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Editorial

The *Law Enforcement Executive Forum* continues its mission of establishing a research-based publication for criminal justice academics, students, and practitioners alike. The “scholar-practitioner” focus establishes a time-relevant “Forum” for the thoughtful consideration, examination, and evaluation of contemporary issues facing the criminal justice community. The published articles are truly responsive to current and developing concerns, focusing not only on problem identification and analysis, but on solutions and best practices.

The overriding goal of the *Forum* is to deliver a product that will be used by criminal justice administrators and practitioners in addressing the myriad issues they face on the job. As such, the *Forum* publication is (1) timely—published four to seven times per year, (2) responsive—addressing current and developing issues, and (3) diverse—examining a wide range of topics within the field.

The *Law Enforcement Executive Forum* is administered through the Illinois Law Enforcement Executive Institute located on the campus of Western Illinois University. Both the Executive Institute and the *Forum* are established and funded by the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board through State appropriations. The Board’s initiative relative to establishing and funding both the Executive Institute and the *Forum* is to establish a nexus between research and practice, utilizing emerging knowledge as guideposts for developing professional training programs, policy initiatives, and technical assistance responses.

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Social Systems and Social Control: A Theoretical Perspective on Juvenile Gangs and General Delinquency

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A number of disciplines have generated a diverse body of literature on juvenile gangs and violence. This literature can be understood as a unified whole in which specific programs and intervention strategies can be highlighted and analyzed in relation to each other through the application of a systems perspective as a meta-model (Anderson & Carter, 1990). This article uses a social systems model to operationalize social relationships and as a means of perceiving, conceptualizing, and assessing juvenile street gangs and general delinquency.

Several systems affect youth such as family, school, and community. Each system is an identifiable entity that may have either permeable or impermeable boundaries with other systems. Systems have components with specific functions to maintain the system, and these components may be independent or interdependent of each other. There may be connections within each system’s components, and there may also be connections between and among systems. Systems operate in a hierarchical environment (Martin & O’Conner, 1989), and each system is a component of a larger system or suprasystem (Chess & Norlin, 1991). Each system receives inputs of demands and supports from other systems and, in turn, produces outputs which support and place demands on other systems. Feedback from surrounding systems serve as demands, or signal inputs, and supports for the system. Systems may be characterized by their levels of efficiency and effectiveness, both of which may be evaluated by system openness (interrelationships and interactions with other systems) and homeostasis (ability to sustain it).

In this article, three levels of systems—macro, mediating, and micro—will be used to analyze juvenile gangs, including a discussion of applied theories of gang membership. Control Theory is emphasized as a dynamic element in effective programs and practices aimed at reducing gang activity and general delinquency. Additionally, implications for future gang research and practice will be provided.

Systemic Influences in Gang Membership

Juvenile violence has become alarming. In 1992, violent crimes committed by juveniles represented 13% of all violent crimes reported to the U.S. Department of Justice. Sickmund, Snyder, and Poe-Yamagata (1997) reported that teenagers are the most likely group to be victimized, and they predicted that juvenile homicides will increase 145% by the year 2010. More recently, Snyder and Sickmund (2006) reported that 1,600 persons under the age of 18 were victims of homicide, and over one-third of juvenile victims of violent crimes were under the age of 12. Violent crime trends, illicit drug use and trafficking, and victimization among teenagers have been linked to juvenile gang activity (Hill, Lui, & Hawkins, 2001). Gang
violence and crime are continual problems for school-age youth (Howell & Lynch, 2000). These problems include the presence of guns, drug possession and sales, and gang fighting on school campuses. Hill et al. (2001) reported that juvenile street gangs are likely to victimize others by stealing, damaging property, and committing robbery, among other types of crime. A need to control juvenile gang activity is apparent.

The extensive literature on juvenile crime presents many theories of etiology that, consequently, lead to unfocused and diverse conclusions about prevention and intervention initiatives. Organizing the literature in a way that makes sense of the different theories will help to provide direction for the development of programs most appropriate for specific population demographics, issues, and resources.

An extensive review of the literature reveals several major theories on why youth participate in antisocial gangs (Ekland-Olson, 1982; Esbensen, Huizinga, & Weiher, 1993; Shaw & McKay, 1942; Spergel, 1992). This research on juvenile street gangs covers an array of systemic forces that interact and affect each other. Different theories offer different perspectives on juvenile crime, and theories may be applied at macro, mediating (messo), and micro social levels. The organizing tool of Social Systems Theory will be used in this article to make sense of the diverse literature. Social Systems Theory is most compatible with the ecological approaches applied in sociology and criminology; therefore, several multidisciplinary implications in both practice and research may be drawn for prevention and intervention to reduce adolescent gang involvement and other types of delinquency.

**Systemic Levels**

Social Systems Theory provides a meta-level framework for studying the interaction among systems (van Gigch, 1991) and their roles in youth gangs and violence. An overview of applied theories of gang literature reveals a tri-level social systems perspective (i.e., macro level, mediating level, and micro level) in which the levels interface and sometimes overlap (see Figure 1). The macro-level theories, such as Underclass Theory and Social Disorganization Theory, address issues that affect masses of people such as socioeconomic status (SES), racism, limited opportunities for the poor, and other demographic variables. Mediating- and micro-level systems function under the larger macro-level systems. Infiltration from macro-level systems to mediating-level systems may determine how effectively lower-level systems operate. For example, limited housing opportunities for the poor may force families to live in gang-infested neighborhoods, thereby placing children at risk of socializing into gang subcultures. Macro-level systems directly impact mediating-level systems but only indirectly affect micro-level systems. Perhaps the most effective approach for change at this level is to create new or modify existing social policies that will allocate adequate resources to communities (Spergel, 1992).

The mediating level of systems includes law enforcement, social agencies, and schools and is directly affected by the macro level but also directly affects the micro level. Mediating-level theories, such as Social Control, Social Learning, and Self-Control Theories, help to explain the social influences that facilitate gangs. These theories explain the importance of social standards, social role models, and the interaction of social systems in understanding the gang problem. At this level, elements of social control may be the most effective in terms of practice prevention.
and intervention strategies (Butler & Watkins, 2006; Wong, 2004). Schools, police departments, and social agencies should communicate and coordinate in ways that reinforce positive interpersonal relationships at the micro level. School social work programs can greatly enhance the interaction of mediating systems by collaborating with other mediating-level systems (i.e., police and social service providers) to provide adequate resources to students and also by devising in-school programs that address students’ unmet social needs (Esbensen, Osgood, Taylor, Peterson, & Freng, 2001; Peterson & Esbensen, 2004). The 2006 Law Enforcement Survey by the National Youth Gang Center reported that 62.5% of law enforcement respondents agreed that social workers in school and community programs could significantly benefit at-risk youth and help gang members exit gangs (Knox, 2006). These efforts can be used to socialize young people into more positive peer groups as well as to teach them more productive social skills in coping with negative social pressures. Ideally, the boundaries among mediating- and micro-level systems will interact in ways so as to provide each other with energy otherwise missing without intrasystemic support.

**Figure 1. Meta-Model of Systemic Influences to Gang Activity and General Delinquency**

The micro level includes family and peer systems—relationships closest to the individual (i.e., family, peers, romantic relationships). Micro-level theories of family and peer relationships help to explain how people are motivated by their close interpersonal relationships (White, 1996; Winfree, Esbensen, & Osgood, 1986). Micro-level influences have the greatest impact on individual choice and behavior (White, 1996). Mediating systems interact with micro systems to provide the energy needed for micro-level efficiency and effectiveness. This may occur by many different means such as providing financial assistance from mediating
systems by facilitating opportunities for active involvement for youth through conventional activities (Morales, 1991) and by social interaction via religious or civic organizations. Micro-level systems are indirectly affected by macro-level systems by way of the economic or political opportunities available to mediating-level systems that can distribute resources to micro-level systems. The micro level directly affects the mediating level by making social demands of needed resources. Subsequently, the mediating level demands resources from the macro level to distribute them to the micro level, thus creating a flow of energy among all three systemic levels.

**Macro-Level Systems**

Chess and Norlin (1991) state that “society is the most dominant, inclusive, and self-sufficient” social system (p. 64). Social class is an important facet of structure in societal and communal systems (Anderson & Carter, 1990). Some structural features of communities are dysfunctional for lower-class groups (Chess & Norlin, 1991). Spergel (1992) subscribed to the Underclass Theory, emphasizing macro-systemic influences that affect gang subcultures. He described how social class and demographics perpetuate gang problems through economic suppression and limited opportunity for underprivileged youth. He claimed that young people resorted to criminal activity to garner material wealth through illegitimate means such as drug dealing and gun sales; this permits them to attain higher status in their communities. Spergel also described Social Disorganization Theory in which “such disorganization weakens social controls on youth, particularly adolescent males, which, in turn, creates a need for an alternate socialization institution to the family, school, the youth agency, and legitimate employment” (p. 129). Juvenile street gangs provide an excellent alternative to institutions that fall short of meeting the unmet needs of youth. Both Underclass Theory and Social Disorganization Theory help to explain macro-level influences that perpetuate gang subcultures.

Other research supports Spergel’s perspective that demographic factors, such as SES, age, and ethnicity, explain gang crime (Bjerregaard & Smith, 1993; Ekland-Olson, 1982; Esbensen et al., 1993; Fagan, 1989; Moore, 1988). Ekland-Olson (1982) and Esbensen et al. (1993) support a macro-level cultural deviance perspective. The cultural deviance perspective aids in explaining how gang members cope with poverty, racism, and other problems by engaging in crimes such as stealing, criminal mischief, and violence. Like Underclass Theory, the cultural deviance perspective proposes that disjunctures in social structure lead to gang involvement (Esbensen et al., 1993). From a macro-level systems perspective, variables beyond the individual’s control reinforce gang participation. Without intervention from mediating or micro levels, gang involvement is a viable response to the signal inputs of the unmet needs of youth (see Figure 2).

Ekland-Olson (1982) describes the social strain perspective to juvenile gang involvement. The social strain perspective can be understood as the product of both the macro- and micro-level systems. Status threats, reflecting social strain at the macro level, may push individuals toward gang activity as a way of increasing feelings of self-worth. At the micro level, families may express social strain through arguing and hostility, inadvertently pushing individuals toward a gang. Social strain, then, is relevant to the influence of macro factors in determining how individuals cope with pressure.
Mediating-Level Systems

Research by Ekland-Olson (1982) and Esbensen et al. (1993) use the control perspective to illustrate the importance of mediating systems in shaping the behavior of young people. Ekland-Olson (1982) describes the control perspective by stating that unattached and unsupervised teenagers engage in criminal activity for a lack of more productive, positive alternatives to delinquency. Young people are more likely to demonstrate prosocial behaviors when they have positive social role models (i.e., coaches, teachers, and mentors).

Esbensen et al.’s (1993) longitudinal study compared differences in explanatory factors between gang and non-gang youth. Their analysis used Social Control, Social Learning, Social Strain, Labeling, and Self-Concept Theories. Youth were selected from targeted neighborhoods in Colorado that were socially disorganized. Family structure, ethnicity, SES, housing, mobility, marital status, and age composition were the variables that were studied. They conducted annual personal interviews with approximately 1,095 individuals, using self-report measures on delinquency and drug use.

To examine socialization between gang and non-gang youth, the researchers described theoretical variables of Social Control Theory such as conventional activities related to school, work, and the community. The results indicated that there were no significant differences between gang members, street offenders, and non-gang youth with respect to involvement in conventional activities (school-year job, summer job, school attendance, school athletics, school extracurricular activities, community athletics, community activities, and religious activities). This finding does not support the idea that youth involved in conventional activities have a greater chance of avoiding
deviant behavior, however; the results did report that gang members engage in more crime than street offenders and non-gang members. Moreover, gang members and street offenders were more likely to associate with peers who negatively influence them. Although there were no differences between gang and non-gang youth in conventional activities, gang members and street offenders appeared to be more tolerant of peers who commit crime. It appears that non-gang youth have personal boundaries which limit the influence of criminally active peers. Mediating systems, like conventional activities, may not deter young people from gangs and drugs. More research is needed to determine if certain components of peer bonding within these groups can serve as effective deterrents (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Mediating-Level Influences to Deter Gang Activity and General Delinquency
Micro-Level Systems

Winfree et al. (1986) used Self-Control Theory and Social Learning Theory in their evaluation of Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.). These theories provide a structural framework for teaching methods of self-control and reinforcement of positive behavior, helping to emphasize micro-level systemic influences on the individual (see Figure 4). In their applications of Self-Control Theory, Winfree et al. explained that individuals who experienced low self-control acted on impulse and thrived on immediate gratification. Individuals with low self-control are at-risk for gang activity because gang activity provides immediate gratification in the forms of monetary incentive and identity formation. Winfree et al. stated that young people with low self-control displayed “immediate gratification, simplicity, physicality, risk-taking, self-centeredness, and anger” (pp. 184-185). Parents’ management styles facilitated low self-control by a lack of supervision, inappropriate punishment, and irregular displays of affection. In conjunction with Control Theory and the use of mediating systems, Winfree et al. used Social Learning Theory to retrain individuals to adapt prosocial skills. The G.R.E.A.T. Program takes place in a classroom setting, and police officers teach students skills in resisting negative peer influences. Research demonstrates that this school-based initiative has shown promising results in developing students’ prosocial skills (Esbensen et al., 2001; Peterson & Esbensen, 2004).

Figure 4. Micro-Level Influences to Deter Gang Activity and General Delinquency

Family systems have important functions in the development of individuals. Anderson and Carter (1990) discussed the family systems perspective from
Erikson’s (1968) psychosocial model of development. When identity is formed, individuals are most likely to join a gang during the identity and repudiation versus the identity diffusion stage. If entropy (when a system becomes run down to the point that it is unable to operate effectively) exists in the family system (i.e., dysfunctional families), the system may be unattended and vulnerable to outside influences, and individuals will look for sources outside the family system. This may help to explain that when energy in the family is low (i.e., single parent family, latchkey children, and sibling rivalry), other sources serve as pseudo-families; hence, the gang becomes “the family.” When families are synergetic (increased energy in a system via interaction among system components), individuals are more likely to draw on the family for energy. Energy within the family system may be in the form of encouragement and direction from parents or siblings to make appropriate choices, and structure in the form of discipline and values. Anderson and Carter (1990) discussed the influence of peers on identity during adolescence. This developmental perspective has significant implications regarding the effects peer groups have on identity when adolescents withdraw from the family.

White (1996) discussed familial factors associated with moralization of adolescents and how family closeness may determine the referents adolescents use for moral standards. Moralization may be considered the fundamental beliefs individuals abide by when determining right from wrong and when living according to prosocial standards. The proposed framework embraced the Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems as the theoretical orientation to adolescent moralization. The Circumplex Model relied on three factors within family systems: (1) adaptability, (2) cohesion, and (3) communication. This model has been a topic of debate over the past few years, however, because of its inability to successfully differentiate between “normal” and dysfunctional families.

White (1996) used a systems perspective to address adolescent moralization on three different family types: (1) enmeshed, (2) disengaged, and (3) balanced. For enmeshed families, adolescents who identified with the parents’ moral standards were less likely to develop an independent sense of moralization. Adolescents in families that were disengaged were so independent of the family’s moral standards that they primarily identified with sources outside the family; while in families that were balanced, not too engaged, or disengaged, adolescents considered both family values and other referents to establish moral standards. Finally, for families with balanced moralization, White concluded that healthy family bonding is important for the prosocial adaptation of teenagers in a wider social environment. The family type has significant implications for prevention and intervention and for healthy moral development. Adolescents in disengaged and balanced families who look outside the family for moral standards will need positive role models in the form of adults and peers.

Swaim, Oetting, Edwards, and Beauvais (1989) conducted a survey with 11th and 12th graders on emotional problems and peer associations with adolescent drug activity. They used a path analysis to test Peer Cluster Theory to determine peer association with drug use. They found that 43.3% of the variance in their path model was accounted for by peer drug use, while emotional distress only accounted for 4.8%. The results of this study, at best, predicted emotional distress as an indirect link to adolescent drug use and thereby attributed a much higher degree to peer influence.
Identifying Effective Social Control Components in School and Community Programs

Systems Theory clearly organizes the body of gang literature into an understandable whole. Macro systemic influences can be described through the Social Disorganization and Underclass Theories (Spergel, 1992), the social strain perspective (Ekland-Olson, 1982), and the cultural deviance perspective (Ekland-Olson, 1982; Esbensen et al., 1993). Mediating systemic influences can be described in terms of the control perspective (Ekland-Olson, 1982; Esbensen et al., 1993; Winfree et al., 1986) and Social Learning, Social Strain, Labeling, and Self-Concept Theories. Micro systemic influences may be defined by applying some of the same theories used in mediating systems such as Social Learning and Self-Control Theories and the control perspective (Wong, 2004). The research reviewed thus far outlines how each level interacts and, thus, compounds or reduces gang involvement.

While much of the problem may be defined in systemic terms, other questions remain with respect to effective intervention or prevention solutions. Control Theories, a component of Micro-Objectivist Theories (Ward, Carter, & Perrin, 1994), suggest that individuals engage in deviant behavior because of weakening social controls. Social Control Theory hypothesizes that delinquency is more likely when control in the forms of parents, schools, or other social institutions fails to hold people accountable for their deviant action. This theory provides the best framework to measure the effects of mediating systemic influences in after-school programs that serve to deter young people from gang involvement and other forms of delinquency. Longres (1990) defines social control as “the processes through which a person’s participation in a system is limited or constrained. Social control may be implemented through positive or negative means. Often systems of reward are devised to assure compliance with group expectations” (p. 44). Social control variables associated with the mediating systemic level serve to control delinquent actions during school- and community-based after-school programs. Social control variables that help individuals conform to group expectations facilitate positive peer socialization. Specifically, these forms of social control can be identified as police visibility, presence of adults during after-school programs, accountability of behavior through adult supervision, and parental reinforcement of negative consequences (Butler & Watkins, 2006).

Social controls that influence youth on a daily basis may either encourage or deter them from engaging in gang activity and delinquency depending on the consistency of the social control. Weak social controls in after-school programs at the school and in the community may serve to promote delinquency in program participants, thus allowing youth to socialize into negative peer groups. Delinquency levels tolerated in these programs may facilitate an environment in which gang activities occur. Consistent with the notion that mediating systemic influences can serve as effective prevention and intervention methods, social controls that exist in the mediating systemic level may help to serve as deterrents to delinquency.

Mediating systemic influences, such as school and community programs, may offer the best options for positive peer socialization. Questions still exist, however, about what kind of programs may be most effective in deterring young people from gang involvement and other forms of delinquency. Esbensen et al. (1993)
described how there are no significant differences among gang members, street offenders, and non-offenders in their participation in conventional activities. Other research (Ekland-Olson, 1982), however, supports the involvement of youth in such activities to establish interpersonal bonds with peers who engage in positive activities, deterring them from delinquent activities. Also, much has been documented about the significance of peer influence on adolescent decision-making, suggesting that students involved in constructive activities with positive peers have a greater likelihood of socializing into positive peer groups (Wong, 2004). Butler and Watkins (2006) studied the effects of involvement in school and community after-school programs on outcomes of gang participation and delinquency. They found that higher levels of social control in both school and community programs were significantly related to the reduction of gang and delinquent behaviors. Moreover, although involvement in the activities alone did not have a significant impact on gang participation and delinquency, levels of social control, or rather, how the programs were run, had the greatest impact. These programs had more than one adult present, the adults were attentive to the participants’ needs, and the participants’ parents were involved with their extracurricular activities.

Implications for Mediating Systems

Methods to reduce juvenile gang and truant behaviors are represented in a systems perspective, utilizing mediating systems as an avenue to provide programs and reinforce prosocial attitudes for youth. Mediating and micro-level systems such as school and family play important roles in deterring young people from gang participation and delinquency due to the social controls they have on the socialization process. Schools and community programs may prove to be the most effective, particularly if parental role models are inattentive, negative, or nonexistent. Consistent with the literature, a systems approach of entities working together to achieve the common goal of reducing antisocial behavior in the schools is the best option. This will require structure, consistency, and cooperation from all systems to be effective (Goldstein & Huff, 1993). Prevention and intervention efforts should more closely target peer socialization, using multisystemic approaches involving mediating and micro levels with high levels of social control. Macro-level systems should aim efforts toward providing more economic relief to low socioeconomic communities in need of providing alternatives to deviance through opportunities for active involvement in positive activities. Law enforcement agencies can help by expanding prevention programs in the schools (i.e., the G.R.E.A.T. program) with high at-risk populations in conjunction with suppression efforts. Families who incorporate and reinforce high levels of adult supervision, accountability for negative behavior, positive moral development, and who combine extra-familial resources that provide constructive networks for adolescents will help establish a healthy, individual identity. Families and schools can work together to develop healthy networks for individuals and facilitate positive peer socialization.

Bibliography


What the Cops See: Intergenerational Violence and Teen Crime in St. Louis, Missouri

Martha L. Shockey-Eckles, PhD, Assistant Professor of Sociology and Criminal Justice, Saint Louis University

Kids are more dangerous than the adult offenders. Adults have some idea of the consequences. Kids think they’re invincible. I fault the criminal justice system. These kids know if they’re 15, there’s not much we can do to them. If they’re 17, they’re going to the Big House—but not if they’re 15. We pick up a kid, we call Family Court, and we’re told to send them back to their parents.

Sergeant Jeff Myer
Town & Country Police Department

From the early days of theorizing, researchers and practitioners alike have long been interested in understanding and explaining the intergenerational and intercultural transmission of crime. It goes without saying that this group includes and represents a wide array of disciplines, from psychology to social work to criminology. Although these explanatory efforts continue today, the early work of the Chicago School is largely credited with providing the first in-depth analysis of the varied social and ecological factors that contribute to the transmission of criminogenic behaviors across time and in spite of shifting cultural dynamics within specific neighborhoods (see Cressey, 1962; Shaw & McKay, 1942; Sutherland, 1947).

An extensive review of the literature clearly indicates that the primary focus of social workers and psychologists, along with legal and feminist scholars, has been on family violence and the long-term effects of abuse suffered by children who are raised in dysfunctional environments (Becker, Stuewig, Herrera, & McCloskey, 2004; Clark, 1989; Stewart, Livingston, & Dennison, 2008). These long-term effects are, and have been, so well-documented it comes as no surprise that a strong correlation is found between early abuse and later involvement in the criminal justice system as these same children mature and engage in juvenile delinquency career criminality, and transform themselves from the abused to the abuser. Due to the devastating and long-lasting effects of childhood abuse, at least some contemporary scholars are now calling for the development of a national policy aimed at mandatory early intervention in the lives of children deemed to be at risk for later offending as a result of their experiences within the home environment (see Welsh & Farrington, 2007). It is apparent that the scholarly research conducted to date on family dysfunction and its relationship to later criminal activity suggests the need for both intervention and prevention policies and practices that are specific, standardized, effective, and enforceable. These same policies and programs must bring together the combined knowledge and efforts of all whose job it is to provide social services to families in need.
As extensive as the research has been on the link between family functioning and its effects on youth behavior, few studies have included, or drawn from, the insights and knowledge held by those who both intervene at the point of crisis and witness, firsthand and over time, the generational transmission of crime. To date, little has been learned from this special group—the men and women of law enforcement—who, as a result of their interactions, possess a plethora of knowledge about those who engage in, teach, and transmit “family based” crime and criminality across generations.

This paper examines the role of, and knowledge acquired by, the police officers who are most often the first to respond to the types of criminal activity that bring specific individuals and groups to the attention of the criminal justice system. In more than a few cases, it is the first responder who is essential in assessing the family dynamics and ensuring these individuals and groups are subsequently referred to service-based organizations. These initial collaborative intervention efforts thus provide valuable information that can later serve as the foundation for future efforts aimed at preventing family-based crime and criminality (see Welsh & Farrington, 2007). Hence, the goal of this paper is to expand upon that which is already known about the effects of family dysfunction on the intergenerational transmission of crime. It does so by placing the first responders—law enforcement—front and center in the project itself. These are the men and women who witness, over time, the workings of what one officer included in this project refers to as the “family enterprise” of crime.

A New Perspective

A lot of things we do are not police or criminal issues. A lot of things we don’t have answers for; we can’t solve. I laugh when I go to [community] meetings now. I tell them "Don’t bitch to me when the crime rate goes through the roof because that’s a societal problem." As a police officer, I’m part of that. As a citizen, I’m part of that. I’ll do anything I can to try and eradicate that, but it’s not fully the police department’s problem. It’s a community issue.

William
St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department

The paper presented here derives from a larger project designed to investigate interaction styles adopted by members of the St. Louis (Missouri) Metropolitan Police Department (SLMPD) when engaged in discourse with criminal and noncriminal residents of the city. Recognizing the importance of cultural context in shaping interaction, the methodology employed is best described as Interpretive Ethnography, utilizing a grounded theory approach. The information gained from in-depth, semistructured interviews and observation is augmented with detailed fieldnotes maintained during the research act, thus allowing for the rich description so necessary to understanding the nuances of police-resident interaction. The approach undertaken here has allowed for relevant concepts, categories, and theoretical implications to emerge from the information obtained. Hence, remaining true to the work of Glaser (1978, 1992) and Glaser and Strauss (1967), the findings themselves constitute the core of the project, thus providing a picture of “what is” in the unique culture within which St. Louis police officers and residents interact.
Since beginning the project in October 2006, 25 initial interviews have been conducted to date. Each interview lasted approximately 90 minutes, and three follow-up sessions have been conducted with select interviewees in order to clarify information provided or expand upon a topic introduced during the first meeting. Of the 25 interviews recorded to date, 17 have been conducted with members of the SLMPD. The interviewees include patrol officers assigned to the Third District, members of the highly selective Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART), and detectives working within the Sex Crimes and Homicide units. Four interviews have been conducted with local media personnel representing television, radio, and print journalism, and the remaining four interviewees represent criminal and noncriminal residents living or working in the Benton Park neighborhood of St. Louis. One interviewee, due to his life experiences, is categorized as law enforcement, a self-identified offender, and a resident/employee of the neighborhood included in this project. With the permission of the interviewees, all sessions were taped and later transcribed for analysis. Each interviewee was assured his or her identifying information would remain confidential in nature. This assurance was enhanced by a Saint Louis University (Institutional Review Board) approved Informed Consent Document, which both the interviewer and interviewee signed. One interviewee requested that his name, rank, and departmental affiliation at the time of the interview be included with the information provided. As a result, all information attributed to Sgt. Jeff Myer of the Town & Country (Missouri) Police Department reveals his actual identity. The tapes were coded with no identifying information revealed during the course of the interview except in the case of Sgt. Myer. Master code lists and the accompanying Informed Consent Documents are maintained in a separate, locked facility with access granted to only those officially associated with this project.

The fieldwork described here required in-depth observation of those most central to this research—members of the SLMPD. Thirty-two hours were devoted to observational ride-alongs with Third District officers working the streets of the Soulard and Benton Park areas of the city. The hours spent in observation represent four of the five shifts worked by SLMPD officers: (1) Days (7:00 AM to 3:00 PM), (2) Overlay Shift (10:00 AM to 6:00 PM), (3) Evenings (3:00 PM to 11:00 PM), and (4) Nights (11:00 PM to 7:00 AM). Following each ride-along, copious fieldnotes were recorded and a personal journal was maintained in order to ensure that the subtle nuances that are so important to rich description were not lost as time passed and the project progressed.

All transcripts and accompanying fieldnotes have been hand-coded as relevant concepts, categories, and theoretical implications have emerged. Respect for the emergent quality of this project demanded a certain intellectual naiveté upon entry into the field, for such is the nature of the beast referred to as qualitative fieldwork. Respect for objectivity and verification demanded triangulation. What was termed “factual information” by an interviewee was deemed reliable only if, and when, at least two unrelated sources confirmed the statement as fact.

The findings presented here are intended to “have a life.” The goal is, at all times, to uncover and disseminate information that is relevant, timely, and of use, thus transforming theory into praxis. The intended audience are those individuals—the scholars, practitioners, and lawmakers—who will most benefit from, and put into practice, the suggestions emanating from an enhanced understanding of the
mechanisms that support and sustain the intergenerational transmission of crime and violence. The secondary goal is to bring to life the necessary understanding that true social control represents a collaborative effort between key societal players—the individual, the family, schools, and the larger community in which we all, criminal or noncriminal, function (see Welsh & Farrington, 2007).

What the Cops See

I can assure you—and I think you probably understand this from research and from understanding the process—I can assure you the impact on these kids [from seeing family abuse] can be not only . . . uh . . . hard, but terrifying. There’s a lot of crying going on. There’s a lot of screaming going on. We understand their response, but we don’t want them there. This part of the situation can be very devastating. We know that. We try to minimize that. We try to get them out of the immediate area so we can process the primary participants. There’s quite a bit of services [available to them]. We’re such a lucky community here in St. Louis. There’s a lot of services available to the children.

Tony
Sex Crimes Division
St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department (SLMPD)

All too often the immediate impact of living within a dysfunctional environment is overlooked as scholars and laypeople alike focus on the long-term effects of ongoing family interaction and its influence on later behaviors. Early theorizing suggests this short-sighted approach contributes to our collective tendency to delay the inevitable, for the learning process that is so central to the individual’s later involvement in criminal acts often begins at an early age and thus assumes priority in the life course. Family dysfunction and the behaviors witnessed in this context exert an immediate impact on the child and become even more influential if they are repeated frequently and endure over time (Cressey, 1962; Sutherland, 1947). Just as an individual’s routine activities can contribute to an increased likelihood of criminal participation or victimization (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Smith & Ecob, 2007) so, too, can repeated exposure to family dysfunction, partner abuse, and even criminal activity become “routine” in nature. In the absence of early intervention, the child learns to define the family and its behaviors as “normal” while viewing law enforcement as the interloper—the enemy as opposed to the ally:

I’ve seen with the older kids where they don’t even say very much when [the police] show up. They’re watching TV. And they keep watching TV. Like it’s a pattern. It happens all the time. [Then] as a patrol officer, there were the times we’d arrest someone and I would hear them say, particularly when you’re in the car with them, when you’re driving up to the station, I would hear them say, “Hey, I didn’t assault my girlfriend and this is why. Because I watched my father beat up my mother. And I would never do that to a woman.” I heard that over and over.

Thomas
Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART)
SLMPD
It is readily apparent from the statements made by both Tony and Thomas of the SLMPD that family dysfunction and long-term abuse damage not just those directly involved in the altercation, but also the child who grows up witnessing the ongoing violence that all too often becomes a routine component of daily life. As the child learns what it means to “be” a family, he or she is also learning how to justify socially inappropriate behaviors through the use of neutralizing techniques (see Sykes & Matza, 1957). In families where crimes against society are also a part of daily life, the lessons learned extend, and are played out, well beyond the walls of the family home. As children are raised in criminal environments, the boundaries that typically delineate conformity and criminality become blurred. Just as the abused child can become the adult abuser, so, too, can this same individual learn the definitions, behaviors, and justifications that support and sustain his or her later life as a career criminal:

State statutes limit us. And because we’re dealing with a lot of kids who have learned this at home, they know what the police can and cannot do legally. I’ve seen kids sent home the same day I pick them up. I’ve had to take them home. Before I finish filling out the report, they’re out the front door and heading home.

Ross
St. Louis Metropolitan Police Academy

Critics have long argued that the juvenile justice system in America is desperately in need of reform (Howard & Jensen, 1998). The officers interviewed for this project unanimously agree, stating that the Family Court does little to deter the would-be juvenile offender who often becomes the adult criminal. While most cite case-overload as a contributing factor to the leniency provided youthful offenders, they also argue that the underlying philosophy of the juvenile justice system is outdated and fails to mete out the types of consequences needed to give the message that “crime doesn’t pay.” This, combined with a dysfunctional home environment or one wherein youth actively learn that crime does pay, sets the stage for both the intergenerational transmission of crime and the maintenance of the crime-based family enterprise.

