



New Response Team Makes Progress

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photo by Scott Barstow

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The Rochester Police Department says it has made a lot of progress in the past year in dealing with situations that involve people with mental illnesses.

The department released a report Wednesday on its year-old Emotionally Disturbed Persons Response Team. The police department put the EDPRT in place a year ago, after several cases where officers used force to deal with a mental issue case.

103 officers received 80 hours of training on how to respond to suicide cases and other cases involving people who are emotionally disturbed.

The department says since the EDPRT was put into place, no officers were injured and no one with a mental illness was injured during an incident with police.

Police say one of the most important things they have learned is knowing how to talk to a person with a mental illness and learning not to use force immediately.

"One of the biggest things they learned was the reduction of stigmas and the barriers of the police and the mentally ill," says Rochester Police Sergeant Eric Weaver.

Before EDPRT, at least a dozen officers every year were injured in a mental health incident.