

Law Enforcement's Contact with the Mentally Ill: Are We Saving Lives?

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Law enforcement officers have numerous job tasks that are not directly related to criminal violations. The most difficult of these situations are contacts involving the mentally ill. The worst encounters lead to violence, resulting either with injury or death to the offender or an officer. A significant amount of time and expense is expended on trying to manage these individuals. This includes removing them through the Baker Act Law or entering them into the criminal justice system. With the advent of less than lethal weapons, along with advanced crisis training provided to officers, are we seeing a reduction of fatalities and injuries in these potentially violent encounters?