



Adolescent Mental Health Training for School Resource Officers and Educators Course Outline and Objectives

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The *Adolescent Mental Health Training for School Resource Officers and Educators (AMHT)* is a 1.5 day training course designed to help school resource officers and educators better identify and respond to students who are suspected of having a mental health need. It was developed by the National Center for Youth Opportunity and Justice¹ (NCYOJ) at Policy Research Associates, Inc. with support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The *AMHT* is intended to help school resource officers develop the critical skills and capacity for appropriately responding to the many predictable behavior issues that are typically observed among adolescents with mental health problems. School administrators and teachers may also participate in the training to ensure that all team members are receiving consistent information, as well as have the opportunity to jointly discuss any issues related to school-based policies and procedures that may arise during the training.

The eight-unit *AMHT* curriculum helps school resource officers enhance their prevention and response skills and addresses the following critical topics:

- Enhancing the role of SRO's
- Important adolescent development concepts
- Impacts of childhood experiences on development and behavior
- Behavioral health conditions common among students and the family experience
- Crisis prevention, intervention, de-escalation, and communication techniques for SROs
- Strategies for applying these intervention techniques in a school setting
- Connecting to Resources

The *AMHT* course is designed for school resource officers, school administrators, school security, teachers and other school personnel. A school safety team approach helps to ensure that all team members are receiving consistent information, as well as to have the opportunity to jointly discuss any issues related to school-based policies and procedures that may arise during the training.

¹ Between September 2001 and October 2018, the NCYOJ operated as the National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice.



Course Overview

This course provides information that can serve as a framework for interactions with youth. It will help participants understand how using a school-community specific approach can have important benefits for all: students, SROs, teachers, and families. To achieve this, the goals of this training include sharing information about the important role SROs and educators play in effectively intervening with youth who have mental health needs.

Course Objectives:

- Understand adolescent development.
- Understand mental health conditions in youth.
- Learn and practice crisis intervention, de-escalation, and communication techniques.
- Discuss the role of SROs in schools.
- Learn about the important role of families.
- Learn what service options are available to youth.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY / CLASS FORMAT: This course uses a combination of classroom instruction, interactive learning, PowerPoint presentations, videos, and practical scenarios. Students will be provided with a NASRO AMHT course manual.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Attendees will be allowed to miss no more than 10% of the total course time.

CONTENT OUTLINE:

Unit One: Introduction and Overview

Goal: The goal of this unit is to provide participants with information about the Adolescent Mental Health Training for School Resource Officers (AMHT) and the requirements of course completion.

Learner Objectives:

- Describe the goals of the AMHT-SRO course.
- Understand the triad concept of school-based policing.

Unit Two: Roles and Responsibilities

Goal: This unit reviews the roles and responsibilities of school resource officers in relation to other key stakeholders, such as teachers, administrators, family members, and students in support of positive adolescent development, behavioral health, and crisis prevention and intervention to improve outcomes for youth, schools, and communities.

Course participants will examine and discuss the roles and responsibilities of SROs in relation to other key stakeholders (teachers, administrators, family members, and students) and learn crisis prevention, intervention and de-escalation skills. Most importantly, positive relations between youth, law enforcement, and educators on campus will be discussed, promoted, and



linked to concepts from the adolescent development, mental health conditions, and de-escalation units. This will serve to encourage school safety, create a pro-social environment, and deter juvenile delinquency.

Learner Objectives:

- Discuss the importance and benefit of using an adolescent development- and mental health-informed team intervention approach within a school setting.
- Describe the roles and responsibilities of SROs and other key stakeholders within the school environment as related to interactions with youth with mental health needs.
- Demonstrate skills specific to the role of SROs, including decision-making, role modeling, and teaching/reinforcing student skills.

Unit Three: Understanding Adolescent Development

Goal: The goal of this unit is to provide participants with a basic understanding of healthy adolescent development and the impact of environmental factors on brain development and psychosocial development. Participants will gain insight into the adolescent brain and how different stages of development affect emotions, thinking, and social functioning, all of which play a vital role in an adolescent's behavior and decision-making processes.

Learner Objectives:

- Explain basic adolescent development in relation to physical, emotional, social, and cognitive tasks.
- Describe the impact of brain research on understanding adolescent behavior.
- Discuss adolescent risk-taking and impulsive behavior.

Unit Four: Childhood Experiences

Goal: The goal of this unit is to provide participants with a basic understanding of the factors that affect brain development and psychosocial development. The module will provide information on how childhood experiences and environmental factors influence physical, socio-emotional, and cognitive developmental processes.

Learner Objectives:

- Explore potential disruptions to normal adolescent development.
- Describe the impact of experiencing child trauma on adolescent behavior.

Unit Five: Adolescent Behavioral Health Conditions

Goal: The goal of unit is to provide participants with a broad understanding of common adolescent behavioral health conditions and how these conditions may present in a school environment. Course participants will also learn how to identify and respond to a student's risk for suicide or self-injurious behaviors.

**Learner Objectives:**

- Understand the prevalence of mental and substance use disorders.
- Identify possible signs of mental and substance use disorders.
- Discuss warning signs for suicidal and self-injurious behavior.
- Identify ways the school community can support families who are caring for adolescents with behavioral health conditions.
- Create meaningful opportunities to engage families and promote partnerships.

Unit Six: Crisis Prevention

Goal: The goal of this unit is to provide participants with strategies to assist youth with successful crisis management. Participants will learn how to establish rapport and avoid roadblocks while communicating with youth who are in crisis.

Learner Objectives:

- Define a crisis.
- Identify triggers for adolescents from a developmental framework.
- Discuss crisis prevention.

Unit Seven: Crisis Intervention and De-escalation

Goal: The goal of this unit is to provide participants with crisis intervention and communication techniques for gaining compliance with youth in crisis and using de-escalation skills tailored to youth. Participants will learn how to establish rapport and avoid roadblocks while communicating with youth who are in crisis.

Learner Objectives:

- Differentiate between various methods of gaining compliance before, during, and after a crisis event with youth.
- Understand elements of effective communication to prevent and intervene in a crisis, including establishing contact; building rapport; and using calming techniques, reflective statements, and active listening.

Unit Eight: Connecting to Resources

Goal: The goal of this unit is to provide participants with information about school and community services and resources for assisting students and families. The unit will be regionalized to include local agency contacts for assistance.

Learner Objectives:

- Generate a local contact list of emergency and non-emergency mental health service providers, as well as other service providers who accept youth referrals from the law enforcement and school communities.
- Generate a local contact list of support service providers who accept youth referrals from the law enforcement and school communities.



NASRO Adolescent Mental Health Training for School Resource Officers and Educators Agenda

Day One

- 8:00 am** Introduction and Overview
- 8:30 am** Roles and Responsibilities
- 9:40 am** Adolescent Development
- 11:00 am** Childhood Experiences
- 12:00 pm** Lunch
- 1:00 pm** Adolescent Behavioral Health Conditions
- 3:00 pm** Crisis Prevention
- 4:00 pm** Adjourn

Day Two

- 8:00 am** Review Key Learnings from Day One
- 8:30 am** Crisis Intervention and De-escalation
- 11:00 am** Connecting to Resources
- 12:00 pm** Course Review and Wrap-up
- 12:30 pm** Adjourn

Agenda times are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.