

# Policing the Teen Brain™ Training Process

Strategies for Youth (SFY) is a national nonprofit policy and training organization dedicated to improving police/youth interactions and reducing disproportionate minority contact. SFY offers a variety of training programs and materials to achieve our mission.

## INTRODUCTION

SFY approaches the *Policing the Teen Brain™* training using a three-pronged approach including an assessment, a review of law enforcement agency policies, and a train-the-trainer/coached training approach. Each step of the process is described below.

### 1 ASSESSMENT

SFY conducts an assessment prior to the training to get a sense of police/youth interactions from various perspectives. The purposes of the Assessment are to understand the strengths and weaknesses of current officer/youth interactions, customize the training to address issues that surface during the Assessment, and identify youth serving community based organizations to which officers can refer youth as an alternative to arrest.

- Assessment methods include observations of police/youth interactions, ride alongs, interviews, review of arrest data, and surveys;
- Participants include youth, law enforcement command staff and patrol/school resource officers, juvenile defenders, probation officers, and juvenile court judges.

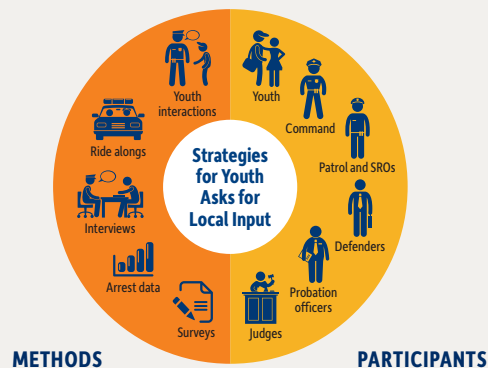
### 2 POLICY REVIEW

SFY reviews agency policies that affect youth including use of force, search and seizure, custody, Miranda protections and waivers, interview and interrogation, domestic violence, and child abuse. We review the language of each policy with an eye to how well it reflects a trauma-informed, youth development approach.

## POLICING THE TEEN BRAIN™ TRAINING PROCESS

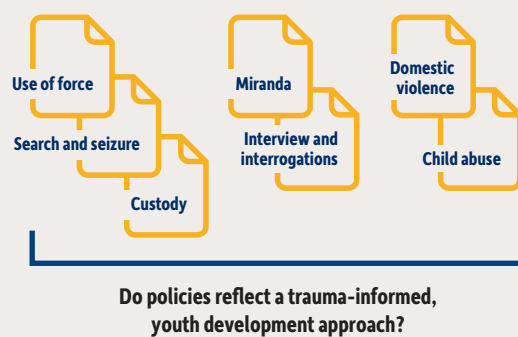
### 1 ASSESSMENT

Preliminary assessment to customize the training so it addresses the needs of the local community.



### 2 POLICY REVIEW

The language of each policy is reviewed with an eye to how it reflects a trauma-informed, youth development approach.



### 3 TRAIN-THE-TRAINER

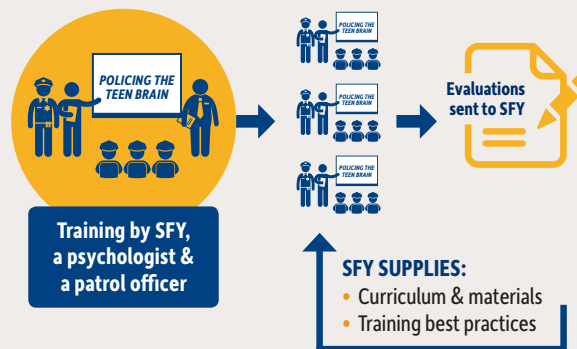
SFY is committed to the long term sustainability of its training and to the integration of a youth development approach in existing training programs. To promote this approach SFY uses a train-the-trainer model in which officers learn how to train their peers. This process includes:

- A 4 day train-the-trainer training conducted by a psychologist with a specialty in adolescent development, psychiatrists and clinical social workers, a current trained patrol officer, and SFY staff;
- Identification and training of local psychologists to provide future trainings and serve as a resource to the agency;
- SFY coaches attending 2 trainings to assist the agency's officers implement the 2-day trainings;
- Curriculum and materials for distribution for future use,
- Training evaluation forms.

The subsequent 2-day *Policing the Teen Brain™* trainings involve a nature/nurture approach. On Day 1, officers learn about how the teen brain's structure changes during adolescence and how those changes affect the way youth think and act. On Day 2, officers learn about environmental factors that affect the way youth interact with adults and each other. At the end of Day 2, youth are involved in skits in which they explain to officers why certain kinds of assertion of authority are more effective than others, and share their experiences with officers.

### 3 TRAIN-THE-TRAINER

Strategies for Youth trains local officers and psychologists to train their peers.



### JUVENILE JUSTICE JEOPARDY

The Juvenile Justice Jeopardy game teaches youth how to navigate interactions with their peers and police and to understand the short and long term consequences of arrest and court involvement on their education and employment opportunities.

Since the goal of this game is to ensure that youth have accurate, relevant information about how their conduct is perceived by legal authorities, SFY develops game questions by reviewing juvenile arrest data, interviews with juvenile court judges, juvenile defenders, and youth. We develop game questions and place them into the Jeopardy software format. We use a train-the-trainer approach to replicate the game. After all the questions have been developed, we train youth program staff and youth to serve as future game leaders.

