

A Statewide Training Approach: Strengthening Communication Between First Responders & Autistic People

**DNEA Resource Guide
for Professionals**

Why is this important?

A first responder who is sensitive and understands the nature of autism is better prepared to assist and make positive changes for people with autism and their families.

How can a state strengthen relationships between first responders and autistic people?

Training for First Responders

Teaches first responders about autism and other developmental disabilities from a law enforcement and family perspective.

Focuses on de-escalation strategies through lectures, interactive learning, and video-based scenarios.



Relevant Research

Gardner, L., Campbell, J. M., & Westdal, J. (2018). Brief report: Descriptive analysis of law enforcement officers' experiences with and knowledge of autism. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 49(3), 1278–1283. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-018-3794-4>

McMahon, C. M., & Carey, J. M. (2016). Autism spectrum disorder and the criminal justice system: The need for community engagement and interdisciplinary research. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Practice*, 7(1), 6–22.



"Win the heart and confidence of the parent; [use] common sense, patience and understanding."
- Training attendee

Visit the DNEA website to learn more

<https://www.delawareautismnetwork.org/training-events/first-responders/>

Fletcher, A., Sawchenko, C., Mallory, S., & DNEA CDS & Autism Delaware Teams. (2024). *DNEA resource guide for professionals: A statewide training approach: Strengthening communication between first responders and autistic people*. Delaware Network for Excellence in Autism.



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