



# Adolescent Mental Health Training for School Resource Officer Course Outline and Objectives

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

*Adolescent Mental Health Training for School Resource Officers (AMHT-SRO)* is a 1.5 day training course designed to help school resource officers and school personnel to better identify and respond to students who are suspected of having a mental health need. It was developed by the National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice (NCMHJJ) at Policy Research Associates, with support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The *AMHT-SRO* is intended to help school resource officers and other school professionals 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.

The *AMHT-SRO* curriculum addresses:

- Understanding Adolescent Development
- Adolescent Mental Health Disorders and Treatment
- Crisis Intervention and De-escalation
- SRO – Role and Responsibility
- The Family Experience
- Connecting to Resources

The AMHT-SRO 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.

## Course Overview

This course provides information that can serve as a framework for SRO 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 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-SRO 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-SRO) 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: 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.
- Explore potential disruptions in normal adolescent development



## **Unit Three: Adolescent Mental Health Disorders and Treatment**

**Goal:** The goal of unit is to provide participants with a broad understanding of several common adolescent mental health problems and to introduce general treatment options for these issues. Participants will be introduced to common adolescent mental health conditions and how these disorders may present in a school environment. Participants will also learn about several factors that may increase a student's risk for suicide or self-injurious behaviors.

### **Learner Objectives:**

- Understand the prevalence of mental health conditions and substance use disorders within the juvenile justice population.
- Identify possible signs of mental health conditions and substance use disorders.
- Describe the impact of trauma.
- Discuss warning signs for suicidal and self-injurious behavior.

## **Unit Four: Crisis Intervention and De-escalation**

**Goal:** The goal of this unit is to provide participants with crisis intervention and communication techniques specific to law enforcement 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:**

- Define a crisis.
- Differentiate 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 Five: School Resource Officers**

**Goal:** The goal of this unit is to review the role and benefit of SROs by linking the traditional roles and responsibilities of law enforcement on campus to adolescent development, mental health, and crisis intervention concepts and skills that will improve outcomes for youth, schools, and communities.

In this unit, participants will examine and discuss the roles and responsibilities of SROs in relation to other key stakeholders (teachers, administrators, family members, and students), and will discuss existing school policies that guide SRO interactions with students. Skills necessary to effectively approach and interact with students with mental health and behavioral issues will be demonstrated and practiced. Most importantly, positive relations between youth and law enforcement on campus will be discussed, promoted, and linked to concepts from the adolescent



development, mental illness, 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 issues.
- Demonstrate skills specific to the role of SROs, including decision-making, role modeling, and teaching/reinforcing student skills.

## Unit Six: The Family Experience

**Goal:** The goal of this unit is to present information about the important role that families can play in supporting youth with mental health needs who may risk involvement in the juvenile justice system. The materials presented in this unit will help SROs build positive relationships with a youth's family to help ensure the best outcomes for everyone involved whenever possible.

## Learner Objectives:

- Describe the experience of living with and caring for youth with mental health conditions.
- List ways that the law enforcement community can support families who are caring for youth with mental health needs who come in contact with law enforcement.
- Create meaningful opportunities to engage families and promote partnerships.

## Unit Seven: Connecting to Resources

**Goal:** The goal of this unit is to provide SROs with information about school and community services and resources available to youth with mental health needs. This unit will provide SROs with information on resources for assisting students and families. The unit will be regionalized to include local agency contacts for assistance. If possible, a panel of local service providers will be assembled to share information about the services that they offer youth and how these services can be accessed.

## 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 community.
- Generate a local contact list of non-emergency community mental health service providers who accept youth referrals from the law enforcement community.
- Generate a local contact list of other community service and supports.



# **NASRO Adolescent Mental Health Training for School Resource Officers Agenda**

## **Day One**

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8:00 – 8:45 am	Welcome, Introductions, Course Overview
8:45 – 10:30 am	Understanding Adolescent Development
10:30 – 12:00 pm	Adolescent Mental Health Conditions and Treatments
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Lunch
1:00 – 4:00 pm	Crisis Intervention and De-escalation
4:00 – 4:30 pm	Wrap-up

## **Day Two**

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8:00 – 10:00 am	SRO's Role and Responsibilities
10:00 am – 11:00 am	The Family Experience
11:00 – noon	Connecting to Community Resources
12:00 – 12:30 pm	Course Review and Wrap-up

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