



# Adams County Sheriff's Office Police Training Institute CYCLE Training Program Report



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## OVERALL PROGRAM COMPONENTS

The PTI program involves several key components involving both law enforcement and youth including:

**Pre-Training Site Visits:** Before each training, PTI trainers and staff conduct pre-training site visits to become familiar with the law enforcement agency, patrol functions and unique aspects of the community. These visits include ride-along observations with the law enforcement agency and listening sessions with youth from our community partners. The LE field observations give PTI staff an opportunity to learn about the agency, understand their methodology and learn about issues from the perspective of officers in the field. Our listening sessions are conducted to learn more about specific community issues from the youth and young adult perspective.

**Town Hall Meetings:** In advance of the “Connecting Youth & Communities with Law Enforcement (CYCLE)” training, PTI staff, along with our community partners and the law enforcement agency, host a town hall meeting. The Town Hall meeting provides opportunities for youth, law enforcement, and community members to have an open dialogue about current community issues around police and community relations. The goal is to provide a safe environment for open communication, while simultaneously providing the PTI team with essential information to customize training for the local agencies and the communities they serve.

**Training:** The CYCLE training curriculum includes a 16-hour law enforcement course that provides information on topics such as adolescent brain development, building rapport, contemporary issues in law enforcement and communities, de-escalation, implicit bias, listening skills and trauma-informed response. During the second day of training, youth participate in a separate engagement, focusing on similar core topics that are covered in the law enforcement curriculum. The last four hours are spent allowing direct interaction between officers and youth by means of sharing a meal, participating in role-playing scenarios, and a meaningful question-and-answer period to close the program.

## PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

**Law Enforcement Participants:** The law enforcement training session held in Natchez, Mississippi on April 11 and 12, 2019 included a total of 17 participants. The rank and assignment of participants was diverse, as were the departments represented (Adams County SO, Jefferson County SO and Vidalia PD). This diversity adds a great depth to the knowledge, conversation and outcome of the training program. There were officer-level patrol and school resource officers in the class, corrections officers, supervisors and managers, as well as staff assigned to the crisis intervention team. The interest level of the deputies who participated in the training emphasized the strategic investment being made by Adams County Sheriff's Office and other local law enforcement agencies to improve law enforcement-community relationships.

**Youth Engagement Participants:** With cooperation from two local community-based organizations – the Adams County Court-Appointed Special Advocate and the Copiah-Lincoln Community College – local youth were involved in the listening sessions, town hall meeting and the youth engagement session of the CYCLE Training Program. Approximately 27 youth, the largest group of youth that we have engaged to date, learned important information regarding communication skills, de-escalation and implicit bias. These young men and women aged in range from 13 – 20 years old and were a diverse group in many ways.

## SURVEY RESPONSES

**Law Enforcement Pre-Training Surveys:** In each training site, we ask that attendees provide answers to two baseline questions: knowledge and interest in the topics of the curriculum. A total of 17 pre-training surveys were completed and submitted. Specific information can be located in the tables listed later in this section.

**Law Enforcement Post-Training Surveys:** There were a total of 15 post-training surveys completed and submitted by LE attendees. The post-training survey is much more comprehensive than the pre-training survey and includes a follow up for baseline knowledge, a rating for usefulness in everyday work, the effectiveness of program components and several open-ended comments.

**Increase in Knowledge (self-reports):** Four areas saw the greatest increase in knowledge, according to the survey instruments:

***Adolescent brain development:***

Time of Measurement	Very little knowledge	Some knowledge	A great deal of knowledge
Pre-training	65%	23%	12%
Post-training	0%	0%	100%

***Youth exposure to trauma and its effect on behavior:***

Time of Measurement	Very little knowledge	Some knowledge	A great deal of knowledge
Pre-training	30%	53%	17%
Post-training	0%	0%	100%

***The difference between explicit and implicit bias:***

Time of Measurement	Very little knowledge	Some knowledge	A great deal of knowledge
Pre-training	70%	24%	6%
Post-training	0%	7%	93%