Predicated on the belief that children are capable of change when effectively parented, the U.S. juvenile justice system and its belief in parens patriae developed in the late 19th century (MacCord, Crowell, & Widom, 2001). Since that time, it has undergone several reforms, leading critics to claim we now treat the youthful offender more like an adult (Howard & Jensen, 1998). Those I interviewed disagree. Most with whom I spoke feel the current system is ill prepared to deal with a generation raised by parents who are either emotionally detached from the child, abusive, or are themselves actively involved in crime and criminality:

[When I was working the streets], I did find one thing that was fascinating—immediately—was that there were these guys that we were stopping that were maybe 16 or 17 years old who knew the system better than I did. I had a degree. I just came out of the Academy, and they knew about the—at the time it was a twenty hour order, now it’s a twenty-four hour order—and they were telling me where to go, where not to go as far as the criminal justice system. Things I didn’t even know. As far as families—something I found
over a period of time a lot of people don’t understand is that if we get a call
for a drug sale at such-and-such corner, we’d get there and what struck me is
that the family members would start showing up and causing a disturbance.
“You’re harassing them. You know you didn’t get a call. You’re only here
because [of] this reason or that reason.” And there’s a pattern of that. And
I realized that—what I believe in my opinion—is that a lot of these families
are criminal families, almost a criminal enterprise. These guys are out selling
dope, and I believe the family members know about it and when someone
makes the phone call and they’re being harassed by the police, then the
family members come by and it’s their job to harass us to get our focus off of
them and now we’re trying to defend ourselves. This was a repeated pattern
and it happened all the time.

Thomas
DART, SLMPD

From the perspective of veteran officers who have worked the streets and witnessed,
firsthand, dramatic changes in youth crime, it appears more than a little naïve to
assume that our current juvenile justice system, first developed in the 1800s, is
equipped to deal with the issues of juvenile crime today. The juveniles entering
today’s juvenile justice system are not the youth of yesterday. They are a new
breed—one which embraces violence and introduces an added element of danger
into the larger society. They are also a generation who have not only witnessed
dysfunction and criminality within their own families, but have also learned the
behavioral definitions and techniques necessary for engaging in criminal behaviors
(see Cressey, 1962; Sutherland, 1947). Just as individuals learn and enact specific
roles during the commission of a crime, distinct families will tend to develop and
pass on their own form of criminal enterprise to the next generation:

You know, some family’s crime is burglary; some family’s crime is robbery;
some family’s crime is dope. I [definitely] think dope is a family business.
And it may just be that dope is a thing that requires a lot more trust than
other crimes, so I think it’s more of a tight-knit family thing just because
they have that extra bond and they know they’re not snitching them out and
stuff like that. There are other crimes—you commit burglaries by yourself,
but you can’t sell dope by yourself. With dope everything is a conspiracy,
and I think it becomes more of a family thing because of that aspect to it.
There’s nothing supporting the social fabric that helps them keep their moral
compass. Some may never have had the moral compass from the get-go.
They don’t understand that taking things is wrong. Or if they do think it’s
wrong, it’s wrong in that you can go to jail for it—not that it’s wrong because
it’s wrong. It’s only wrong if you get caught.

Rick
Homicide Division
SLMPD

Preliminary government data released in June 2008 indicate that, following a two-
year rise in violent crime, these numbers fell in 2007. However, while the statistics
indicate a nationwide decrease in homicide of 2.7%, the trend was not shared
uniformly across the United States (Schwartz, 2008). While homicides declined
dramatically in larger cities during 2007, the same cannot be said for smaller metropolitan areas which experienced an increase in murder during that same year. The data have raised more questions than answers. According to analysts, the disparity in violent crime rates nationwide cannot be explained by merely examining geographic location or population. Nor can experts predict what the future holds with regard to violent crime due to a pattern of volatility that has appeared over the past several years (ibid). In spite of the nationwide decrease in violent crime, St. Louis police officers cite youth violence as a growing concern shared by residents and law enforcement personnel alike (Shockey-Eckles, 2007). According to the officers interviewed for this project, this, too, often has its roots firmly entrenched within the family unit:

You know, [there's this one family] their family crime is murder. They’re all murderers. Everybody. We’re talking—I mean, you know it’s . . . uh . . . —their grandfather, he’s in the penitentiary for murder. Father’s in the penitentiary for murder. Uncle’s in the penitentiary for murder. And some of these murders were committed with other family members. Some of the murders, they weren’t indicted or they beat the case. They’re bums. But they’re all murderers—violent people. I thought of another murder. The father and the son kidnapped and tortured a pawn dealer; killed him. Didn’t get convicted of that either. The son beat the whole case. My first contact with these people was [when] one of the brothers ran over somebody with a truck. Never was able to make the case on that. But, in the meantime, what I was working on down on South Broadway area was this girl on the phone. Talking on the phone. This guy tells her to get off the phone. She didn’t get off the phone quick enough for him, so he crushed her skull with a baseball bat. Didn’t kill her—at least she was alive the last time I was aware—crushed her head with a baseball bat cuz she wouldn’t get off the phone. And that was that one. And then recently the one brother shot the other brother. They were both high. And they’re all big into justification. You know the phone—it was an accident. Or you know, “I meant to hit the lamp.” Or it was—with the shooting of the brother—“We were going to shoot some niggers outside,” but they were just too high, and the brother got shot instead. They’re just—that’s a violent family. And their game is murder.

Rick
Homicide Division
SLMPD

It is apparent from the information provided by members of the SLMPD that crime often has an intergenerational element embedded within it. It cannot be claimed that family experiences of dysfunction and abuse, in and of themselves, cause crime and criminality. It is also the case that not all of those raised within dysfunctional environments become the criminals of tomorrow. These individual differences raise pertinent questions that must be addressed in future research. Why is it that some who are raised in dysfunctional environments follow the lead of their family members while others from similar environments pursue lives of integrity and social conformity? Perhaps more can be learned by examining and comparing the differential outcomes appearing among individuals raised in similar environments rather than by focusing solely on those whose childhood experiences contributed to lives of social dysfunction and crime.
However, with that said, it is also apparent the information presented here suggests that further investigation into the role of the family as a mechanism of crime transmission is warranted. Valuable knowledge can be gained by including all who work with these youth in future studies. The tendency among researchers has been to examine these children’s lives only after their entry into the system. This paper approaches the subject from a different perspective. In so doing, it provides additional insight into the intergenerational transmission of crime by drawing from those who are on the front lines, witnessing firsthand the transformation from child to criminal. This knowledge must be included in future discussions if we, the scholars, practitioners, and policymakers hope to fully understand the generational resiliency of crime, its causes, and our past failures when attempting to curb this intergenerational transmission.

**Theory Revisited**

*Change* has to start within the community itself. In my opinion, certain communities don’t want the police involved. Right? But that’s not the feelings of everyone in that community. Yes, many of these are poor communities, but many of the people are good people. They work every day. Maybe they’re not as fortunate as some other people, but they’re honest, hard-working people. I think there’s some people within these communities [who are] quiet when violent crimes occur. They accept it. I’m not saying it’s all the people. But some don’t want the police, and they’re accepting this environment. I think if people would stand up and say, “Hey, get out of my neighborhood. Get out of here. We don’t want your kind here. Find somewhere else to go,” I think we’d see these neighborhoods change.

Randy
Sex Crimes Division
SLMPD

Criminology and Sociology have both been referred to as “cumulative sciences.” The goal of criminological research is, at all times, to add to that which is already known about a particular social phenomenon as researchers attempt to bring change—not just for the sake of change, but for the betterment of society. As a result of these efforts, old theories are continually retested, while new explanations for behavior are drafted. The information presented here suggests much can still be gained by drawing from the long-standing theories that have withstood the test of time. Much of what is witnessed daily by the officers of the SLMPD can be explained by returning to these time-tested frameworks. Perhaps of greater import is the very real fact that these same theories possess the ability to guide policymakers as we seek real change aimed at reducing crime and bettering the lives of all in society.

It has long been recognized that crime is multifaceted in nature, and the underlying causes of criminal involvement are both varied and complex. Embedded squarely in this complex web of contributing factors lies the family and the role it plays in shaping the lives of those in its midst. Few theorists have failed to recognize this. Fewer still have omitted it completely when attempting to identify the underlying causes of crime and the social factors shaping the criminal’s life course.
The insights and contributions of those working in the SLMPD suggest it is time to revisit three key factors in order to better understand the intergenerational transmission of crime within the City of St. Louis. First, it is time to reconsider the concept of learning in order to more fully understand crime as an ossified element of society. Second, it is essential to revisit the integral role of one’s daily activities as they shape the individual’s perception of normalcy. Finally, ecological factors—the surrounding environment in which one functions on a daily basis—cannot be ignored if the goal of bringing change is to be achieved.

Sutherland (1947) and Cressey (1962) first introduced the concept of learning into our theoretical understanding of crime and criminality with their work on Differential Association Theory. Drawing from the work of the French philosopher Tarde, these theorists addressed the role of imitation as a precursor to learning, especially as it appeared in the burgeoning urban areas of the early 20th century. Both Sutherland and his protégé, Cressey, delineated the process by which one learns to define behaviors in such a way as to make them personally acceptable. They also, through this delineation, addressed the shortcomings of earlier theories by identifying why individuals living in similar situations can, and often do, experience vastly different life outcomes. Based upon the observations of the SLMPD officers included in this study, it is abundantly clear that learning, especially as it occurs within the family environment, plays an integral role in the transmission of what has come to be called the family enterprise of crime and criminality.

Although intended to address how one’s daily activities contribute to criminality or victimization, Routine Activities Theory (Cohen & Felson, 1979) lends a deeper theoretical understanding of the intergenerational transmission of crime. As stated previously in this paper, chaos and disruption become a way of life for many who are raised in dysfunctional environments. The terror experienced by the young child who encounters the police as a result of repeated domestic disturbances or criminal activities on the part of the parents gives way, over time, to a detached acceptance as the presence of law enforcement becomes routine in nature. It is easy to assume this detachment eventually transforms itself into resentment of the police as the child matures, learns, and accepts the explanations provided by the parents themselves. This, in large part, may also account for the very real fact that officers are often met with open hostility as they attempt to “serve and protect” the communities and neighborhoods in which these children reside. For these youth, the men and women of law enforcement have become the enemy—a message provided routinely by parents who, themselves, have come to define the officer as a threat to life as they know it.

Finally, the physical, as well as social, environment in which the child is reared cannot be ignored if a deeper understanding of youth crime is to be achieved. As first addressed by Shaw and McKay (1942) and later by Wilson and Kelling (1982), deteriorating ecological conditions promote an influx of crime into a particular neighborhood while forcing out those who once served as positive role models. It comes as no surprise that many of the officers interviewed for this project report a geographical component to the crimes they investigate, with poorer neighborhoods more likely to experience higher rates of youth violence and crime in general. These “hot spots” provide fertile ground for the intergenerational and intercultural transmission of crime as youth live and function within neighborhoods comprised
of deteriorating homes, substandard schools, and conditions that are ripe for the emergence of gang activity:

My opinion is that it’s culture. Culture. Culture. Culture. They’ve been brought up in this. They go to school in it. They see it on TV. And they’ve seen all their friends caught up in it—and their family, too—but I think it’s more than just family. I think it’s the whole environment perhaps.

Thomas
DART, SLMPD

The youth discussed in this paper stand apart from the “kids” who, especially during their adolescent years, rebel against authority, experiment in their own ways, and commit their own transgressions. These are the youth who find their way back to the beaten path—those who act out but do not continue in lives of crime. They are the ones who do not constitute a true threat to the neighborhoods and communities of which they are a part. The others, those who have been shaped by their early and ongoing interpersonal experiences and physical environments, represent the ones most needing the attention of scholars, practitioners, and policymakers. These are the youth of today who will become the adult offenders of tomorrow. They are also the ones who, as adult offenders, will pass along the same messages and expectations to their own children. And so the intergenerational transmission of crime continues—until and when enough is understood about the process to break the cycle of learning:

It’s a progression. I think they do more and more each time. And that’s just from my limited experience here and from my 13 years [on the streets]. You know they start with stealing candy from the store. The next thing you know they’re doing robberies, the carjackings, the burglaries. Eventually they’re going to get themselves into a situation where maybe they’re getting more violent. Maybe they’re hitting more people; they’re assaulting more people in their robberies. In my experience as a policeman, they graduate—it gets progressively worse. I can remember when I first came on—brand-new—dealing with kids that were juveniles. Nine or ten years old. They were doing things like breaking windows with rocks or stealing from the corner store. Look at the family dynamics. And you see it so many times that eventually they’ll go onto other things. One case that I ended up working—she was a juvenile. She ended up pregnant and said it was her boyfriend’s. She wouldn’t say she was raped. Well, it turns out the “boyfriend” is too old to be having sex with her, so now we’re going to have another one growing up. I finally found out the name of the guy. And, sure enough, he was one of the ones from when I first came on who was running around, breaking windows, slashing tires, fighting in the neighborhood. Well, now I’m doing another investigation and now it’s statutory rape. Well, now this kid I remember as a child—he’s incarcerated on a murder charge. And my thoughts were, “Little girl, I’m not surprised.” Because you could see the writing on the wall back then.

Randy
Sex Crimes Division
SLMPD
The Writing on the Wall

It goes without saying that the primary purpose of law enforcement is to serve as agents of social control. What is often lost in this moniker is their intended role as peace keepers within the communities they serve. Without a doubt, they are responders—the ones who appear during a crime or after a crime has been committed against an individual or society at large. Although they are first on the scene of a crime, they are often the last to be considered when attempting to understand, explain, and give meaning to criminal behavior. The project from which this paper derives originates from the basic belief that those in law enforcement have been long ignored by scholars attempting to understand and explain crime as an ossified component of society. Thus, this paper attempts to explain the intergenerational transmission of crime by tapping into the knowledge of those who respond to crime on a daily basis—the men and women of law enforcement.

The information obtained during the course of this project compels us—the scholars, practitioners, and policymakers alike—to revisit what is already known about crime and its maintenance over time and across cultures. It is now time to draw from the annals of early theorizing and to synthesize that which has already been done if we hope to break the ongoing cycle of crime that remains so prevalent in most urban settings.

Without a doubt, those who engage in crime are younger than at any point in our social history. These same youth are also more prone to violence than ever before and more likely to become the career criminals of tomorrow. Of paramount importance in understanding these phenomena is the need to address two specific entities of import in the life of today’s youth.

The first that must be addressed is the family and the learning that occurs as the child is raised within a dysfunctional, or even criminal, environment. Both Sutherland (1947) and Cressey (1962) addressed, long ago, the role of learning in the life of the would-be criminal. It is important to remember that just as one can learn definitions favorable to law violation, that same individual can learn definitions unfavorable to crime and deviance. Thus, the role of the community comes into play. It has been said it takes a village to raise a child. Although the lessons learned from significant others play a crucial role in self-development, competing messages offered frequently and throughout the life span by those invested in the child’s success can counterbalance that which is learned in the family home.

Routine Activities Theory (Cohen & Felson, 1979) offers additional insight into the influence of family dysfunction and its role in shaping the child’s view of law enforcement. If we, as a society, hope to witness a time wherein the police are viewed as allies rather than enemies, the cycle of violence pervading many homes must be broken. For many children, their first encounter with the police occurs when a domestic disturbance occurs. As young children, these individuals are traumatized by the police presence. As adolescents, they have become accustomed to the police presence and have bought into the belief that those in law enforcement are the enemy. Efforts must be continued to have therapists and family advocates on call and immediately available to serve as first responders to domestic disputes, with their primary responsibility focused on the needs of the child or children impacted by family dysfunction.
Finally, the physical conditions in which children are raised must be addressed, and improving impoverished neighborhoods must become a civic priority. In 1982, Wilson and Kelling made the argument that deteriorating neighborhoods presented themselves as natural targets for the emergence of gangs and the fear they instilled in those who were once viable, active residents. Thus, deteriorating urban areas became havens for criminal activity. Although the works and writings of Wilson and Kelling contributed to the move toward a Community Policing philosophy, the cities themselves have been slow to bring the kind of change needed if the environment is to rid itself of crime.

At this point, the author must interject a caveat borne of social awareness and ongoing research that focuses on crime and the role of law enforcement in serving as agents of social control. Collectively, we must work to bring the kinds of changes suggested by theory. However, these efforts will be only as successful as the residents of specific areas allow them to be. It is now time for neighborhood residents, with the support of civic leaders and effective programs, to stand up and say, “Enough!” Until those neighborhoods and groups acknowledge and assume personal responsibility for the role they play in perpetuating crime and criminality, little in the way of real change will be achieved. However, in order for this change to occur, those living within crime-ridden neighborhoods must have the kind of civic support that allows them to stand up against the criminal forces now in power.

Some have argued it is now time we pass and implement a national policy aimed at mandatory early intervention in the lives of at-risk children (Welsh & Farrington, 2007). These early intervention strategies would intentionally target the very children discussed throughout this paper—those who are raised within a family enterprise of crime and criminality. History has shown that great care must be taken when considering such a policy.

Shaw and McKay (1942) originated their work on urban delinquency in response to just such a policy suggestion. In response to industrialization, cities like Chicago experienced a rapid influx of diverse cultures into its inner-city areas. These same cities also witnessed a concomitant rise in crime and delinquency among those living in impoverished neighborhoods, a trend that remained stable over time and across cultures. These groups became easy targets for city leaders who claimed innate moral inferiority, making it impossible for immigrant groups to raise non-delinquent children. As a result, early intervention policies were passed that allowed for the removal of children from the family home as attempts were made to indoctrinate them into the normative system of U.S. society. Although well-intentioned, these policies disrupted family life and, in more than a few cases, destroyed the social fabric of the neighborhood.

The work of Shaw and McKay (1942) introduced an alternative explanation for the dramatic rise in crime and delinquency witnessed in early 20th-century Chicago, one that compelled city leaders to examine ecological factors as opposed to individual and group traits. In so doing, their work raised awareness regarding society’s role in promoting crime and delinquency and, thus, set the stage for innovative intervention strategies aimed at supporting and sustaining the family unit while working to eradicate social problems. Although 80 years have passed since Shaw and McKay challenged the moral entrepreneurs of the day, much can be learned by revisiting their research and theorizing. Early intervention efforts
aimed at breaking the cycle of intergenerational crime must focus on the needs of both society and the families in question. Each must assume responsibility for the role it plays in perpetuating crime. Each must be willing to step up to the plate and collectively say, “Enough!”

References


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The Law Enforcement Executives Guide to Understanding Bullying Behavior in Schools and in the Workplace

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Introduction

Bullying and violent behavior within school and workplace settings is a phenomenon that is just beginning to be recognized by researchers. School shootings at Columbine High School in Colorado and other locations throughout the world have caused the public to look closely at school and workplace safety issues.

The Basics

Law enforcement and school officials will continue to seek out solutions to preventing violence and bullying behavior in what is perceived to be a growing problem within society. First, it is prudent to offer some background on bullying for guidance and outline some areas of what to look for in designing a safety program.

Baron (1996) found that interpersonal relationships are critical determinants within any organization and provide a foundation for how effectively it functions, performs central tasks, and reacts to all those external environmental variables that are exacted upon it. Those interpersonal relationships are at least as important as other factors that have received far more consideration and attention from researchers in organizational behavior and industrial organizational psychology, including areas of job-related attitudes, performance, and reward (appraisal) systems, and other aspects related to employee behaviors.

If individuals were to consider the importance of the positive and negative perceptions of their school and workplace cultures and compare those differences to examples of the behavioral outcome, such an understanding of social relationships and interactions would provide more insight into designing healthy and productive people regardless of age and demographics (Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002).

According to Rook (1992), there appears to be no argument among scholars that social relationships are clearly complex matters that are capable of producing intense feelings regarding a person’s perception of happiness as well as disappointment. Law enforcement officers respond to daily calls for service that underscore their need to develop a better understanding of human behavior and multiple intelligences. In disputes, Duffy et al. (2002) point out that threats of disruption of a person’s social network are a considerable source of negative stress.
We find that these types of threats to a person’s social structure are manifested in many different behavioral outcomes, including emotional, verbal, and physical violence.

Many times when an individual or a group of individuals feel insecure they seek to take measures to punish those they perceive as contributing to their feeling insecure. Oftentimes, a bully who feels threatened and seeks revenge for some perceived wrong will pursue, conduct surveillance, or stalk the person believed to be responsible.

Dating back in time, we find retaliation by the victim was the earliest form of social control, although it often proved to be disruptive, ineffective, and disorganized (Ziegenhagen, 1977). That retaliation often led to blood feuds, or vendettas, wherein a group would intercede when they perceived a loss or situation had been handled in a disproportionate manner.

In contemporary group settings, such forms of retaliation are unacceptable but not unknown. Both school and workplace bullying creates an abusive, hostile environment marked by many forms of negative behavior that undermine the victim’s self-worth and ability to learn and perform. Such behavior is an unproductive phenomenon that can destroy people, the educational organization, and its mission. In addition to negatively affecting people and human capital, bullying behavior can be economically devastating to any community and organization, costing lives and billions of dollars annually (Neuman, 2001).

Following this same theme, law enforcement finds itself at the core of responding to incidents of school and workplace violence. Oftentimes, it is too late, and people have been injured or murdered. For those times when law enforcement has been proactive in the prevention or apprehension of a violator, the judicial system is used as the tool of choice to mete out the justice necessary to maintain and restore social order.

Considering the potential importance of interpersonal relationships and how each can negatively impact an entire locality, it appears that more attention should be devoted to these issues, in particular educating law enforcement officers on those perceived and intentional behaviors that are negative and can disrupt the lives of citizens in local communities while stretching public sector resources far beyond projections.

Definitions of Bullying

Through a series of evolutionary research studies, Duffy et al. (2002) identified a definition in their social undermining construct that includes any behavior that weakens, injures, or impairs a person, by degrees or imperceptibly, specifically in schools or the workplace. However, the task of establishing one definition for bullying behavior has not been easy. Barton (2006) characterizes bullying by three criteria:

1. Bullying is an intentional aggression that may be discriminatory, physical, verbal, sexual, or more relational. Bullying behaviors may be demonstrated through technology such as cell phones and computers.
2. Bullying exposes victims to repeated aggression over an extended period of time and impacts a victim’s sense of well-being.

3. Bullying occurs within an interpersonal relationship characterized by a real or perceived imbalance of power which may be physical or psychological.

Bullies come in all shapes, sizes, genders, races, occupations, educational levels, relationships, economic levels, and political affiliations. Bullying behavior is identified as a multifaceted behavioral problem that remains fragmented and reflects the clandestine nature of the behavior itself. The particular selection of negative behavior to use against others is the subjective choice made by the bully to fit his or her needs and situations. Patterns and themes emerge; however, the exact intellectual thought processes ongoing in the mind and intent of a bully remain elusive and are intertwined within the psyche of the violator.

Einarsen and Skogsad (1996) found that bullying behavior is not considered a one-time incident but has been described as a gradually evolving process of unresolved conflict. Victims of bullying behavior have difficulty pinpointing the exact onset of their exposure to it. As the behavior continues, the conflict escalates, and the bully is able to deflect blame for his or her behavior to the target, placing a stigma on the victim as being the problem employee. At the axis of the psychological breaking point is where we find the potential for violence.

In the research regarding bullying behavior, Brodsky (1976) found that abusive behavior is inclusive of all forms of harassment that repeatedly and persistently aims to exclude, torment, wear down, or frustrate an individual, as well as all repeated behaviors intended to provoke, frighten, intimidate, or bring discomfort to the recipient. A conflict with a boss or school teacher could easily fit this example.

Based upon the factors and associations outlined in research presented by the data on bullying, we found that each author outlined information suggesting that all forms of abuse have similarities centered around intentional oppressive and exclusionary behavior directed to achieve control and power over the rights, privileges, and opportunities of victims. The current state of affairs is similar to that of the controversial early discussions on the identification of sexual harassment, which was exposed a decade ago (Perrone, 1999).

Much of the work utilized by Duffy et al. (2002) leading to a definition of bullying fits into the same definitions as that of other authors who have undertaken research on bullying behavior. They found many examples, including intentional acts designed to create an atmosphere that undermines individuals’ reputations and weakens their standing in their organizations. They note that much of the behavior of social undermining causes individual victims to invert and question themselves.

In defining an exact term for bullying behavior, researchers continue to shape and define common, emerging themes from the data. Studies suggest that the bullying situation provides opportunities for a wide range of intimidation tactics.
Rayner and Hoel (1997) note that many of these emerging themes focus on exclusionary workplace choices, which are intentionally and subjectively under the control of the bully, the organization, and its participants. Some of these examples include racism and discrimination along with sexual harassment because each share many of the same elements found in workplace bullying definitions reported in the research conducted by Rayner and Hoel.

Some researchers and medical officials (Bjorkqvist, 1994; Brodsky, 1976; Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996; Keashly, 1994; Leymann, 1997; Lyons, Tivey, & Ball, 1995; Vartia, 1996) have asserted that bullying behavior should be defined in terms of how it psychologically and physically affects the victim, not the bully. They note that some negative aspects of bullying does influence the victim, including persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious, or insulting behavior, and abuse of power or unfair penal sanctions. All of these are intended to make victims feel upset, threatened, humiliated, or vulnerable, which undermines their self-confidence and may cause them to suffer stress. Finally, bullying behavior must be persistent, causing victims to develop irrational feelings and to seek to retaliate.

Researchers Wyatt and Hare (1997), supported by Namie and Namie (2001), take the definition further still. In their definition of bullying, they include threats to status or personal standing such as belittling opinions or public humiliation, name calling, insults, or teasing. Other forms include preventing access to opportunities; withholding information; applying undue pressure to produce work; setting impossible deadlines; failing to give credit; assigning meaningless tasks; and perpetuating harassment, racism, and reprisal.

Not to be overlooked is bullying in the virtual environment of the Internet or airways, better known as cyber bullying. Cyber bullying may differ from other forms of bullying in a number of ways (Willard, 2007), including that (1) cyber bullying can occur any time of the day or night; (2) cyber bullying messages and images can be distributed quickly to a very wide audience; and (3) cyber bullying can be anonymous, which makes it difficult (and sometimes impossible) to trace.

Although there are some differences, the basic bullying definitions of repeated mistreatment and harassment are still true. It is simply a different delivery method.

For the purpose of this paper, the authors will incorporate those previously referenced definitions as follows as indicators of cyber bullying:

- **Bullying behavior**: A form of flagrant mistreatment or silent neglect of people.
- **Abusive behavior**: Repeated malicious, verbal, physical, and emotional mistreatment as a form of harassment. This includes abusive behavior in the electronic environment as well as the physical one. This behavior is intended to create a combination of cruel acts of deliberate humiliation or interference and withholding opportunities.
The Bully and the Environment

Most of the discussion on bullying assumes children are the issue. We find little debate on the link from parents to children to employees within group settings. The data suggests that young schoolchildren who gravitate toward imitating bullying behavior from others are likely to grow up emulating similar behavior as adults employed in the workplace. There is little argument from law enforcement officials who oftentimes consider gang and various criminal groups as included in this discussion. The authors contend that schools qualify in the definition as a workplace and are similar to traditional workplaces because each has many complex dynamics that impact the lives of those found within.

The Schematic

Since bosses, teachers, and others are often considered unwitting victims of bullying, Vinokur and van Ryn (1993) undertook studies to research the effects of negative workplace issues on workers’ well-being and attitudes to compare and contrast the differences and understanding of how to improve workers’ perceptions of their environment. Behaviors they considered to be undermining to social interactions included “targeting an employee or other person by criticism in terms of their own attributes and/or actions intended to hinder the attainment of instrumental goals” (Vinokur, Price, & Caplan, 1996, p. 167). Following this schema, we find an open opportunity for violence.

We know from our years of studying the behavior of people, much of human behavior is a learned enterprise. Parents and caregivers are responsible for many of the role modeling behaviors of children. Coloroso (2003) describes the “backbone family” as one who supports children with six life messages for coping: (1) I believe in you; (2) I trust you; (3) I know you can handle life situations; (4) You are listened to; (5) You are cared for; and (6) You are very important to me. Drawing from Coloroso’s research, we learn that disruption to these life messages creates internal conflict and insecurity, and this may potentially result in some form of violence.

In contrast to the backbone family cited above, a family that regularly watches or is exposed to continuous violence and allows children to interact with the illusion of video game “reality” simply compounds the inability of its members to cope without using violence.

Coloroso (2003) found that when people were exposed to constant negative stimuli and too little “real-life” social interaction without violence, the person is frequently found unable to employ acceptable conflict resolution skill sets to mediate differences. Too much media involvement and engagement actually stifled the intellectual and emotional development of the social skills necessary to relate in a decent, caring, and responsible way.

If the social skills as outlined above by Coloroso (2003) are not developed, supported, and learned at home, then these groups of people seek other means to meet their needs. Absent life skills, those needs are often sought out from peers in schools and within the workplace, with no consideration for more legitimate models and validated resources.
Schools and the Workplace

Teachers play a key role in developing classroom and educational environments that honor and respect all children (Barton, 2006). Classroom rules and curriculum may be developed to discourage bullies, and teachers may develop consistent, acceptable ways of dealing with misbehavior. Planning for the integration of anti-bullying initiatives and reporting procedures should be a priority for educational institutions and law enforcement executives annually. Although as important, educating the workplace is more problematic. As a comparison, today, workplace bullying is an issue. As an example, U.S. Postal Service employees have cited workplace bullying in reported high-profile incidents of violence.

The investigation of these workplace incidents uncovered employee claims that they were bullied (victimized) by management and coworkers. As a result, bullying behavior was found to be the primary precursor for employees using violence. Much like kids who bully or the violence found in schools, employees described how they were victimized by management through discrimination, harassment, racism, and sexual abuse until they could no longer cope with the level of abuse and turned to violence as a means to cope and to punish those whom they felt were responsible or had a role in their bullying (U.S. Postal Service, 1998).

The workplace bully acts much like the school bully. Both the schoolyard and workplace bully requires a form of concealment to carry his or her message of destruction. Because of the psychological design of bullying, younger and adult victims are generally unaware that they are being targeted until some time later when they find themselves in some form of conflict (Wyatt & Hare, 1997).

Expanding on this viewpoint, Finch, Okun, Barrera, Zautra, and Reich (1989) and Rook and Pietromonaco (1987) found in their research that early social undermining has clear linkages that support the notion that undermining events result in emotional reactions such as distress and decreased subjective well-being regardless of age and can result in potential violence.

Rook (1992) agreed with those same conclusions and noted that negative actions and related comments directed toward bullying targets may result in feelings of guilt, self-blame, or isolation. It is logical to conclude many of these examples are related to the early childhood experiences we discuss in this article.

Unhealthy Values

A dysfunctional family that is prone to abusive and bullying behavior is cited as being responsible for helping to create unhealthy children who learn to bully others. Leymann’s (1997) research indicated that these unhealthy people would not otherwise engage in abuse and violence if their life skills were devoid of learning to abuse and bully others to gain their intended results.

Much like students who bully, employee perceptions of fairness have been identified as extremely important markers to determine how employees view their fit in workplace culture. Issues for which perceived fairness is important include employment security, opportunities for movement and promotions, trust, respect, dignity, and a sense of control over their lives (Leymann, 1997).
By drawing upon the concept outlined by Coloroso (2003), the backbone family suggests that any person who has been subjected to constant withholding of support, respect, and trust are examples or can be considered as probable cause indicators that feelings of self-worth have been damaged. This concept may be a key component for law enforcement to consider when investigating incidents of school and workplace abuse and violence.

**Emotions and Feelings**

Focusing upon the true meaning of self-esteem, Reasoner (2002) defines the premise around developing self-esteem as a building or people-making enterprise. He asserts that there is no doubt that leaders, educators, parents, and business and law enforcement officials play significant roles and must develop individuals with healthy or high self-esteem, characterized by tolerance and respect for others: “individuals who accept responsibility for their actions, have integrity, take pride in their accomplishments, who are self-motivated, willing to take risks, capable of handling criticism, loving and lovable, seek challenge and stimulation of worthwhile and demanding goals, and take responsibility and control of their lives.”

Healthy and authentic self-esteem leads to individuals who are life-affirming, constructive, responsible, and trustworthy and who develop trust in their own being. Reasoner (2002) goes further suggesting that self-esteem is more than the perception of feeling good or having positive feelings about oneself:

Individuals with defensive or low self-esteem typically focus on trying to prove themselves or impress others. They tend to use others for their own gain. Some act with arrogance and contempt toward others. They generally lack confidence in themselves, often have doubts about their worth and acceptability, and hence are reluctant to take risks or expose themselves to failure. They frequently blame others for their shortcomings rather than take responsibility for their actions.

Continuing, researchers have found that employee physical and psychological functions become negatively affected by an unhealthy environment, reducing self-esteem and self-confidence and creating negative stress that results in psychological injuries to victims and their families (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health [NIOSH], 2002).

Those negative school and workplace feelings of conflict certainly are regarded as precursors to angry and disruptive behavior. Much like the angry student, the disgruntled employee gets much of the blame for workplace violence; however, most on-the-job murders and assaults stem from other groups and include those situations in which people act on emotional impulse. Changing this potentially deadly problem requires education, a paradigm shift, and change for the entire school and workplace cultures and is a learned behavior.

