

## **Axon Partners with Chicago Police Department for First VR Empathy Training Program; Debuts New Autism Empathy Training**

### **Axon assembling crisis intervention training advisory board to guide in the development of VR mental health training scenarios**

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz., May 22, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- Axon (Nasdaq: AAXN), the global leader in connected law enforcement technologies, today announced a partnership with the Chicago Police Department to pilot Axon's virtual reality (VR) empathy-based training. Chicago PD, a Major Cities Chiefs Association member, is the first agency to incorporate Axon's immersive experience into its current crisis intervention training curriculum. Chicago PD is also the first agency to debut Axon's new autism empathy training VR scenario.

Axon's VR training is offered through Axon Academy, a network of online and in-person training for law enforcement. The VR training program is designed to better equip officers with the tools to de-escalate situations involving people suffering from mental health issues, crises or psychotic episodes. The autism empathy scenario is the second VR empathy training offered to customers following a schizophrenia empathy scenario which launched in October 2018. Axon announced its empathy-based training following a survey of 500 US law enforcement professionals, which found that 80% of officers believe there is a need for improved agency tools and resources to effectively de-escalate dangerous situations.

"It's humbling to work with the second largest police department in the country to pilot this VR training program," says Laura Brown, Axon's Sr. Director of Training. "There's no one-size-fits-all strategy for responding to calls for service in the field. The more police officers understand what people are experiencing during a crisis, the more they can adapt their response to effectively de-escalate the situation and protect lives."

The VR technology provides officers with an immersive training where trainees can put themselves in the shoes of both the officer responding to the scene and the person in crisis. For the pilot program, Axon will work closely with the Chicago PD to incorporate the VR training piece into their existing curriculum.

"The goal is to take crisis intervention training out of the classroom, and into a virtual field," says Chicago PD Lieutenant Antoinette Ursitti, a Crisis Intervention Team program coordinator. "We're excited to see how this new partnership with Axon can help our department not only understand civilians in crisis, but equip them to de-escalate situations verbally."

Axon is announcing its partnership with the Chicago PD during Mental Health Awareness Month. In addition to the partnership, Axon is working to assemble a crisis intervention training advisory board to guide the development of empathy-based training scenarios. For both the autism and schizophrenia empathy training, Axon worked with mental health, community and policing experts to ensure an accurate portrayal of a service call involving someone suffering from a mental health crisis.

The VR training is available now to US customers who purchase Axon's Officer Safety Plan 7+. They will receive an Oculus Go training headset loaded with both the autism and schizophrenia empathy training.

### **About Axon**

Axon is a network of devices, apps and people that helps public safety personnel become smarter and safer. With a mission of protecting life, our technologies give customers the confidence, focus and time they need to keep their communities safe. Our products impact every aspect of a public safety officer's day-to-day experience.

We work hard for those who put themselves in harm's way for all of us. To date, there are more than 371,100 software seats booked on the Axon network around the world and more than 216,000 lives and countless dollars have been saved with the Axon network of devices, apps and people. Learn more at [www.axon.com](http://www.axon.com) or by calling (800) 978-2737.

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Additional assets available online: [Video \(1\)](#)

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