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New Media 499

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## **Assessment of Deployment Plan**

### Phase 1 of deployment

The first phase of my deployment was intended to be a trial run of my training program on pervasive developmental disorder. I traveled to the Scarborough Maine police department on March 15th, originally planning to conduct the training from March 15th to March 18th.

However, due to inclement weather, it was collectively decided to only meet on the 15th.

Accompanied by my father, who provided valuable connections to the department, I was able to secure a small group of five officers, all of whom were family friends, to participate in the program. On average, it took around 15-20 minutes for each officer to complete the program.

Although I did not have a survey at the time due to the small group size, I closely observed each officer and received valuable feedback from them after they completed the program. Some of the feedback included

- the need to get straight to the point or purpose of each section
- assume that the person going through the program knows nothing about PDD as a whole
- incorporate more imagery and videos as there were only two videos and a few photos in the original program.
- However, the collective positive feedback was an encouraging start towards making the program more interactive and user-friendly.

After receiving the feedback, I gave myself a two-week period to make edits and additions to the program. One troubleshooting issue I encountered was that the personal videos I had created were having issues when played in the program. Unfortunately, I had to scrap the videos entirely, which was a significant setback for the project. However, I was able to find suitable replacements for the videos and pictures with information in them.

## Phase 2 of deployment

Throughout the second phase of my deployment, I worked hard to ensure that the program and survey on Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD)/Autism that I had developed were well-received by the Scarborough police department. To accomplish this, I contacted Chief Holmquist and social service navigator Lauren via email to obtain their assistance in distributing the program and survey.

The survey, which consisted of ten questions, was developed on Qualtrics, a web-based survey software, to gather feedback from patrol officers. As soon as the program and survey were sent out on the morning of March 30th, responses began to come in, with a total of 16 responses being received within the first week of deployment. This was a promising start, and I was thrilled to see that the officers were taking an interest in the program.

However, the real success came when the service navigator suggested that the survey be sent to the 911 operators as well. I immediately agreed, and within the second week of deployment, I had received an additional 24 responses from the Scarborough police department. The positive response from the officers was overwhelming, and I was ecstatic to see the program making an impact.

On April 14th, I received an email from the service navigator and Chief Holmquist, expressing their appreciation for the program's development and asking if I was comfortable sending it to the Saco and South Portland police departments. This was a huge vote of confidence in my work, and I agreed to send the program to those departments. After the program was sent out, I received an additional 14 responses, bringing the total to 38.

The officers' feedback was incredibly valuable, and it helped me identify areas where the program could be improved. While most of the officers found the program comprehensive and effective, some suggested including more stories about successful and unsuccessful interactions between police officers and individuals with PDD/Autism. There was also a request for more engaging and interactive elements and additional topics related to PDD/Autism. Here are some quotes from the officers:

- This is a good overview of the topic.
- very thorough
- I knew very little about PDD, and did not know that Autism was a sub-category, amongst others, of PDD.
- Yes, but would be helpful if there were stories about successful and failures regarding police officers and interactions with individuals with PDD/Autism
- yes it did very well
- It seemed very comprehensive.
- I was not aware of the PDD title until taking the class.
- Was very comprehensive. I did not feel that anything was left out.
- It was defined and explained in an understanding way

- Amazing job covering all sectors of PDD. I really appreciated the piece on de-escalation!
- It covered all topics from what to look for, to interacting, deescalating, interacting and positive outcome
- Sure it did all topics were well answered and the information was very clear and got right to the point
- Information was very clear and as far as I know of everything was covered
- Personally not too familiar on the topic but everything being said makes sense and is fairly straight forward
- You could go more into detail on what an arrest may look like with someone with PDD but overall the information being shown was very impressive

Despite these suggestions, the feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and it was truly rewarding to see that my work was making a difference. As someone who is not a professional in the field, I was grateful for the opportunity to teach experienced officers something new. Moving forward, I am committed to improving the program further to make it more engaging and interactive, and to cover additional topics related to PDD/Autism. Overall, the success of the program thus far has been inspiring, and I look forward to seeing how it continues to impact the police departments in the future.