Law enforcement personnel can probe into each of these areas to make investigative findings to establish probable cause in support of enforcement actions as required in protecting the safety of the public.
Damage

Dobson (2001) and Field (2002) reported that many victims of bullying still bear emotional scars regardless of time considerations. In the same context, Noll and Carter (1998) report that bullies push people around, play psychological games, boss others, and insult or make fun of others. They note that almost everyone is bullied or made fun of for one reason or another during their lifetime, and many victims can recall those past incidents clearly, along with any current situations.

Considering that the data on school and workplace bullying seems to place most of the blame upon the bully, we find the problem appears to have a multitude of participants whose roles should be explained.

Researchers identified three explanations for consideration. First, bullying leads to psychological ill health and reduced job satisfaction. Second, certain employees are more likely to report being bullied than others. Third, depression, stress, and anxiety may have some effect upon the individual’s status as a victim if others perceive they are weak (Hoel & Cooper, 2000). The same can be identified in the classroom with bullied students who are obsessively absent, lack motivation, and earn poor grades.

As noted by Potter-Efron (1998), anger and negative behavior is an outcome of poor adjustment and unless the source of the problem is identified and controlled by individuals in their environment, they will find an unhealthy outlet, which includes destructive behavior, as a means for making an adjustment to their perceived conflict. This perspective can also apply to the strength of the teacher in the classroom or the manager in the workplace and their leadership abilities and commitment to acceptable behavior.

Neuman and Baron (1998) found that employees’ perceptions of having been subjected to negative stress made them feel like they had few choices except to accept or return the same behavior to others as a measure of retaliation. In support of the work of Keashly, Trott, and MacLean (1994), they go on to propose that negative workplace behavior is observable and an unhealthy form of learned behavior, and the fact that the cycle will continue unless some positive intervention takes place is one area that law enforcement officers can examine by reviewing the organizational vital signs.

Any extended exposure to abusive environments produces real and disabling health conditions. The U.S. Surgeon General (2000) promotes a foundation for successful contributions to the workplace, family, community, and society. This strategy is accomplished by promoting overall proactive mental health programs.

Suggestions for Prevention and Control

In the educational environment, well-developed lines of open communication are necessary to produce a trusting environment. In this example, the students, teacher, principal, and parents must communicate and promptly deal with bullying issues that may develop into more serious, violent behaviors. Early identification of the problem is a key to finding and seeking resolution in both the school and workplace.
Similar to the workplace, classroom teachers must establish a warm, welcoming environment for all students and must model respect for diversity. Each child is special and has talents and gifts that should be honored. As leaders, the teachers should make each child feel unique and a part of the school community. Not only does this establish an atmosphere of respect, it enhances each child’s self-worth.

The culture of the school and workplace should include a clear message that rules are enforced with dignity. The rules are established by the teacher and manager, holding students and employees accountable, and should be stated in as much detail as necessary to the age and environmental needs of the students and workers.

Both students and workers need to be made aware that rules are for their safety and that they guide the goals of the organization. Considering that safety is the second tier in Maslow’s (1943) Hierarchy of Needs and assumes a prominent place in an individual’s potential to learn as a productive person, we recognize the potential danger in intentionally not allowing people to reach this tier. If a student or employee does not feel safe or feels threatened in their environment, he or she can be potentially dangerous.

**Bibliography**


Dr. Matteson is the chair of the Department of Criminal Justice at Saint Leo University. He completed a long-term career in the field of law enforcement. This experience and his academic research provides greater insight regarding the various reasons that abusive relationships are found in society. He frequently publishes on the topic of bullying behavior and completed a published pioneer research study on bullying and a recent book on school bullying and its relationship to abuse and violence. Education and advocacy provide some of the best tools for helping society overcome this potentially destructive form of behavior.

Dr. Walker is the dean of the School of Education and Social Sciences at Saint Leo University. Her experience as an elementary classroom teacher and high school resource person has given her the knowledge and background for this article on a very personal level. As a concerned university professor, the research reflects a growing awareness of the need to incorporate a more diverse perspective of education to broaden knowledge with a focus on prevention of violence.
Insights of Juvenile Justice Workers in a Community Intensive Supervision Program to Improve Treatment

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Setting of Research Project

The organization that participated in this research study was the Allegheny County Juvenile Court–Community Intensive Supervision Program. This program is a court-operated program that provides intensive supervision and treatment in a community-based setting. The Community Intensive Supervision Program (CISP) functions as an alternative to institutionalization for repeat juvenile offenders. These offenders have continued to challenge both the human and financial resources of the court. The court continues to experience an increase in total referrals and an increase in the severity of offenses. Institutional beds are filled to capacity across the state. Institutions, both public and private, have created waiting lists for counties wishing to commit youth to residential treatment programs. In an effort to address this problem, the court has developed the CISP.

CISP provides the court with a community-based alternative to residential care for selected, chronic juvenile offenders. A full range of programming, including drug screening, is offered in five specially designed neighborhood centers during afternoon and evening hours, seven days per week. Supervision of youth continues throughout the night by use of an active electronic monitoring system. In addition to traditional probation department personnel, the program is staffed by paraprofessional Community Monitors, who are adult residents of the same neighborhoods in which the youth reside.

Each center has a staff of 13. By job title, they are a Program Supervisor, an Assistant Supervisor/Caseworker Manager, a Drug and Alcohol Counselor, a Secretary, and nine Community Monitors. This staffing pattern is necessary in order to provide seven-day coverage. During the hiring process and whenever possible, staff members are selected from the communities where they will work. This was done in order to provide youth with positive adult role models from their own communities.

All program supervisors are required to have a Master’s degree; the assistant supervisors are required to have a Bachelor’s degree; and the community monitors are required to have a minimum of a high school diploma, although most community monitors have some postsecondary education and several of the community monitors have Bachelor’s degrees.

The target populations are youth from five geographic regions of Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh. The specific regions are Garfield, Hill District, Homewood, Wilkinsburg, and McKeesport. These areas are high poverty and predominately African-American communities. CISP is designed for male juvenile
offenders, ages 10 to 17. Since CISP is neighborhood-based, a youth must live in one of the designated neighborhoods to be placed in CISP.

The objective of CISP is to provide an alternative to institutionalization for youth under court supervision who continue to commit delinquent acts. CISP objectives are (1) to operate an intensive supervision program for repeat offenders in the community, (2) to successfully impact the recidivism of youth in CISP (thereby impacting the number of youth requiring institutionalization), (3) to provide a real-world learning experience in the community rather than an artificial or sterile environment of an institution, (4) to maintain the failure to adjust charges from CISP at a 2% rate, and (5) to make CISP effective enough to significantly impact the court’s overall institutional budget.

The following are descriptions of what a typical day entails. A typical day consists of routine program activities, which give insight to juvenile justice workers’ interactions with youth offenders. These interactions can be described as formal and informal interactions, and interactions can be defined as assessments. As a result of describing a typical day, this researcher can ask the question, “How can the insights of juvenile justice workers improve the process of preparing youth offenders for functioning successfully after being released from a Community Intensive Supervision Program?”

A Typical Day as a Source of Informal Assessments

To examine the current process by which juvenile justice workers provide services through routine program activities, insights of a typical day would be helpful.

**Daily Staff Meetings**

At the beginning of a weekday shift, which usually starts at 3:00 PM, the staff meets for about 15 minutes to go over the agenda for the day. The agenda includes (1) which staff will transport the students from their homes, (2) who will be facilitating the group counseling session, and (3) whether there are any special assignments. An example of special assignments could be installing electronic monitoring equipment, taking a student to a job interview, or maybe attempting (in cooperation with the police) to apprehend a youth who has a warrant for his arrest because of a program violation. The senior monitor usually conducts this meeting.

At one of these meetings, we were discussing the increased shootings in the neighborhood. During this particular week, one of the young men who had recently been released from CISP was shot and killed by a group of young men in a car. As a result of the fatality, the young men were upset, sad, angry, confused, and concerned about their safety. The emotions were mixed, and the staff members were trying to be sympathetic, deal with the emotional impact on staff, while maintaining control. The workers decided it would probably be helpful if they took a few young men to the local funeral home, although this could also make the situation worse. The young men were taken to the funeral home and were able to view the body. When they returned, the staff let the young men talk and express their feelings about the incident. Unfortunately, these types of incidents are happening far too often and the workers are not sure how to deal with these
situations and with the young men expressing their feelings. This is the reality of working in the community, however.

**Transporting the Youth to the Program**

After the daily meeting, the transportation of the young men begins. This is the first contact made with youth that day. As the young men are transported from their homes, the staff usually senses whether or not the youths had a good day or if they had problems in school or at home. Upon arrival to the center, the young men are instructed to line up at the door so they can be searched for any contraband before entering the center. After the staff checks each youth, they can then enter the general activity area of the center, hang up their coats, and sit in their assigned seats.

Working in the community, all aspects of the youth’s life can be seen. During this particular trip, I noticed the poor condition and atmosphere of one of the youth’s homes. I can remember arriving at the home to transport this student and noticing that some of the windows were broken out, the front door was off the hinges, and large groups of youth were hanging out on the porch. This is a gang member’s hangout, and staff must transport this young man to the program. It goes without saying, this became problematic and was a safety hazard to the staff.

In this case, when a child lives in a house that is unkempt and is being used as a hangout for gang members, there are a few things that can be done. One approach is to have a meeting with the parent or guardian to inform them of the problem. Staff will also inform the parent that because of the unhealthy living conditions, CISP will be reporting the family to Children, Youth, and Family Services. We also inform the young man that if staff have problems transporting him to and from CISP, he will be held responsible. This could include putting the child into the local juvenile detention center and scheduling a detention hearing in front of his judge, recommending out-of-home placement. CISP must be able to travel to a youth’s home and not be threatened by exterior forces. If staff observe hazardous conditions at the home of the youth, CISP is obligated to report any condition which prevents them from providing court supervision. To resolve this issue, CISP will usually inform the police of the problem. CISP staff also meet with the youth and the parents to discuss the options. Usually as a result of going through these options, the issues can be resolved.

When the young men arrive at the center, the searches are one of the most important things that are done. Searches ensure that everyone entering the building is safe and secure. Most of the time, nothing is found, but on a few occasions, students were caught attempting to bring drugs into the center. When this happens, the student is taken to the local juvenile detention center and a detention hearing is scheduled in front of his judge. We also call the police to confiscate the drugs so that they can be checked at the lab and also to obtain a written police report. For the most part, nothing is found on the students because they all know that they will be searched.

**Initial Meeting with the Youth**

After they enter the CISP Center, the students are instructed to sit in designated seats on the main floor. During this time, the youth are told the agenda for the
day. They also have a chance to ask any questions, and they are required to turn in a daily school class card report signed by each teacher. This class card indicates whether the youth were on time for class, whether his behavior was appropriate, and if he had any homework or upcoming tests for which he needed to study.

Most of the time, the young men have no problem turning in a daily school class card. After a person has been in the program for a while, they begin to respond favorably to the routine because it can highlight their positive behavior. Some people would think getting these class cards would be a problem, but both the teachers and the students are very cooperative. The good thing about daily class cards are that it shows whether the student reported to class on time, what their classroom behavior was for the day, whether they participated in classroom assignments, whether homework was assigned for the evening, and if the homework assigned the previous school day was completed and submitted for credit. This method of school accountability can be an effective tool for helping keep the students focused in the school setting.

**Study Hour**

During study hour, the youth are instructed to go into the group counseling room so they can complete their homework and write in their daily journals. This period of time is focused on education. Each day, they are required to write in their journals how their day went, if they had any problems, and/or whether they need to meet with their primary counselors for the day. The youth in the program have access to a tutor, computer, and help with their homework.

**Dinner**

After study hour, the youth have dinner. This can be a time to teach life and social skills, along with appropriate adult and peer interaction. The food is precooked and delivered to the center every day by a catering service. Usually the youth look forward to dinnertime. This is a pleasant time during the day because all of the young men are able to socialize. The young men and staff all interact together and discuss things such as current events, sports, upcoming group counseling sessions, school issues, or anything that is deemed appropriate and positive. I have also found that because of a lack of money and unemployment in some of the households, this meal is very important and helpful to the family and the youth.

I remember a case where a young man was acting out, unable to focus in school or follow directives in the center. When the staff set up a meeting with the mother, it became extremely difficult to catch her at home. When the staff went to the house, we found out that the mother was an addict and there was no food in the house. As a result, the young man took on the responsibility of caring for his younger sister. Needless to say, we had to contact Children, Youth, and Family Services, which forced her to check into a drug rehabilitation center. While she was getting help for her drug addiction, we put the young man in a group home and the younger sister lived with a relative. This was one of the extreme cases, but we have some cases in which young men look forward to the meal because some parents are struggling to provide the basic needs. We also have families that live well and provide all of their child’s needs and wants.
Chores and Community Service

After dinner, all youth are assigned a chore to complete. Again, this is a time to teach life skills and independent living. Some of the chores are cleaning bathrooms, sweeping floors, mopping floors, emptying the garbage, vacuuming carpets, washing dishes, wiping off tables, and so on. There is an assumption that most young men these days are lazy and are resistant to work. Although this may be true for a few, most youth have no problem completing the daily assigned chores in the center. Also, during community service projects, most of the young men are hard workers and enjoy serving others. For example, once per month the young men prepare and deliver meals to senior citizens’ homes. They are also involved in other projects such as raising money for Victims of Violent Crime by washing cars, cleaning local parks, and unloading trucks of donated clothing and other items for nonprofit agencies. Most of the youth enjoy helping with community service projects that benefit their community.

Group Counseling Sessions

After the young men have finished eating and completing their chores, they are required to attend various group counseling sessions/treatment groups throughout the week. On Sunday, they participate in a group entitled Focus. Monday, they attend a Thinking Errors group, which deals with the criminal personality; Tuesday, they attend a Maleness to Manhood (Rites of Passage) group; Wednesday, they attend a Drug and Alcohol (AA/NA) meeting; and Thursday, they attend a Self-Assessment group. This group is where each young man assesses his overall week and verbally acknowledges the challenges, successes, and problems he endured during the week. On Friday, the youth participated in a Victim Awareness group, which is designed to help them understand the effects the crimes they committed had on the community, their family, the victims, and themselves. Saturday, they attend the Keep Yourself Alive group, which deals with how to manage their anger. All of these groups are facilitated on a daily basis, and all youth are required to participate in the group sessions. The success of group counseling relies heavily on the facilitator. Fortunately, most of the workers are very good group facilitators. During group, most of the young men participate by asking and answering questions. There are also occasions when they cofacilitate the group session. This is important because it instills a sense of responsibility and builds their self-esteem.

There have been several group sessions that were very memorable as a result of this process. During a particular Maleness to Manhood group session, the topic was, “The Importance of Understanding Your Orientation” (how you were raised). During this session, a few young men began reflecting on how they were raised and started to share things that they had witnessed as a child. One young man talked about witnessing his mother doing drugs. He said that when this happened, he remembered being hungry and waiting for his mother to come home for days at a time. He said when his mother and friends left alcohol around the house, he would taste the drinks as early as six years of age. He said he started liking the taste of alcohol and now, as a teenager, it’s hard for him not to drink. We had another young man who witnessed his mother being shot. She died in his arms. Another young man remembered moving residences so many times that he has a hard time keeping track of all the schools he attended. He didn’t remember when
he went into second grade and became angry because he could not remember. These stories are very important to share so that the participants as well as the facilitators can better identify and understand how patterns of dysfunction have been established in the lifestyle of the youth.

**Recreational Time**

After the group counseling sessions, during the last hour of the program, the youth are permitted to participate in recreational activities. This is a time to socialize and interact leisurely. This can be in the form of playing basketball, board games, etc. During this structured recreational time, both the staff and youth participate together. CISP has a basketball league and a softball league and participates in community tournaments such as weight lifting contests. There have been numerous occasions wherein youth in CISP have competed and won a tournament or contest.

**Individual Counseling Sessions**

During the recreational period, staff is able to conduct individual counseling sessions. This is also considered to be a treatment time for youth. This is when each youth’s primary monitor can talk to him on an individual basis about any problems or concerns. The primary monitor also can review the youth’s short- and long-term treatment goals and make an effort to keep the youth focused and to encourage him to make progress. Some complaints are that the staff needs more individual counseling time to address individual needs.

**Transporting Home**

After recreation time, the young men clean up the center, and then staff, beginning at 9:00 PM, transport them home. There are two vans used to provide the transportation. One van takes half of the youth to one part of the community, and the other van takes youth that live in another part of the community. The youth are separated by areas mainly because of the dangers of taking youth that do not live in one particular area into another. There have been several incidents where a group of youth attempted to attack the vans or attempted to get into the vans because they saw youth in the van that were not from their area. The vans have been bricked, kicked, and, on a few occasions, guns have been pulled. During the transport to and from CISP, the workers are in teams of at least two and must be vigilant and careful because of the street violence in various parts of the neighborhoods.

**Home Visits**

After the youth are dropped off, the staff then returns to the youth’s homes for routine face-to-face visits to see if the youth are doing what they are supposed to be doing. The staff can check if the youth are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or entrenched in family issues. In addition, all youth are randomly selected to be drug tested on a daily basis. Each youth also has an electronic monitoring device, which is installed in the home and on the youth’s ankle, which detects if the youth leaves the house.

The face-to-face visit procedure of the program is very annoying for some parents. Parents complain that they are being disturbed late at night and that they
have to get up early in the morning for work. I must admit that this may be an inconvenience for some parents, and I feel sorry for what their child is putting them through. Most of the parents are working and doing the best they can, but some of the parents don’t want the staff to make home visits because of their own personal inappropriate behaviors. For example, parents who use drugs would not want community monitors coming to their homes exposing their issues, so home visits can be a problem for them.

Another concern I have is in regards to the safety of the staff going to the homes of each youth late at night. On some occasions, it is too dangerous to make home visits because of where the youth live in the community. The youth could live in dark and secluded areas or in high drug traffic areas, which is a safety concern. Additionally, when we don’t have cooperative parents, it makes things worse.

These are just a few examples of what a typical day is like and how the staff gain insights through informal routine program activities. Further examinations will give insight as to how youth are formally assessed, as well as how knowledge is being gained by interacting with each youth.

**Formal Assessment Procedures**

**Initial Referral**

To be eligible to participate in CISP, the youth must have a court hearing and be found guilty of a charge or a consent decree and committed to CISP by a court order signed by a judge. After the youth is committed to CISP, a probation officer will send a referral to CISP with information about the youth containing the youth’s current address, phone number, charges, and so on.

Upon CISP receiving the information, a staff member sets up a meeting with the parent or guardian. During the meeting, which we refer to as the initial interview of the parent, the staff member will go over the CISP contract. This contract contains the rules of the program, what the youth is expected to do, and what happens if the youth violates the program rules. After this interview, the staff member will release the youth from the detention center and bring the youth to CISP.

Before the youth is brought to the program, assumptions are being made about the youth. Some of the assumptions are valid because, very often, staff know the family, know the friends of the family, and are familiar with their living environment. As a result of the staff’s familiarity, conversations take place such as this:

*Staff member x:* We received a new referral.

*Staff member y:* What’s the name?

*Staff member x:* Johnny X; he lives on Y Street.

*Staff member y:* We know that family. We had his brother about three years ago. His brother is the one who shot that lady in the store about two years ago.
Staff member x: Oh yeah, I remember that.

Staff member y: His brother is serving life without parole.

Staff member x: That was a shame. Well, hopefully, he’s not like his brother.

The staff’s knowledge and insightfulness can be a valuable asset. The following are CISP workers’ assumptions and questions about youth entering the program:

- A crime has been committed
- Possible family or parenting problems
- Possible educational issues
- Possible substance abuse issues
- Possible negative peer associations
- Possible behavioral issues
- Possible attitude problems
- Possible financial and employment issues
- Possible physical and mental health issues

These are all potential areas to explore before the initial interview takes place.

**Initial Interview**

Once the youth arrives to the program, the contract and commitment order from the judge is explained to him. At this point, the level system, which is a tool used to determine and measure whether the youth has followed or violated the rules, is also explained to the youth. The level system will be described in some detail later in this report. A primary counselor, who is responsible for keeping track of the youth’s progress in the program, is then assigned to the youth. The community monitor also tracks whether the youth is violating the program rules and tracks any and all sanctions that have been imposed on the youth. This part of the initial interview is to explain the program rules and expectations.

The other part of the initial interview consists of asking the youth various questions in order to learn more about him and to get more insight into the circumstances surrounding his criminal acts. The initial interview is where the fundamental question, “Why are you here?,” begins to be answered. During this initial interview, the staff attempts to get the youth offender to tell his story through the use of the following questions:

- What happened?
- Start from the beginning.
- Did this happen on the weekend or on a school day?
- What was the weather like? Rainy, snowy, etc?
- What did you do when you first woke up?
- Take me step-by-step through the day.
- Did you eat breakfast?
- What did you eat?
- Did you brush your teeth?
- Did you take a shower?
- Give all the details in order.
• Tell us everything that led up to the crime that you committed.
• Did you get high any time that day?
• What did the victim look like?
• What was the victim wearing?
• Did you know the victim?

Another part of the initial interview is to attempt to learn about the youth and his family’s background through the use of a Youth and Family Narrative. The questions are as follow:

• Who do you live with?
• Do you live with your mother, father, or grandparents?
• Do you have any brothers or sisters? If so, what are their ages and have they ever been in any trouble?
• Do you get along with your parents?
• What school did you last attend?
• How were your grades and attendance?

The importance of the interview is to get the youth to tell his story. After hearing the story, the staff usually learns a great deal about the youth such as whether he lives with both parents, his relationship with his parents, his attitude toward school, whether he uses drugs or alcohol, the circumstances surrounding the criminal act, and a clear picture of what led up to the youth being arrested.

There have been occasions when after asking the various questions I felt that the best way to help the youth was to help the whole family. For example, if a youth in CIS has been having problems in school due to fighting, poor grades, and so on, and he tells me that his younger sibling is also having problems in school, it’s easy to see the patterns. If he tells me that he has no contact with his father, his sister is pregnant, and he has a child by some girl he is no longer with, then it is easy to see the patterns. From doing these interviews, it is evident that the development and coordination of services for the entire family are greatly needed.

School Monitoring

The ability to monitor school behavior has proven to be very effective in raising grade levels. One staff member is responsible for monitoring youth in school. This staff person works from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM visiting the various schools. This person also collects weekly progress reports and is available for parent/teacher conferences.

One of the first indicators outside of the home that a youth needs additional supportive services or attention is his inability to learn or to control his behavior and/or actions in the school environment. This component of the program works closely with the school and is extremely successful. It works because the teachers can teach their classes, give us feedback on a daily basis about the young men’s behavior, and, after school, CIS can then focus on correcting inappropriate behavior. For example, during the day, staff could get a call from a teacher stating that a youth was disruptive during class, such as using profanity or throwing objects at other classmates, while the teacher was trying to teach the class. When this student reports to CIS, the first thing that we do is address the child about his behavior in school. We counsel him about acting appropriately and then hold him
accountable by taking away certain privileges. The relationship with the schools has been working very well, and the teachers benefit by this collaboration. I know this to be true because teachers have told me how well this works and that they wish they could refer non-adjudicated youth to CISP.

**Level System**

The level system is a system used to measure how well the youth is progressing in the program. A client Daily Rating Sheet is used to determine the youth’s ability to follow rules and directives. The level system identifies several rules and behaviors that each youth is responsible for following and adhering to throughout the duration of a day. Here are some of the various items that are used to determine whether a youth is following the rules and making progress in the program:

- Positive peer interaction
- Adult interaction
- Appearance
- Grooming
- Reporting on time to center
- Brought in class card
- Completed chores
- Followed staff directives
- Using appropriate language
- Participates in group counseling
- Participates in individual counseling

The level system works very well in CISP. From the level system, the youth are able to make self-assessments of their behavior and progress in the program. This system makes them accountable for how they act, respond, and present themselves. This system is used as a daily inventory, but it needs to be improved to include long-term goals and personal interests.

**Staff Meeting**

Another venue to assess the youth who are committed to the program is the weekly staff meetings conducted on Wednesdays. In this meeting, all of the staff meet and discuss each youth’s progress in the program. The staff meeting consists of going over the daily routine of the program and discussing what is going well and what needs to be improved upon. Each staff member does case presentations using a Weekly Progress Report. This includes presenting any progress that the youth are making and identifying any problem areas. The staff talks about whether each youth has had any electronic monitoring violations, how well he is doing in school, whether there are any problems at home, whether the youth is working, and whether the youth’s behavior is appropriate in the center. The staff meetings allow for the staff to discuss each case as a treatment team in order to identify problems and develop various treatment goals.

Sometimes during the staff meeting, we get into very lengthy discussions about the youth and their circumstances. For example, there was a situation in which a youth showed a pattern of missing school because he claimed he was sick, but staff found out that he had been teased repeatedly by his peers about his body odor. It
was also found out that when he went to school, he refused to dress for gym class. So, as a treatment team, we decided that his mother must get a written doctor’s excuse for this child to miss school. His primary counselor privately talked to him about hygiene issues and what he must do to stay clean. He was also encouraged to dress for gym daily, although this was not an option. During staff meetings, it is common to have focus-driven discussions about how we can help the youth and still hold them accountable.

**Parent Support Meeting**

The parent support meeting is held once a month. This is when parenting skills are taught. The program supervisor usually facilitates this meeting with other staff involvement throughout the meeting. This meeting was designed to formally meet with all parents at least once a month to discuss various topics. Some topics include parenting skills, parent concerns, and educating parents about the program goals. The meeting also allows feedback about how their child is doing in the program as well as at home. After the parent support meeting, each parent has the opportunity to meet individually with their child’s primary counselor. This meeting is very helpful for getting further insights about family circumstances and parenting skills. The parents are given a weekly behavioral sheet to complete to indicate how well their child is behaving at home.

I feel that parent support meetings are very important and useful. Most parents are helpful and concerned about their children, but to get some of them to come to these meetings is a challenge. There are two ways we get parents to come to the parent support meetings. First, we make the meeting mandatory. This means that if a parent does not attend the parent support meeting, their child will not get credit for making progress on the level system. This also means that the youth will not advance to the next week until the parent comes to the center and has a formal meeting with the youth’s counselor. This strategy works because the youth makes the parent aware of the importance of the parent’s participation. We also provide transportation for those parents who otherwise would not have a way to come to the meeting. We had a lot of resistance and excuses not to come to the parent support meetings until we made them mandatory. It is also the law that the parents must be a part of the youth’s treatment program. Subsection 6310, “Parental Participation,” of the consolidated statute of the Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice Act states,

(a) General Rule – In any proceeding under this chapter, a court may order a parent, guardian or custodian to participate in the treatment, supervision or rehabilitation of a child, including, but not limited to, community service, restitution, counseling, treatment and education programs.

(b) Presence and Proceedings – The court may, when the court determines that it is in the best interest of the child, order a parent, guardian or custodian of a child to be present at and bring the child to any proceeding under this chapter.

(c) Contempt – A person without good cause, fails to comply with an order issued under this section may be found in contempt of court. The court
may issue a bench warrant for any parent, guardian or custodian who, without good cause fails to appear at any proceeding.

(d) Intent – The General Assembly hereby declares that every parent, guardian or custodian of a child who is the subject of a proceeding under this chapter and a court-ordered program under this chapter should attend the proceeding and participate fully in the program.

(e) Limitation – Nothing in this section shall be construed to create a right of a child to have his parent, guardian or custodian present at a proceeding under this chapter or participate in a court-ordered program.

**Treatment and Competency Development**

Treatment within CISP can be defined in various ways. Treatment for youth offenders is defined as facilitating the process of changing from one way of doing something to a more acceptable way, or are we managing behavior? An example of teaching change is going from making money illegally to making money legally, controlling one’s anger, and thinking about consequences before acting. These are some of the possible positive changes that can occur through treatment/managing behavior. To provide treatment, CISP defines this as facilitating various group counseling sessions to develop cognitive development skills which help young men make better choices. The group’s topics are Thinking Errors, Anger Management, Victim & Community Awareness, Maleness to Manhood, Drug and Alcohol, Self-Assessment, and Job Readiness. The youthful offenders also have individual counseling sessions, family counseling, and mental health therapy if needed. To develop the youth offenders’ awareness of their victims and being held accountable, they are required to participate in community service projects such as delivering meals to senior citizens’ homes, cleaning vacant lots, and setting up tables at local community events, just to name a few. We also attempt to help them get jobs before being discharged from the program.

I feel that the treatment groups and competency development skills have enhanced each youth’s ability considerably in the short term. Some young men take longer than others to make considerable progress, but when they are discharged from the program, they would have completed close to 100 hours of community service. Most of them have a job; their grades have improved; and they are able to understand the harm they have done to others. The problems that still exist are preparing youth for long-term success and understanding what is meant by the likelihood for youth to re-offend.

**Exit Interview and Discharge**

The exit interview is a process that occurs when the offender is ready to exit the program. This means that the youth has completed the level system and is ready to be released. Currently, this interview is conducted in two phases. The first phase is when the youth meets with the court’s Balance Approach to Restorative Justice (BARJ) coordinator. This person is responsible for ensuring that the court is fulfilling its obligation to focus on the BARJ concept, which is holding youth offenders accountable for their actions through the process of paying restitution, performing community service, and being aware of their victims. The youth offenders must also demonstrate a sense of competency through developing cognitive skills,
attending school, and acquiring job readiness skills. The community must also be safe, so community safety is enhanced when the offender can stay out of trouble and avoid probation, is monitored electronically, is detained in a juvenile detention center, or is placed in an institution.

When the BARJ coordinator meets with the youth offender, the coordinator asks questions to determine whether the youth understands the reason he was placed in the program and if he understands the impact of his crime, including the impact of his crime on his victims. This meeting is not a test, but it gives the BARJ coordinator an idea of what the youth has gained from the program. If the youth cannot talk about what he has learned from being in the program, the coordinator will recommend that the youth not be released until he can demonstrate what he has learned. This recommendation does not happen often, but on a few occasions, young men have failed to talk about what they have learned and about their plans to stay out of trouble.

After the BARJ meeting, a final meeting with the youth and his parents is then scheduled to discuss the youth’s release from the program. In this meeting, the youth will again talk about what he has learned while in the program. He must also read an apology letter about the crime he has committed. This letter is read in the meeting and to his peers during the Self-Assessment Group session.

After this exit meeting, the youth is discharged from the program. The official release is a court order signed by the judge based on the probation officer’s recommendation for release; this is done in court. At that point, the youth is officially discharged from the program. His case can be transferred to school-based probation or regular probation, or the case can be closed. In most cases, if the youth is 18 years of age and does not owe any restitution, the youth’s case is closed. If he owes restitution, the case is transferred to probation. Some cases are transferred to probation even if there is no restitution, depending on the age of the youth and if less restricted court supervision is needed for a period of time after the youth is released from CISP.

The exit interview is an exciting time for the youth and his parent. It is also a time when some parents are worried about whether the youth will go back to his old ways. At this point, we have learned a great deal about the circumstances surrounding the youth, including the following factors:

**Home**
- Living conditions
- Economic status
- Dynamics of the family
- Whether the home is a single- or two-parent family
- Behavior at home
- Whether the family is supportive
- Whether there are mental health issues
- Sibling interaction
- Other family issues or problems

**School**
- GPA and grades
- School attendance
• Classroom tardiness
• Classroom behavior
• Interaction with teachers
• Amount of days missed
• Whether homework is completed
• Number of schools youth has attended
• Whether the youth is in the proper grade
• Problems youth is having with school

CISP Center
• Ability to follow rules
• Ability to follow directives
• Ability to get along with peers
• Respect for adults
• Participates in activities
• Drug and alcohol problems
• Whether they are afraid to seek help
• Ability to complete daily chores
• Whether they can or cannot comply with the program structure

We’ve had parents say, “If I refuse to sign the exit interview paper, can my child remain in CISP?” This is an example of how strongly some parents feel about the youth’s progress in the program and the importance of the help he has received. We have to tell the parent that we cannot keep the youth in the program if he has completed all of the requirements. I feel this is a compliment we get when parents acknowledge the change that CISP has made in the youth’s life. The new challenge is two-fold: (1) how can we sustain the progress the youth has made after exiting the program and (2) how can major funding dollars and resources be allocated for prevention and reentry programs to allow a youth to receive resources and support like a CISP but not have to commit a crime. “It takes a Village to raise a child,” and money could be allocated to restore the village/community.

From Assessment to Understanding

These insights from a typical day describe what the juvenile justice workers see, experience, and understand based on their knowledge of various dynamics surrounding the circumstances of youth offenders. Juvenile justice workers see the living conditions of the youth. They see how the youth are dressed—that is, whether they are neatly dressed or dressed with some sort of gang affiliation markings. For example, a young man committed to the program reported to the center his first day wearing a shirt indicating that he was in a gang which promoted killing others who did not live in his area. This shirt was offensive to other young men in the program, and the staff had to intervene to avoid a major confrontation.

