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Police officers encountering these family crisis situations are often faced with choices that are not optimal: either ignoring problem behavior or criminalizing it, neither of which resolve the situation or lead to appropriate solutions.

**TYPICAL RESPONSE:** Arrest and custody

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**WHAT WE KNOW:** Research findings

- The human brain does not fully develop until one's mid-twenties.
- Young people in their teen years are more susceptible to peer-pressure, less able to consider the consequences of their actions, and are more volatile in emotionally-charged settings.
- Getting involved in the juvenile justice system can be detrimental. Kids found guilty on delinquency charges can end up with a record that may follow them throughout their lives—making it difficult to find a job, apply for public housing, obtain a driver’s license, access higher education, and more. Even when not found delinquent for any offense, they still experience stigma from the arrest or negative police contact.
- Traditional responses like arrest and detention perpetuate racial disparities in our justice system.

**AS OUR UNDERSTANDING OF ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT EVOLVES**, traditional strategies of arresting youth as the primary response to troubling behavior are starting to change. Communities—including police—are implementing a variety of innovative strategies to better address and support these youth and families.
JUVENILE ASSESSMENT RESOURCE CENTERS
Drop-in resource and assessment centers serve as “diversion hubs” where police officers, families, and school personnel can bring youth engaged in low-level misbehavior or who just need a safe place to go if home or school is not an option. These centers employ social workers, mental health clinicians, and other community-based professionals to assess the presenting issues and connect youth and their families to services and support without justice-system involvement. Many of them are open around the clock, and are in accessible and convenient locations for police officers and families.

CRISIS RESPONSE SERVICES
Many jurisdictions have created crisis response systems to support law enforcement, schools, families, and other agencies needing immediate help—often by connecting families to behavioral health services, instead of to emergency rooms and the justice system. Trained case workers respond quickly to law enforcement or family calls, either by phone or in person, assess the situation, and determine the best course of action, usually by connecting youth and their families with community-based supports and case management services.

CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAMS FOR YOUTH (CIT-Y)
The CIT for Youth (CIT-Y) program, focused on crisis prevention, trains law enforcement officers to better understand, identify and react to adolescent development and mental health issues, and to help connect those youth to effective and appropriate services and supports in their community. Some communities are going beyond this model, to not only train and connect police officers with community resources, but to also incorporate crisis response programs into their initial response.

2015 GRESHAM, OREGON: Gresham is currently in the midst of a strategic planning process to open a juvenile reception center that serves youth and families in crisis in an accessible and welcoming location.

2015 SARPY COUNTY, NEBRASKA: Although under a year old, the Heartland Family Service Crisis Mediation Team has conducted over 90 face-to-face CMT interventions, none of which led to juvenile detention.

2016 LAS VEGAS, NEVADA: Set to open in fall 2016, a variety of Southern Nevada stakeholders are developing an assessment center to provide both diversion and intervention services for youth, with a specific goal of reducing the disproportionate arrest and detention of African American youth.

2015 MICHIGAN STATE: After implementing CIT-Y across the state, stakeholders have seen an increased number of referrals to mental health providers and a decrease in the number of automatic juvenile justice referrals from police officers.

2011 CONNECTICUT STATE: The state implemented CIT-Y and added a partnership with the Emergency Mobile Psychiatric Services program. In 2015, fewer than 2 percent of the 12,472 EMPS responses ended with arrest.

2011 CALCASIEU PARISH, LOUISIANA: The Multi Agency Resource Center (MARC), while initially focused on being a resource for law enforcement, has also become a resource that families can trust and use without relying on police intervention. Between 2012 and 2015, the MARC saw a 150 percent increase in the number of direct family walk-ins without police referral.

2010 PEORIA COUNTY, ILLINOIS: In response to a high number of Adolescent Domestic Battery (ADB) calls, police and other county leaders decided to utilize the statewide Comprehensive Community-Based Youth Services’ (CCBYS) 24-hour crisis intervention service and changed arrest and detention protocols to allow police to make referrals to community social services providers. Eighty-five percent of youth referred to crisis intervention for ADB had no further domestic battery contacts while receiving services.