

CIT Topic Rationale Sheet
Presenter Outline

Topic: ADOLESCENTS

Why is this topic relevant to the STREET ENCOUNTER?

1. Law Enforcement will encounter youth with emotional and behavioral problems. An alarming number of youth with mental health needs struggle in school and at home with undiagnosed and untreated conditions. Increasingly, these youth enter the juvenile justice system. Seventy percent of youth in the juvenile justice system have one or more psychiatric disorders and at least 20 percent of these youth live with a serious mental illness that significantly interferes with their day-to-day functioning.
2. Officers may believe that bad parenting only is the cause of youth with emotional or behavioral.
3. There are some unique differences when de-escalating juveniles than with adults.
4. Command and control approaches with some juveniles may actually escalate the encounter

Proposed learning objectives to prepare the officers for such encounters?

1. Introduce officers to the extent and affects of trauma with respect to youth and families.
2. Learn about the major emotional and behavioral disorders that affect adolescents, including the age of onset for most mental illnesses
3. Understand how the adolescent brain is wired with respect to the developing frontal lobe (judgment is learned, impulsivity and immaturity in consequential decision making).
4. Learn how adolescent anger is expressed differently than adult anger, address the issue of self harm among adolescents.
5. Explore the tensions around bad behavior equals bad parenting.
6. Identify de-escalation strategies different then the EAR strategies officers can use when they find themselves in an adolescent encounter.

What do officers need to know about de-escalating this encounter that is unique to the EAR Model?

Engage	Assess	Resolve
Most conflicts with adolescents will include elements of Power and Control, both of which you represent. Be aware that your uniform and position may be frightening or provoking to the youth.	Get past treatment and behavioral history from parents. Ask if the youth's behavior is the same at home and at school	Set firm limits but remember that encouraging, praising, or explaining to a youth what you need from them is better then giving orders
Separate family members and begin interviewing the adolescent separate from parents and what is happening. If this is a school or street encounter, separate the adolescent from his peer group.	Look for signs of cutting and or drug use	If the youth remains out of control, be gentle but firm and forecast what you are doing.

<p>Remember, juvenile VERBAL aggression can be very loud and personal, and occur very quickly. Remain calm and professional</p>	<p>Remember the de-escalation mindset of patience, empathy and vigilance. Don't say "There's nothing we can do" or "Your kid needs a good lecture."</p>	<p>Remind, warn then if have to confront the adolescent.</p>
<p>Explain to the adolescent what you want, what you need them to do and what will happen.</p>	<p>A sensitive intervention by a police officer can be a reassuring influence on a struggling family.</p>	<p>Leave the parents with the toll free crisis line if you are concerned with depression or suicide. Talk to the parents about the availability of services if the youth is not being treated. Desperate parents can be guided to appropriate community services by a knowledgeable officer</p>
<p>Don't judge appearances- adolescents are good at reading adults and will quickly know if you disapprove of a piecing, tattoo, haircut or how they are dressed. Be friendly and accepting, but remain firm and professional</p>		