



Training Police in Responding Effectively to Youth

When it comes to interacting with children in crisis, youth-specific training matters.

A Challenge: Youth are Different

Police generally see teens in a negative light, using words like disrespectful, lazy, angry and entitled to describe them. However, police newer to the force describe children more positively with words like active, curious and in-need (of supports).

Even though many officers understand that youth are less mature than adults, they self-report low skills for interacting effectively with teens, especially with children impacted by trauma.

Better Equipping Police

Even trainings for police as short as three hours that focus on child development, strategies for teen interactions and crisis response can make a real difference.

After youth training, police provided more favorable answers to questions like: *Do you believe building relationships with youth is important for officers?* and *Do you agree that adolescents need to be treated differently?* They felt more optimistic about connecting with teens and said their new skills would lead to positive interactions.

Future Opportunities

With their new skills and knowledge, police anticipate positive changes in their interactions with youth.

Future police trainings should include applied content, hands-on scenarios specific to the officer's roles and expected interactions with youth; and discussions and scenarios that include young people.

A win-win for police and young people: Targeting youth training to police new to the force, with follow-up coaching and on-the-job support, could make for positive changes that last an entire career.

Best Practice Skills for Youth Encounters

Slow down your actions and speaking rate.
Use a calmer tone of voice.
Give youth more time to respond.
Be patient.

Want more detailed information on these results or training?

Contact the Schubert Center at
schubertcenter@case.edu or **216.368.0540**.
case.edu/schubertcenter



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*Data analysis based on conclusions from **Recognizing & Responding to Traumatized Youth: Cleveland Division of Police Training Pre- and Post- Training Survey Results**, August 2020, which examined results from **Strategies for Youth** training sessions offered to 1300 Cleveland Division of Police officers.*