

MODULE 3A: Think About It First!

MODULE OVERVIEW: In this session participants will learn about youth culture – comparing their youth culture with the 80's youth culture of many adults in their lives. The group examines how the teenage brain's development impacts their emotional intensity and how their exposure to violence effects their interactions. A focus of this session is exploring strategies that increase the likelihood that their behavior contributes to safer police stops and interactions.

TIME FRAME

Time: 2 hours – includes a 15 minute break

PARAMETERS

Audience: Youth Participants at the Forum

Number: Based on Size of Academy Class and ratio of youth invited to attend.

Space: A room large enough for small groups to sit together at tables

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

In this module, participants will be able to:

- ☐ Identify how adolescent development and environmental influences (physical, social, cultural) impact behavior with law enforcement
- ☐ List the options for youth behavior that can contribute to safe and positive interactions with police

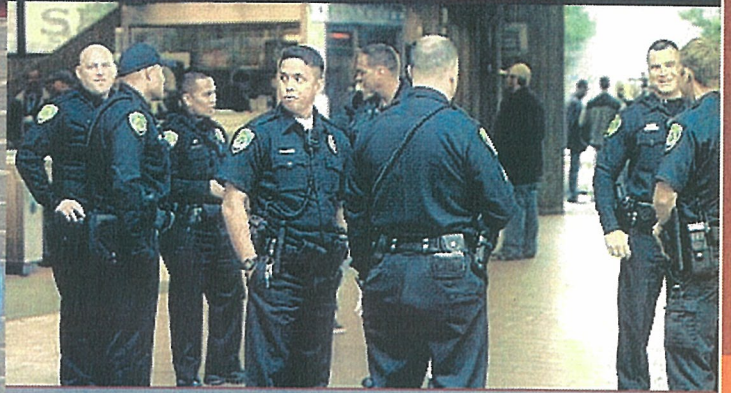
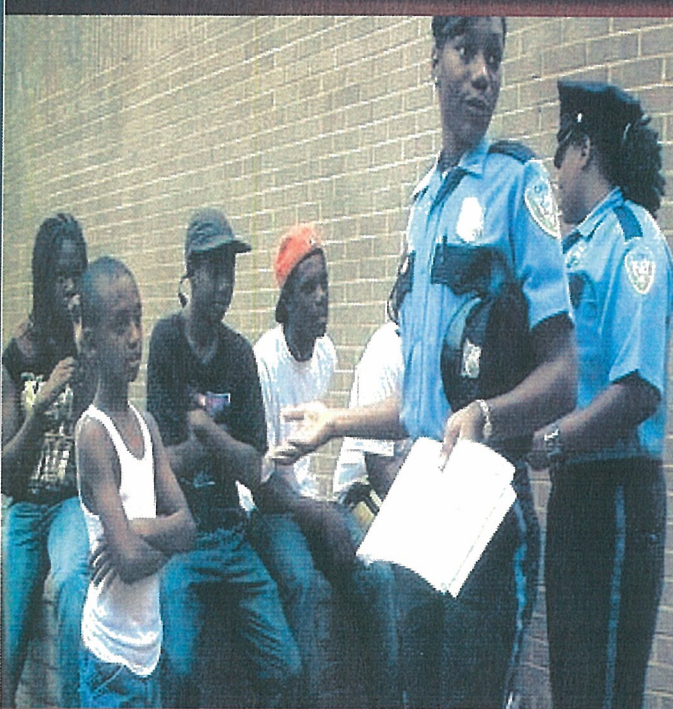
EVALUATION TECHNIQUES

Facilitator observation of participant responses

PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY

DISPROPORTIONATE MINORITY CONTACT (DMC)
SUBCOMMITTEE

PHILADELPHIA WORKING GROUP



LAW ENFORCEMENT YOUTH CURRICULUM

PHILADELPHIA POLICE ACADEMY
MARCH 2009 • PHILADELPHIA, PA

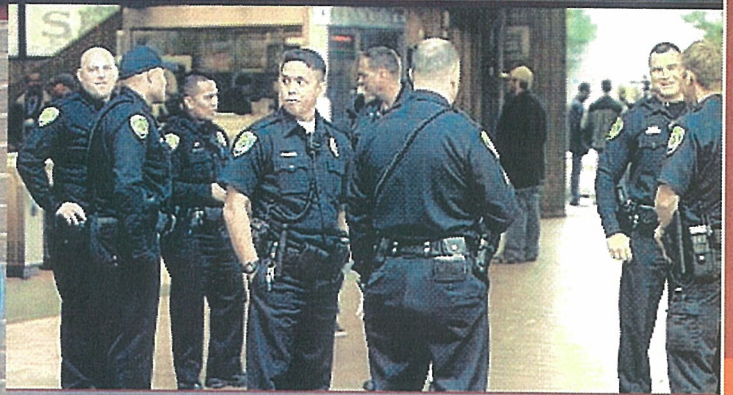
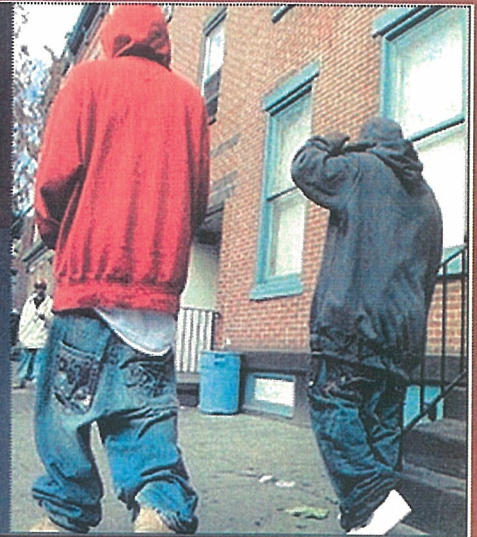
YOUTH MANUAL



**PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ON
CRIME AND DELINQUENCY**

**DISPROPORTIONATE MINORITY CONTACT (DMC)
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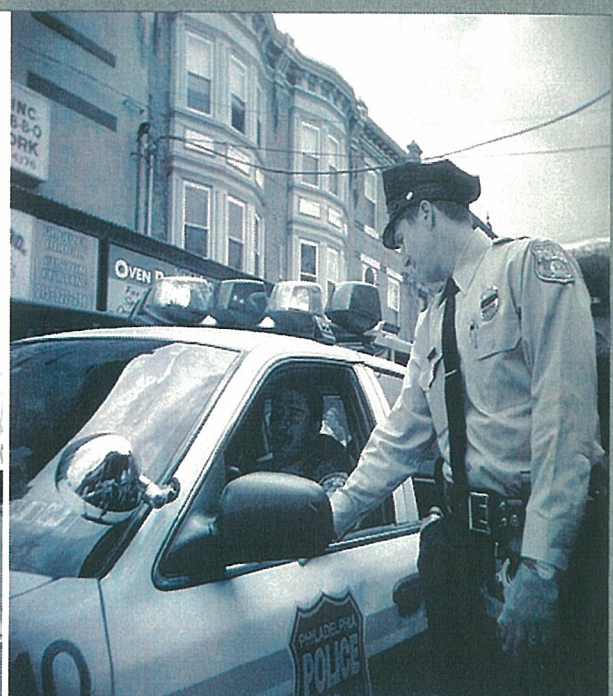
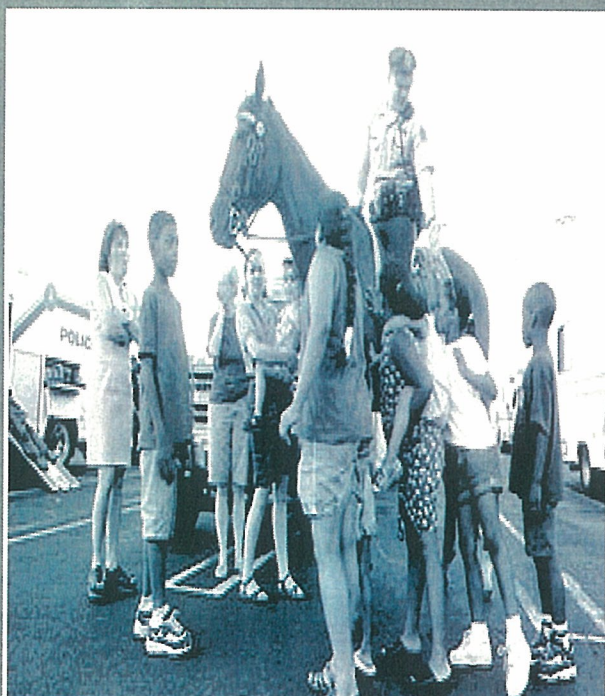
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LAW ENFORCEMENT





Guide to Police Practices in Philadelphia



Disproportionate Minority Contact: Addressing the Disparate Treatment of Minority Youth in the Juvenile Justice System

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Minority Contact Subcommittee

In a nation that is based on notions of fairness and equality, the realization that our laws and justice system are often administered in a way that has a disproportionately harsh impact on youth of color is extremely troubling. In 1988, Congress included in the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA) a mandate that states receiving federal formula one grant money address Disproportionate Minority Confinement, or DMC. The initial focus, as suggested by the term Disproportionate Minority *Confinement*, was addressing the disproportionate number of youth of color in secure facilities. In 2002, Congress reauthorized the JJDPA and expanded the definition of DMC to include all aspects of the juvenile justice processing, including prevention, redefining the issue as one of Disproportionate Minority *Contact* as opposed to just confinement.

