

ACO, JCO and PO Mental Health Training

Adult Corrections Officer (ACO), Juvenile Corrections Officers (JCO), and Probation Officers (PO) employed at local jails, juvenile detention facilities and probation departments are required to complete a course of training prescribed by the Board of State and Community Corrections within the first year of hire (core training). The course of training is specific to each classification and is determined through a process of job analysis which identifies the tasks performed on the job and the knowledge, skills and abilities required for successful job performance. Job analysis is the legal and professional standard for linking selection and training requirements to requirements of the job.

Current core training for the ACO, JCO and PO classifications includes curriculum on mental health issues. Some of the training is organized into mental health specific topics. For example, PO core training includes a 4 hour course on Crisis Intervention and Counseling. Other mental health training is woven into related classes such as roles, interviewing and communication. For example, PO core training includes a 3 hour course on the Roles and Responsibilities of the Probation Officer that includes an instructional objective requiring students to describe the role of a probation officer as it relates to the mental health needs of probationers.

Although some training on mental health issues is currently included in the core training programs for ACO, JCO and PO classifications, it is clear that additional training is needed. As part of the current job analysis project, BSCC staff convened a workgroup of Sheriffs and Chief Probation Officers to identify areas of change in those jobs and training needs. One of the changes identified by those administrators was the increased use of mental health services and the need for improved staff training. Another was the need for better communication skills including conflict resolution and violence de-escalation. The job analysis will identify all of the changes that have occurred in the job, including those identified by the administrators, and describe each of the ACO, JCO, and PO jobs as they look today. The information from the job analysis will then be used to revise the core training curriculum.

Probation Officer Core Course – Mental Health Training

Last major content revision effective July 1, 2012

Specific mental health courses – 14 hours

- Introduction to Assessment Tools (2 hours)
- Interviewing Techniques (4 hours)
- Risk Factors - Psychological Problems (4 hours)
- Crisis Intervention and Counseling (4 hours)

Related courses woven with mental health as part of a learning objective

- Introduction to Assessment Tools (2 hours)
- Interviewing techniques (4 hours)
- Establishing Case goals and Plans (4 hours)
- Case Plan and Supervision (6 hours)
- Factors in making Referrals (2 hours)
- Principles of Use of force (3 hours)

Juvenile Corrections Officer Core Course – Mental Health Training

Last major content revision effective July 2007

Specific mental health courses – 10 hours

- Mental Health Considerations (2 hours)
- Suicide Prevention (4 hours)
- Communication Skills – Crisis Intervention (2 hours)
- Communication Skills – Depressed or Suicidal juvenile (2 hours)

Related courses woven with mental health as part of a learning objective

- Constitutional Rights, Civil Rights, and Case Law (2 hours)
- Handling Medications (1.5 hours)
- Principles of Use of Force (2 hours)
- Safety Room and Physical Restraints (2 hours)
- Intake/Receiving Juveniles (30 minutes)
- Classification and Case Planning (2 hours)
- Group Dynamics (1.5 hours)
- Elements of Interpersonal Communications (4 hours)
- Communication Skills – Practice (4 hours)
- Safety and Security Rounds (1 hour)
- Preparation for Transport and Escort (2 hours)
- Performing Transport and Escort Duties (2 hours)

Adult Corrections Officer Core Course – Mental Health Training

Last major content revision effective July 1998

Specific mental health courses – 6.5 hours

- Mental Health Issues (2.5 hours)
- Suicide Issues (4 hours)

Related courses woven with mental health as part of a learning objective

- Constitutional Rights, Civil Rights, and Case Law (2 hours)
- Factors Affecting Classification (1 hour)
- Implications of Classification (1 hour)
- Interpersonal Communications (9 hours)
- Principles of Use of Force (2 hours)
- Principles of Use of Restraints (30 minutes)
- Mechanical Restraints and Safety Cell (2.5 hours)
- Receiving Inmates (1.5 hours)
- Booking Inmates (1.5 hours)
- Security Rounds (1.5 hours)
- Movement Within the Facility (1 hour)
- Assisting Medical Personnel in the Distribution of Medication (30 minutes)
- Preparation for Transport (1 hour)
- Transport Procedure (1 hour)