

CRISIS: Role-play helps officers prepare

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autism spectrum in law enforcement situations.

The training was led by Sherri Coronado, who works in law enforcement and has a son on the autism spectrum, and Carlyle King, who was diagnosed with autism at 35. They discussed the different ways autism can show up, and ways people with autism may react when confronted by an officer.

“I have difficulties with visual noise,” King said. “So things like blinking lights get processed as motion.”

If someone on the spectrum gets pulled over, Coronado said, they might be overwhelmed by the sight of flashing lights.

“(The person) may not be able to follow your instructions because there’s too much input from the lights still going on,” she said.

In addition to sensory overload, the two discussed some of the social cues people with autism find difficult. In a crisis, Coronado said, even those who can communicate verbally may have difficulty.



D. Ige and H. O’Brien, both Oregon Department of Corrections correctional officers, do a role-playing exercise where they reason with an annoyed and confused truck driver (played by Dan Jeffery, a case manager at Lifeways) during Crisis Intervention Training on Friday at New Hope Church in Hermiston.
Staff photo by Kathy Aney

“That’s one of the first things to go,” she said. “You’re not going to be able to communicate with them.”

“There are no particular physical markers,” Coronado said. “But if you know you’re dealing with someone on the spectrum, afford them (courtesy). Calm your voice, your body, your tone and be patient.”

Lifeways has been putting on the crisis intervention team training since 2013. Umatilla Police Lt. Bill Wright, who helps coordinate the training, said it changes a bit from year to year, but the core principles are the same.

In addition to addressing issues they might encounter in their jobs, the training covers how law enforcement

officers may themselves be affected by such encounters.

“We talk about resources available for other officers, and making sure we’re watching out for each other,” Wright said.

The course ends with a role-playing exercise, in which trainees will act out some of the scenarios they’ve learned about all week.

“We (role-play) an individual who may be suicidal — that can be really challenging,” said Rachele Burke of Lifeways. “Or how to intervene with someone who is experiencing acute psychosis or mania.”

Some class members said the training helped them feel more comfortable reaching out to mental health services when they have a call for someone in crisis, and how they can contribute.

“Before, I didn’t know who to contact — I had been relying a hundred percent on dispatch,” said Nick Berg, a Umatilla Tribal Police officer. “Here with this inter-agency training, you learn about the steps you can take.”

EOTEC: Sale starts Oct. 14

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hold down the sandy soil but not become a significant fire hazard for vehicles to park on during the fair and rodeo. They said if EOTEC could come up with seed, the center could lend some free labor and equipment. The board authorized Dorran to work out the details with HAREC and also voted to have a Department of Corrections work crew pull puncture vine by hand.

Logistics for EOTEC’s biggest event since the Umatilla County Fair and Farm-City Pro Rodeo were discussed at length Friday as the Hermiston Horse Sale Extravaganza looms Oct. 14-15. Rivera said in EOTEC’s current situation — with just a part-time, interim manager as EOTEC’s only staff — the facility isn’t really ready to handle that type of event in 2017. But Rivera said he made an exception for the horse sale because it is an event with a good track record in Hermiston that the community doesn’t want to lose. The sale is expected to bring in 2,000 to 2,500 people and generate about 500 hotel stays.

“This is exactly what this facility was designed for,” Rivera said.

The facility’s conditional use permit has different requirements for different sizes of events, and the board discussed whether those attendance thresholds applied to overall attendance during the entire weekend or merely the number of people on the grounds at any given time, which is expected to be 500 or less. They also discussed the need to have people directing parking and enforcing the restrictions that are in place for access off Ott Road, and someone from EOTEC to be on site managing those people and taking responsibility for issues that arise.

Rivera will be tied up with his other job as superintendent of Hermiston Energy Services over the next couple of weeks, but

Dorran said he would work out logistical problems with horse sale manager Randy Hull and make sure someone from EOTEC was on site during the event.

The board also approved a \$2,500 grant from EOTEC’s tourism promotion assessment funds to market the horse sale. Board members said the grant amount was coincidental to the fact that Hull was paying \$2,500 to rent the rodeo arena, barns and pens. That fee was based on the price Hull had paid at the old fairgrounds, and board members noted it would likely change for future events after a permanent manager is brought in and a fee structure is created for the barns and arena.

A middle school leadership convention had requested free use of the event center in exchange for doing all set-up and tear-down, but Rivera suggested a \$400 fee due to the fact that the facility is operating at a loss when comparing expenses such as contract labor for janitorial to rental revenue.

“It costs us over \$1,000 per day just to open our doors,” he said, calculating the cost since July 1.

The board also approved some suggestions by Rivera for policy changes to address problems caused by evening events involving alcohol. He suggested an earlier last call for alcohol in order to make sure events wrapped up on time. He said the center should stop offering a discount for doing their own tear-down, since “drinking and exhaustion” was causing additional wear and tear on chairs and tables, and that renters should be charged a \$250 fee for leaving their decorations in the building to be picked up later. He also said that someone needed to be supervising security staff hired for events, since “without supervision we’ve identified that very little work is actually being done,” including one incident in which security showed up two hours late to a wedding.

WALDEN: Tours diesel technology lab

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including FARM, the Precision Irrigated Agriculture Center in Hermiston and Workforce Training Center in Boardman.

“The importance of an educational institution like this cannot be overstated,” Walden said. “Institutions like this really are where students get the technical training that we need, too, in the workforce. And it’s often an unmet need.”

The tour began at FARM, where Walden met with Preston Winn, chairman of the BMCC agriculture department. Joined by fellow instructors, the group strolled around the building, including the livestock lab which features a new, top of the line hydraulic squeeze chute.

“This is what I need in



Staff photo by E. J. Harris
Rep. Greg Walden wears a Make Onions Great Again hat during a visit to the BMCC campus Friday in Pendleton.

Congress,” Walden joked, drawing a laugh.

From there, Walden headed to the diesel tech-

nology lab where he met Jeff Priester, a second-year student from Twin Falls, Idaho, whom Walden helped sort out a paperwork blunder that might have prevented Priester from applying for federal student aid.

Priester, 20, now lives in Pendleton and plans to use his degree to work for either a railroad or Oregon Department of Transportation.

“It’s been great,” Priester said of attending BMCC. “The way they teach is wonderful. You learn a lot.”

The tour wrapped up with trips to the newly renovated Morrow Hall, home of the student service center, financial aid and admissions offices, as well as Pioneer Hall for a brief stop at the Betty Feves Memorial Gallery.

On the subject of afford-

able education, Walden said he was pleased that Congress approved the restoration of year-round Pell grants in its omnibus budget for the 2017 fiscal year.

“That has helped a lot of students, and also helped with retention,” he said. “Students that stay in over the summer seem to stay into the next year.”

Carl Melle, dean of career-technical and community education, said he hoped to show Walden how BMCC is working to improve its programs for students, and aligning with state expectations for higher education.

“We’re doing our best to serve our community’s needs, based on the funding from our bond and good stewardship of the resources we have,” Melle said.

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