Police Training: A Strategy for Reducing DMC

The shift in emphasis from youth who are in secure confinement to looking at multiple decision points in the juvenile justice system recognizes that a youth's confinement is one of the last steps in a long juvenile justice process. Disparities in the treatment of youth of color at earlier stages in the system have a dramatic impact on the rates at which youth of color are sent to secure facilities. Reducing disparities in the treatment of youth of color at the point of contact with police on the street and the point of arrest will also reduce the disproportionate representation of youth of color at later points of the system. One way that disparities in the rates of arrest for minority youth may be reduced is by training police to recognize cultural and developmental differences between adolescent and adult behavior and improving relationships between youth and law enforcement on the street.

In Pennsylvania, the Governor's Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee formed a DMC Subcommittee in 1990 to assess and address the problem of DMC at multiple points in the juvenile justice system. The DMC subcommittee's research has focused on arrest rates, detention admissions, prosecutions, adjudications, transfers to adult court, dispositions and placements and has disparities between treatment of youth of color and white youth at multiple points in Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system. In many areas of Pennsylvania, African American and Latino youth are more likely to be arrested for certain types of offenses than white youth and are also more likely to be

detained prior to trial and subsequently placed in secure state run residential placement than their white counterparts.

The Philadelphia Working Group is Formed to Challenge DMC in the State's Largest City

In 2003, the Philadelphia Working Group was formed to address the problem of DMC at the local level. The Philadelphia Working Group includes members from the Defender Association of Philadelphia, the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office, five branches of law enforcement, the School District of Philadelphia, Juvenile Probation, faith-based and community organizations who share a commitment to eliminating racial disparities in the juvenile justice system. With the support of the state DMC subcommittee, Philadelphia became the first of five counties in Pennsylvania to sponsor minority youth- law enforcement forums which brought law enforcement officers and minority youth together to talk frankly and openly about the problems on the street and the troubled relationships between youth and law enforcement. By opening a dialogue between youth and law enforcement, the Philadelphia Working Group hoped to reduce the number of volatile interactions between youth and officers on the street, to decrease arrests of minority youth and to diminish the chance of injuries to officer and youth on the street.

The forums provide an opportunity for both youth and law enforcement to be heard and to consider each other's views without endorsing either side as completely right or wrong. Discussions between the young people and officers who have participated on the panels have often become quite heated. For example, when asked by a youth why police beat kids who run, an officer replied that "that's the running tax." These frank exchanges led to more in-depth discussions about balancing the need for police to investigate crime safely with the desires of young people' to live in their community without being harassed. At the end of each forum, both officers and youth have said that they have developed a new understanding of each. Of greater importance, both law enforcement and youth have indicated that they might react differently to situations on the street as a result of the forums.

The Philadelphia Working Group used the discussions between youth and law enforcement to develop a series of policy recommendations designed to change the system. One of the primary recommendations was the creation of a training program for law enforcement officers relating to youth development and culture. In 2007, the Philadelphia Working Group, with the support of the DMC Subcommittee and the MacArthur Foundation DMC Action Network, began working on a curriculum for law enforcement. The curriculum was created through close collaboration between youth, law enforcement, the Office of the District Attorney, the Office of the Public Defender, faith based institutions and community organizations a district attorney, public defenders and community

organizations and was prepared with the assistance of experienced curriculum developers.

The Philadelphia Minority Youth Law Enforcement Curriculum is a one-day training for police academy cadets, experienced law enforcement officers and youth. The curriculum is divided into four modules. Modules I and II are based on the minority youth – law enforcement forums that have been conducted in Philadelphia since 2003. Cadets observe facilitated discussions between minority youth from the community and experienced law enforcement officers. Youth from local high schools and community programs participate with cadets both as panelists and as audience members. The goal of the panel discussion is to identify issues, concerns and recommendations for improving youth and law enforcement relations from the perspectives of experienced law enforcement officer and youth. After the panel discussion, the cadets and youth in the audience are given an opportunity to discuss the panel discussion in facilitated small groups.

In Module III, police cadets and youth are separated for instruction on adolescent development and youth culture. Cadets learn about youth culture, adolescent brain development, concepts of hypervigilance and hypermasculinity, as well as the distinctive characteristics of coping strategies for boys and girls. Cadets discuss the environmental, physical and biological reasons why teenagers think and behave the way they do and how adolescent responses to authority differ from adult responses. In a separate session, youth are taught to identify how adolescent development, environmental influences and issues of respect impact their behavior with law enforcement. Youth discuss options that can contribute to safe and positive interactions with police.

In Module IV, youth and cadets join to participate in a series of facilitated role play exercises designed to reinforce the previous training and give cadets the opportunity to practice what they have learned.

In 2009, the Philadelphia Minority Youth Law Enforcement Curriculum will be used at the Philadelphia Police Academy, which trains the vast majority of officers with arrest powers in Philadelphia. By training officers to recognize the difference between potentially criminal conduct and normal adolescent behavior and by working with youth to emphasize responsible decision making, the Philadelphia Working Group hopes to improve the relationship between youth and officers on the street and reduce the number of minority youth who are arrested.

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Disproportionate Minority Contact Subcommittee