

Mental Health Training for Juvenile Justice (MHT-JJ): Supporting Youth and Staff



National Center for Youth Opportunity and Justice

In 2016, more than 850,000 youth under the age of 18 were arrested and, on any given day, nearly 50,000 were in residential placement facilities. Research over the last 30 years has firmly established that youth with mental health and substance use conditions (behavioral health conditions), as well as those who have experienced significant child trauma are disproportionately represented in the juvenile justice system.

Overrepresentation of Youth with Unmet Needs



Up to **70%** of justice-involved youth have at least one diagnosable mental health or substance use conditions, with nearly **two-thirds** experiencing multiple conditions.



At least **75%** of justice-involved youth have experienced traumatic victimization, compared with **34%** in the general adolescent population.



Of youth in detention, over **90%** had experienced at least one trauma, with **55%** having been exposed to trauma 6 or more times.

The MHT-JJ Curriculum

From probation intake to secure corrections, juvenile justice staff are responsible for the management and care of a large population of youth, many of whom are experiencing behavioral health conditions. Those staff members with the most direct contact with youth are often untrained to understand how these conditions impact staff-youth and peer-peer interactions. The MHT-JJ was designed to build practitioner knowledge of the behavior health and trauma needs of youth in their care, while also building their skills and capacity to use trauma-informed and therapeutic approaches in their daily interactions with youth. In addition, staff also build their skills to prevent crisis situations, and effectively intervene and de-escalate when these situations do occur.

Topics Covered:

- Adolescent Brain Development
- Impacts of Childhood Trauma
- Historical and Intergenerational Trauma
- Signs and Symptoms of Behavioral Health Conditions
- Juvenile Suicide
- The Family Experience
- Evidence-based Treatments
- Psychopharmacological Treatments
- Active Listening
- Crisis Intervention and De-escalation
- Vicarious Trauma
- Staff Wellness

No prior behavioral health training or knowledge is required for participants. In some situations, a jurisdiction may find it useful to jointly train clinical and direct-care staff. This joint training ensures that all agency staff receive the same information, and have the opportunity to discuss any questions or issues that may arise during the training.

Mental Health for Juvenile Justice: Train-the-Trainer (T3)

NCYOJ offers regular MHT-JJ train-the-trainer (T3) events to build state and local capacity to cost-effectively train staff as needed. Local trainers are also best equipped to incorporate local data and context allowing agencies to tailor portions of the curricula.

How the T3 works . . .

- The T3 is a 2.5-day course led by a small pool of select clinical and juvenile justice master trainers.
- T3 participants typically include state and local juvenile justice and behavioral health staff.
- The T3 blends lecture, discussion, demonstrations, exercises, and videos to engage adult learners.
- T3 participants cultivate familiarity with curriculum and complete training demonstrations for feedback from their peers and the master trainers.

The NCYOJ Trainer Network

Once certified, trainers are able to convene training sessions within their agency or locality. Certified trainers also become members in NCYOJ's "Trainer Network." Members receive access to the annual updated training curriculum, ongoing continuing education opportunities, and a virtual forum to connect with other trainers.

NCYOJ partners with certified trainers to continuously collect evaluation data on the training's effectiveness. This data informs the annual updates to the standard training curriculum and the T3 events.



New Orleans MHT-JJ T3 2018

Average T3 Program Ratings

n= 856

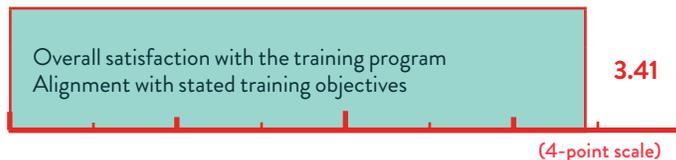


86%

86% of T3 participants reported no concerns with their ability to deliver the MHT-JJ.

Satisfaction with Standard Training Program Delivered by Certified Local Trainers

n= 2100



70%

70% of MHT-JJ recipients reported changes in how they interacted with youth with mental health needs in the month following the training.

Staff reported deliberate use of gained skills and other benefits, including:

- Reduced job stress
- Improved communication with youth
- Increased collaboration and intervention planning
- Better interaction with colleagues
- Improved staff communication across agency

Endnotes

- 1 Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention, OJJDP, 2017, OJJDP, 2018
- 2 Shufelt & Coccozza, 2006

- 3 Sprague, 2008. Adams 2010
- 4 Abram et al. 2013