

Training Workshop for Law Enforcement

**Practical Applications of Teen Brain Research for
Law Enforcement Officers Assigned to Schools and Youth**
Greg Richards, Ph.D., Director, Middle Grades Ethics Project

I. “Brain Quiz” (informal, humorous introduction to the teen brain)

Challenges from Brain Biology

II. Introduction to a framework from developmental psychology
and adolescent brain biology

Higher moral reasoning rare in teen years

Brain executive function structure immature in adolescence

Risk alerting structure absent in teen brain

Critical moment in young adolescence (middle years) for brain plasticity

Chemical rewards from novelty and risk; finding a “passion”

Puberty occurs earlier, adolescence extended

Opportunities from Brain Biology

III. Importance of significant adults during adolescent brain development

Scaffolding, guidance from educators

Authoritative parenting

Resilience and “charismatic adults”

Mindful awareness and secure attachment

Curriculum project engaging parents as home teachers to extend and enrich
instruction at school

IV. Findings from bullying prevention literature—“vaccinating” teens against
peer cruelty and high-risk behaviors

Risk factors and protective factors

V. Final thoughts and questions

RECENT PRESENTATIONS

Criminal Justice Institute, University of Arkansas
Innovative Schools Summit
National Association of School Resource Officers
Collier County (FL) Sheriff's Office Youth Bureau
National Conference on Bullying
Webinar, CyberBully Hotline
National Conference on School Safety
Florida Association of School Resource Officers
NextGen School Safety Conference
Arkansas Safe Schools Initiative
Pine Ridge Middle School, Naples (FL), (pilot program)
Girl Bullying and Empowerment National Conference
National Conference on School Discipline
Innovative School Summit

References available

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