



UNION COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

BEHIND THE STAR

SHERIFF MALCUM J. "JAMIE" PATTON



Sheriff's Office Collaborates to Help Those in Crisis

Union County is not immune. The Sheriff's Office has seen a steady increase in the number of mental health crisis calls that deputies are responding to. To address this challenge, the Sheriff's Office has partnered with the Union County Mental Health and Recovery Board to assign a deputy sheriff to focus on community programming that addresses crisis intervention training (CIT) and critical incident stress management (CISM) needs. This CIT/CISM position is the result of our partnership with the Mental Health and Recovery Board of Union County (MHRBUC). "The Mental Health and Recovery Board assisted us in obtaining grant funding that allows us to assign a deputy to this position full time," said Sheriff Jamie Patton. In January 2020, Deputy Morgan Brown was assigned to the position and he works daily with the staff at MHRBUC and Maryhaven to address the mental health needs in Union County.

This position is a part of the *Stepping up Initiative*, which is an existing program between the Mental Health and Recovery Board and the Tri-County Regional Jail. The goal of the *Stepping up Initiative* is to reduce the number of people with mental illness in our jail. Deputy Brown will be training first responders in techniques to help de-escalate situations involving those with mental illness and to transport individuals to Maryhaven, a behavioral health and addiction treatment center, as opposed to jail. One of Deputy Brown's primary duties is training. Union, Champaign, and Logan Counties partner together annually to conduct crisis intervention training. Deputy Brown is also responsible for advanced CIT training that focuses on working with more specialized groups such as those with autism, our veterans, and the youth of our community.

Deputy Brown also coordinates our local critical incident stress management response. The response for CISM involves a volunteer team of public safety and affiliate professionals that serve local fire, EMS, law enforcement, industry, educational, and other organizations that may experience any type of critical incident. The goal of the CISM Team is to respond and help people be resistant, resilient, and recover from critical incident stress. The CISM Team can respond to a wide range of events including line of duty deaths, multi-casualty incidents, violent events involving a child, and incidents where responders know the victim personally. Team members include deputy sheriffs, police officers, fire fighters, mental health professionals, local clergy, and representatives from other local support groups. The CISM Team can be quickly activated through the Union County Emergency Management Agency.

"As a result of this collaboration, we have a dedicated law enforcement professional working with our community mental health professionals to systematically develop wrap around strategies to better serve those in our community with mental health challenges," concluded Patton.