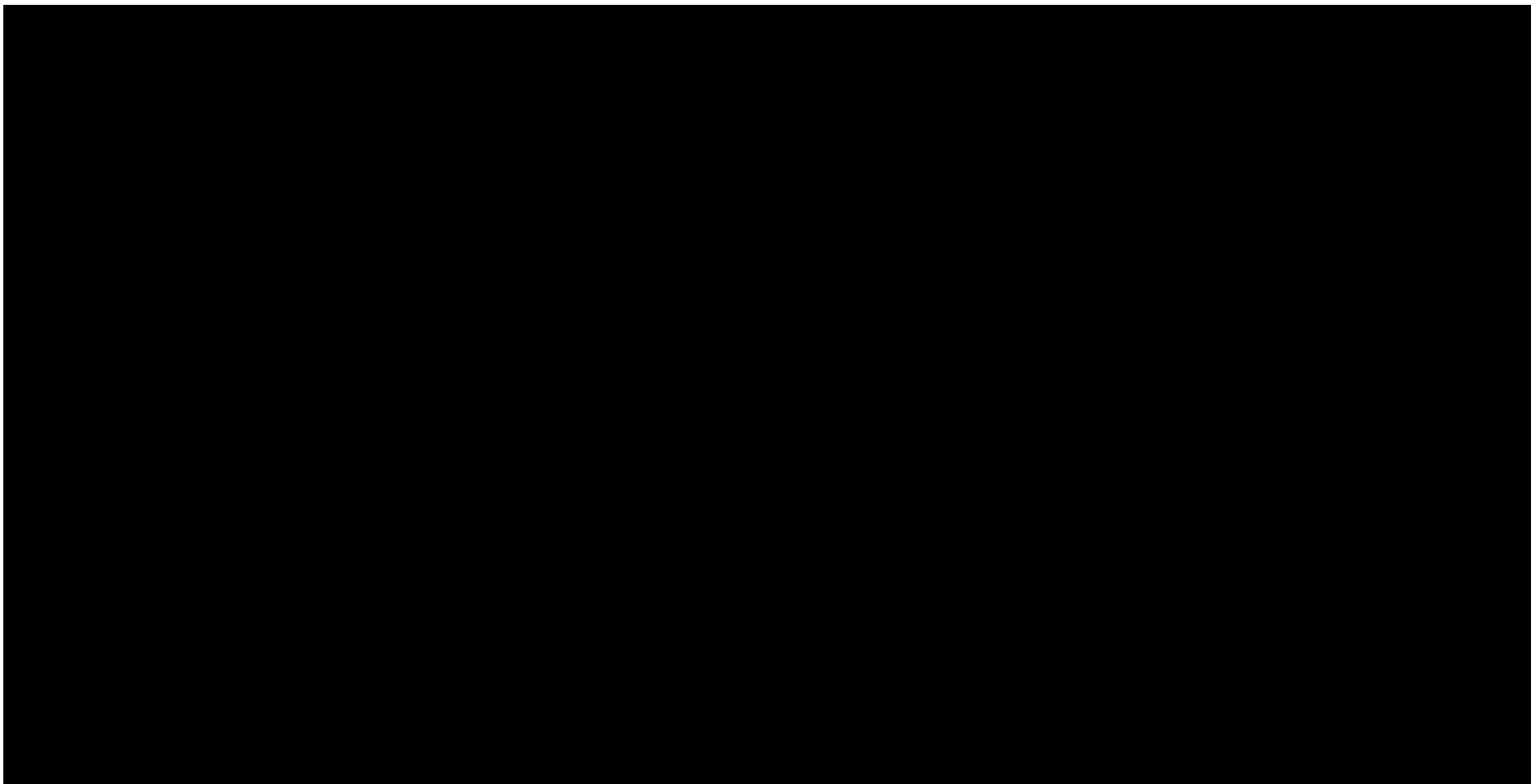
Key Components of the Curriculum

Need for Training

Statistics on national, state, and county incidence of autism

Recent headlines

Self-advocates want to feel safe, understood, and included



Characteristics of Autism

Spectrum Disorder

Communication

Social Communication and
Social Relationships

Processing

Sensory Issues

Repetitive Behaviors /
Restricted Interests

Meltdowns & Tantrums

Behavior

Behavior is a form of communication

Repetitive behaviors are often self-regulating

Impulse control

Need for routine

Vulnerabilities of People with Autism

More likely to be victims

People with autism and related developmental disabilities generally are **not violent**

- Victims of crime
- Victims of bullying
- Victims of post-elopement abduction
- Victims of abuse and physical restraint

May not fully understand danger

Elopement and wandering

Drowning--#1 cause of death related to wandering

Safety and self-care

Communication and de-escalation strategies

Focus on . . .

Signs of escalation

Stages of a meltdown

Patience -- calm instills calm

Listening skills

Communication strategies for limited speech communicators

Awareness of command presence and gestures

Respect for space

First/then statements to assist with transitions

Building trust

Using all resources available



CNN

Scenarios and videos used in the training

Videos

Patti Saylor—need for training

Office consoling teen—what to do right!