The staff are aware of various dynamics surrounding the circumstances of the youth, including whether this youth is living with older parents who are unaware of the fast pace of the streets or parents who are very streetwise and engage in antiproductive street activities themselves. The staff witnesses parents who don’t care much about their children, as well as parents who provide upstanding, moral, and ethical values. When we hold family support meetings, the staff have a unique opportunity to see the level of parent involvement based on whether parents attend
the meetings, whether they are resistant to any suggestions, or whether they are in denial of everything that we see and share in reference to their child’s actions and behaviors. Oftentimes, some of these parents refuse to accept the reality of what their children are actually involved in.

**Maleness to Manhood**

One of the best ways I found to understand and explain the thinking behind criminal behavior among Black adolescent males in the inner city is from the work of Dr. Na’im Akbar, especially his book, *Visions for Black Men* (1991). Dr. Akbar explains how one is identified at birth as a biological entity, mainly in terms of anatomical characteristics. Furthermore, as a male, he is driven by his urges, instincts, desires, and feelings.

The process of moving from maleness to boyhood is determined by discipline. Discipline comes through the ability of controlling one’s urges, desires, and feelings. An example of this is when a young child wants his bottle. When he is hungry, it doesn’t matter if it is 1:00 in the afternoon or 3:00 in the morning, the child wants it when he wants it. When a male moves into the boyhood stage, he understands that waiting for something is possible. So, the young boy learns to discipline his appetite, urges, and feelings. The process that moves us from boyhood to manhood is through service and sacrifice to benefit the whole. That is, a man begins to plan for the future. A man not only becomes independent, but others begin to depend on him. Manhood is demonstrating responsible behavior and accepting the challenges of being responsible. With this philosophical understanding of developmental stages and age-appropriate behavior, the juvenile justice workers are able to understand the developmental stages of the youth (Akbar, 1991). This program is called Maleness to Manhood, and meetings are held weekly to discuss this issue (www.maleness2manhood.org). I believe that to help facilitate the change in Black adolescent males, we must adopt a “rites of passage” philosophy that identifies the stages of development as they move from maleness to boyhood to manhood.

Finally, our juvenile justice workers understand about the criminal thinking behind the behavior. Because of this, the CISP treatment community also incorporates the work of Yochelson and Samenow (1997). This treatment modality helps the staff to understand what these authors define as “criminal thinking” (p. 39). Criminal thinking is developed when moving from responsible behavior to irresponsible behavior. Along the irresponsible behavior continuum, there is non-arrestible behavior, arrestible behavior, and extreme criminal behavior. As the staff learns various thinking errors, they are able to know and understand the thinking behind the criminal act.

As the staff work through a typical day, creating a treatment environment and facilitating treatment groups, these juvenile justice workers have a unique opportunity to look into the circumstances surrounding the criminal act and to give insight to improve the process of preparing youth offenders to function successfully after leaving a youth offenders program.
Definition of Terms

**Group Session:** This teaching technique is used to stimulate the active participation of all students in the classroom activity, be it a discussion, brainstorming session, or the practice of new behaviors.

**Intervention:** The aim of intervention is to identify delinquent behavior and to assist them in modifying their behavior or, if necessary, to obtain early treatment. Intervention includes activities, programs, or practices that prevent a health problem from continuing once it has been detected.

**Prevention:** The objective of primary prevention is to protect the individual in order to avoid problems prior to signs or symptoms of problems.

**Treatment:** Efforts made to end compulsive delinquent behavior through rehabilitation.

**Delinquent Child:** A child 10 years of age or older whom the court has found to have committed a delinquent act and is in need of treatment, supervision, or rehabilitation.

**Committed:** Youth offender court-ordered to participate in a program.

**Adjudication:** A court case heard and decided upon by a judicial system.

Examining Formal Assessment Instruments

From the last section, it is clear that many formal and informal assessments occur within the ordinary operation of CISP. This research is committed to finding ways to organize and re-focus these assessments to help youth offenders to succeed after leaving the program. The main focus of this research has been toward tapping the personal expertise of juvenile justice workers. There is another dimension of importance, however. Are their existing assessment tools that can “fit in” with current efforts? This section will address that question.

As stated earlier, currently, juvenile justice workers in CISP provide services through routine program activities via the initial interview, treatment groups, and preparing student discharge summaries. Within the current process, even though there are level system processes, weekly reports, and exit interviews, the information collected is not easily accessible to address strategies for long-term success after youth are released from the program. There is also no systematic approach to measure the overall progress for each individual offender.

In order to improve the program’s ability to measure and address long-term success, the use of a new assessment instrument is proposed. This instrument will be a key part of a new process. This new process will continue to interview the youth as in the current process, but after the initial interview, a risk/needs assessment will be calculated. At this point, treatment will be provided, followed
by a further risk/needs assessment. Finally, a refined discharge summary, which combines the assessment scores, the treatment that was provided, and a plan after discharge, will be prepared.

The proposed risk/needs assessment instrument to be used is the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI). This instrument predicts the likelihood to re-offend and identifies needs. The following literature review will address the importance of utilizing a risk/needs assessment and the adequacy of the YLS/CMI.

**Prediction of Criminal Behavior**

Andrews and Bonta (1998) explore key links between assessments and criminal behavior. They make the argument that criminal conduct must be filtered through various risk factors to identify the types of personal conduct that contribute to criminal acts. Their basic approach is to reduce the likelihood to re-offend through assessing risks and needs.

I feel that CISP does a good job of identifying risks and needs through juvenile justice insights and routine program activities, but it lacks an instrument to identify risks and needs in a systematic way. Andrews and Bonta (1998) argue that there are individual needs and risk factors that need to be assessed and understood in order to attempt to reduce the likelihood to re-offend:

> Everyday, whether we are psychologists, police officers, economists, students, or what have you, we make predictions to guide our own behavior. Prediction of criminal behavior is perhaps one of the most central issues in the criminal justice system, because from it stems community safety, prevention, treatment, ethics and justice. Prediction of Criminal Behavior raises issues that are relevant to all concerned citizens as a whole. The human, social and economic costs of prevention are not trivial, and because of the power that criminal justice professionals have over people who are arrested, detained, convicted, probated or incarcerated, is extraordinary. These issues are of immediate interest to those who become entrapped in the process of criminal justice by way of being a victim, an offender, or a criminal justice professional. (p. 212)

Prediction of criminal behavior has also been viewed as dangerous. According to Floud (1982), “all of the evidence indicates that, for the time being, those who make predictive judgments must realize that they may have on average no more than an even chance, at best, of being right” (p. 224). Also, Meloy (1992) stated, “It is clear from the research literature that we cannot and will never be able to predict with reasonable medical certainty future violence” (p. 949). Andrews and Bonta (1998) explained that “these perspectives must be considered in the context and setting under which the negative conclusions were drawn. We must look at what was being predicted and how the predictions were made” (p. 218). Andrews and Bonta explained that “the contexts were special, that the subjects of debate were usually mentally disordered offenders, and as a result, criminal and civil commitment laws that justified the confinement had a greater influence on the prediction of these mentally disordered offenders” (p. 218).
Historical Background of Risk Prediction

In Bonta’s (1996) review of the literature of prediction of criminal behavior, he chronicled three generations of offender risk assessments. The first generation referred to clinical judgments of risk, while the second- and third-generation assessments were actuarial-based (p. 219). These modes of assessment were then compared.

A clinical approach refers to a judgment made by a professional trained in social science. This type of assessment often involves interviewing an offender, sometimes giving a psychological test and sometimes reviewing files. Then, the staff member arrives at a judgment regarding the offender’s risk to the community and the need for treatment: “The key feature to Clinical Approach is that the reasons for the decision are subjective, sometimes intuitive, and guided by gut feelings, they are not empirically validated” (Bonta, 1996, p. 219). Researchers have criticized clinicians for using non-empirical and subjective methods for making clinical diagnoses and predictions for some time (Meehl, 1954).

According to Andrews and Bonta (1998), the actuarial method is a better prediction of offender behavior. One of the earliest examples of the actuarial method is from a study that examined more than 3,000 parolees and found 21 factors that differentiated parole successes from parole failures (Burgess, 1928). Other early research similarly employed simple summation with weightings according to demonstrated criterion validity (Glueck & Glueck, 1950). Actuarial methods have consistently outperformed clinical methods in risk assessments. Grove, Zald, Lebow, Snitz, and Nelson (1995) conducted a meta-analysis of 136 studies which compared actuarial and clinical approaches. This analysis showed actuarial methods performing better than clinical procedures in 46% of the studies and performing equally as well in 48% of the studies. Only 6% of studies showed clinical judgment outperforming actuarial prediction (Grove et al., 1995).

Bonta, Law, and Hanson (1998) compared objective risk measures with psychiatric judgments of risk in the prediction of general and violent recidivism among mentally ill offenders and found objective factors to be superior to professional assessments of dangerousness in the prediction of both general and violent outcomes. There are also additional studies that show statistical risk assessment procedures predict sexual offenders better than clinical procedures (Hanson & Bussiere, 1998).

At this point, it seems that the evidence consistently supports the predictive validity of actuarial methods for risk prediction and offender classification. So, why do so many professionals in the criminal justice system still refuse to use empirical and actuarial methods? According to a survey administered to Oklahoma Probation Officers concerning their views on using quantitative risk instruments, the chief obstacle to use was the lack of training of professionals (Schneider, Ervin, & Snyder-Joy, 1996).

It is estimated that probably no more than two dozen approved psychological clinical training programs strongly emphasize the necessity for scientific proof (Grove & Meehl, 1996, p. 318). This indicates that there seems to be a limited number of criminal justice programs in North America that educate graduate

**Theoretical Bases**

Bonta (1996) explains that second- and third-generation risk/needs assessments are actuarial based and represent improvements over clinical approaches, but many assessment approaches are limited in their usefulness partly because they lack a theoretical foundation (p. 221).

Burgess (1928) created the first risk scale recorded as an example of a second-generation offender assessment instrument. One of the problems with second-generation offender assessments is the predominance of items that are static or unchangeable. For example, an offender who was imprisoned at 16 years of age for an auto theft while high on heroin will continue to fall into the “poor” category even if the event occurred 20 years ago and he has been straight ever since (Andrews & Bonta, 1998, p. 224).

According to Andrews and Bonta (1998), “the second significant disadvantage to these scales stem from a failure to appreciate the importance of dynamic predictors. Put in other words, these scales give little or no credit to the offender who changes his life for the better (p. 224). Second-generation risk scales were developed in an era of “dustbowl empiricism,” when it did not matter whether the items made any sense as long as they showed significant correlations with key criteria.

**Social Learning and Predictions**

Andrews and Bonta (1998) explain that predictability improves when one uses a variety of predictors that include both static and dynamic variables (p. 225). Static predictors such as prior criminal record are good predictors, but they do not change. Dynamic predictors can change. One example is the poor use of leisure time. Use of leisure time is a predictor and is subject to change (Rogers, 1981). This makes sense from a social learning perspective because the central theme in the perspective is that deviance is a form of learned behavior and, as a result of interventions, change is possible. According to Pfohl (1994), the process of learning criminal (deviant) behavior by association with criminals and anti-criminal (deviant and anti-deviant) patterns involves all of the mechanisms that are involved in any other learning.

Andrews and Bonta (1998) argued that the social learning perspective strongly suggests the development of more comprehensive offender assessment instruments that tap static and dynamic risk factors. These are the instruments that are considered “third-generation” risk/needs assessment instruments (p. 226).

**Third-Generation Risk/Needs Assessments**

Andrews and Bonta (1998) distinguish third-generation risk/needs assessments from second-generation assessments (p. 226). There are three third-generation risk/needs instruments in use today: (1) the Wisconsin Risk and Needs
Assessment Instrument (Baird, Heinz, & Bemus, 1979), (2) the Community Risk Needs Management Scale (Motiuk & Porporino, 1989), and (3) the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R) (Andrews & Bonta, 1995).

The Wisconsin Risk and Needs Assessment Instrument is an assessment approach that recommends different types of treatment intervention for different types of offenders. The Wisconsin Risk and Needs Assessment Instrument consists of three components: (1) a risk scale, (2) a needs scale, and (3) a client management classification (CMC). Evidence for the predictive validity risk scales has been positive (Baird, 1981, 1991; Baird et al., 1979; Bonta, Parkinson, Pang, Barkwell, & Wallace-Capretta, 1994b). According to Andrews and Bonta (1998), the only exceptions are a study by Wright, Clear, and Dickson (1984), which used a New York City sample of adult probationers, and juvenile offenders (Ashford & LeCroy, 1988; Bonta et al., 1994b, p. 227).

Evidence for the predictive validity of the needs scale is lacking. Research indicated that using the Wisconsin Risk and Needs Assessment Instrument was also a problem based on how much time it took staff to tabulate. The only known analysis of the predictive validity of the needs scale found relatively low correlations with recidivism, ranging from 0.10 to 0.22, compared to the risk scale, which ranged from 0.22 to 0.33 (Bonta, Parkinson, & Barkwell, 1994; Bonta et al., 1994b).

The Community Risk Needs Management Scale was used as a tool for assisting in the supervision of parolees by Correctional Services of Canada (Motiuk, 1993; Motiuk & Porporino, 1989), which showed that the linking of needs with static risk assessment was an important improvement over the Wisconsin Risk and Needs Assessment Instrument. The Community Risk Needs Management Scale views needs as risk factors. The total score may predict recidivism, but not all of the individual need items helped to predict parole outcome.

The third and only theoretically based third-generation offender assessment tool is the LSI-R. According to Andrews and Bonta (1998), this tool can be traced to the late 1970s when there was a perceived need by probation and parole offices to become more explicit about how decisions were made regarding level of supervision and the type of services their clients needed (p. 229). There seemed to be a scarcity of research findings addressing level of risk and need for services. Andrews and Bonta (1995) created a quantitative decision aid that constituted a reasonably comprehensive survey of factors judged relevant for decisions of supervision in legal and professional terms.

The resulting risk/needs scale was the LSI-R. LSI-R is theoretically based on social learning perspectives and focuses on what is defined as the “Big Four”: (1) Criminal History, (2) Companions, (3) Attitudes/Orientation, and (4) Emotional/Personal (Andrews & Bonta, 1995).

There have been at least twenty articles published on the LSI-R in professional journals that have reported on the validity of the LSI-R and also examined the psychometric properties such as its reliability, convergent validity, and factor structure (e.g., Bonta & Motiuk, 1985; Loza & Simourd, 1994). The evidence on the predictive validity of the LSI-R and comparison research of the LSI-R to other offender risk instruments all show the LSI-R predicts as well or better than other
instruments (Bonta & Higginbottom, 1991; Motiuk, 1991, 1993; Motiuk, Bonta, & Andrews, 1986). According to Gendreau, Little, and Goggin (1996), when the LSI-R is compared to the Wisconsin Risk and Needs Assessment Instrument, it produced higher correlation coefficients (a higher level of accuracy to predict). It was found that the LSI-R is “the current measure of choice” (p. 590).

Usefulness of the LSI-R

Andrews and Bonta (1998) pointed out the potential usefulness of the LSI-R to manage correctional costs by reducing the amount of control placed on low-risk offenders. They also point out that a frequent problem in offender assessment is the problem of “Over-classification,” or in the language of prediction, “False Positive” (p. 232). Additional research suggests that over-classification is extremely wasteful of both resources and correctional staff who rely on professional judgment (Schneider et al., 1996).

Andrews and Bonta (1998) pointed out another potential application of the LSI-R: the delivery of effective supervision and services to higher-risk offenders. These are the offenders who are likely to be responsible for a measurable amount of criminal activity in the community as a whole. Andrews and Bonta, suggest that by attending the criminogenic needs as well as the static risk, the overall risk level of some offenders may be decreased. As stated earlier, the two potential uses of the LSI-R are (1) decreased correctional control for those who do not require it and (2) identification of dynamic risk factors for treatment targeting and monitoring (p. 232).

Field Test of the LSI-R: A Study of Offenders Under Intensive Community Supervision

Intensive community supervision settings provide a somewhat unique arena where both punishment and treatment are often coupled to promote public safety by limiting opportunities for re-offending, by holding offenders accountable for crime and by providing treatment and educational services (Kirkpatrick, 1998). During this time, the necessity of monitoring the change in static and dynamic risk is critical for successful supervision and offender rehabilitation.

Kirkpatrick (1998) field-tested the LSI-R and investigated the relationship between offender static risk, dynamic needs, and both release and post-release outcomes in an intensive community supervised setting. The sample selection included every individual under supervision and home detention in a northeastern Indiana county from October 1996 to January 1998. The data were gathered from the case files of selected tests administered during intake into the program. The following demographic information was retrieved: age, gender, race, and presenting offense status. The range of ages of offenders studied was 17 to 69 years old. The mean age was 31.12 years with a standard deviation of 8.53 years. According to Kirkpatrick, when using the LSI-R, correlations between scores and age were found to be weak to moderate (r = 0.11 to 0.29); furthermore, these correlations were statistically insignificant at the 0.05 level. This study compared the rate of response for each category of items on the LSI-R inventory to the corresponding failure of adults under intensive community-based supervision, as well as the relationship between each
item and release outcome. This is in reference to adults having excessive program violations in relationship to high scores indicating likelihood to re-offend.

Overall, this study established the predictive validity of the risk scale. Kirkpatrick (1998) found that after administering the LSI-R every three months while the offenders remained under supervision, the relationships between need categories and release outcome from intensive supervision changed over time—that is, that changes in LSI-R scores were associated with changes in recidivism. The result of the study confirmed the ability of the LSI-R to predict the outcome of offenders under intensive community supervision. More specifically, the findings of the study indicated a consistently moderate to strong relationship between the identified need area and the release outcome (recidivism). However, the article goes on to state that a statistically significant moderate correlation to outcome was found using the risk scale on the first interview, but further assessments of risk were not significant and demonstrated low correlations to outcomes. Furthermore, according to this study, in separating the items of the risk scale, the study reinforced those static risk variables that might serve to indicate limiting criteria policy for entry into a community-based supervised setting. One such variable was a history of previous revocation.

**Utilizing the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory Assessment Instrument**

Andrews and Bonta (1994) pointed out that the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI) is an adaptation of the Level of Service Inventory (LSI) (p. 90). The LSI, as explained by Hoge and Andrews (1996), is an instrument designed for assessing risk and need levels in adult offenders. The LSI was followed by the development of a youth version incorporating case management components known as the YLS/CMI (Hoge & Andrews, 1994).

Hoge and Andrews (1996) explain the six major components to the YLS/CMI. The first part of the measure consists of a set of 42 risk/needs items. They are divided into eight subscales:

1. Prior and Current Offenses/Dispositions
2. Family Circumstances/Parenting
3. Education/Employment
4. Peer Relations
5. Substance Abuse
6. Leisure/Recreation
7. Personality/Behavior
8. Attitude/Orientation

Part Two of the instrument provides for calculation of a total risk score as well as a graphical summary of scores across the eight risk/needs areas. Part Three of the instrument allows for the assessment of a variety of other factors relevant to the youth. Part Four permits the mental health provider to record his own estimate of risk and needs in the youth. Part Five provides for an indication of the contact level recommended for the youth, and Part Six allows for professionals to indicate a case management plan (p. 91).
The important potential strengths associated with the YLS/CMI are that it provides a very broad assessment of factors and direct information about the needs areas. There is a systematic basis for collecting information. The design for completion of the instrument is for probation officers and other front-line workers. Finally, the detailed information about clients and their circumstances is of value from an information management point of view (Andrews & Hoge, 1996).

The YLS/CMI is a relatively new instrument for which only preliminary psychometric data is available (Hoge & Andrews, 1994, 1996); however, considerable psychometric support is available for the two instruments on which the inventory is based: (1) the LSI (Andrews & Bonta, 1995) and (2) the Youth Level of Service Inventory (Andrews, Robinson, & Hoge, 1984; Simourd, Hoge, Andrews, & Leschied, 1994).

Summary
The conclusions of the review of literature led this researcher to suggest that implementing an appropriate assessment instrument within the current process of CISP will improve the evaluation component of the current process.

Methodology

Research Design and Procedures
This research is a qualitative research study. General questions were asked of participants in a focus group setting to gain insight into how juvenile justice workers think and act in terms of providing treatment and preparing youth for discharge. The questions focused on the following:

• What are some of the assumptions made by juvenile justice workers about the youth offenders before they enter the program?

• What are some of the formal and informal services provided by juvenile justice workers through routine program activities?

• How do juvenile justice workers determine whether youth offenders are responding to the services being provided?

• Are juvenile justice workers satisfied with the level of responsivity of youth offenders, parents, and other service providers?

• Are juvenile justice workers able to make adequate prognoses about youth offenders’ ability to succeed or to determine the likelihood to re-offend when exiting the program?

Instruments
The insights of juvenile justice workers were captured through the facilitation of focus groups with open discussions on the aforementioned questions. No other instruments were used. There were three focus groups that were conducted. The first focus group questions dealt with general and global program issues. The
second two focus group questions were more specific. These questions were about developing an exit plan and identifying specific areas of focus.

Sample Selection and Size

The participants who were asked to participate in this research were juvenile justice workers working for the Allegheny County Juvenile Court, Community Intensive Supervision Program (CISP). There were 11 participants. All of the workers volunteered to participate in the focus groups, and no participant had knowledge of the identified instrument that was used to compare insights and risk factors. For these participants, the number of years of experience in this field ranged from two to 25 years. Three participants had over three years of experience; seven participants had over 10 years of experience, and one participant had over 25 years of experience. Four participants had a minimum of a high school diploma, two participants had an Associate’s degree, four had a Bachelor’s degree, and one participant had a Master’s degree.

Each participant was given a pseudonym for the purposes of identifying their responses. The following pseudonyms were used:

- Homewood
- East Liberty
- The Hill
- Garfield
- Penn Hills
- Bloomfield
- Wilkinsburg
- Highland Park
- Shadyside
- Morningside
- McKeesport

These are the names of local areas, some of which are within the geographical jurisdiction of the program. The participants do not represent the areas based on the pseudonyms they were given.

Recruitment of Juvenile Justice Workers

Juvenile justice workers working in the CISP were given the opportunity to participate in the three focus groups which were established for this research study. An inter-office memo was sent to all workers working in the Homewood area. Anyone who was interested in participating in this study was asked to sign the consent form and to return it to me.

Informed Consent Procedures

Endorsement of this research project was given by the Chief Juvenile Probation Officer of Allegheny County’s Juvenile Court. All willing participants were asked to sign a consent form, and before the research began, this researcher explained the intent of the research and the detailed consent form.
Collection of Data and Method of Data Analysis

While facilitating the focus groups, I audiotaped each session. The information was recorded to enable juvenile justice workers’ insights to be documented for review and to be used in improving the process of preparing youth offenders to be successful after being released from CISP.

Emphasize Issues Relating to Interactions with Subjects and Subjects’ Rights

All juvenile justice workers participating in this project agreed to participate on a voluntary basis. All rights to participate were explained in detail while going over the consent form. As a supervising probation officer, I structured the research method in a way to ensure that CISP workers were under no obligation to participate or respond to questions that could compromise their position. There was no list of structured questions. The focus groups were guided by a general question at the beginning of the discussion in regards to the routine program activities. The discussions took on a life of their own. CISP workers were able to respond to each other’s opinions and questions about the routine program activities. As a result, insightful discussions developed.

Results

The purpose of this research project was to determine if the insights of juvenile justice workers could improve the process of preparing youth offenders for functioning successfully after being released from an intensive supervision program. The initial focus group was a discussion about routine program activities. The focus groups were conducted at the Homewood CISP. This is a CISP site located in a community in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This site is a place where youth are committed to CISP by court order and report to the CISP Center after school.

The following data sources were used to provide information from the three focus groups: (1) the focus group transcript, (2) a summary of the focus group points, and (3) imaginary illustrative narratives to demonstrate points that were brought up in focus groups.

Initial Focus Group Transcript

The following is the transcript of the initial focus group:

    Researcher: Let’s talk about the program routine activities, specifically the exit interview. Do you feel that the exit interview is helpful? Why or why not?
    
    Homewood: I think the exit interview is beneficial. I think the youth and the parents need to know the importance of all the group sessions and program activities. Hopefully, the youth will use the information after he is released from the program.
    
    Morningside: I agree.
Researcher: Do you feel that the exit interview is effective?

East Liberty: We need to look at risk factors. Traditionally, African-American families don’t like to share family information. It seems like we don’t really address the issues, but just put a band-aid on the problem. When we don’t get information from the parent, we usually rely on information in the child’s record. Usually, that information is either incomplete or inaccurate. If we don’t talk to the parents, then we miss important information and are unable to identify risk factors.

The Hill: I think we learn a lot about the family once the child is committed to CISP. CISP has the opportunity to interview the parents and the youth. I believe all the things we learn about the youth should be transferred in the exit interview. I think we learn more about the child and the family than they know about themselves. It goes way beyond effectiveness. We help the youth to recognize things about himself which he never knew such as, for example, the school factor. We have young men who had never received an “A” on their report card in school before coming to CISP. They get the “A,” and they become so excited, but when they leave the program, they feel lost. They feel lost and say, “What’s the point? How can I continue to get that ‘A’ on my report card?” They feel they can’t accomplish that level of success without the support of the program, not realizing that there is still a support system out there. But the youth doesn’t know where that support system is. The effectiveness of CISP is evident by the fact that so many youth are afraid to leave the program. Some kids say, “I shouldn’t have left CISP,” thinking that the only reason they got the “A” in the class was because of CISP, not because they could do it on their own. They feel that they no longer have that support system in place or that resource that can help them to work out an issue they may have with a teacher or an issue they may have at home. I feel we need an aftercare for our aftercare.

Homewood: I think we need to treat the family, not just the child. We need to know the dynamics of the family. We also need a resource center for families. Parents need to be educated about how to raise a child. I think we need more parenting and skills training.

Researcher: If we had all the money we needed to develop a program, where would you begin?

The Hill: We need to begin by holding parents accountable for supporting their child. We need to enforce the law that says, “Parents must be involved with their child’s treatment.” If the parent needs to go in front of the judge, then it needs...
to happen. Parents need to know that when they aren’t supporting their child’s needs, that they are breaking the law.

**McKeesport:** I agree. I know of parents who refuse to get their child’s medical prescription filled.

**Researcher:** Do you think we should spend time holding parents more accountable for their kids?

**Garfield:** Yes, but I think that should be done on an individualized basis and not necessarily to all parents.

**Penn Hills:** I believe that it’s important to understand that some parents have to work at helping their child. There are times when some parents can’t be there for their child because they have to work, but does that make the parent a bad parent? I understand that there are some things that parents have to do, but being there for their child is a part of being a responsible parent. I have a problem with some of this stuff. I think we can put too much pressure on parents and overwhelm them with additional responsibilities.

**Bloomfield:** I spoke to a parent who said that she works on the day we have our monthly parent support group meetings but has been willing to meet with me on another day. I also suggested that I meet the family at the home, and the parent was very open to that suggestion. This was also an opportunity for me to find out the circumstances and dynamics of the home. You see, you can get a lot of insight about the family as every family is different, but you first have to assess to see if the family is resistant to supporting their child or whether they have other problems.

**Researcher:** Is it possible that we are too focused on program routine activity and not individual needs?

**The Hill:** We deal with families on an individual basis. For example, we have a mother who attends a local community college, but she makes arrangements to meet with staff. She explained her situation and scheduled to make alternate accommodations with me in order to show her support for her child. Now on the other hand, we have another parent who is just totally resistant. This parent makes excuses for everything. There is no excuse for a parent to not be able to make some kind of alternate arrangement to meet with the child’s counselor one hour out of a month. We have to get parents to understand that they have to make some sacrifices in order to support their child. They need to know that they have to support their child regardless of whether they are in CISP or not. Parents need to understand that they
should support their child, not because they are in CISP, but because it is a moral responsibility and simply because the child is their son.

**Wilkinsburg:** I also think that the child’s needs must be met. If the parents are not meeting the child’s needs, then the child will attempt to get their needs met elsewhere.

**Researcher:** What is it that we can do to get parents to follow up where CISP leaves off or is this impossible?

**Wilkinsburg:** Within the program, young men begin to show respect toward themselves and others, show that they care and are helpful. This is because they see people that care about their well being and so they respond positively to caring adults.

**Highland Park:** When we provide structure, we show the youth appropriate ways of dealing with situations, but it is up to the young man to make his own choices. The young men have to make a choice whether or not to act and respond appropriately to any given situation.

**Researcher:** Although it is ultimately up to the youth to make the choice, is there something we can do to prepare the youth to make the right choice after they leave the program?

**Penn Hills:** I think we do that now. When they need help after they leave the program, we let them know before they leave that they can always stay in touch with us to help them after they leave. We often get calls from the youth after they leave the program.

**Researcher:** So if they are calling us after they have completed the program, is that an indication that they need support?

**Homewood:** Yes, that does indicate that they need support, but it may also indicate that the parents aren’t able to provide counsel and support to their child. It also shows that the youth needs to be able to identify additional support systems which he may not know are in place. It ultimately shows that the youth are confident that CISP staff will lead and guide them in the right direction.

**Researcher:** That’s a good point. So, if we know they feel comfortable with asking us for advice, and since we can anticipate that they will be calling upon us to help, can we put something in place to prepare the youth for what they will be facing after leaving the program?
Garfield: I think we do that in our daily group sessions. I think we discuss circumstances and scenarios that may come up and discuss alternative ways of how to handle them.

Homewood: That’s true. We do prepare them for circumstances after they leave the program in the various group sessions, but after they leave the program, we know that a crisis will happen, and they will need someone to help guide them through it even though they were given information to help them through the crisis. They will still need some personal support. Something that I suggest which can be done is to create some sort of tracking or a follow-up outreach worker who can follow-up and keep in touch with the youth after they have left the program during a predetermined period of time.

Researcher: How do we walk a child through a crisis while they are currently in the program?

Homewood: We walk them through the crisis by counseling them.

Wilkingsburg: We take a personal interest in responding to their crisis.

The Hill: The norm is to research and exhaust all possibilities before we go back to court.

Shadyside: We normally would go to the child’s house, talk to the parent, talk to the child, and gather all of the information. Then make efforts to sort out options to resolve the crisis.

Homewood: First thing we do is meet with the family, pull our resources together, and sort out the problems and options.

Researcher: If we notice that a child continues to have problems and isn’t making any progress, do you think we are addressing his needs?

Homewood: We have to continue to look at the whole circumstance to determine whether they are home issues, parent issues, school issues, attitude issues, or behavioral issues.

Wilkingsburg: We need to know what they are not getting at home.

Homewood: Some children hate their home situation. The parents might be using drugs or have other problems, which the youth may be running from.

East Liberty: A lot of problems come when a child is used to leaving the house and ignoring the problems in the home. But when they get into CISP, they are on house arrest and have to be in the house. This sometimes creates a bigger problem because
the child now has to face the realities of the home. The child has to interact with the parent, and some parents are used to the child just leaving the house as well and handling his own problems.

The Hill: One thing that has come up in court when we finally have to send a child back to court is that we have a reputation of exhausting all of our resources before we go back to court.

Researcher: We’re going to stop here. Thanks for all of your input and insights. We will continue this discussion next meeting.

This specific conversation was very insightful and gives an account of what was said during the first focus group. The first focus group dealt with general and global issues; the following two focus groups addressed specific relevant topic areas. For instance, I asked each focus group to discuss an exit plan for a youth offender being released from the program. As a result, the next two focus groups identified specific topic areas while discussing an exit plan.

In reference to specific questions about preparing youth to be successful after leaving the program, the conversation started by talking about the program’s exit interview. In reference to the general question about routine program activities, the general consensus seemed to be that the routine program activities provided the necessary structure to operate a program. Also, according to Morningside, “We can monitor the progress that a youth is making from entering the program to exiting the program.” It seems that the consensus of the focus group was that the routine program activities are a necessary approach for providing the needed program structure.

Another question the focus group discussed dealt with the intentions of the workers while going through the routine program activities. The consensus seemed to be that the workers’ focus was on managing behaviors through routine program activities. The group was very concerned about preparing the youth for functioning successfully after leaving the program, but most of the effort was put into managing behavior. This was evident in the group’s knowledge about the youth offender’s program violations moreso than the youth offender’s needs and interests.

The focus groups also discussed conflicts between the goals of the program and the intentions of the workers. There seemed to be evidence of a conflict as a result of workers expressing their need for more program time to build better relationships with youth offenders in order to discover the interests and needs of the youth. The group seemed to feel that there isn’t enough one-on-one time to spend with the youth.

