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Mental health awareness week

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LEE COUNTY, Ala. – Lee County is recognizing mental illness awareness this week.

Mental health awareness is critical to Auburn Police. They recently partnered with East Alabama Mental Health in order to train their officers on how best to address mental illness within the community.

The training will teach officers on how to recognize if someone they come in contact with is suffering from a mental illness, and how an officer needs to respond to that individual. Captain Williams Mathews with the Auburn Police Division says the training is vital, because law

enforcement needs to be able to quickly identify if they are dealing with someone with a mental illness.

“They need to be able to identify that based on just that initial contact,” says Captain Williams Mathews.

Mathews says the agency involved in Lee County is the care coalition chaired by East Alabama Mental Health, the organization brings awareness and resources to members of the community.

The police department also works with the Auburn University mental health force, where they talk to students and staff about mental health concerns on campus, and what are the best resources available in the community for students.

Auburn Police say they do not have a specific database of individuals in the community who suffer from mental illnesses.

Captain Mathews says police can refer to prior police reports on an individual, if they believe they could suffer from mental illness.

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