

MEMORANDUM TO: All Chiefs of Police and
Commissioner Thomas Carrique
Chairs, Police Services Boards

FROM: Richard Stubbings
Assistant Deputy Minister
Public Safety Division

SUBJECT: **Virtual Reality Mental Health Crisis Response Training
(VR-MHCRT) Registration for Municipal and First Nation
Police Services**

DATE OF ISSUE:	December 7, 2021
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The Ministry of the Solicitor General has partnered with Wilfrid Laurier University, Ryerson University, the University of Victoria, and a broad spectrum of subject matter experts to develop the *Virtual Reality Mental Health Crisis Response Training* (VR-MHCRT). This is a scenario-based curriculum and evaluation framework that offers an evidence-based, standardized training protocol on de-escalation and mental health crisis response for police services across Ontario. The background and curriculum overview for MHCRT and VR-MHCRT is included as an attachment to this memo.

Police Service VR-MHCRT Registration

Police services are encouraged to register to experience the VR-MHCRT at their home service. This will be done at no cost to participating services and includes the Virtual Reality (VR) educational technology and equipment to deliver the training. Registered police services will receive information on MHCRT, VR, and equipment delivery.

To register your police service, or for more information regarding VR-MHCRT, please contact vr-mhcr@lumeto.com by December 17, 2021.

VR-MHCRT User Acceptance/Research Study

The ministry will also be issuing a call for volunteers for the VR-MHCRT User Acceptance/Research Study. The objective of the study is to test the logistics and feasibility of running VR against that of live action circuit scenarios for mental health crisis simulation evaluation.

The study is tentatively scheduled for January 11-13, 2022 and February 8-11, 2022. Further information on this study and how to register will follow.

Background

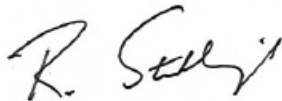
The MHCRT was designed to be used by police officers of varying levels of experience. The MHCRT was developed with the support and involvement of a broad range of organizations including mental health professionals and expert police panels.

The MHCRT will support both the ministry and individual police services in realizing recommendations from multiple seminal reports and inquests. This includes the recommendations on de-escalation and training techniques outlined in [A Matter of Life and Death \(2016\)](#) from the Ombudsman of Ontario.

The format of the live action MHCRT curriculum consists of in-person scenario-based training with supplementary online modules. In partnership with Wilfrid Laurier University and Ryerson University and with the support of Toronto-based technology provider Lumeto, the MHCRT program has been adapted for a VR format. VR is an immersive medium for scenario-based training that fosters scalability, cost-effectiveness, and consistency in simulating high fidelity, authentic crisis situations, allowing officers to practice decision-making, and implement communication and de-escalation strategies. The VR-MHCRT program will be available to all municipal and First Nations police services and can be used alongside existing training resources for mental health crisis responses and deployment of de-escalation strategies across diverse communities .

Thank you for your continued support on this important initiative.

Sincerely,



Richard Stubbings
Assistant Deputy Minister
Public Safety Division

Attachment

c: Mario Di Tommaso, O.O.M.
Deputy Solicitor General, Community Safety