To get a clearer picture of the insights of juvenile justice workers preparing a youth offender for functioning successfully after being released, this researcher asked the next two focus groups to discuss an exit plan for youth being released from the program. The focus group developed an exit plan in the context of CISP routine program activities. As a result of this discussion, a general consensus was
established by the focus group on a plan to prepare a youth offender to function successfully after being released from the program.

Within each topic area, I present an imaginary illustrative narrative case of each youth offender from my experiences whose situation characterized the points raised. The narrative will demonstrate the importance of risk/needs factors to assess the family situation.

**Risk/Needs Assessment**

All members of the focus group felt that a risk/needs assessment should take place. The discussion centered on finding out a youth’s interests, making an effort to get to know the individual person, and establishing a working relationship with the youth. Although this was the consensus of the group, when the question was asked about various youth’s personal interests, it was evident that most workers did not know the personal interests of the youth on their caseload. It seems that although the focus group seemed to think that the interests of the youth were important, this was something that individual workers did not explore. The explanation for this seems to be that most of the time is focused on the offenders’ behaviors and ways to change those behaviors, not to explore personal interests. So despite what workers feel is most important, the main focus is on behavior. The workers also discussed the importance of making a thorough risk/needs assessment to identify all of the various needs, but it wasn’t clear which needs should be addressed.

One worker stated that the current way we address needs is by measuring the number of group sessions a youth participates in. Here are a few examples from a Group Progression Form that is used to keep an account of program participation. This Group Progression Form is used by workers to document program participation. The form records the number of group sessions a youth offender attends in a given period of time while on a specific level. The form also indicates the minimum amount of group sessions each youth offender must attend in order to qualify for advancement. Examples of groups are as follow:

- Anger Management (4 sessions required)
- CISP Introduction/Focus Group (4 sessions required)
- Victim Awareness (4 sessions required)
- Thinking Errors (4 sessions required)
- Drug and Alcohol (4 sessions required)
- Maleness to Manhood (4 sessions required)
- Self-Assessment (4 sessions required)
- One on One (8 sessions required)
- Community Service (25 hours required)
- Outside Recreation/Social Activities (4 sessions required)
- Restitution ($15.00 required)
- Competency Exercise
- Pledge
- Transition Meeting with Parent

As you can see, this form is geared more to holding the staff accountable for documenting participation, but we still need to assess the risks and needs. Below are comments by staff when talking about risk/needs assessments:
• We assess how well we manage behavior, but we need to identify risk factors.
• Information learned isn’t followed through for treatment purposes.
• Information should be transferred to others such as service providers, schools, parents, teachers, and so on.
• Youth are comfortable talking to staff, but the information isn’t used to assess the youth’s circumstance.

The focus group made a point that even though we know the problems and concerns of the youth and families, the information isn’t first assessed to determine strengths and weaknesses. Secondly, we don’t create an individual plan to provide effective treatment; and thirdly, we don’t transfer the information to other providers to continue with the treatment in process.

*Imaginary Illustrative Narrative*

The following imaginary conversation during an initial interview between the program supervisor and a parent illustrates the need for assessment that identifies the various risk and needs of a family:

**Supervisor:** Hello Mrs. G. My name is Mr. B., and I will be asking you a few questions, and Mr. N. will be going over [the] CISP contract with you. I have some forms for you to sign and some questions about your son. You can stop me at any time during the meeting to ask me questions about anything. Before we get to the contract, I want to ask you a few questions. First, from your understanding, what happened and why was your son committed to CISP?

**Parent:** He was caught in a stolen car, and the police found a gun under the seat.

**Supervisor:** Was he driving?

**Parent:** No, he was the passenger.

**Supervisor:** Was the gun under his seat?

**Parent:** Yes.

**Supervisor:** Has your son ever been arrested before?

**Parent:** Yes, he was arrested for fighting in school. He also went to court for another stolen car, but the charges were dropped.

**Supervisor:** How is your son doing in school?

**Parent:** Terrible. He’s failing all of his classes and was suspended at least ten times this year.

**Supervisor:** What grade is he in?
Parent: He’s supposed to be in the eleventh grade, but he’s taking ninth-grade classes.

Supervisor: Is he in special educational classes?

Parent: No, he’s in regular classes. He’s not dumb; he’s very intelligent, but he gets suspended a lot for fighting. He can’t control his anger. He needs anger management.

Supervisor: Has he ever had a psychological evaluation or been on medication?

Parent: In the fifth grade, I took him to be evaluated and they wanted to put him on medication, but I refused to put my child on medicine.

Supervisor: Did he have a counselor or therapist?

Parent: Yes, but I wasn’t able to take him to the appointment every week.

Supervisor: Does he have any brothers or sisters?

Parent: Yes, he has two older brothers and a younger sister and a younger brother.

Supervisor: Does he look up to his older brothers, and how are they doing?

Parent: Yes, he idealizes his brothers. Both of his brothers are in trouble. One of his brothers is in jail, and the other is in a juvenile placement.

Supervisor: How are the younger brother and sister doing?

Parent: The younger ones are doing well in school. My boy is in the fourth grade and my girl is in the sixth grade.

Supervisor: Do you think your child uses drugs or alcohol?

Parent: Not that I know of.

Supervisor: How well do you think your son will do in a structured environment with lots of rules?

Parent: I think he will try you, but you’ll have to show him that he can’t get away with nothing. If he thinks that he can get away with something, he will keep challenging the program. At this point, I know I need help, and I think this is what he needs.
Supervisor: Well, thanks for your input. I’ll be talking to you more throughout the time that he is in the program. We also have a parent support meeting once a month to discuss how parents and CISP can work together. The program is very structured, but most of the young men learn a lot from the program. Thanks again; it was nice meeting you. Now Mr. N. will go over the contract with you. Here’s my card; call me if you have any questions.

This is an example of how information is collected at the initial interview. According to staff in the focus group, “Information learned isn’t followed through with for treatment purposes, and we need to identify risk factors.” CISP staff is in a unique position to gain specific insights and knowledge about the youth offender, but we need to be able to document and interpret the information in the context of identifying the ability to succeed and likelihood to re-offend. The information should be used throughout CISP, from understanding the youth’s circumstances to developing a treatment plan to predicting success and likelihood to re-offend. Another source of insightful information is during an exit interview, which usually consists of the youth, parents or guardian, and the youth’s primary counselor. During the exit interview, the counselor and youth go over a checklist to ensure that all requirements were completed before exiting the program. The exit interview checklist consists of the following:

- Welcome everyone.
- State the purpose of the exit interview, which is to determine what the client has gained from his experience in CISP and to assess his future plans.
- Have the client stand up and recite the pledge.
- After reciting the pledge, the client must give his interpretation of the pledge.
- Staff member feedback is given concerning the pledge.
- Discuss treatment goals that were developed at the pre-interview stage and discuss accomplishments made as a result of the goals.
- Check off the evidence the client presented on checklist #2.
- Ask the parents if there is anything that they want to say, and give the parents an opportunity to respond to any plans they have in helping the client achieve other long- or short-term goals after leaving the program.
- Have the client read his CISP exit letter.
- Have staff comment on the exit letter read by the client.
- Ask the client what his future plans are.
- If present, the drug and alcohol counselor makes a few remarks and the signing of the drug and alcohol forms are completed by all parties present. If the drug
and alcohol counselor is not present, then the form is forwarded to him or her for completion at a later time.

- All parties present make final remarks, and then the CISP Aftercare Certificate of Achievement is presented to the client. Crisis intervention forms are given to both parent and client, and the exit interview process is concluded.

The purpose of the exit interview is to determine what the youth has gained from his experience in CISP and to assess his future plans. According to the comments of the focus group, we need to identify the risk factors or other factors that may contribute to the likelihood of the youth re-offending. For example, I have been part of numerous exit interviews, and the youth will go through the checklist; read his apology letter, which addresses his remorse for the harm that he has caused; and discuss what he has learned as a result of his commitment to CISP. While I believe that all of this is important, I believe that it is also important to discuss the risk factors and needs as well as the likelihood that the youth will re-offend.

Parents and Family

Imaginary Illustrative Narrative

The following is an imaginary conversation between the program supervisor and a parent at an exit interview:

**Supervisor:** Mrs. J., congratulations on your son finishing the program.

**Parent:** Thanks Mr. B. I can’t thank CISP enough for what you all have done for my son. This is a good program. CISP helped out a lot.

**Supervisor:** Now, the thing that we are concerned with is Johnny continuing to do well after he leaves the program. We tell all of the young men that, far too often, a month or so after the young men are released from the program, we see their names on the list at Shuman Detention Center.

**Parent:** You hear that Johnny? You have to make better choices. I can’t watch you 24 hours a day. You have to stay out of trouble.

**Johnny:** I know. I’ve learned my lesson. I’m not trying to go back to Shuman Center.

**Supervisor:** Well, you know the key to staying out of trouble is to stay clean from drugs and alcohol, continue to go to school every day—you know you can’t do nothing without an education—and don’t commit any crimes. You have a job now, you’re making good grades in school, and you’re clean from drugs and alcohol. You need to continue to do the right things and make your family proud.

**Johnny:** I will, Mr. B., I will. Thanks.
The consensus of the focus group felt that the parents should be educated on the findings of an assessment and educated and counseled on ways to address the needs of the youth. The focus group had a long discussion about parents’ unwillingness to assist in the process of holding youth accountable for their actions and helping the youth to make changes. The routine program activities that addresses parents and families consists of a monthly parent support meeting and routine visits to the home. As a result of the focus group discussion about parents, it seems that parents need more encouragement and support to stay involved with holding their children accountable for their actions.

An exit plan for the parents would be to educate the parents on the various identified needs of their children and to promote the importance of families following through with support systems and programs that will address and support the needs of the youth.

Here are some comments made by staff in the focus group when we were discussing parent and family involvement:

- “We need to have more parent involvement.” The focus group discussed the problems that we continue to have in convincing parents that the best chance for their youth to succeed is when the parents are involved.

- “We must help families to see what we see.” The group would like to be able to clearly define the strengths and weaknesses for the family to see.

- “We need more parenting education and support.” The group feels that parent effectiveness training would be beneficial to the parents of the youth. We must use the law to force parents to follow through with being responsible for their child.” An example of this is through informing parents of the law, which states, “Parents must participate in the treatment process of the child.”

- “Some parents are overwhelmed with their child’s irresponsible behavior.”

The focus group felt that CISP should make parents aware of the fact that we could be an asset to their family and a support system. Here are more comments:

- “We must work with the parents through the child’s issues.”
- “We must assess families in order to be helpful.”
- “We can get insight from individual assessments.”
- “Some parents are very resistant to help.”
- “Parents must get involved.”

Again, the focus group was concerned with helping families to understand their strengths and weaknesses as well as having the ability to provide information to help families work through their issues. We continue to discuss ways to work with difficult parents. We encounter hostile parents who feel that protecting their child from being held responsible for their actions is a loving and nurturing gesture. We have parents cursing out CISP staff and teachers when these professionals hold their children responsible for their actions. A common example of this is when the youth are required to attend school on a daily basis. There have been times when a youth is court ordered to the program and prior to being committed
to the program, the youth had missed over 45 days of school. Upon the youth entering the program, both the youth and the parent are informed that the youth is no longer able to miss any school days unless there is a case of severe illness or hospitalization is required. We ask the parent if they consider education to be important, and the parents always agree that education is important. We then let the parent and youth know that we will hold the youth accountable if he does not attend school.

Not long after this conversation, we begin receiving the excuses from both the youth and the parent about not attending school. Some excuses have been, “My child is sick,” “I couldn’t find my shoes,” “My brother took my coat,” or “It’s raining, and I don’t have an umbrella.” When this happens, we inform the youth and the parent that the youth will not advance on the level system and the youth will lose his privileges of sleeping in his bed on the weekend as he will serve a weekend sanction at the local juvenile detention center. This is when the parent becomes upset, and oftentimes, even enraged and begins to make even more excuses for their child. At this point, we have to start the process of educating the parent about tough love, about enabling behaviors of parents, and about the importance of holding their child accountable for his actions.

This is also an argument for good risk/needs assessments. Parents need to know that the likelihood for their child to get back into trouble increases when the child does not go to school. They need to stay clean from drugs and alcohol and avoid negative peer association. Families need to be educated with the information we receive and to understand the prognosis, treatment, and likelihood to re-offend based on risk factors.

School

*Imaginary Illustrative Narrative*

The following is an imaginary conversation between the program supervisor and a teacher about a young man in CISP:

**Teacher:** Hi Mr. B. I called about Kevin. He’s been doing well until lately. This week, Kevin seems to be argumentative and short tempered. I didn’t call to get him into trouble, but I wanted you to follow-up and talk to him so he could get back on track.

**Supervisor:** Thanks for calling and letting us know. We will follow-up to find out what’s wrong. At the center, he’s doing well. I do know that he was having problems with his mother’s paramour. Maybe something happened. I’m not sure, but we will follow-up and encourage him to continue to do well in school. Thanks again for calling.

The consensus of the focus group was that education and school were important aspects of preparing youth for exiting the program. A majority of the youth have been truant from school, have poor grades, and have problems following school policy. As a result, the young men in the program are monitored closely in school.
To prepare a youth for exiting the program, the focus group consensus was that the student’s progress should be measured on an individual basis. For example, if a youth hadn’t attended school for a long period of time and currently attends on a regular basis, this shows evidence of improvement.

The focus group consensus suggests that we need to explore our present protocol. Currently, the routine program activities address school issues through getting the teachers to provide a weekly report and daily class report about a youth’s behavior. The focus group suggested that the program should provide the teachers and school with a report and an assessment about the youth’s progress or problem areas. The focus group also suggested that at the exit interview, the information compiled during the youth’s placement in CISP should be shared with the school so that the school can better serve the youth.

Here are some of the comments that were made in the focus group about school:

- “Parents are not involved enough with their child’s school issues.” The focus group members felt that if we were to provide the parents with the same information that we receive from the schools on a daily basis, then the parents would then be forced to become more involved with their child’s school issues and would better understand the importance that we put on education.

- “Many parents of our youth are not promoting the value of an education.” The focus group discussed situations where parents make excuses for their children to miss school but insist that education is important to them.

- “We have to find out the interests of the youth.” The focus group discussed the importance of finding out the interests of the youth and to translate their interests into understanding the importance of an education, which would enable them to better pursue and develop their interests.

- “Teachers do not have enough insights about the youth who are having problems in school.” The focus group discussed and agreed that one way we could assist teachers in better understanding the individual circumstances of each child is by sharing information learned through the process of CISP monitoring the youth 24 hours a day/seven days a week.

- “We need to have more feedback from counselors to teachers and from teachers to counselors.” This discussion pertained to the importance of developing a better means of communication between CISP and the schools regarding the development of the youth.

- “Our youth and their parents make a lot of excuses not to go to school, and it seems that they have an unusual amount of excuses for being sick.”

The focus group’s overall concern is the universal promotion of the importance of an education through holding youth and their parents accountable for not taking school seriously. The focus group feels that the more we begin to effectively communicate with the teachers, school administrators, and parents, the more we can universally promote the importance of an education.
Again, the argument for an assessment at the exit interview continues to grow. Here is a typical prognosis statement: The prognosis of this child is good as long as he stays in school and refrains from drugs and alcohol. The prognosis actually oversimplifies the problem and the task of keeping the child out of trouble. The assessment measures the prediction or likelihood to re-offend. I believe that if we were able to provide this type of information to parents, schools, and service providers, then the prognoses would be of increased value.

**Counseling, Drug and Alcohol Treatment, and Mental Health Services**

**Imaginary Illustrative Narrative**

The following is an imaginary conversation between the program supervisor and a counselor during a staff meeting:

**Counselor:** I need to talk about Henry’s case. Henry seems to be getting worse. He’s not making any progress on the level system. He is argumentative and seems to be angry all of the time.

**Supervisor:** Is he taking his medication?

**Counselor:** His mother said he is, but it doesn’t seem like it. He’s usually in a better mood than these last few weeks. I know his mother calls the center complaining about his behavior at home, but she never follows through on anything she is supposed to do. Last month, Henry ran out of medicine, I asked her if she refilled his prescription, and she said she was sick. That’s when I took him to get his prescription filled.

**Supervisor:** Did she come to the last parent support meeting?

**Counselor:** No, she made excuses as to why she couldn’t come. But other staff see her out in the community going places. Staff saw her catching a jitney (taxi-cab) going to the store. She was also seen going to the nightclubs.

**Supervisor:** I know Henry is having problems at home because the mother called complaining about Henry on the day there was no school. It seems as long as he’s at CISP, she is OK, but she can’t be around him without arguing.

**Counselor:** I talked to Henry, and he’s upset with his mother because she never follows through on anything. Every time Henry has a doctor’s appointment, his mother is too sick to go. Every time she is supposed to come to the parent support meeting, she makes an excuse not to come. Henry gets mad and upset because of his mother.

**Supervisor:** Yes, I have noticed the problems that Henry’s mother is causing. She is making it difficult for us to provide treatment.
We have to document every time she refuses to follow through with her child. I need you to schedule a meeting with Henry’s mother so we can let her know that she is making it hard for her son to make any progress and for us to provide treatment. She will know that if we don’t get her cooperation, we will be forced to schedule a review hearing in front of Henry’s judge about the lack of support. We will recommend to have Henry removed from the home.

Counselor: OK, I will schedule the meeting, and we will go from there.

The consensus of the focus group identified counseling, drug and alcohol treatment, and mental health services as a major area of concern when considering releasing a youth from the program. The focus group shared the feeling that it is important to initiate referrals to service providers to provide ongoing counseling, drug and alcohol treatment, and mental health services. We should provide information to parents and connect the parent with a service provider.

Some comments of staff are that information learned in CISP should be transferred to parents and other service providers in order to sustain the level of care after CISP. CISP needs an aftercare component, which extends beyond the period of a normal discharge of a youth from the program. Currently, when youth exit the program, the parents are given a resource packet, which contains information about other programs and services in the community, that may be helpful to their child’s development.

The parents should also be given the prognosis of their child. I believe that if parents were given information regarding an assessment of their child, which identifies youth’s likelihood to re-offend, then both the parent and the youth would walk away from the exit interview understanding the reality of what will be needed for the youth to continue to make progress. I know of times when parents have been thankful for how the program has helped to facilitate the change process in their child. But prior to this period and at the exit interview, the parents are wondering and concerned about how their child will continue to be successful after exiting the program. We need to use instruments that will give realistic and detailed risk/needs assessments for families as they leave the program.

Employment

*Imaginary Illustrative Narrative*

The following is an imaginary conversation between the program supervisor, the probation officer, and the counselor:

*Counselor:* Johnny has been in the program for a month and a half. He’s doing well in school and is participating in group counseling sessions. He owes restitution in the amount of $500.00, so I recommend that we help Johnny find a job.

*Supervisor:* I agree. He needs to get a job to, first, pay off his restitution and also to have money in his pockets. He needs to experience having a job. Has he ever had a job before?
Counselor: No, this will be the first.

Supervisor: Well, it seems like he is ready. He’s doing very well in the program, and his grades have improved.

Probation Officer: I will make a referral to the job readiness programs, and he can start putting applications into the local fast food restaurants.

The consensus of the focus group was that employment is an important component in order to be successful after exiting the program. The focus group felt that an effective exit plan would include the youth having a job before exiting the program. Staff comments about employment were focused on the fact that youth need to have something positive to occupy their time. Youth need a job in order to develop responsible attitudes.

Currently, juvenile court has a program called, Work Bridge, which provides job readiness skills and helps the youth obtain employment. But just having a job when exiting the program is only a part of it because employment retention is another key issue. There are many examples of young men exiting the program with a job, going to work on time, and sustaining the job for several months while in the program. But as soon as they are released from CISP, they stop going to work and usually get fired.

This happens far too often. I recently ran into a young man who was released from the program with a job. When I saw him, he spoke to me, but he was in a hurry to avoid holding a conversation with me. It seemed as if he was high on drugs or alcohol. He didn’t seem to be his normal self as I remembered him from when he was in the program. Later that day, I told a staff member that I had seen this young man, and that person informed me that he was fired from his job. What could we have done differently at the exit interview? How could we have identified his prognosis in a different way? I know that we couldn’t have prevented him from getting fired, but could we have assessed his situation in a way to ensure that the youth and his parents were educated about the importance of retaining a job?

I believe that finding a different way to assess and view success for youth exiting the program will change the hopeless feeling juvenile justice workers have when youth fail to continue to make progress after leaving the program. If we view the prognoses as measuring the likelihood to re-offend, then we could be able to pinpoint reasons for failure. This is better than getting frustrated and feeling hopeless in the effort to help the youth offenders to continue to make progress after leaving CISP.

Service Providers

Imaginary Illustrative Narrative

A conversation between the program supervisor, the probation officer, and the counselor at a staff meeting:

Probation Officer: Does any counselor recommend a family therapist for their clients?
Counselor: Yes, my client needs a therapist. My client Joey is living with his grandmother because of problems he was having with his mother. Joey doesn’t respect his mother because she abandoned Joey early in his life. The mother was a drug abuser. Joey and his mother have physically fought, and Joey has a lot of anger toward his mother.

Supervisor: Are the mother and grandmother willing to participate in counseling?

Counselor: Yes, the grandmother feels that it is necessary before Joey can move on.

Probation Officer: OK, I will put in a referral for the family counseling.

Supervisor: Make sure we give as much information to the therapist as possible so they will know all of the dynamics involved.

Counselor: No problem. I will set up a meeting with the therapist as soon as I find out who will be assigned to Joey’s case.

The focus group felt that parents should be given information about various support service providers to ensure the successful release of a youth offender. Some of the staff felt that the program needed more community involvement in the ongoing development of our youth. Once the young men are released from the program, the group felt that the schools and local youth programs should be accessible and available to follow through with the interests of the youth. We know that if a young man isn’t involved in something productive—something that nurtures or piques his interests—that the likelihood of him getting back into trouble is great. As a result, the group felt that if we were to document the needs of our youth, then local programs or service providers would be able to use that information to develop more effective services for families and youth at risk.

We need other community groups and institutions to care and take an interest in our youth by providing support, resources, information, employment, and counseling. The youth get a lot of information and counseling while they are in the program, but they need to have access to these same services once they leave. We know that a crisis will again surface in a youth’s life after he has left the program. We need long-term tracking. What do we do when a youth is in a crisis after leaving the program? We need an aftercare mentoring program.

As a result of the need for follow-up with youth after they have left the program, I have developed a program that serves youth while they are in the program and continues to serve them after they have been released from CISP: the “Maleness to Manhood Mentoring Initiative.” The program is currently open to the public and has been offered to the public for over two years.

Service providers and the juvenile court can help each other develop better programming. I feel that information about families and youth, prognoses, and the measurement of likelihood to re-offend is valuable information for both the court and service providers. With information that can measure change and
identify needs and risk factors, the court is in a better position to know what types of programming are needed, and they can then evaluate the programs that are addressing those needs.

Some of the questions that this research raises are

- “How does Juvenile Court evaluate service providers?”
- “Are service providers addressing the needs of the youth offenders?”
- “How do they know they are addressing the needs?”
- “How do they measure success?”

Summary of the Results

As a result of holding these three focus groups, specific issues were identified that we need to pay attention to when releasing a youth from the program. Focusing on these issues will improve the process of preparing youth offenders to function successfully after being released.

The problem with following through with the focus group’s recommendations is that there needs to be a systematic approach to addressing the needs of the child. Although the needs are being addressed and insights are revealed, it is important to establish a system to measure and document risks and needs to ensure that long-term success is being addressed.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this research project was to gain insights from CISP juvenile justice workers to improve the process of preparing youth offenders to function successfully after being released from the program. As a result of exploring this research topic, I was able to categorize the insights of juvenile justice workers into seven primary areas:

1. Insights through assumptions about youth offenders
2. Insights through formal and informal assessments
3. Insights through youth responding to the routine program activities
4. Insights from what juvenile justice workers learned about youth and their families
5. Insights through examining a formal assessment instrument
6. Insights through the focus groups
7. Insights through making prognoses and recommendations for release
Throughout these seven focus areas, this research was able to document ways that CISP juvenile justice workers prepare youth to function successfully after leaving the program. It was also determined that these workers provided valuable insights which will improve the process. The following are detailed descriptions of these focus areas.

**Insights Through Assumptions About Youth Offenders**

Analysis of assumptions made by CISP juvenile justice workers indicates that the workers are very knowledgeable about youth offenders. The workers understand the dynamics of the community, the schools, and the social atmosphere surrounding the youth’s circumstances. They make assumptions in the following specific areas when a youth offender enters the program:

- A crime was committed.
- There are possible family and/or parenting problems.
- There are possible educational issues.
- There are negative peer associations.
- There might be behavioral issues.
- There might be attitude problems.
- There might be employment and financial problems.
- There might be physical and mental health issues.

These are the key assumptions made by CISP juvenile justice workers when youth offenders enter into the program.
Insights Through Formal and Informal Routine Program Activity

The formal routine program activities are as follow:

- Initial interview
- Drug and alcohol assessment
- Weekly behavioral report
- Daily behavioral assessment
- Daily class card
- Group counseling sessions
- Individual counseling sessions
- School monitoring
- Weekly staff meetings
- Monthly parent support meeting
- Exit interview
- Case transfer/Case closing

The following are the identified informal routine program activities:

- Transporting youth in the van
- Monitoring study hour and tutoring
- Dinner time
- Chores and clean up
- Recreational time
- Home visits
- Community service

As a result of this research, it was understood how CISP juvenile justice workers were able to know and understand the circumstances surrounding each youth and his family. This understanding came in the form of formal and informal insights. The formal insights were all of the routine program activities established through the program procedures and forms. This is the standardized information being collected on a daily basis. Information collected on a daily basis is about a youth’s behavior in the home, at school, and in CISP. The informal insights are gathered from staff establishing a trusting relationship with the youth and observing how the youth reacts to his environment. These informal insights occur over a meal, while driving in a vehicle, or during a recreational activity. The following information defines the various ways insights are obtained.

Insights About Youth Responding to the Program

The research findings indicate that CISP workers were able to identify ways to determine if youth were responding to the program. This was demonstrated through imaginary illustrative narratives and routine program activities. The following information was recorded:

- School attendance records
- Daily class cards signed by teachers
- Whether students are abstaining from drugs
- Whether students are interacting with peers
- Ability to follow directions
• Whether students are receiving positive feedback from parents
• Ability of students to hold a job
• Whether students are respecting the rights of others

Again, the routine program activities enabled the workers to determine if youth offenders were responding to the program and to give insights into the circumstances surrounding these youthful offenders.

**Insights from What Was Learned**

By the time a youth offender has been in CISP for about six months, CISP workers have learned a great deal about the youth and his family. Here are some examples of what CISP workers have learned:

**Home**
- Living conditions
- Economic status
- Dynamics of the family
- Behavior at home
- Whether the family is supportive of the youth
- Mental health issues
- Sibling interaction
- Single- or two-parent home

**School**
- Grades
- Attendance
- Classroom behavior
- Interaction with teachers
- Amount of days missed
- Whether homework is completed
- Any school problems
- Special education

**CISP Center**
- Ability to follow rules
- Ability to follow directions
- Ability to get along with peers
- Respect for adults
- Participates in activities
- Drug and alcohol problems
- Ability to seek help
- Ability to comply in a structured environment

**Insights Through Examining a Formal Assessment Instrument**

According to the literature review, prior and current offenses/dispositions, family circumstances/parenting, education/employment, peer relations, substance abuse, leisure and recreation, personality/behavior, and attitude/orientation are eight important variables to focus on when preparing a youth offender for being released from the program. The results of these findings were very similar to those
issues that the focus groups identified. That is, the focus groups and the YLS/CMI assessment instrument identified mainly the same variables. The literature review offers an opportunity to understand the importance of an empirical risk/needs assessment to reduce the likelihood that the youth will re-offend. The goal of this literature review was to inform an organization on how to make better decisions, utilizing an empirical risk/needs assessment.

The reason I chose to focus primarily on the research effort of Andrews and Bonta (1998) in regards to assessments is because they make the argument that criminal conduct must be filtered through various risk factors in order to identify personal conduct that contributes to criminal acts. Andrews and Bonta present an approach to reducing the likelihood to re-offend through assessing risks and needs. I feel that CISP does a good job of identifying risks and needs through routine program activities and juvenile justice worker insights, but it lacks an instrument to identify risks and needs in a systematic way. Andrews and Bonta argue that there are individual needs and risk factors that need to be formally assessed in order to attempt to reduce the likelihood to re-offend. This argument is made in Andrews and Bonta’s book, *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct*. In this work, they explore assessments, assessment approaches, assessment instruments, and various research perspectives that utilize assessment instruments.

**Insights Through the Focus Groups**

The consensus of the focus groups identified the following areas of focus that are important to improve the process of preparing youth offenders:

- Needs assessment
- Parents and family
- School
- Counseling, drugs and alcohol treatment, and mental health services
- Employment
- Service providers

After examining the results of the three focus groups, it was evident that the insights of CISP workers were very valuable. The workers understood the dynamics of the home, they were in a position to build relationships with the offenders, they understood the community, they were able to show empathy, and they demonstrated the ability to help families through crises. The most compelling evidence that the insights of CISP workers had value was demonstrated in the imaginary illustrative narratives. These narratives gave a clear picture of what CISP workers see and experience on a daily basis. Hopefully, this research will continue using juvenile justice workers’ insights to improve the process of preparing youth to be successful.

**Insights Through Making Prognoses and Recommendations for Release**

Currently, the probation officer and the drug and alcohol counselor will write a prognosis that is documented in the youth’s case transfer or case closing. The prognosis will read,
Prognosis is excellent at this time. Child needs to obtain employment, which will allow him to pay off his restitution. Employment will also fill the void due to being released from the program. Child needs continuous monitoring in school to ensure a successful adjustment.

Another prognosis was stated like this:

Child has reached all of his treatment goals. He has maintained a positive attitude throughout his commitment. Child completed all of his core groups and has positioned himself in a place where he should be able to make the correct choices by obtaining “B” grades on his report cards and obtaining his driver’s permit.

These are some examples of the documented prognoses on the probation officer’s case closings and case transfers. The language used seems to suggest that the probation officer is struggling to find adequate words to describe circumstances. During the focus groups, this was an important point because it is essential to make appropriate assessments. During the focus groups, it seemed that juvenile justice workers knew many of the risk factors, but the case closings and case transfers did not provide the types of information that is needed to make prognoses, predictions, and or to identify risks and needs.

It seems that the majority of the focus groups knew of the various needs, but not in a systematic fashion. The needs were identified based on personal judgment and, as a result, some important variables were missed.

**Conclusions**

Based on the insights of the juvenile justice workers and the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory, both the focus groups and the instrument identified basically the same variables. The focus groups identified the following as needs:

- Needs assessment and interest
- Parent and family involvement
- Schooling
- Counseling
- Employment
- Support services

The YLS/CMI identified the following as risks/needs:

- Prior and current offenses
- Family circumstances and parenting
- Education and employment
- Peer relations
- Substance abuse
- Leisure and recreation
- Personality and behavior
- Attitude and orientation
The differences are that the focus groups’ ways of addressing the identified need to prepare youth to be successful are not being followed through within the current routine program activities. As stated earlier ways, in an example, the focus group identified the interests of a youth as being important but wasn’t able to identify the interests of the youth. This one example alone could justify a recommendation for change. The main question for this research was, “How can the insights of juvenile justice workers improve the process of preparing youth offenders for functioning successfully after being released from an intensive supervision after-school program?” To improve this situation, this research identified categories of insights from juvenile justice workers through three focus groups. The information was presented to determine the value of the juvenile justice workers’ insights to preparing youth offenders for success after exiting the program. It was determined that the YLS/CMI instrument had the ability to use insights to identify risks and needs, which can help prepare youth offenders for long-term success.

**Recommendations for Change**

The purpose of this project was to examine and discuss methods to improve the process of preparing youth offenders to function successfully after being released from the program. The main recommendation for change is to utilize the YLS/CMI, identified in the literature review, to ensure that there is a systematic approach in place for this process.

The YLS/CMI instrument can help identify those routine program activities that can prepare youth for being released, making them more than ways of just managing behavior. The research findings can be used to make the argument for implementing the YLS/CMI instrument to ensure that the management of behavior is balanced with the identification of needs.

This research also makes an argument for utilizing an instrument to enhance the systematic approach in preparing youth offenders for functioning successfully after being released from the program. The ability to have calculated documentation that can be transferred to schools, service providers, and parents for creating detailed assessments of needs would be helpful.