***Communication skills that are specific to youth:***

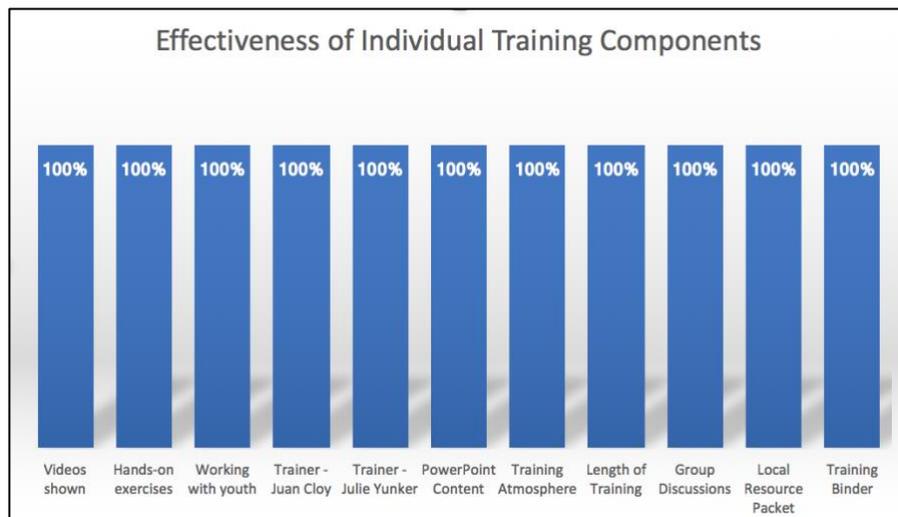
Time of Measurement	Very little knowledge	Some knowledge	A great deal of knowledge
Pre-training	24%	53%	23%
Post-training	0%	0%	100%

**Pre-training Interest:** According to respondents prior to the training, the three topic areas in which the highest interest was indicated were: 1) De-escalation tactics with youth, 2) Developing new skills to communicate with youth, and 3) How bias affects people and how to manage its effects. A great majority of participants indicated interest in the other areas on the survey: understanding how traumatic experience affects behavior, how to build trust in the community and the ability to communicate with people of different backgrounds.

**Post-training usefulness in day-to-day work:** Participants rated areas of the training in the area of usefulness in daily work. The percentage indicated for each topic indicates a response of “very useful”:

Understanding how brain development affects youth behavior	100%
Local resource packet	100%
Understanding how exposure to trauma affects youth behavior	100%
Active listening techniques	100%
Proper de-escalation techniques	100%
Understanding how implicit bias affects professional judgements	100%
Effective parenting techniques	100%
Understanding why minority youth are overrepresented in the justice system	100%

**Post-training rating for effectiveness of training components:** Participants rated several of the key areas included in the training. There were 15 post-training surveys submitted and the following chart illustrates these ratings. Respondents were able to choose between three answers: Not effective, somewhat effective, and very effective. **ALL** of the training components measured were rated as very effective.



**Additional comments made by participants:** Participants were asked if they would recommend this training to other officers and the answers available were “yes”, “no” and “not sure”. Of the 15 responses, 11 participants said “yes” and four participants failed to answer the question. None of the participants answered “no” or “not sure” to this question.

Finally, we used four questions to solicit open-ended comments by asking:

- What parts of the training did you find yourself paying the most attention to?
- What parts of the training were not really of interest to you?
- What benefits, if any, do you think a training like this can have on youth-police relationships?
- What would you add or do differently to make the training more effective?

This is the area in which we have a great opportunity to gain specific information to improve our program and truly serve law enforcement officers across the United States in their daily job responsibilities. The participants from this class provided important comments. All of the comments submitted can be found in Appendix A. We have provided a few of the most specific and insightful answers to these questions in the body of this report to highlight the importance of police and community relationship training:

*“This training has great benefits of building a rapport with the youth-police relationships.”*

*“It strengthens the way we interact.”*

**Youth Pre- and Post-Engagement Surveys:** The surveys used to gauge youth attitudes pre- and post-engagement are identical and used to gather youth attitudes toward community and attitudes toward police. The surveys include a Likert scale for measuring agreement by a series of several statements. The following is a snapshot of the information collected before and after the youth engagement and is based on an average of 27 pre-engagement surveys, and 15 post-engagement surveys, both of which use a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree):

<b>Attitudes Toward Community</b>	<b>Pre-Engagement</b>	<b>Post-Engagement</b>
I take an active role in my community.	3.1	3.5
I am someone who gives to benefit others.	3	4
I like to work with others to solve problems.	3.3	3.5
I have things I can offer to others.	3.1	3.7
I believe I can make a difference in my community.	3.3	3.5
I care about contributing to make the community a better place.	3.4	3.6
It is important to make a difference in the community.	3.6	3.7
<b>Attitudes Toward Police</b>		
It is possible for youth and police officers to get along.	3.2	3.5
Police officers help keep my neighborhood safe.	2.8	3.2
Police officers and youth in my community do work together.	2.4	3.0
Youth and police officers can have positive relationships.	2.9	3.5
I feel comfortable when I see police on the street.	2.4	3.3
Police officers have a positive role in society.	2.7	3.5
Police officers play an important role in stopping crime.	3.1	3.8
I generally have positive interactions with police officers.	2.9	3.9
Police officers are respectful of people like me.	2.6	3.7
*Police officers don't communicate very well.	2.7	2.1*
Police officers show concern when you ask them questions.	2.6	3.6

