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HONS 3990-003

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April 17, 2020

First Responders and the Mentally Impaired Summary

First responders often encounter people when they are having one of the worst days of their lives. They receive training to de-escalate and take control of dangerous situations. However, it is unclear if their current mental health training is adequate. My research question is, does the pre-service mental health training translate into professional and effective contacts in the field? Since there is very little research on this topic, and an increasing number of people with mental impairments having encounters with first responders, I believe that direct observational research is needed. I will obtain permission to ride along with first responders. I will gather information about the kinds of and hours of training the first responders receive. I will ride along with first responders and ask survey questions. I will document my observations of the contacts both with average citizens and with people with mental impairments. I will repeat this until I have gathered a significant amount of data with which to draw conclusions. I expect to find that although trained, first responders will likely use politically incorrect terminology and offend those with whom they make contact.