From my experience working for CISP (Community Intensive Supervision Program), observing the daily routine activities and getting insights from the staff working in the program, I can conclude that an individual, formalized youth assessment process would be helpful. For example, we requested that the parents attend a parent support meeting once a month. Many times we would be met with great resistance from parents who did not want to participate. We also saw many inconsistent messages given to youth by parents. For instance, we told a parent that her child was involved in gang activity, which we determined by how he interacted with his peers. The parent denied everything that we told her about her child and made excuses for others picking on him. One section of the assessment tool addresses family circumstances and parenting, allowing us to pull together those sorts of diverse findings and observations under one heading.

Another part of the assessment tool deals with education and employment, which asks whether the youth is disruptive in class, disruptive on school property, if he is a low achiever, whether he has problems with his peers and teachers, and if he
has truancy problems. This section also addresses whether or not the person is employed.

As part of the CISP’s routine program activities, we require all youth to turn in a class card signed by each of his teachers daily. The program also requires teachers to provide a weekly behavior report. Each day, we are able to monitor how each youth acts in school and interacts with his peers. This routine program activity can be included in a formal assessment to determine the youth’s likelihood to re-offend.

The routine program activities of group interaction and counseling give us insights on how each youth interacts with his peers. We know that if the young men associate with delinquent peers, the likelihood for him to re-offend is great. We see gang activity and gang involvement on a daily basis, though the offenders make efforts to minimize or deny being personally associated with gang activities. Routine program activities grant a lot of insights into peer relations and how they affect the youth’s likelihood to succeed after being released from the program. These routine program activities can be measured and assessed through the use of the YLS/CMI assessment tool.

Another routine program activity is designed to monitor substance abuse. While the youth are committed to the program, they are randomly drug tested, educated, and counseled on the use and abuse of drugs. The YLS/CMI assesses this area of concern and can determine the likelihood of a youth re-offending based on substance abuse.

Another part of the assessment tool addresses leisure and recreation. During CISP’s routine program activities, we closely monitor how a youth spends his leisure time. The assessment tool looks at those organized activities a youth has been involved in, whether a youth has personal interests, or whether a youth could make better use of his time. Based on the focus group, we feel it is very important to know about leisure activities in order for staff to prepare a youth to be successful after being released from the program. This is one of the areas that is important and was not explored very effectively. The argument is that if we use an assessment instrument, the instrument will ensure that this area is explored in a more systematic manner.

The assessment instrument also measures personality and behavior. The routine program activities focus on behavior more than personality. The argument is that if the instrument is used, we will not miss important personality variables that might help in our efforts to reduce the likelihood that the youth will re-offend. Currently, the program doesn’t take into account the personality of the youth when preparing the youth to be successful after being released from the program.

Finally, the assessment instrument measures the youth’s attitude and orientation. This section of the instrument determines the following: “If the youth is anti-social or has a pro-criminal attitude, if he actively rejects help, if he defies authority, and if he is callous and has little concern for others” (Hoge & Andrews, 1994, p. 3). During routine program activities, we can observe the attitude and orientation of each youth. For example, during group counseling sessions, youth are given the opportunity to express themselves. During one particular session, a young
man talked about his crime and what he did to his direct victim. It seemed that the young man was using his crime to impress others with little or no regard for the victims. This observation was discussed during our staff meeting to inform all staff to monitor him more closely, but the information discussed was not taken to develop a plan to reduce the likelihood of this youth re-offending. This is another example of how the use of the instrument could be helpful in planning.

It seems that CISP’s routine program activities give great insights to the circumstances surrounding the program, and the YLS/CMI can help to assess the insights of the workers and can improve the process of preparing the youth for functioning successfully after being released from the program. The instrument also assesses the likelihood that a youth will re-offend. The argument made by this research is that without an instrument to pinpoint and identify the insights of juvenile justice workers, the insights will get lost and will not be useful for long-term use. With the utilization of the instrument, the insights of the workers can be put to good use. The key is to learn how to put these two pieces together for the ultimate benefit of the youth offenders. When these young men can routinely leave CISP and lead trouble-free and productive lives, then all of the pieces of the program, from the operation to assessment, will be working successfully.

References


Dr. McCrary is currently an assistant professor at Western Illinois University teaching in the School of Law Enforcement and Justice Administration. Prior to Western Illinois University, he worked for the Allegheny County Juvenile Court, Community Intensive Supervision Program for 18 years as a program supervisor, where he was responsible for counseling, designing, implementing, and monitoring a progressive treatment program. Other responsibilities included supervision of the probation officers, probation counselors, and drug and alcohol counselors. His responsibilities also included parent training, life skill training, and research in the area of criminal behavior. As a program supervisor, Dr. McCrary collaborated with schools, churches, and community organizations to enable the juvenile court to provide a holistic approach to improving the social developmental needs of delinquent youth.

Dr. McCrary received his Bachelor of Science degree from Geneva College in Human Resource Management, a Master of Science degree in Administration of Justice from Shippensburg University, and a Doctor of Education degree from Duquesne University.

Dr. McCrary is also the founder of Maleness to Manhood Inc., a nonprofit, faith-based organization. The purpose of this organization is to improve the educational and social developmental needs of inner-city youth by promoting the importance of an education and designing, implementing, and developing progressive programming for urban youth, particularly African-American males.

Dr. McCrary was also an adjunct professor for Carlow University in Pittsburgh where he taught Introduction to Criminology. He continues to be active in many professional and community organizations.

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Research Note: Temporal Variations in School-Associated, Nonfatal Violence

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Introduction

Recently, several well-publicized incidents of school violence have incited public fear and a renewed concern for the safety of school-aged children. Although during the early 1990s, the rate of victimization in schools did not decrease with the rate of youth violence overall (Thompkins, 2000), school violence has since declined rapidly (Brener, Grunbaum, Kann, McManus, & Ross, 2004; DeVoe, Peter, Noonan, Snyder, & Baum, 2005). However, fear of victimization in schools and the perception of safety in schools have not been in tune with overall levels of violence in school, in part due to media reports of the most heinous incidents of school violence (Bliss, Emshoff, Buck, & Cook, 2006; Burns & Crawford, 1999).

Violence in schools has been conceptualized in a number of ways. Given that homicides on school property have recently been a politically salient topic, several studies have looked at school shootings as an issue in school violence (e.g., see Leary, Kowalski, Smith, & Phillips, 2003; Schwarz & Kowalski, 1991). Others have defined less harmful yet more frequent acts of violence in schools to include threats made at school (Flannery, Wester, & Singer, 2004), vandalism (O’Keefe, 1997), hitting with fists (Singer, Anglin, Song, & Lunghofer, 1995), and physical fighting (Kingery, Coggeshall, & Alford, 1998). Studies have also looked at the effects of both witnessing and being a victim of school violence (e.g., Flannery et al., 2004; Singer et al., 1995). These disparate measures have provided a comprehensive look at the prevalence and consequences of exposure to school violence. The present study tested whether time can predict the incidence of everyday types of violent behavior such as violent threats, physical fighting, and other assaults. Data from the local police department were compiled and analyzed for the frequency of violent incidents for the school year.

Literature Review

Of the various relevant factors influencing violence in schools, temporal variations in the incidence of violence has received less attention than others. Studies that have incorporated time have looked at increases or decreases over a period of years (Anderson et al., 2001; Kachur et al., 1996). One such study by Kachur et al. (1996) examined violent deaths associated with schools over a three-year period. Their data were obtained from the media, local and state education officers, and from various official sources. Among their findings, Kachur and colleagues found that almost 44% of the violent deaths in schools occurred during some type of school-sponsored activity, the most common being class time. This particular study did not
report findings on violent incidents other than those involving death for the study year. Anderson et al. (2001) looked at school-related violent deaths from 1994 to 1999 and concluded that schools were most likely to see violent incidents at times of transition such as at the start and end of the school day. Given that these are periods of the day with the least amount of supervision, these findings are not surprising.

Several other studies have looked at temporal factors in predicting school violence. A 2001 CDC study published in the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* analyzed homicide and suicide events for the ten months that define a typical school year. The investigators found that homicide event rates were relatively high near the beginning of the school year, gradually declined during the fall semester, but then exhibited a similar pattern during the spring semester. These spikes in violence were attributed to the stress associated with the beginning of a school year and a new semester following a holiday break. In addition, a pair of recent studies made use of the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance (YRBS) data to examine temporal trends in nonfatal violence among high school students. Brener, Simon, Krug, and Lowry (1999) looked at temporal changes over the period 1991 to 2003. Likewise, Zhang and Johnson (2005) used YRBS data to track changes over time. Rather than examining the incidence of violence within a school year, the YRBS tracked changes in the annual prevalence of school violence. Although the YRBS includes items on nonfatal, violent behavior among students, the variables did not permit an analysis of patterns within any given school year.

Past research has shown that there is temporal variability in the number of violent incidents in school. Although these studies made important contributions toward understanding general trends in school violence, several questions remain unanswered. The present analysis attempted to answer the following:

Q1: What is the pattern of nonfatal, violent incidents occurring in and around schools?

Q2: Does this pattern in fact mirror that found in studies of school-related violent deaths?

Q3: Within any given school year, what are the temporal correlates of violent incidents?

**The Present Study**

The purpose of this study was to extend prior research on the relationship between time and the incidence of school-related violence. The research team examined the characteristics of nonfatal, violent incidents in and around schools within a large city in the Midwestern region of the United States. Unlike previous studies which relied on media accounts (e.g., Anderson et al., 2001), this study relied upon data compiled from police department calls for service. This provided us with a more objective and reliable source of information on reported incidents for the geographical area in question. Rather than examining annual changes, we focused on temporal patterns within the school year. In light of previous research, the following proposed hypotheses were tested:
H1: Nonfatal, violent incidents will parallel homicide incidents and peak at certain times during the school year.

H2: The identified peaks in nonfatal, violent incidents will be related to periods thought to be stressful to students.

Data and Methods

Data
The data compiled and analyzed in this study were based upon police calls for service to all public elementary, middle, and high schools in a large Midwestern city. This type of data is a highly reliable source of information regarding violent incidents occurring within the school district (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993). The data covered a period including the spring semester of the 1999-2000 school year, the entire 2000-2001 school year, and the fall semester of the 2001-2002 school year. Tables 1 through 3 provide an overview of the data, including times, locations, and types of violent incidents reported to the police.

Table 1. Times During Which Calls for Service Occurred

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Times</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2:01 AM–4:00 AM</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:01 AM–8:00 AM</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:01 AM–10:00 AM</td>
<td>1,362</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:01 AM–12:00 PM</td>
<td>1,360</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:01 PM–2:00 PM</td>
<td>1,350</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:01 PM–4:00 PM</td>
<td>1,720</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:01 PM–6:00 PM</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:01 PM–8:00 PM</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:01 PM–10:00 PM</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:01 PM–12:00 AM</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>6,317</td>
<td>96.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6,517</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Locations of Reported Incidents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In school</td>
<td>2,141</td>
<td>71.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On school grounds</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On bus</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicinity of school</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>2,865</td>
<td>96.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,980</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. Incident Types in Elementary/Middle Schools and High Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Incident</th>
<th>Elementary/Middle Schools</th>
<th>High Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altercation/fight</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>894</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal substances</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalism</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapons</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,370</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the present analysis, the focus is on the type of school, location, and the time in which the violent incidents took place. The data were aggregated by week for the school year, yielding a total of 77 data points. Incidents prompting calls for service consist of abuse, accident, altercation/fight, assault, fire/gas, illegal substances, mental health, missing person, theft, threats, trespassing, student with charges, vandalism, weapons, 911 calls, and an anticipated incident. Of particular interest were incidents that can be categorized as interpersonal violence, including altercations/fights, assaults (that cause actual physical harm), and threats (with the intent to harm).

Incidents were first placed into 18 categories by an expert rater. To ensure that incidents were coded reliably, a randomly selected sample of 624 incidents (10%) was checked by a second rater. The percentage agreement between the two raters was 71.3%. A more conservative reliability test, Cohen’s kappa, which accounts for chance agreements (see Bakeman & Gottman, 1986) was then employed. Comparing the raters’ coding of incidents, a significant kappa of 0.68 was achieved. Although Fleiss (1981) considers kappas between 0.40 and 0.75 as good, we adopted the rule of thumb offered by Bakeman and Gottman (1986) that kappas of 0.70 are adequate for reliability assessments. Disagreements in coding were then reconciled. Considering our initial kappa score of 0.68 was borderline “good,” we extracted the ten most frequently occurring incident types ($n = 529/624; 85\%$) and re-estimated Cohen’s kappa. By doing this, we collapsed the rare incident types, which are more prone to varied interpretations, into an “other” category, which yielded a kappa of 0.71.

Our dependent variable was the number of incidents aggregated by week. The total number of cases was divided by the number of school days in each week to calculate a rate of incidents per day. The number of school days in each week was calculated by using official school calendars. The number of incidents per week (2,980) ranged from 1.50 to 14.60 ($\overline{X} = 8.13; SD = 2.59$). The data presented here represents 77 school weeks spanning two academic years.

The semester is another independent variable that was included to control for the variation from December and January. The average number of days of exposure to violent incidents per week was estimated for the two-year period based on examination of school calendars (range 2 to 5; $\overline{X} = 4.66; SD = 0.73$).
Results

Phase I

From the beginning of the spring semester 2000 to the end of the fall semester 2002, a total of 2,980 school-associated incidents occurred involving interpersonal violence, property crimes, and incidents with weapons. All of these incidents occurred on school days, with the exception of 82 cases that occurred on weekends and were excluded. A total of 2,370 incidents occurred in elementary and middle schools, while 528 incidents occurred in high schools. We were interested in comparing violent incidents with offenses against property and incidents involving weapons (the possession of a weapon). Of 2,197 calls for service, most related to interpersonal violence (74%), approximately 18% (542) were incidents against property, and about 8% (241) were related to the possession of a weapon.

Second, we looked at the number of incidents during the different days of the week. With an average of just over 4.5 incidents per day, Mondays experienced the fewest violent incidents. After that, violence grew during the school week, peaking on Thursdays at between six and seven violent incidents per day. The rate then fell slightly on Fridays.

Third, we looked at the changes in the amount of violent incidents by month. Violent incident rates were substantially higher in the spring semester than fall semester. The violent incident rates in schools gradually increased beginning with August through May. March experiences the highest number of incidents.

Finally, we examined the weekly temporal variations in violent incidents at schools. During the two-year period, an average of 38.7 school-associated violent incidents occurred during each school week. A Poisson regression model, which is appropriate for analyzing rare events over time, was fit in order to determine if violent events significantly increase at different periods of time. We calculated the logarithm of exposure days as an offset term for our model. The model describes logs of expected incident counts, and it accounts for the varying exposure per week. The results suggest significant systematic temporal variations in school-associated violent incidents ($p < 0.01$) for the middle schools. The weekly and semester effects are both significant for middle schools but not for the high schools.
Phase II

In order to further explore what might account for the spikes, we obtained from the schools more detailed calendars of events. These calendars contained a variety of both academic and extracurricular activities. In particular, we were able to use these calendars to identify proficiency testing schedules for the middle and high schools over the study period. Subsequently, two additional variables were added to the analysis: (1) testing week and (2) testing week lag (one week after testing).

The findings show peaks in incidents during or right after a testing week. Rates decreased before the testing weeks and increased during or right after the testing weeks. We conducted separate analyses for elementary/middle and high schools. Despite the different types of schools and different testing dates, the rate of violent incidents appears to increase right after a testing week in each type of school. However, Poisson regression analysis highlighted significant temporal variations for elementary/middle schools but not for high schools. Specifically, the Poisson regression models revealed a 17% increase (IRR 1.175, $p < 0.05$) in the number of interpersonal violent incidents during test weeks and a 21% increase (IRR 1.214; $p < 0.01$) in the week following testing for the middle school sample. While the Model Chi-Square was significant (LR Chi-Square = 35.55; $p < 0.01$), it is important to note that the Pseudo R-squared was a modest 0.05 for the model. Significant results were not found when property offenses and weapon offenses were examined using the same predictors. In addition, none of the multivariate results was significant for the high school sample. In sum, these findings suggest that middle school students are prone to exhibit increases in interpersonal violence during and right after testing weeks.

Figure 2 represents violent incidents in high schools. Specifically, Week 10, the highest peak within the first ten weeks, is testing week (TW) for high school students. Week 12, the highest peak within the second ten weeks and also the highest among all others, is the second week after testing (SWAT). Week 18, the
second highest peak among all others, is right after testing week (RAT). Week 27 is the interim reports week (IRW). Week 49 is a RAT week. Finally, Week 70 is also a RAT week. As indicated above, these apparent differences in high school incident rates are not significant in the multivariate models.

**Figure 2. Number of Violent Incidents per School Day by Week in Cleveland High Schools**


Figure 3 illustrates the violent incidents in elementary/middle schools. Week 13, the second highest peak among all others, is a RAT week for elementary/middle schools. There is no specific activity, such as testing or other event, for Week 8, which is the highest peak in the graph. Week 50, the third highest peak in the graph, is a RAT week. Finally, Week 57 is two weeks before final exams (BFE).
Figure 3. Number of Violent Incidents per School Day by Week in Cleveland Elementary/Middle Schools

Discussion

This study is an effort to extend prior research by examining the temporal effects of nonfatal violence in and around schools. The data in this study are unique in that they were derived from police calls for service to the addresses of the schools. From this data, we found that incidents of school violence are not evenly distributed across time periods. Certain times during the school year experienced greater amounts of violence than others. In order to explore this further, we obtained detailed school calendar data and performed additional analyses.

Although past research found that violence is most prevalent during the beginning of each semester (CDC, 2001), our data showed something quite different. That is, they show a spike immediately during and after school testing for the middle schools examined. Perhaps this is due to disparate measures of violence. The CDC study focused on school homicides, while we chose to look at more mundane types of violence. Given this difference in outcome measures, we found that there were spikes in violent incidents around mass testing weeks. This is quite a serendipitous discovery for which there are several explanations. Testing may increase the level of stress overall among students and teachers. In addition, the change in routine may create an anxious environment. Testing is often a morning activity, leaving the afternoon for activities that do not involve classroom work. There also may be issues regarding supervision as testing creates a stressful environment for teachers. Evaluating the performance of teachers often includes the performance of their
students in proficiency tests. These factors may combine to create an environment full of stress and conducive to violent behavior.

We have known for some time that temporal factors can play a role in injuries in and around schools (Limbos & Peek-Asa, 2002). What we now realize is that school policies and activities must take into account these temporal influences. If we regard student behavior as the interaction between the individual and the environment, we should attempt to identify those factors that increase either positive or negative behavior (Hyman & Perone, 1998; Mulvey & Cauffman, 2001). Future research should investigate the connection between temporal-related school violence and individual-level factors, including, but not necessarily limited to, environmental stressors and the influence of structural, organizational, and classroom characteristics.

References


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Daniel J. Flannery, PhD, is professor of Justice Studies and director of the Institute for the Study and Prevention of Violence at Kent State University. Prior to coming to Kent State to found the institute, Dan was associate professor of Child Psychiatry at University Hospitals in Cleveland. Dr. Flannery has extensive experience in evaluating school-based violence prevention programs in Ohio and elsewhere. His research has appeared in Developmental Psychology, the New England Journal of Medicine, and numerous other journals. He received his doctorate in Clinical Child Psychology from Ohio State University.

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The Attention Study: A Study on the Presence of Selective Attention in Firearms Officers

William Lewinski, PhD, Executive Director, Force Science Institute, Mankato, MN

Introduction

Perception, or the acquisition of information through the senses, has been a focus of philosophy and psychology for millennia. Phenomenological philosophers recognized that we were not simply passive absorbers of information but actively interact with our environment to perceive, process, and interpret this information. The philosophers’ perspective simply expressed is that there is no such thing as an objective reality. The very act of perceiving is dependent upon the direction and quality of the senses of the perceiver, and this varies on an individual level based on the nutrition, fatigue, experience, interest, etc., of the observer. Further, they questioned whether the very act of observing changed in some fashion the elements of what was being observed. If that were true, it would further distort the reality of that which is being observed. For instance, a cell under a microscope is neither seen nor functions as it would among other cells in a body. The very act of observing changes the dynamics of that which is observed. Subsequently, there was and is no such thing as a pure, objective reality. Similarly, there is no such thing as a pure, objective viewer.

Not all philosophers held this phenomenological view. Even Augustine and Descartes argued for the “rational man” model of human behavior (Damasio, 1994). They saw human beings as objective and rational and as essentially bringing an unbiased perspective to their perception of the world. This “rational man” worldview was extremely appealing at that time in the evolution of the understanding of human behavior. Unfortunately, although humankind has significantly advanced, primarily through research, in its understanding of human beings and their subjective interpretation of the real, residue of the “objective, rational man” continues to pervade Western culture.

For example, Descartes’ ideas about human information and decisionmaking had and still have a powerful influence over many areas of study on human behavior. His dichotomization of the soul (mind) and the body (emotions) into two separate parts and his powerful but chilling notion that issues of truth (including perception and memory) could be decided in light of reason alone became historically prominent in philosophy and then psychology and was very appealing to both the fields of theology and the law for centuries. In many countries, the field of law still has components that consider the human being as only a factual information-processing machine and a rational decisionmaker. Appeals to the heart or the influence of emotions had no place in Cartesian science. The thought that emotions could influence perception even at a subconscious level would have been ludicrous for them to consider. Yet, research done in the 1950s on “the smiling face in the crowd” (Hansen & Hansen, 1988) proved this very point. This research demonstrated that emotions even influence perception before that
perception occurs! Even research in the 1940s indicated that hungry rats saw less and subsequently learned less in a maze than non-hungry rats. The hungrier the rat, the more the rat was “tunneled in” on getting to the food, and the more they missed important clues about how to get there—the next time. The Cartesian view of human beings just didn’t stand up to the research conducted by today’s scientists, whether that research is in the perceptual, cognitive, or biological areas.

But Cartesian philosophy had an impact on at least some areas of psychological research and, as stated, remained influential up to the 1950s. Even in the 2000s, courts have been noted to report that there is little research on perceptual distortions and have subsequently questioned the validity of the effect of human emotions and perceptual limitations on perception, information processing, and memory.

However, this dualistic (mind/body or passions versus reason separation) approach has been swept aside in psychology, in fact in all branches of science, since the 1950s. Leading theorists and researchers in psychology, such as the noted Jerome Bruner, have argued for over half a century that the deeper question is not whether emotions influence our perception, judgment, and memory but how they do so (Niedenthal & Kitayama, 1994). Well-known psychological researchers in memory, such as James McGaugh (2003), have understood the impact of emotional reactions on attention and memory and literally have spent their entire careers examining this influence. McGaugh’s work even examined the impact of emotions on perception and memory formation when the emotionally arousing event occurs before, during, or even after the incident was recorded in our memory. Current neuropsychological giants such as LeDoux (2002) and Damasio (1994) argue that our brains actually are constructed in such a fashion that we are not thinking beings that happen to feel as Descartes proposed but actually the reverse. We are hard wired as feeling beings that think. The impact of this information on understanding the value of memory recall in the criminal justice system is and should be profound.

Further, an important question in psychology since the 1950s has been “What is the extent to which what humans see in the external world is driven by their need to seek out factual information that is simply registered in the storage device of our memory or whether there is something more?” The question simply put is, “How does our attention get focused on something?” Recently, considerable research has focused on our capacity to direct our attention to something of interest to us or, phrased another way, how our own cognitive and affective interests leads us to seek out information in the environment. This is a logical way of understanding the direction of attention and our ability to perceive and then process information in our environment. But it is only a limited explanation for understanding how attention is directed. Cartesian Science and this approach to research cannot explain the seductive nature of modern advertising and its capacity to draw our attention toward such things as an advertisement. The overt, attention-seizing aspect of an external stimulus apart from anything we might be thinking about at the time has been an interesting problem for cognitive and neuroscientists. The research indicates that certain elements in our environment have an amazing capacity to draw our attention and do so in an automatic or unconscious manner. An everyday example would be an advertisement whose color, topic, action, or some other feature seizes our attention, almost unwillingly, yet it does so precisely because of the soundly researched principles of visual cognition and attention.
We, therefore, can see that attention is both internally directed or driven to something, or externally attracted to it, and the process is both a conscious and an automatically unconscious one. A law enforcement example of this is an officer’s attention in a conflictual situation such as when a subject draws or points a gun, knife, or club at an officer. That motion instantly attracts the officer’s attention even if the officer was not even thinking about the incident having any potential for becoming violent. This illustration now provides us with two ways that an officer’s attention can be drawn to something. Their training, experience, and/or information leads them to conclude that they need to visually search for something in their environment or something in the environment grabs their focus of attention.

Regardless of the reason for the officer’s focus of attention in a rapidly evolving, dynamic, and high-stress encounter, research and logic both inform us that the officer’s attentional focus is going to significantly influence what the officer is able to then perceive and remember. Generally speaking, if something is not perceived, it cannot be remembered. To reiterate, it is the focus of attention and not the operation of the senses that determines what information is perceived and then acted upon or remembered (Weltman, Smith, & Edstrom, 1971).

Attention has been extensively studied in a variety of areas in psychology. One area of study has been the singular, limited nature of a specific focus of attention and the information that is both acquired and discarded because of this. Another related area of study has been our ability to split our attention and multitask so we can accomplish a variety of tasks at the same time such as drinking coffee, talking on a cell phone, listening to the radio, and driving. Other areas of study have been on the effect of stress or threat and time compression on attention, as well as the catastrophic failure of attention when subjects panic.

Regardless of the data from research, even from our own experience, we are aware that it is possible for us to multitask and have a soft focus of attention over a number of items at the same time. Most of us multitask many times over the course of the day. However, we have also experienced that once our attention is driven or drawn toward an object, we have a limited capacity to attend to any other task. This usually has not been a controversial topic, except when law enforcement officers are apparently incapable of reporting on everything that occurs at a scene of what for them would have been an emotionally intense incident. This process of attentional tunneling or a narrowing of attention and its opposite attentional blindness have been well-researched for decades. Derryberry and Tucker in The Heart’s Eye (Niedenthal & Kitayama, 1994) note that attentional narrowing is an adaptive adjustment that serves to limit the processing of less important sources of information and to promote focused, effective responding in emergency situations; it is essential that the individual avoids distraction by irrelevant input, quickly narrows down the potential avenues of escape, and establishes a tight coupling between threat signals, relief signals and related response. . . . The general description suggests that the combined effects on orienting and focusing help to guide worrisome thought toward an effective solution or plan. (p. 189)

For example, it is not unusual for a driver of an automobile to listen to the radio, drink a cup of coffee, and drive at the same time—multitasking. We should note, though, that
if the driver were to spill the hot coffee on their lap, for some brief period of time the driver’s attention to the management of the vehicle and to the songs being played on the radio might be very limited and perhaps these would not be attended to at all.

Dr. Marcel Just, a psychology professor and co-director of the Center for Cognitive Brain Imaging at Carnegie Melon University in Pittsburgh, conducted a study seven years ago that provides illumination into the limitations of the attentional processes (Just et al., 2001). Just et al. had participants in this study focus on language tasks and then on spatial tasks. By using brain imaging with an fMRI, Just was able to roughly compute the total amount of attentional resources used to intently focus on one task at a time. When he had the subjects attempt to work on two tasks at the same time, he found that the brain then allocated a certain amount of its total resources to each task. Interestingly, the total amount of attention given to both tasks roughly approximated the total amount of attention given to one task when the person focused entirely on that one task. Further, the relative amount of attention given to each task varied with the importance allocated to or difficulty involved with that task. For instance, in his study, if the spatial organization was more difficult than the linguistic task, the percentage of attentional resources dedicated to spatial organization were higher than the amount dedicated to linguistic tasks. However, regardless of how the attentional resources were divided up, the total amount of attentional resources did not exceed the total amount of attentional resources available, regardless of their distribution.

From this study and others, it seems that we have a limited amount of attentional resources, and these can then either be divided up in some limited way among many tasks or directed solely to one task with little or nothing left over for anything else. It should be noted that a significantly large and growing body of research in the area of visual cognition informs us that our attentional focus is what both permits us to acquire and then remember information. The opposite also has also been confirmed. That is, when we intently attentionally focus on something, we can literally be attentionally blind to something else, even if it is directly in front of us. Further, because we were incapable of noticing it at that point in time, we will not be able to report on it later, simply because something else has occupied our attention. This is true for information processed in both high- and low-stress conditions. To become inattentionally blind, one only has to intently focus on something else. The reader might be aware of times when they are commuting, and while doing so, they were focused intently on a conversation or were deep in thought and subsequently became inattentionally blind to some very prominent background noise or music.

Police officers refer to this narrowing of attention as tunneling and, subsequently, use the terms tunnel vision or tunnel hearing. Although these terms are understood in the academic world and have been used in research articles since the 1950s a more accurate term for this process is selective attention. Selective attention refers to something that the person is attentionally focused on and includes the use of all of the senses and attentional processes and not just vision and hearing. The research, particularly in visual cognition and selective attention notes that once someone selectively focuses on something, the person is then said to be inattentionally blind to anything else. This means that regardless of whether the attentional process is internally directed toward something or externally drawn toward it, once we intently focus on something, we have, according to Just et al.’s (2001) research, a very limited capacity to notice anything else.
In the 1970s, Dr. Robert Nideffer theorized that selective attention could be further subdivided (Nideffer & Sharpe, 1978). He hypothesized that normally we direct our attentional resources to one of four types of attentional focus. He asserts that we have an external focus of attention, which is drawn or driven toward something outside of ourselves, and an internal focus that is directed toward something inside of us, either our body and the movement of our body or our thoughts. He further divided external attention into broad or narrow. A broad external focus of attention would be seeing a forest, while a narrow, or specific, focus of attention would be seeing or focusing on only a specific tree or leaf in the forest. He also has divided the internal component into both broad and narrow as well. An internal narrow focus of attention would be a specific focus on something experienced inside of yourself such as the tactile feel of a bat or pen in your hand. An internal broad focus might a whole body movement toward something, a limb movement such as swinging a bat or golf club, or a general awareness of feeling happy.

Nideffer’s division is so commonly experienced and so easy to notice that anyone working in a garden can easily experience all four of the attentional components. The gardener could shift their focus of attention to an external specific target such as a particular bug on a plant. They could have an external broad focus such as the overall aesthetic appearance of the garden. They could have an internal narrow focus by having their attention drawn to a painful knee when squatting down, or they could have an internal broad focus by experiencing a sense of satisfaction with a job well done in the garden. It is possible of course for the gardener to have a soft focus over all four attentional foci at the same time, but once the gardener’s attention is strongly drawn to one of the foci, it becomes difficult for them to attend to other foci. For instance, attempting to identify a potentially damaging insect on a plant’s leaf is going to significantly narrow the gardener’s attentional focus and reduce their capacity to notice and then report on other elements in their potential attentional foci.

If we summarize the research it means that once our attention is driven or drawn toward an internal or external focus of attention, either broadly or narrowly, we then have a limited capacity to note and, subsequently, remember anything else that may be going on to which we are not attending.

Research on the impact of perception and attention on performance has been conducted for well over half a century, but so has research on the impact of emotions on the effectiveness of this perception and attention on performance. The research focusing on the impact of attention and emotion on performance also supports the research on attention and memory. Easterbrook (1959) noted that the pressure to perform well distracted performers from paying the appropriate attention to the main elements of their success on their task. Further research in the 1970s and 1980s confirmed an ancient belief—that is, that choking in a high-stress performance is the result of the performer becoming self-conscious and/or too concerned with the step-by-step execution of the task (Baumeister, 1984, 1985). This means that not only is an external narrow focus of attention important for success, but it has to be the correct external narrow focus. Even the famous Asian philosopher Bruce Lee noted this concept in many of his movies prior to and including Enter the Dragon (Heller, 1973). Lee often noted the effect of the right “mind” or focus on performance. Self-focused attention (either internal narrow or broad) disrupted the automatic process that is so necessary for the skilled performance of a task just as much as the incorrect external focus of attention.
Gray (2004) used an innovative way of measuring the impact of an athlete’s focus of attention on his or her performance. Gray observed that expert batters had periods of both high and low levels of success at batting and predicted that expert batters would make more judgment errors about the angle their bat was held in when they were in a good phase of batting performance and fewer errors in judgment on their bat angle when they were in a batting slump. His logic was that the batters who were externally and narrowly focused on the game and responding automatically would not be paying attention to the angle of the bat and so would not remember it. Expert batters who were in a slump would have an increase in their self-focused attention, would be paying more attention to their own behavior, would be responding less automatically, and would remember the angle of their bat more often. Wulf (2007) also noted that, regardless of the causal factor, it is interesting to see that good athletic performance is associated with less attention directed to the details of the performance and most of the attention directed externally to the outcome of the performance. The author would like to add that the process Gray used of using recall memory to note the athlete’s attentional focus is a simple and effective tool for demonstrating the memory benefits of both selective attention and the memory impairment associated with inattentional blindness. Simply stated, besides noting the benefit of an external focus of attention and automaticity on great performance, Gray’s study also indicated that the more an athlete was focused on something, the less they were able to remember about anything else that occurred during this focused phase. This research study will use a like process of post-event reporting to assess a constable’s focus of attention.