\*expect / hope for a decrease here 😊

**Youth response summary:** Although changes on a scale as small as 1 – 4 can seem negligible, it is important to see that there were changes in the overall average of youth attitudes. In the “attitudes toward community section” most notable changes came where youth feel they are a person who gives to benefit others and that they have things they can offer to others. In attitudes toward police, the greatest changes came where youth believe that 1) Police officers are respectful of people like them, 2) They generally have positive interactions with police officers, and 3) Police officers show concern when you ask them questions. It should also be noted that in **each and every** of the 18 categories, attitudes toward community and toward police improved! This is great proof that the CYCLE program is of benefit not only to law enforcement, but also to youth who are involved!

As is true in each site that we have delivered the CYCLE program, participants in the Adams County training made it clear that the most important part of the training is the direct interaction with youth. Having a number of local youth participate in pre-training listening sessions, as panel and audience members in the Town Hall Meeting, and engaged as participants in our training is invaluable. The assistance that we received in Adams County to engage the youth was instrumental in the success of our training. A comment made by one of the officers summed up the importance of having youth engaged: “Absolutely loved the interactions with the kids!”

## **CONCLUSION**

The PTI program was designed to reduce negative encounters between law enforcement and youth. Using the CYCLE curriculum, the program seeks to both provide new information and reinforce existing knowledge related to the specific curriculum topics. The purpose of this information is to teach positive approaches for successfully interacting with youth.

The Adams County Sheriff’s Office appears to be progressive in the strategic goal of building and sustaining great community relationships. The PTI staff is thankful to Sheriff Patten, his executive staff, and all who worked to make this program possible. We extend a most sincere thank you to the law enforcement officers who attended the training. Our time and interactions in Adams County was one of the most memorable in our work!

## **DIRECTOR’S NOTE**

We would be remiss if we did not recognize the extraordinary support we received in Adams County, Mississippi. Sheriff Patten and his team did an incredible job of bringing together members of the law enforcement community, youth and community focused organizations and the citizens of Natchez – Adams County. We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the great work and support of the Adams County Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) and the Copiah-Lincoln Community College, we cannot thank you enough! We also want to recognize the Natchez Convention and Visitors Bureau who provided their convention center for the Town Hall meeting. This Town Hall being the largest in recent PTI history we really needed the space.

Everyone we interacted with in Adams County, MS and Vidalia, LA were professional and extremely helpful, for that our entire team is very thankful. Our hope is that this experience was the start of something great for the community and is the first step in bringing the law enforcement community together with the youth to build a bridge of understanding and empathy.

Be safe, grow strong together.

John Shanks, National Director  
Council for a Strong America  
Police Training Institute

## Appendix A

### Additional Comments

- I really value this class
- The training was great and very beneficial for both the students and officers
- The brain does not develop completely until he or she are 20 years of age. The brain undergoes a lot of changes due to the age and adolescent. The prefrontal cortex is not fully developed. During this time...adolescents are more sensitive to rewards and more likely to seek stimulation and least able to suppress their impulses. The role play was excellent.
- All of the instructors did a great job!!!

### What parts of the training did you find yourself paying the most attention to?

- All of it, but how the brain works helped me even with my kids
- How to turn a bad situation into something positive
- All
- All of it
- I found myself paying the most attention to the de-escalation parts of the training
- The brain development and the role play
- How a lot of kids are in abusive homes
- All of the information was interesting
- Role playing - interaction with the youth

### What parts of the training were not really of interest to you?

- None
- N/A
- The whole training was very interesting
- All were
- The whole training was interesting
- I enjoyed the entire training
- No parts of the training did not interest me
- All parts were interesting
- To me all was great – enjoyed the class
- N/A
- None

### What benefits, if any, do you think a training like this can have on youth-police relationships?

- It can open up the lines of communication which can only improve from there
- Bring the community together. If implemented, these youth could "Bridge the Gap" with other youth and use peer leadership to help curtail issues
- A very positive relationship, help the youth to portray the police as a positive
- It strengthens the way we interact
- The benefits of the training is bring people together
- It bridges the gap between youth and Law enforcement
- Benefit all
- This training has great benefits of building a rapport with the youth-police relationships
- This training can help the youth understand how police officers think and feel when making a traffic stop
- Bridging the gap between police and youth
- Communication
- How to build more communication with each other

**What would you add or do differently to make the training more effective?**

- Nothing
- Add more time. Very informative
- It was awesome. Bring it to the schools to reach more students
- Nothing
- You should have the youth write questions down they might be scared of
- More role plays
- Just do it more
- I would add more youth and police scenarios
- More hours
- I would keep it the same
- Nothing
- Nothing, continue the work!