

Policing the Teen Brain
Contra Costa County Office of the Sheriff: 5590
| POST Certification IV | Reimbursement Plan N/A | 14 Hours
(Revised 11/12/2025)

DAY 1

I. Introduction to Training & Overview

- A. Goals of training.
- B. Value of developmental competence.
- C. Introduction of Body Language Timing (BLT) mnemonic device.

II. The Teen Brain

- A. Understanding how the teen brain works differently with emphasis on differences in the way teens:
 - 1. Perceive
 - 2. Process
 - 3. Respond
- B. Key elements of adolescent development.
- C. Impacts of peer pressure on behavior.
- D. Communication styles.
- E. Tactics for de-escalation and face-saving in public situations.

III. Recognizing & responding effectively to youth with mental health issues

- A. Mental health disorder.
 - 1. Estimate of youth suffering from mental health disorder
- B. Mental health diagnoses and treatment.
 - 1. Percentage of youth in the Juvenile with mental health diagnoses
 - 2. Mental health treatment.
- C. Tactics for de-escalation of interaction with teenagers with mental health issues.

IV. Recognizing & responding effectively to traumatized youth

- A. The role of trauma in youths' responses.

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1. Sources of trauma.
2. Impact of trauma on youth.
3. Tactics used by Psychologists to respond effectively to youth and promote trauma-sensitive approaches.

V. Ask the good Doctor

- A. Open discussion between the psychologist/psychiatrist and Officer to discuss the following:
 1. Youth behavior witnessed by the psychologist/psychiatrist.
 2. How to handle situations that they might encounter with youth that are having mental issues problems.

VI. Understanding bias

- A. Discussion on the effect of bias on youth and on Officers.

DAY 2

I. Cultural factors & community demographics: Implications for Officer.

- A. Review of risk factors present in communities and top predictors for involvement in delinquency, special emphasis on truancy and foster care youth.
 1. Share data on how gaps in safety nets become youth issues that lead to involvement of law enforcement.
- B. Survey of cultural and media messages that compete with and oppose traditional authority.
 1. Review topics including parenting, pervasive cultural views on conflict resolution.
 2. Emphasis on manhood being a function of power/force.
 3. Discuss the increase of sexualization of youth.
 4. The role and power of social media.

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II. What to do: Connecting youth to youth-serving community-based programs.

- A. Identify community-based assets.
- B. Demonstrate impact of assets on offending.
- C. Showcase youth-serving community-based organizations and 4 program types.

III. Juvenile Justice for law Enforcement

- A. U.S. Supreme Court adoption of developmental approach.
- B. State court interpretation of supreme court post-JDB v. North Carolina.
- C. Federal and State Policy trends and pressures.
- D. Implications for law enforcement.
- E. Using Juvenile Justice Jeopardy to make an impact on learning.

IV. Asserting Authority Effectively with Teens

- A. Summary of research and evidence-based best practices for Officers working with youth.
- B. Review of de-escalation techniques effect with youth.

V. Trying it on for size

- A. Showing Local youth participate in skits enacting typical scenarios to ask students why they respond to assertion of authority in the manner they do.

VI. Conclusion & Evaluation

- A. Course Conclusion.
- B. Course Evaluation & Wrap up.