In summary, some generally accurate statements from all of the research on attention are as follows:

- Attention, particularly under high stress, has a single, undifferentiated, limited capacity and reduces our ability to process information. This is termed selective attention.

- We can multitask or scan as long as anything we are doing is not too complicated or requires a rapid shift in attentional focus.

- Once we focus our attention, the perceptual narrowing involved leads to an increase in information from that on which we are focused and a reduction in information that is processed in the peripheral areas of our attention (e.g., visual, auditory, kinesthetic, spatial, etc.).

- Perceptual narrowing that occurs under these conditions results in more information being processed about that to which we are attending to (selective attention), but it significantly restricts or blinds us to information that we are not paying attention to. This is called attentional blindness.

- Attentional narrowing, while being necessary for great performance, can also impair performance (depending upon its direction). It can also significantly enhance or impair memory as well.

- Attentional processes can be enhanced or impaired by our emotional responses.
Rationale for the Study

In the movie *The Last Samurai* (Cruise, 2003), the actor Tom Cruise was held captive in the camp of the samurai leader Katsumoto. As he was recovering from his wounds, Cruise’s character began to train with the bokan, a Japanese wooden sword. As the movie evolves and Cruise develops his skill with the bokan, he was still being soundly beaten by a rival. At a significant point in the movie, when his rival is once again beating Cruise’s character, one of the samurai comes up to him and says “too many minds.” Cruise’s character understands this to mean that his attentional focus (i.e., self-consciousness, focus on the use of the skill and not the conflict, etc.) is impairing his automaticity and causing him to not do well. He then loses his “too many minds” and fights his rival to a draw. The effect of attentional focus on performance has been the topic of philosophical musings and “practical” research for thousands of years among warrior cultures. Some of the most productive thinking has been from studies conducted by the practitioners of Yoga, Zen, and the martial arts (Ratti & Westbrook, 1973). This fertile work came to the attention of the Russian space industry at the end of the Second World War (Garfield, 1984).

Based on the philosophy of combat and human performance, in the 1940s, the Russians began to research the benefit of attentional processes on emotional control and performance. In the 1960s, the Western world began to learn of this research and by the 1970s, as noted earlier, Nideffer and others were speculating about and researching the benefit of specific types of foci of attention on performance (Nideffer & Sharpe, 1978).

The early research on memory, including that conducted by one of the pioneer researchers (Ebbinghaus 1885), noted that memory is connected to attention. Without some focus of attention, little environmental and personal information moves into permanent storage. It is important to note that memory is a product of information processing. That information processing may occur at all stages, or at any one stage of a behavior. For instance, first, the awareness might be at the beginning of the thought of initiating the behavior or being aware that the behavior started. Interestingly, even if the behavior is not completed, the memory of starting the behavior or even thinking of starting the behavior could lead the person to believe the behavior was completed—if they do not have any other memory of that behavior as it was occurring. Secondly, the behavior or act could be noted as it is happening and then it would be remembered as happening. Finally, even if the person had no knowledge of doing the behavior, if the outcome was observed, then it could be noted as having happened and would be remembered as such. Without an awareness of the behavior or act being initiated, observed while it is occurring, or noted as having happened, the behavior or act will not be remembered.

More subtle components of the behavior can also only be remembered if the person’s attention is directed to that component of the behavior as it is occurring. As Gray (2004) noted, behavior that is processed automatically is not remembered, only that it is occurring or did occur. Subsequently, the information about how it is specifically occurring is not processed. Miller, Galanter, and Pribram (1960) observed that a rich store of unconscious motor memory is available for the performance of acts of neuromotor skill. In this sense, a complete neuromotor program, including significant amounts of stored memory, such as pointing and shooting a gun or automatically moving while in the middle of a high-stress encounter, can occur.
without any conscious effort at all, except for the shooter’s decision to engage the correct motor program or the memory that the automatic motor program was engaged after it was over. The exact process by which it occurred as it was occurring will likely not be stored in the shooter’s memory. The reader may recall that when they are typing on a computer, knowledge about their striking any specific key during the automatic act of typing a sentence is impossible to remember. That it occurred and the specific letter connected to that key is in the word displayed on the computer screen informs the typist that they did strike that specific key; however, knowledge about striking that specific key at that point in the sentence is unavailable to the typist and never will be. Therefore, automatic behavior that we do every day is noted as having occurred, but we cannot accurately and with honesty report that we remember having done it. A similar process occurs with police constables as they engage in any type of automatic behavior, including well-trained behavior, in a wide variety of both low- and high-stress encounters.

The purpose of this current study was to assess the validity and application of these observations to the behavior of police constables. The critic’s conclusion would be that well-trained armed response officers from the Metropolitan Police Service do not experience perceptual distortions. The scientist would say that perceptual distortions and, in particular, selective attention and inattentional blindness have been the topic of discussion among philosophers and warriors for thousands of years. Their presence in all humans, including expert athletes, has been researched for over half a century. Therefore, they will also be present in well-trained, armed officers from the Metropolitan Police Service. The question is not will they be present but, rather, to what extent.

The research presented here will focus on using the constables’ perceived memories to assess their focus of attention at the moment of conflict in a scenario involving a simulated armed encounter. Nideffer’s Quadrants of Attention (internal and external, narrow and broad) will serve as a way of categorizing the direction of attention and informing us about the presence of selective attention and inattentional blindness among the constables during the simulated encounter (Nideffer & Sharpe, 1978).

The research secondarily will examine different means of acquiring post-incident information from the involved constables. These methods involved either having the constables interviewed or having them write reports. Further, the constables were divided up into groups that conferred or did not confer prior to their writing the reports or being interviewed.

**Method**

The goal of this study was to research the attentional allocation of firearms officers (constables) who were thrust into a simulated incident. The incident had to occur suddenly and be dynamic, rapidly evolving, complex, and symbolically life-threatening. To do this, the researchers had to create and then engage the constables in a realistic type of encounter.

**Scenario**

The scenario the constables encountered had to be realistic enough to create a stressful event for them. It also had to involve decisionmaking and action on their part such as would be required of them in a real life-and-death encounter.
Further, it had to involve at least one other constable and several subjects so the researchers would be able to assess the constable’s ability to note the behavior of others in the same scenario. It also had to be open-ended in that the constable’s response changed the nature of the encounter in a fashion that would be unique and noticeable by that constable. The scenario also had to be novel and unique enough that the constables involved would need to read the situation. This meant their attentional resources and scanning behavior would be notable.

**Location**

The scenario occurred at the reception area of the gymnasium at the recruit-training center at Hendon. At this location, the entrance to the gymnasium building was altered to represent a reception area of a hospital ward. The benches at the site accommodated “waiting patients,” and the large front desk facilitated the appearance of a reception area. A side door to the left of the reception area contained a small room that hid the hostage and hostage taker until their “surprise” entrance into the scenario. A hallway further to the left of the main desk led to an area where the constables could be equipped with simunition handguns loaded with simunition blanks before they engaged in the scenario. Heart monitors and numbered vests were also placed on their chests, and they were also briefed on the upcoming incident. When they had been briefed about the scenario and were ready, they then entered the hallway that led to the “waiting room” and into the scenario.

**Incident**

The constables were grouped into teams of two or three. They were then instructed that the scenario they were about to enter involved their being posted as guards for a subject who had been wounded in an armed robbery and who was now being held in a locked ward in a medical facility. The ward was located upstairs from their briefing room and they had to walk through the lobby to get to the stairs and then to the assigned area. As they walked through the lobby with “waiting patients” sitting in the reception area, unbeknownst to them a staged conflict was developing at the reception desk between a brother of the wounded subject and the receptionist. As the constables passed the reception desk on their way to the stairs, they would intentionally be drawn into the conflict by having the arguing parties escalate their voices, use profanity, or by having the brother threaten physical harm to the receptionist who was preventing him from seeing his wounded brother. In post-incident interviews or reports, not a single constable was able to note anything about the relationship of the complainant at the desk to the wounded patient or of the communication content overall except that the complainant wanted to visit his brother.

After a brief period of time when the constables were sufficiently engaged in the conflict at the reception desk, the hostage taker, with his arm around the hostage and a double-barreled shotgun in his right hand, burst through the door to the left of the reception desk. The hostage taker fired the double-barreled shotgun twice into the floor, disengaged from the hostage, and pointed the shotgun at the constables. The constables immediately reacted and attempted to control or shoot the hostage taker.

Once the hostage taker was disabled, the scenario was halted and the constables were then ushered off to the staging room where they either conferred or did not confer and then were sent off to be interviewed or to write a report.
Volunteers

The study was possible due to the kind contributions of time, energy, and skill from a number of very gracious individuals. These included Dave Blockidge, Paul Monk, Mark Williams, Dave Jeffries, Patricia Thiem, Dr. Alexis Artwohl, and several staff from the training facility who were kind enough to fill in as “waiting patients” on the benches. Members from the Department of Professional Standards served as interviewers and, of course, armed officers from the Uniformed Occupational Command Units were the volunteer constables who were involved in the study.

Subjects

The 46 subjects/participants were all armed officers from one of the four armed units within the department: (1) CO6 – The Diplomat Protection Group, (2) CO19 – The Armed Response Unit and Tactical Support Team, (3) CO18 – The Aviation Security Unit, and (4) the Territorial Support Group. Although they varied in age and experience, for the most part they were male and young. Three of the participants were women.

Interviews

The constables were divided into two reporting groups. One of the groups handwrote reports detailing the incident and their participation in it. The other group was interviewed about the incident using a cognitive interview format.
All of the interviewers were volunteers from the Department of Professional Standards with the Metropolitan Police Service and had training in cognitive interviewing. They were skilled interviewers. Dr. Amina Memon from The University of Aberdeen in Scotland conducted a refresher training session in cognitive interviewing for the interviewers just prior to the start of the research. The interviewers met and individually interviewed each participant. All of the interviews were recorded on audiotape, and these were later transcribed into a typed format.

**Written Reports**

The other main fashion in which the constables recorded their memory was in a written format. The constables were given incident report booklets, and they recorded their memories of the incident. These were also transcribed into a typed format.

**Confer or Nonconfer**

Each of the groups—the report group or the interviewed group—were further broken into two groups: (1) confer and (2) nonconfer. The confer groups met immediately after the incident and discussed their roles and perceptions in the scenario. The time for the confer session varied as each group was allowed up to 20 minutes to process the scenario. This method of conferring was not identical to the conferring method currently employed by the Metropolitan Police Service that occurs when their officers are writing their reports. Subsequently, only limited comparisons of the results of this study can be made to the conferring process currently employed.

**Cardiac Measurement**

Mr. Justin Dixon, the Physical Training Manager for the Metropolitan Police Service, arranged to monitor the heart rate of each of the constables by having them wear a Polar chest belt and recorder throughout the scenario and during their reporting of the event in either written reports or interviews. After the event, the constables who were still wearing their heart monitors were given the Metropolitan Police Fitness “Bleep” Test that provided information on their maximum level of physical exertion.

**Video Recording**

Three cameras stationed at three different locations in the reception area filmed each scenario and each constable. The film from each camera and for each scenario was loaded into a *Final Cut Pro Video Editing* program that permitted the precise syncing of all three cameras to specific frames. In this fashion, all three videos from each scenario could be viewed simultaneously in a precise frame-by-frame mode.

**Transcribed Interviews and Reports**

All of the interviews and reports of the constables were transcribed either from the audiotape or from the written report, and each constable’s transcriptions were printed and placed into binders. Each grader was provided with their own binder of the constables’ transcriptions.
Graders

The graders were graduates of or graduate students at Minnesota State University, Mankato.

Grading Process

Once the interviews and reports were transcribed, the graders then read the transcriptions of the interviews or reports of the constables and categorized every reported detail into one of the quadrants of attention. This included every item of clothing noted, every person, thought, action, and so on.

After this was completed, the graders individually viewed the synchronized videotapes of each scenario. During this viewing, they evaluated whether the constable was actually capable of reporting each item or behavior on which he or she had reported, and they noted the accuracy of the constable’s report on that item or action. They then recorded the results. The prime area of interest for this project was the focus of each constable’s attention during the high-stress component of this incident. Therefore, all of the analysis on the constables’ attention was taken from the data provided by the constable from the point of the entrance of the hostage taker into the room and the unexpected discharge of the shotgun. The analysis ended when the constables noted that they exited the scenario.

Results

The results from the transcriptions of the constables’ interviews or reports were then coded by the graders and entered into the appropriate categories in Nideffer’s Quadrants of Attention (Nideffer & Sharpe, 1978). The results were grouped by the graders and also by whether the constables were interviewed or wrote a report and whether they conferred or did not confer.

This remembered information then allowed the researchers to extrapolate about the constable’s focus of attention during the incident. If the constable was able to report on something that was present or occurred during the encounter, then it likely was something the constable had observed or focused on during the incident. Inversely phrased, if the constable could not report on something or erroneously reported on it, then it was likely not a focus of the constable’s attention.

The information on which the constables reported was then grouped into one of Nideffer’s Quadrants of Attention, which allowed the researchers, among other things, to determine if there was any applicability of this concept to assist in understanding the constables’ perceptions and memories in a high-stress encounter of limited duration.

Only one constable reported that he had acquired information during the confer stage of the experiment. The reports of all the other constables included details on which they were appropriately focused and on which they were thus capable of reporting. Of significant note here is that constables who conferred, whether they wrote reports or not, even if they did not report learning anything during the conferring, made significantly fewer errors on the material about which they were reporting.
Analysis

Results from the Cardiac Monitors

The constables’ pulse rates during the incident were monitored by means of Polar cardiac monitors. Mr. Justin Dixon of the Metropolitan Police Physical Education Branch placed the monitors on the constables before they entered the staging room. After the constables completed the scenario, including being interviewed or writing a report, they were tested on the Metropolitan Police Fitness “Bleep” Test to assess their heart rate at maximum effort. Mr. Dixon then collected and analyzed the data. His report on 43 of the constables from this study is included in here as Addendum 1.

The scenario was constructed to be rapidly unfolding, highly dynamic, complex, and very stressful. The cardiac measurements revealed that the researchers had accomplished this goal. The constables’ pulse rates spiked to an average of 75% of their maximum during the conflict situation in the scenario. Very significantly, it also spiked at 65 to 70% of their maximum when they were reporting on the conflict moment during their interviews. For illustration, a constable coded 001 in Group 1 had a maximum pulse rate of 198 beats per minute on the fitness test. During the shotgun blast, his pulse spiked at 159 beats per minute.

Nideffer’s Quadrants of Attention

The research project was primarily designed to assess whether constables in the middle of a violent, rapidly unfolding conflict would develop a perceptual distortion known as tunnel vision. Also investigated was the relevance of applying Nideffer’s Quadrants of Attention philosophy (Nideffer & Sharpe, 1978) to reports from the constables involved in this study, with the goal of assisting researchers in understanding and quantifying a constable’s perception and attention in a stressful, use-of-force encounter in law enforcement. Further, a pilot study was conducted on various means to obtain the memory of a constable after an incident.

The information about the incident provided by each constable, whether the constable was interviewed or wrote reports, was transcribed and then three independent graders graded every word in the transcription. Every item of clothing, thought, behavior, movement, etc., in the scenario, as noted by each constable, was graded for its appropriate fit into one of Nideffer’s Quadrants of Attention. For example, if the constable noted the double barrels of the shotgun, it was graded as being an item that was entered into the External Narrow focus of attention. If the constable thought they were in danger, it was an Internal Broad focus. If the constable thought he had to move to the pillar, it was an Internal Narrow focus. If the constable noted the assailant fell to the floor, it was an External Broad focus. The data was then entered into the appropriate attentional quadrant. This then gave the researchers a numerical indicator of the number of items the constables accurately remembered when they were engaged in the simulated critical incident and the placement of those items in Nideffer’s Quadrants of Attention. It is obvious that the constables could not see everything occurring at any instant in this encounter, but the items that the constables remembered at the end of the incident are a good indicator of their focus of attention during the incident.
A variety of statistical analyses were then applied to the data. However, in the author’s very first undergraduate class in research, the students were encouraged to “eyeball” the data first to see if any trends in the data “popped out” at them. The following tables are presented in that spirit.

Table 1. Average Score per Constable per Quadrant of Attention for All Experimental Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Narrow</th>
<th>Broad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>9.40</td>
<td>4.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External</td>
<td>35.37</td>
<td>19.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The purpose of presenting the data in this format is to illustrate the blatantly obvious nature of this data. The above table illustrates the average score in each quadrant for the average constable when the data is combined across all of the research conditions. For example, the reader will note that the External Narrow quadrant of attention generally has nine times more data recorded in it than the Internal Broad quadrant. The Internal Narrow quadrant is generally over twice as large as the Internal Broad quadrant. The External Narrow quadrant is roughly about twice as large as the External Broad quadrant. Therefore, the researchers can state unequivocally that during the most stressful component of this simulation, the constables experienced a narrow focus of attention and were externally tunneled specifically on items or behavior that were crucial for their performance in this situation. This tunnel vision or selective attention is characteristic of all humans who engage in this type of encounter, whether they have received law enforcement training or not. This study illustrates that this phenomenon also occurs in well-trained peace officers.

The following is presented for a more detailed analysis of the data. Tables and figures reflecting a higher level of analysis are included in the Addenda and are available for review.

Condition I: Nonconferred and Wrote Reports (11 Constables)

A total of 11 constables were in this group. Immediately after participating in the scenario, each of the teams of constables in this experimental condition returned to the briefing room, where they returned their equipment. They were immediately separated after this. They were instructed to not discuss the incident with anyone. They were then told to go to an area where they could write their reports and that they should turn them in when they were completed. At some point after writing their reports and during the same shift, they took their fitness test.

The following table includes the average scores for the constables, recorded in each of the four quadrants of attention for this group. The numbers listed in each quadrant of the chart are averages in that quadrant for all of the scores of the 11 constables across all three graders.
Table 2. Average Score per Constable – Nonconferred and Wrote Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nonconferred and Reports Totals</th>
<th>Narrow</th>
<th>Broad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External</td>
<td>18.70</td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The constables who wrote reports in this category provided the least amount of information despite being requested to write full and complete reports about everything in the incident. They reported on the essence of the incident, providing little extra information. Their descriptions of the incident and the subjects, even when they were mentioned, were the barest, with little or no elaboration on such things as behavior or clothing. The constables’ reports on their thought processes during the incident were also extremely sparse. Note that the average score per constable was fewer than two thoughts per constable per incident for an Internal Broad focus.

The reader should keep in mind that the pattern of the constables’ scores regardless of the number of items listed is overwhelmingly large in the External category and exceptionally larger by far in the External Narrow category as compared to the External Broad category.

Simply stated, the constables who wrote reports primarily reported on items that they were externally and narrowly focused on while they were engaged in attempting to respond and control the events in the scenario.

Condition II: Conferred and Wrote Reports (14 Constables)

Fourteen constables were in this group. The teams of constables in this experimental condition also immediately returned to the briefing room where they returned their equipment. They were then allowed to discuss the incident for a brief period of time (no more than 20 minutes) and then were instructed to go to an area where they could write their reports and turn their reports in when they were completed. They were also instructed that after the initial conferring, they were not to discuss the incident further with anyone. At some point after writing their report and during the same shift, they took their fitness test.

Table 3. Average Score per Constable – Conferred and Wrote Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conferred and Report Totals</th>
<th>Narrow</th>
<th>Broad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>1.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External</td>
<td>22.43</td>
<td>12.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Constables in this experimental condition, on average, reported the same amount of data in all categories as the constables who wrote reports and did not confer.

Comparison Between Conferring and Nonconferring in the Report Category

Generally, the researchers would not have expected to have a difference in the Internal category between these two groups as this category relates to the constables’
internal reflections and awareness of their own behavior. Considering that most of the constables did not mention their thoughts or make comments about their own behavior during the conferring and that other constables did not elicit their thoughts, there should be no difference in this category between Condition I and Condition II. If there was any expected increase, it should have occurred in the External category because of the conferring. However, during the conferring process, the researchers observed that the constables did not appear to learn anything “new” during the conferring. Therefore, it is not surprising that there was not a difference between conferring and nonconferring in any of the quadrants in the Report category. This is particularly true when what the constables reported was so sparse.

The most significant difference between the conferring and nonconferring report groups occurred in the number of errors that each group made. This is explained more completely in the “Error Rates” section. It is important to note here that in the External Narrow quadrant (which is the quadrant that the constables would be noting the behavior of the subject, the threat presented, etc.), the group that did not confer had four times more errors in their written reports than the group that conferred. This may mean that even though the constables did not comment that they learned anything new during the conferring, some accurate information processing was occurring.

**Condition III: Nonconferred and Interviewed (6 Constables)**

Six constables were in this group. The constables in this group returned to the briefing room right after the scenario and turned in their equipment. They were immediately separated after this and asked to not discuss the incident with anyone. They were then instructed to go to an area where they could be individually interviewed using a cognitive interview format. At some point after being interviewed and during the same shift, they took their fitness test.

Constables in both of the interviewing conditions provided much more information overall than did constables who wrote reports. This was particularly true in the Internal quadrant. The added information was generally two to four times the amount of information provided by the report group, dependent upon the quadrant. In the External quadrant, the interviewed constables generally provided about twice the information as the constables who wrote reports. The reader will note, however, that particularly in the External Narrow quadrant, which was the primary focus area of all of the constables in the scenario, the error rates of those constables who were interviewed was exceptionally high in comparison to those who wrote reports (see the section on “Error Rates” for more information).

**Table 4. Average Score per Constable – Nonconferred and Interviewed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nonconferred and Interviewed Totals</th>
<th>Narrow</th>
<th>Broad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>17.20</td>
<td>9.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External</td>
<td>56.83</td>
<td>28.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that the pattern of the constables’ scores regardless of the number of items listed in each quadrant is overwhelmingly large in the External category versus the Internal category and exceptionally higher by far in the External Narrow as
compared to the External Broad quadrant. This means that regardless of how the constables reported their information, all the constables had experienced the same type of perceptual process.

**Condition IV: Conferred and Interviewed (15 Constables)**

Fifteen constables were in this group. The constables in this experimental condition also returned to the briefing room where they returned their equipment. They then conferred with each other immediately after the incident, discussing the elements of the incident for a brief period of time. Sometimes the discussions lasted up to 15 or 20 minutes. They did not write a report. After conferring, they were individually interviewed using a cognitive interview format. At some point after being interviewed, and during the same shift, they took their fitness test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Conferred and Interviewed Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Narrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>15.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External</td>
<td>51.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, note that the pattern of the constables’ scores regardless of the number of items listed is overwhelmingly large in the External category versus the Internal category and exceptionally higher by far in the External Narrow as compared to the External Broad.

**Comparison Between Conferring and Nonconferring in the Interview Category**

As with the report groups, generally the researchers would not have expected to have a difference in the Internal category between these two groups in the Interview categories. This is because this Internal quadrant relates to the constables’ internal thoughts, reflections, and awareness of their own behavior. Considering that most of the constables in this condition also did not mention their thoughts or make comments about their own behavior during the conferring and that other constables did not elicit their thoughts, there should not be a difference in the Internal category between Conditions III and IV. If there was any expected increase, it should have occurred in the External category because of the conferring. However, during the conferring process, the researchers observed here as well that the constables did not appear to learn anything “new” during the conferring. Therefore, it is not surprising that there was not a difference between the information reported by the constables in any of the quadrants in the Interview condition from those constables who conferred and those who did not confer.

The most significant difference between the conferring and nonconferring interviewed groups occurred in the number of errors that each group made. This is explained more completely in the “Error Rates” section. It is important to note here that in the External Narrow quadrant (which is the quadrant in which the constables would be noting the behavior of the subject, the threat presented, etc.), the group that did not confer had 25% more errors than the group that conferred.
Narrow Versus Broad Focus of Attention

When the averages were combined across both the narrow and broad focus of attentions, the average across all of the experimental groups (conferred, nonconferred, interviews, reports) was four times larger in the External than in the Internal categories. The average for the External focus was 55.31 items noted versus 13.47 items noted for an Internal focus.

| Average Score per Constable Conferred/Nonconferred Interviews/Reports Narrow/Broad Combined |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Internal                        | 13.47                           |
| External                        | 55.31                           |

The data is overwhelmingly clear that the constables had an External focus of attention.

Table 7. Average Score per Constable for Narrow and Broad Focus—Internal and External Groups Combined

| Average Score per Constable Conferred/Nonconferred Interviews/Reports Internal/External Combined |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Narrow                          | 44.77                           |
| Broad                            | 24.01                           |

When the scores are combined across all of the conditions and compared to a Narrow versus Broad focus of attention, the Narrow focus of attention had an average of 44.77 items recorded for the average constable. The Broad focus of attention had 24.01 items recorded. This was true even though the graders were very liberal in putting External items in the Broad category. Therefore, as supported by the data, it is overwhelmingly clear that the constables had a Narrow focus of attention.

This means that when the constables were engaged in the performance of assessing and reacting to the scenario and in engaging the hostage taker with their firearm, they had an External and a Narrow focus of attention. For the most part, because of the close proximity of the encounter, the constables were not using their sights but were using a kinesthetic alignment (point shooting). Although this method of shooting did not require sight alignment, it still occupied some portion of the constables’ attentional processes.

The important element about an External focus of attention, particularly an External and a Narrow focus of attention as most frequently occurred in our study, is that the process allows the constables to focus on what is important to them at the time. Unfortunately, they then can miss other items that later may turn out to be important. For example, if the constable’s attentional processes at the moment
of the shooting were on the alignment of their gun on the hostage taker’s center mass, they then did not note anything about or paid minimal attention to anything else about the subject at that moment. This includes the specific movement of the subject, the subject’s clothing, the subject’s actions toward the hostage, etc. Under this condition, they would note that the subject had moved, for example, but be unable to explain the precise frame-by-frame movement of the hostage taker as they were simultaneously engaged in shooting.

This matches the research results found in the attentional process of successful athletes. Wulf (2007) notes that an External focus of attention is a primary prerequisite for successful performance in an athletic competition. Vickers (2007) adds that an External and Narrow focus is vital for successful performance of a psychomotor skill in athletics, from golf to basketball to football. It is reasonable that trained firearms officers will function in a similar psychomotor fashion to successful athletes when the officers are performing a psychomotor skill.

Therefore, the data is overwhelmingly clear that the constables had an External Narrow focus of attention during the most stressful component of the scenario, and this appeared to facilitate their performance and effectiveness but simultaneously impaired their ability to provide full and complete reports about the incident.

The use of Nideffer’s Quadrants of Attention (Nideffer & Sharpe, 1978) was overwhelmingly supported as being an appropriate tool for categorizing and understanding a constable’s focus of attention during a high-stress force encounter. To use law enforcement terminology, the research overwhelmingly supported the constables’ experience of tunnel vision and tunnel hearing or perceptual distortions during this type of encounter.

The results of the research also clearly illustrate that the constables’ focus of attention in this type of encounter was primarily external in both the External Narrow and External Broad modes. The constables who were interviewed had four times more observations in the External than in the Internal quadrant. The constables who wrote reports had over six times more information in the External quadrants than the Internal quadrants.

Even though the constables were more focused on the External quadrants, they were more narrowly focused than broadly focused. Even when they were broadly focused, they still were narrowly focused on a particular person or event in the environment. This was in spite of the graders being very generous in grading the External Broad category. For example, if the constable noted the shotgun assailant was wearing a shirt, the constable would get a score in the External Broad category. If they noted the shirt had any particular features, such as short sleeves, then the constable would get a score in the External Narrow category.

As noted, an External and in particular an External Narrow focus of attention significantly facilitates a focus of attention on a threat and, in turn, facilitates great performance by the constable; however, it also renders the constable attentionally blind to anything that they are not focused upon. To paraphrase one constable, “I knew what I saw, but I don’t know what I didn’t see.”
Also, the constables’ accuracy of their reported memory waned the further they were away from the details on which they were specifically focused. For example, every constable who could see the shotgun usually reported a quite detailed and accurate description of the shotgun. They were accurate about the shooter’s action while they were focused on it. They were less accurate about the clothing the shooter was wearing. They were often quite unobservant or inaccurate about the hostage, and they almost never noted the behavior or action of anyone other than the shooter. Further, they almost never noted the presence or action of the shooter’s brother and even other constables—unless, of course, that constable or brother was somehow directly involved with them such as being directly between them and the assailant with the shotgun. Subsequently, we can state that the constables’ focus of attention was very narrowly driven and externally specific. However, depending upon the constable, the constable’s location, what the constable was attempting to do, and so on, the constable’s specific focus varied and evolved during the incident and was often unique to that constable and the behavior on which that constable was focused and/or on what he or she was attempting to accomplish.

Thus, we can definitely state that the constables in this study had a very selective attention that was driven by the evolving incidents in the scenario and the constables’ own attempts to respond to those events. They were attentionally blind to anything on which they were not focused.

This means that the constables made errors in reporting items, particularly items or behavior that occurred on the periphery of their attentional focus. We also recorded their errors.

**Error Rates**

As shown, the constables were both accurate and inaccurate in regards to their recollections about their incident from the moment of the assault by the hostage taker up to the constables’ control of the incident. These error rates during that portion of their incident will be discussed in this section. However, before the data in this portion is discussed, it is important to note that the constables were also both accurate and inaccurate in their reports on the scenario before the assault by the hostage taker. For instance, the constables did not note or report on the relationship between the individual engaged in the confrontation at the front desk and the wounded bank robber. In the scenario created for this research, this relationship was not important; however, it was also not noted by the constables during the initial conflict at the desk.

The results of the analysis of the error rates—that is, the number of items the constables incorrectly reported on—is truly astounding and definitely needs to be investigated further.

The following error rates were observed across the only quadrants that error rates could objectively be assessed in: External Narrow and External Broad. Under these conditions, the constables noted some particular behavior or items in their reports or interviews, and the graders could then assess whether or not that behavior actually occurred and was documented by video from one or more of the three video cameras recording the constable’s scenario.
The following tables present the error rate data grouped by the two viable foci of attention and the four treatment groups. Table 8 simply depicts the average number of errors for each constable in each category. Table 9 combines both the averages for the error rates for each constable in each category and the average number of items the constables reported in each of the categories. By combining them in this way, it is possible to assess the volume of items reported and the error rate in relation to that volume.

Table 8. Average Number of Errors per Constable in the External Broad and External Narrow Quadrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>External Broad</th>
<th>External Narrow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonconferred/Report</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferred/Report</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonconferred/Interviewed</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>6.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferred/Interviewed</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. Average Number of Errors per Constable in the External Broad and External Narrow Quadrants Compared to the Average Number of Items Reported in Those Quadrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>External Broad</th>
<th>External Narrow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonconferred/Report</td>
<td>0.45/12.00 items</td>
<td>0.60/18.70 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferred/Report</td>
<td>0.50/12.45 items</td>
<td>0.14/22.43 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonconferred/Interviewed</td>
<td>1.60/28.50 items</td>
<td>6.60/56.50 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferred/Interviewed</td>
<td>1.40/29.33</td>
<td>4.50/51.00 items</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reader will note that the lowest error rates were recorded in the Report categories by the constables who wrote reports. The average number of errors for each constable in this category was somewhat less than half of one error per incident per constable. The errors were 0.45 per constable in the External Broad for the nonconferred/report condition, 0.50 per constable in the External Broad conferred/report category, 0.60 per constable in the External Narrow for the nonconferred/report condition, and an astounding 0.14 per constable for the External Narrow category for those constables who conferred and wrote reports.

This may be a product of the small amount of information provided in the constables’ written reports. The smaller amount of information provided by the constables in this category meant the constables had less chance of being mistaken.

The notable exception in the Report category was the exceptionally small number of errors in the conferred/report category for the External Narrow quadrant of attention. Fourteen constables were included in this group, and each constable reported 22.43 items or behaviors in this quadrant. The average error rate for every 22.43 items was 0.14. It is an amazing statistic. Framed another way, 14 constables provided a total of 314 correct details (14 constables × 22.43 items) in this category and only recorded two factual errors in all of that data.
The smaller number of items reported in this category cannot be the only reason for this incredible statistic. The constables in the nonconferred/report group had about as many items noted but had four times the error rate in this category (0.60). This is still a small number, but it is about four times greater than the error rate of the constables who conferred and wrote reports.