Grant driving

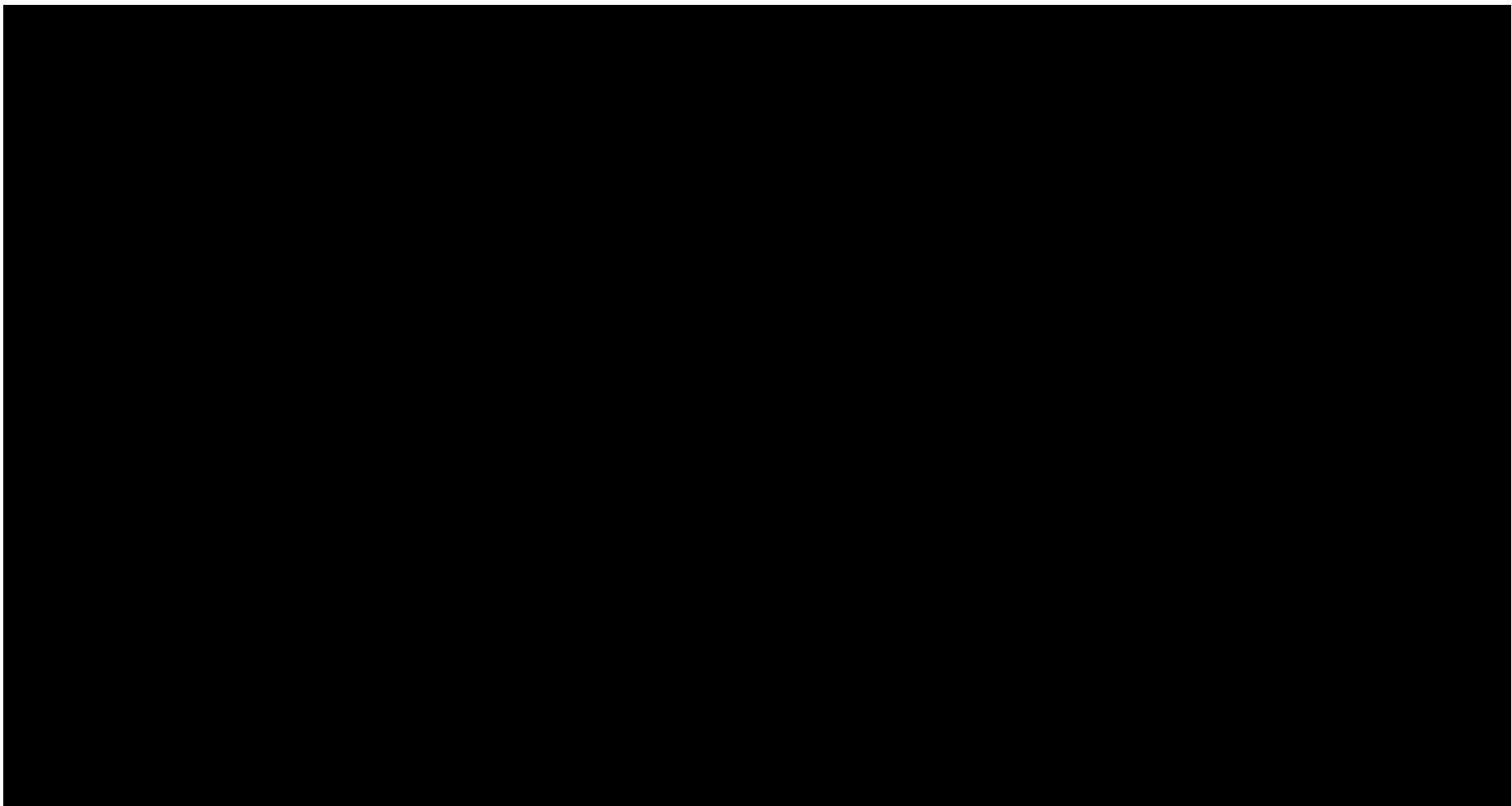
Kyle in swimming pool—processing challenges

Carly's Café—sensory

Police shooting in Miami—officers wound therapist

Arizona officer – misinterprets stimming behavior

HCPD response to Route 29 incident



Scenarios

Wandering incident in Laurel—nonverbal teen found in neighbor's apartment

Missing child by Reservoir Dam

Meltdown in store – Perceived Crisis

Repeated calls to 911 for assistance (not HoCo)

Community Partnerships and Proactive Strategies

911 Address Flagging Program



- 911 Call Center has first-hand knowledge that an individual with autism or a disability resides at a given address
- 911 operators and first responders are already “in the know” when called for an emergency
- specific details are provided in advance by families
- 100% voluntary

Recruit Class

“This partnership has proven to be invaluable to our families. There’s peace of mind in knowing that responding officers will have a basic understanding of autism and how it may affect someone in an emergency situation.”

Theresa Ballinger, Howard County Autism Society



Howard County Police Department recruit Michael Scanton, left, talks with Jane Plapinger and her autistic 13-year-old son Dave. (Kenneth K. Lam / Baltimore Sun)

Community Outreach

HCPD has been present at many HCAS events—from the Every Step Counts Walk/5K each year to several resource fairs

Police station tours

Always open to opportunities to connect with the community, hear about concerns, answer questions

Questions ?

Lt. Bill Chevront

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