Also, those constables who were interviewed, although they provided, on average, more than twice the amount of information in the External quadrants, they had an error rate for that information that was very high. Although the difference under the interview conditions between those constables who conferred and those who did not confer is not as dramatic as the difference in the report writing conditions, the constables who conferred and then were interviewed made 25% fewer errors in the External Narrow quadrant than the constables who did not confer and then were interviewed. This means the constables who conferred and then were interviewed were considerably more accurate in reporting those behaviors that they were narrowly focused or tunneled in on than the constables who did not confer and were interviewed.

The noticeable comparison is on the error rate in the “External Narrow” quadrant between those constables who conferred and wrote a report and those who did not confer and were interviewed. Those who conferred and wrote reports provided about a third of the information about that which they were “Externally” and “Narrowly” focused on as compared to the information provided by those who did not confer and were interviewed. However, those who conferred and wrote reports had fewer errors by volumes in this quadrant than did the constables who did not confer and were interviewed. The constables who conferred and wrote a report had an error rate of 0.14 per constable. This means when all the errors are combined across all of the constables in this category, only two errors were made by all of the 14 constables in all of the information they provided about that which they were externally and narrowly focused on.

In comparison, the constables who did not confer and were interviewed had an average of 6.6 errors per constable in this category in the External Narrow quadrant. The constables in this category reported a total of 339 items (56.5 items per constable × 6 constables) and had 40 errors in total. There were only six constables in this category, and although statistical analysis not provided in this report indicates the data is still reliable, due to the small sample size, the author of this paper is still suspicious. The error rate for those six constables who did not confer and were interviewed is 47 times that of those who conferred and wrote reports.

Another interesting result was found when comparing the error rate of those who conferred and wrote reports with those who conferred and were interviewed. Fifteen constables were in the confer and interview group. This is a significant size difference from the six constables in the nonconfer and interview group and should result in a good comparison. Each constable in the confer and interview group reported an average of 51 items in the External Narrow quadrant. This is a total of 765 items (51 items × 15 constables), and they had a total of 66 errors compared to the two errors for those 14 constables who conferred and wrote reports.

Regardless of whether the constables conferred or not, the interviews led to a significant number of inaccuracies in the information that the constables reported. It is the observation of the graders and the author of this paper that the primary
source of the errors dealt with information on the edge of the constables’ focus of attention. The constables worked hard to provide accurate information, but the interviews apparently led them to expand on items that they were less knowledgeable about.

Discussion

A very credible conclusion from the results of this research might be that interviews produced significantly more data particularly in regard to the items and behavior that the constables were focused on during the incident, but those who were interviewed also had a significantly higher error rate on that increased quantity of information. The written reports produced less information but produced fewer errors and, therefore, were much more accurate in their totality. Conferring, as was done in our study, produced fewer errors around that information on which the constables conferred, which was primarily items and behavior in an External Narrow focus of activity and attention. Therefore, a recommendation from the results of this study would be that when constables are going to have to report on an incident, the most accurate reporting of the details is going to be provided by those constables who have had a chance to confer and write a report. A further conclusion might be that the fewer details the constables provide about the incident, the fewer errors they will make especially if they report only on the behavior that they were most specifically focused on.

This study and others, such as Just et al.’s (2001), inform us of the value of a single, undivided attentional focus. They also inform us of the liability of this same process, which results in, among other things, inattentional blindness to anything the constable is not focused on.

LeDoux (2002) and Damasio (1994) inform us as well that when human beings are performing under a high level of threat, they lose higher cognitive functioning which includes their executive functions such as the ability to critically think and perform logical analysis.

The scenario created in this study caused a high level of stress in the constables, as measured by their self-reports and the scores from heart monitors. This resulted in a significant narrowing of their attention to the hostage taker/assailant and his shotgun and their response to that threat. This narrow focus of attention toward the rapidly evolving and very threatening situation occupied all of the constables’ attentional processes. This narrow focus of attention facilitated the constables’ perception of and response to the threat, but it also created a significant cognitive impairment.

It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the constables or any human to be so intently and emotionally engaged in a scenario such as this one for such a brief period of time and also to simultaneously be critically assessing all of the related elements in the scenario as well as their own behavior. For instance, most of the constables noted that they heard the shotgun being fired, and many noted that it had been fired twice before it had been pointed at them. They also noted as it was being pointed at them that it was a double-barreled shotgun.

Only one team of three constables out of a total of 46 constables was able to note that the hostage taker had fired both barrels from the double-barreled shotgun.
and, subsequently, it was no longer loaded with viable rounds. That group noted this after they had attempted to verbally control the hostage taker who was pointing the shotgun directly at them. When the hostage taker, now with enough time, attempted to reload his gun, these constables saw that it was empty and rushed to control him.

This was not a behavior that the researchers were looking for, but it is consistent with the focus and the finding of this study. That is, that human beings attempting to perform in a high-stress incident of short duration lack the attentional processes and cognitive functioning to engage in life-saving behavior while simultaneously critically analyzing that behavior. Given the opportunity and time of the course, this process could occur as it did in a small number of participants in our study.

**Conclusion**

The scenario, although only symbolically threatening, produced a high level of stress for all but one constable in the study. The research results were indisputable. Selective attention and inattentional blindness or tunnel vision/hearing were apparent in every constable except one. That constable stood away from his group and the incident and was not involved at all as a participant in the scenario. Other than that, every constable’s attentional focus during the shooting portion of the scenario was narrowly directed at some element or subject in the encounter. The constables’ External focus of attention was significantly greater than their Internal focus of attention, and their External Narrow focus of attention was significantly greater than their External Broad focus of attention.

The results of this study are, thus, incontrovertible. The constables all experienced the erroneously termed perceptual distortion of tunnel vision. They were able to report primarily on those elements of the incident that they were attentionally focused on, and their focus was primarily external and narrow. They were unable to report on or reported with varying degrees of error about those elements that they were not directly focused on. The constables who conferred reported more items correctly about the information they conferred about. These constables also had fewer errors in their reported information than did those constables who did not confer. Those constables who wrote reports provided less information by about two thirds than those who were interviewed, but the constables who wrote reports had significantly fewer errors than those constables who were interviewed.

Unfortunately, the researchers were not able to schedule the number of constables needed at the time of the testing and so the population of participants in all of the subgroups was not large enough to ensure reliable results across all of the experimental conditions.

Therefore, the author of this article, based on this study, cannot recommend a particular practice for interviewing constables after an emotionally intense incident. This study was not set up to specifically address this issue, and although the data is amazing, the sample in the subgroups, because they were not large enough, could not provide the degree of reliability the author would prefer. Therefore, the author is recommending another study that focuses primarily on the most effective means to accurately and fully record a constable’s statement. This additional study is needed to more appropriately and empirically address this issue.
Acknowledgments

This study was funded by a grant from the Constables’ Branch Board of the London Metropolitan Police Federation. The Force Science Institute and the Force Science Research Center at Minnesota State University, Mankato are very grateful for this funding and support.

Two individuals from the Constables’ Branch Board need to be recognized for their special efforts in ensuring this project was funded and conducted. The first is Constable Dave Bennett, whose foresight and leadership were foundational in the conduct of this study. The second individual is Constable Dave Blocksidge. His initiative was responsible for the first contact between the Force Science Research Center and the Constables’ Branch Board. He has continued to be an avid supporter of the research goals of FSRC and is responsible for a considerable portion of the project coordination that was required to conduct this study.

The study participants came from the firearms department of the London Metropolitan Police. Without their participation, the project could not have happened. The interviewers came from the Department of Professional Standards. Both of these groups gave generously of their time and professional talents, and we are grateful for their contributions. Recognition also needs to be expressed to Dr. Amina Memon from the University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, Scotland. She provided a review of the cognitive interviewing process for all of the interviewers just prior to the interviews.

Patricia Thiem, the Chief Operating Officer from Force Science Institute deserves special mention for the coordination of the project, the sacrifices she made during the project, and the critical recommendations that she has provided to make this study as successful as it was. Dr. Alexis Artwhol also lent her considerable talent and acting ability to the study as well and deserves special mention for her dedication to this project and to the welfare of the line officer.

The work of Mr. Justin Dixon of the Metropolitan Police Physical Training Branch was invaluable in providing insight into the level of cardiac response and the implied “emotional arousal” experienced by the constables at the time of the incident and how that compared to the constables’ overall fitness level.

Bibliography


**Addendum 1**

**A Study of Heart Rates in Metropolitan Police Firearms Officers in Relation to Scenario Training.**

J. E. Dixon

**1.0 Introduction**

As part of an ongoing research remit directed by and generated by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) branch of the Police Federation, the Metropolitan Police Physical Education Branch (PEB) became involved in a defined study commissioned by the MPS Police Federation and undertaken by the appointed research director, Professor William Lewinski. The area of interest in the main study was the analysis of movement during a contrived dynamic scenario involving firearms—specifically, the discharge of a shotgun at the officers and the subsequent return of fire. This data would then be scrutinised and compared to the ability to recall the events by the officers involved (all officers were MPS-trained firearms officers) in a taped interview conducted after the scenario. The nature of the interview and the time at which it occurred post the scenario were changeable parameters. The PEB’s role in the study was primarily to monitor and record heart rate telemetry from the officers as they progressed through the various dynamic and interview scenarios.

**2.0 Methodology**

The data collection phase of the study took place in late October and early November 2006 spread over several days. Several different MPS firearms Operational Command Units (OCUs) were involved, namely CO6 (Diplomatic Protection), CO18 (Aviation Security), and CO19 (Specialist Firearms). In addition to the three full-time firearms OCUs, officers from the TSG (Territorial Support Group) who were trained at a basic firearms level were also involved. These four OCUs yielded a total of 43 officers with useable heart rate traces (out of the 46 tested). Prior to the scenario taking place, officers signed a consent form and had their height and weight taken. They were then fitted with a specific heart rate belt (Polar team system, Polar, Oi, Finland), which was able to log and record their heart rate response up to 12 hours. They then went through the scenario, underwent an interview, and then undertook the Metropolitan Police Fitness “Bleep” Test to determine their VO\(_2\) maximal oxygen uptake utilising a portable pulmonary gas analyser (Metamax, Cortex, Leipzig, Germany). Once all heart rate related data was collected, it was collated and analysed specifically to look for a correlation between the maximum heart rate attained during the firearms scenario and the maximum heart rate attained during the interview process.
3.0 Results

All the results shown have been determined from the applied methodology as previously outlined.

Results show the descriptive measurements of all subjects, the differences in peak heart rates elicited between the variables of firing a shotgun and sitting in a memory retrieval interview, and the relation between heart rate responses during firing the shotgun and sitting the interview.

All the results shown are given as minimum, maximum, and mean (SD), following a test for normality of distribution. Statistical analysis was carried out using an F-test for variance followed by a $t$-test for two sample means. Pearson’s correlation coefficient was used to ascertain correlation between heart rate for variables of firing the shotgun and the interview. The statistical results from the data analysis were used for discussion points and for drawing final conclusions. Statistical significance was given at $p < 0.05$.

3.1 Descriptive Statistics

The baseline descriptive statistics of all subjects are presented in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Age in Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43 Males and Females</td>
<td>Minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Forty-six constables were tested, but only 43 had usable heart rates.

3.2 Heart Rate Responses

The minimum, maximum, and mean (SD) and differences between means of the peak heart rate responses of all subjects during the firing of the shotgun and the interview are presented in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Min – bpm</th>
<th>Max – bpm</th>
<th>Mean – bpm</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>F-test sig.</th>
<th>$t$-test sig. (2 tail)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shotgun</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>182.0</td>
<td>141.7</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>0.076</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>137.0</td>
<td>115.2</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: bpm = beat per minute

*Significant at the $p < 0.001$ level
The minimum, maximum, and mean of the peak heart rates elicited for the firing of the shotgun and during the interview were 96.0 versus 85.0 bpm; 182.0 versus 137.0 bpm; 141.7 (SD 16.5) versus 115.2 (SD 11.1), respectively. Heart rates elicited for the firing of the shotgun were higher than those recorded for the interview. An F-test for variance was 3.233 ($p = 0.076$), indicating equal variances between variables. A $t$-test on the means of the peak heart rate responses for the firing of the shotgun and the interview showed a highly significant difference ($p < 0.001$) between the two variables.

### 3.3 Relation Between Heart Rates

The relation between the mean peak heart rate responses for all subjects for the firing of the shotgun and for the interview are presented in Figure 1.

![Figure 1. Mean Peak Heart Rate Responses](image)

*Figure 1. Mean Peak Heart Rate Responses*

A Pearson’s correlation coefficient between mean peak heart rates for the firing of the shotgun and during the interview was $r = 0.126$, which is significant at $p > 0.05$ ($p = 0.422$), indicating a poor relation between the two variables.

### 4.0 Discussion

During the scenario event, heart rate, by observation, was induced due to a psychological trigger(s) as there were no factors present or experienced that would have physiologically induced a higher heart rate. This may have had implications on officer action(s) and decisionmaking during the scenario. Research in firearms scenario training clearly shows a link between stress and performance (Meyerhoff et al., 2004). This would account for the elevated heart rate during the discharge of the shotgun within the scenario. Heart rate response during the interview process was also elevated but not as much as the heart rate response experienced during the training scenario. This response was due to a psychological reaction as no physical activity prior to the interview taking place was observed or recorded. The relationship
between stress, anxiety, and physical performance is well-documented (Kent, 1998), and the poor relation between the two variables as seen in Figure 1 of this document is inconclusive.

5.0 Conclusion

Both the firearms training scenario and the interview were stress-inducing events in all participants. The higher heart rate during the discharge of the shotgun coupled with the analysis shows this to be the more demanding and stress-inducing of the two events. The poor correlation between the two variables within this study is not conclusive proof of the lack of a link, and it is suggested that more research needs to be done in this area.

Addendum 2

The following tables are a more detailed analysis and representation of the average scores of all of the officers averaged across the three graders.

### Combined Data

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### Interview and Conferred Totals

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</table>

Dr. William Lewinski is a professor in the Law Enforcement Program at Minnesota State University, Mankato. He is also the founder and director of the Force Science Research Center at MSUM and is the executive director of the Force Science Institute. He has over 30 years of experience studying officer involved deadly force encounters.

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Police/Public Interaction: Arrests, Use of Force by Police, and Resulting Injuries to Subjects and Officers—A Description of Risk in One Major Canadian City

Chris Butler, Staff Sergeant, Calgary Police Service
Christine Hall, MSc MD FRCPC, Principal Investigator, RESTRAINT Study, Department of Emergency Medicine, Vancouver Island Health Authority

The controversy surrounding the temporal association of subject death in custody with the use of the conducted energy weapon (CEW) by law enforcement officers has identified the critical need for research to document the operational risk profile of use of force modalities, including the CEW. While several police agencies and independent research bodies in the United States have released information that suggests that the appropriate use of the CEW reduces officer and subject injuries (Angelosanto, 2003; Bozeman, 2007; Bozeman & Winslow, 2007; Butte County Law Enforcement, 2005/2006; Cape Coral Police Department, 2004; Cincinnati Police Department, 2005; Minneapolis Police Department, 2007; Orange County Sheriff’s Office/Florida Gulf Coast University Division of Justice, 2004), there is no epidemiological research that either supports or refutes this conclusion within the Canadian policing experience.

Extensive media coverage of events where subjects have died proximal to the use of the CEW by police has heightened concerns about the safety of CEW use. This is augmented by the lack of publication of CEW uses without an adverse outcome and the absence of similarly intense media coverage of persons who die in police custody without the use of the CEW. Thus, publication bias prevents the public and stakeholder community from forming an informed opinion about the actual risk presented by the CEW or other use of force modalities. Similar biased reporting of events has also led the laypublic to have the impression that police use of force is frequent when compared to the overall number of police and public interactions.

Studies in the United States have found that the relative frequency of police use of force (force applied or threatened) when compared with the number of police/public interactions occurs only approximately 1.5% of the time (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001). The actual frequency of events where officers actually applied force versus threatened the use of force is not known.

Other studies in the United States which have investigated the injury potential of use of force methods (non-firearm) have consistently found that the highest citizen and officer injuries occur when physical control (hands-on) tactics are used (Garner et al., 2002; Smith, Kaminski, Rojek, Albert, & Mathis, 2007). The use of CEWs and OC spray has been found to result in lower citizen and officer injury rates (Alpert & Dunham, 2004; Seattle Police Department, 2002; Wahl, 2006).
This study is the first in Canada to document the frequency of use of force by police compared to all police-public interactions, force by police compared to citizen arrest, and injury outcome to both citizens and police by force modality.

**Use of Force and Risk**

A clear understanding of the risk associated with any force intervention is fundamental. A contextual risk comparison considers the balance between what the likely or intended consequences are arising from the application of force (risk) and the acceptability of that risk given the circumstances of the event. A basic, universally accepted tenet of the use of force by police is that the force applied and the risk of its use must be proportional to the seriousness of the crime and the degree of resistance being offered by the subject of police interest. However, without an appreciation of the level of injury or harm likely to result from the use of any type of force modality, sound policies and practices cannot be developed. Adding to the confusion is a lack of published scientific evaluation to counteract the large amount of publicly available incomplete or incorrect information and even intentional artifice.

Critical to the appropriate understanding of anticipated harm from the application of any particular use of force modality is the parallel understanding that use of force incidents are typically dynamic, rapidly evolving and often extremely violent in nature. In this regard, no use of force technique available to police officers can be considered “safe.” The theoretical notion of safety with respect to force intervention techniques and devices used by police is not well-understood by the laypublic in Canada. Far from Merriam-Webster’s dictionary definition of “safe” as “free from risk or harm” and “secure from threat of danger” or “security from risk,” it must be understood that when police officers undertake their duty to preserve the public peace it may become necessary to use force. The application of force by police and the concept of “safety” must therefore be viewed in a contextual framework. This framework is based on the balance between the degree of risk of harm or resistance faced by the police and the use of force options that are reasonably available to the officer and proportionately appropriate at the time force was used. As a result of these dynamic and uncontrollable variables, every use of force encounter between the police and a citizen carries with it the possibility for injury for one or all of the participants, however unexpected that injury might be. In this regard, no use of force technique available to police officers can be considered “safe.”

Another aggravating factor faced by the community in understanding the risk of police use of force has been the intense focus on extremely rare events with a negative outcome. As Garner et al. (2002) stated, “Science and policy making are both weakest when attempting to deal with activities that occur very infrequently. . . . Of course when these events do occur, many are prepared to do ‘post-dictions’ about what caused the event without examining the fact that apparently similar events occur every day without deadly outcome, injury or even complaint” (p. I-18).

**Methodology**

This is a descriptive evaluation of a prospectively collected, comprehensive data set from the Calgary Police Service (CPS) over a two-year span from January 1, 2006, to December 31, 2007. The data that follows is the first review of the overall
experience and does not include an exhaustive review of all potential subgroup evaluations or extensive medical evaluations, which will occur at a later date for these data.

The CPS is a municipal agency policing a city with a population of over one million people. There is no other police agency involved in any way with the police services to this population, thus all interactions fall within the jurisdiction of this single agency and are recorded in its database.

Police interactions are defined as the total calls for service, on-view calls reported by officers, special duty activities, and all traffic stops. Only dispatched calls for service where face-to-face interaction occurred are included.

It is understood that a police/public interaction does not necessarily constitute an arrest nor reflect a charge laid. The total number of police/public interactions was compared to the total number of persons charged with an offence during the same study period. The information for total number of persons charged was obtained from the relevant police databases and includes all subjects charged with criminal, provincial, or municipal offences.

The total number of persons charged with an offence was subsequently compared to the number of those persons arrested by police during the same study period. The data of total persons arrested was obtained from the police service database and includes both subjects arrested-charged-released and subjects arrested-charged-incarcerated (in police custodial facilities). The total number of subjects arrested was then compared with the total number and types of police force required to affect the arrests. Following this, the total number and type of police use of force modalities was then compared to the resulting injuries to the subjects of police interest as well as the resulting injuries to the officers.

Subject characteristics such as presence of alcohol or drug intoxication and the presence of an emotional disturbance are recorded based on the interpretation of the responding officer at the time of the event, as the event unfolded, and as they were recorded on the use of force report form. Since officers in the street do not have the ability to confirm medical histories or consumption records or to perform toxicologic analysis, categorization of these data reflect the officers’ best judgement of the situation at hand and not a classification by information known after the fact. While many critical reviewers would find this classification subjective, officers utilize use of force options based on their assessment of the individual at the time, and assessments of injury patterns and outcomes should reflect those judgements. Simply put, accurate medical histories and toxicologic information are rarely if ever available, and categorization by subsequently known information would alter the generalization of these data to the true field experience which involves the officer’s judgement and the categorization of individuals.

The details of use of force in all police/public interactions were recorded prospectively on a use of force report form completed electronically at the time of the interaction as part of the police report. In the CPS, all aspects of police/public interaction involving the use of force are included in an electronic police report completed by officers in the patrol car following the interaction. Each section of the police report, including use of force, is completed by tick box completion of
section-relevant questions. Text answers are permitted only as subsidization of the detail already included in the tick boxes. Completion of the force-option tick box answers are mandatory, allowing consistent categorization of data rather than reliance on a qualitative assessment of text answers. The final electronic police report cannot be submitted successfully if any section is incomplete, ensuring the completeness of the reports that are submitted. The resultant electronic database has evaluable data, which can be accessed by using simple search criteria.

Obviously, no system of use of force reporting will detect incidents in which police officers use force and choose not to report it. While no agency can realistically claim 100% compliance with form submission, compliance with agency rules and regulations regarding submission of use of force reports must be assumed, and the authors anticipate that the ethical, moral, and professional activities of the average police officer in this agency are represented in these reports. There is no systematic method to track events that are not submitted nor to evaluate compliance, although officers are well aware that the best evidence for an officer during a citizen complaint is reflection of the events in a completed police record.

Use of force report forms are included within the overall electronic record of the case and are subject rather than event specific; more than one use of force report form can be contained within one case file number. Since use of force reporting is subject specific and reflects all use of force involving that subject rather than just for the incident as a whole, in cases where multiple officers respond to events in which multiple subjects are involved, the case number allows for a use of force report specific to each subject involved and tracks the use of force for that subject. For situations in which a single officer responds to multiple offenders, the same details can be evaluated for each subject individually. For cases in which there is a single offender and multiple officers, again the use of force report form is specific to the subject and reflects all use of force carried out involving that subject regardless of which officer(s) applied the force. Thus, each subject’s experience with use of force is recorded, and multiple representations of the same use of force are not included in the database.

Officers’ regimental numbers are allocated to each force option that they apply. Each time an officer applies force to a subject, that officer’s regimental number is allocated to that force; and if that officer reports an injury, it can be tracked. The resulting officer injuries are not always suffered by the officer delivering the force modality; at times, an officer present during the altercation may be injured as part of the restraint process. Text additions to use of force reports obviously can be used to clarify the events.

Data concerning the frequency and type of police use of force was obtained from the system which captures all use of force data at levels beginning at the force level called strikes and stuns. Minor physical compulsion such as handcuffing or low-level pain compliance techniques such as joint locks (e.g., wristlocks, pressure points) are not captured and could not be included in this analysis. The use of firearms to threaten compliance (subjects challenged by officers with guns drawn) is not included in this study, although the authors did note several instances where this had occurred without the application of other force.

Since the database search for this report focuses on the use of force methods utilized by frontline police officers during their course of duties over the two-
year study period, the data reviewed does not include the use of police service dogs (PSD/K9) or the application of tactical responses such as chemical agents, noise flash diversionary devices (NFDD), or kinetic impact projectiles. Instead, the force response options represented in this study are physical control,1 CEWs,2 baton,3 OC spray,4 and the vascular neck restraint (VNR).5 It should be noted that threats to use force, the simple display of the force option (baton, OC spray, or CEW), or the application of the laser light beam of the CEW were not counted as use of force events. While all would argue that demonstration of the capability of exerting force induces compliance in some individuals, such displays would not be expected to incur injury. Inclusion of such demonstrations without actual force application would bias the injury profile toward a lower percentage of risk.

In instances where multiple force options were used, the authors used an Intention to Treat Analysis in order to explore all outcomes from the initial use of force chosen by a patrol officer. Under the Intention to Treat Analysis we describe, if an officer originally decided to use one force option to control the subject but was unsuccessful and had to subsequently resort to other force options, any injuries sustained were ascribed to the original force option.

The Intention to Treat Analysis was used to ensure that injuries incurred through the application of the initial force option were ascribed to it which represents the true worst case scenario for the initial force option chosen. In this way, the effects of having a variation in the initial force option choice are examined and a favorable injury profile is not ascribed to an initial force option that is not effective at first application. In the Intention to Treat Analysis, every subject who begins to be restrained by a force option remains analyzed in that group and has their injuries ascribed to that option. Use of the Intention to Treat Analysis is done to avoid the effects of crossover from one force modality to the other and provides information on the overall effect of availability of multiple force options, including CEW.

However, since the authors were specifically interested in the injury pattern of each restraint method, and for the CEW in particular, the injury pattern specifically associated with the CEW was also explored regardless of where it was used in the use of force events. Thus, all resulting mortality and injury is ascribed to the first force option. For example, if the first control attempt was through the use of the CEW and it was unsuccessful with the subject, requiring subsequent physical control, any injuries incurred by the subject or the officer at any time would be ascribed to the CEW. It is understood that this will overestimate the injuries ascribed to the use of force option initially chosen by the officer.

Injuries included are all injuries reported by the subject or the officer and are not simply those injuries felt to be attributable specifically to the use of force option. For example, if a subject had already slashed his wrists prior to the application of force, the subsequent need for treatment would still be evaluated with respect to the force option used. Similarly, if an officer falls and injures him- or herself during the scuffle, the injury would be ascribed to the force option of interest. While this necessarily overinflates the injury rate, it demonstrates a true worst case scenario of the outcome of use of force. More formal evaluation of the actual injury description will be carried out during a later comprehensive medical review of subject outcomes for these data. In this first exploration of these data, subjects’ medical charts have not been reviewed. It is unknown at this point whether
subjects received medical treatment for psychiatric disorders or from pre-existing injuries; it is only known that subjects required medical care. As a result, the interpretation of the data may oversubscribe the frequency of injuries to the use of force modality.

Reporting of subject injuries by officers is mandated by the electronic use of force report form which cannot be submitted electronically unless this (and all other) sections are completed. Predefined subject injuries are categorized by the completing officer as none, minor, minor-outpatient, hospitalization, or fatal. Medical charts of subjects were not accessible to the police service for the analysis of this data. As a result of the large sample size and large number of subjects, we are confident that the resulting values described are precise.

Officer injuries were also obtained from the electronic use of force database (from the categories of none, minor, minor-outpatient, hospitalization, or fatal) as well as from aggregate data surrounding workers compensation claims and includes the total number of days of abstraction from duty from injuries resulting from use of force incidents during the study period. Medical and individual member Workers Compensation Board data were not accessed.

**Police/Public Interactions, Charges, and Arrests**

During the study period (2006 and 2007), the agency reported 827,022 police/public interactions (2006: \( n = 423,707 \); 2007: \( n = 403,315 \)). Out of the 827,022 police/public interactions, a total of 353,899 (2006: \( n = 182,101 \); 2007: \( n = 171,798 \)) violators were charged with an offence (including all municipal, provincial, and federal offences).

Out of the total 353,899 subjects charged with an offence, police arrested 37,719 subjects (2006: \( n = 20,123 \); 2007: \( n = 17,596 \)). Thus, 10.7% of all subjects charged with an offence were subject to arrest. When compared to all police/public interactions (\( n = 827,022 \)), police arrests accounted for 4.6%.

**Arrest and Use of Force**

In the two-year study period, general police/public interactions were extremely unlikely to result in any use of force. In 827,022 interactions, there were 562 use of force events, or 0.07% of all interactions.

When actual arrests occurred, the use of force remained low. Out of the 37,719 arrests that occurred during the study period, police utilized force (at a level above handcuffing or low-level pain compliance) to affect the arrest on 562 subjects who were resisting at some level. The number of incidents requiring force represented 1.5% of the total number of subjects arrested. Figure 1 represents the breakdown of the types or methods of use of force utilized by police during the arrests of subjects.

Figure 1 represents the breakdown of the types or methods of use of force utilized by police during the arrests of subjects.
Subject Gender and Condition Profile
Out of the 562 use of force events during the study period, male subjects accounted for 93.6% \((n = 526)\) of the population. The physical condition of all subjects on which force was used is represented in Figure 2.

Use of Force and Subject Injury
The reasonableness of police use of force methods needs to be viewed in relation to the relative risk profile (risk of injury outcome) and the level or degree of risk of harm being offered by the subject of police interest. This section of the research describes the subject-injury profile from the five force response options available to the officers in the study site.

The most commonly used use of force methodology in this two-year study was the CEW application at 48.2% of all use of force.

Table 1 summarizes the subject and officer injury patterns between the modalities. No injury or injuries not requiring treatment are not reflected in Table 1.
Table 1. Subject and Officer Injury Patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Subject Injury Requiring Treatment</th>
<th>Officer Injury Requiring Treatment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEW</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empty hand control</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baton</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OC spray</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VNR</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Injury patterns within each restraint/use of force modality are discussed below.

**Conducted Energy Weapons**

During the 562 use of force related arrests, officers utilized CEWs 48.2% \((n = 271)\) of the time. The subject injury profile following the application of the conducted energy device is depicted in Figure 3.

**Figure 3. Conducted Energy Weapons Subject Injury**

![Conducted Energy Weapons Injury Chart]

- None (44.6%; 121)
- Minor (42.4%; 115)
- Minor-outpatient (11.9%; 32)
- Hospitalization (1.1%; 3)
- Fatal (0.0%)

**Physical Control**

During the 562 use of force related arrests, the next most commonly utilized use of force was empty hand physical control, used 38.5% \((n = 216)\) of the time. The subject injury profile following the application of physical control techniques is represented in Figure 4.

**Figure 4. Physical Control Subject Injury**

![Physical Control Injury Chart]

- None (32.9%; 71)
- Minor (49.1%; 106)
- Minor-outpatient (13.9%; 30)
- Hospitalization (4.1%; 9)
- Fatal (0.0%)

**Baton**

During the 562 use of force related arrests, officers utilized the baton only 5.5% \((n = 31)\) of the time. The subject injury profile when the baton is utilized is shown in Figure 5.
Figure 5. Baton Subject Injury

OC Spray
During the 562 use of force related arrests, officers deployed OC spray 4.8% ($n = 27$) of the time. Figure 6 represents the injury profile when OC spray is utilized.

Figure 6. OC Spray Subject Injury

Vascular Neck Restraint
Out of the 562 force-related arrests, police officers used a VNR in 3.0% ($n = 17$) of the events. The injury profile from VNR use is shown in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7. VNR Subject Injury
Use of Force and Officer Injury

This section presents the injury risk profile in relation to injuries sustained by police officers utilizing force to affect the arrest of subjects (see Figures 8-12).

Figure 8. Conducted Energy Weapons Officer Injury

- None (83.4%; 226)
- Minor (13.3%; 36)
- Minor-outpatient (2.2%; 6)
- Hospitalization (1.1%; 3)
- Fatal (0.0%)

Figure 9. Physical Control Officer Injury

- None (77.8%; 168)
- Minor (16.7%; 36)
- Minor-outpatient (4.5%; 10)
- Hospitalization (1.0%; 2)
- Fatal (0.0%)

Figure 10. Baton Officer Injury

- None (71.0%; 22)
- Minor (16.1%; 5)
- Minor-outpatient (12.9%; 4)
- Hospitalization (0.0%)
- Fatal (0.0%)

Figure 11. OC Spray Officer Injury

- None (88.9%; 24)
- Minor (11.1%; 3)
- Minor-outpatient (0.0%)
- Hospitalization (0.0%)
- Fatal (0.0%)
Figure 12. VNR Officer Injury

Officer Injury and Abstraction from Duty

In addition to the foregoing, during the study period, the agency reported the abstraction from duty profile resulting from injuries sustained by police officers during arrest-related events. Officers filed 195 arrest-related injury compensation reports during 2006 and 2007. To put this into a contextual comparison with the total number of use of force incidents reported (562), officers filed an injury compensation claim in 34.7% of the events.8

These injuries resulted in 797 days of complete abstraction from duty (2006: \( n = 414 \); 2007: \( n = 383 \)). Modified or “light” duty (not on patrol) resulting from arrest-related injuries reported by the agency was 2,035 days (2006: \( n = 1,173 \); 2007: \( n = 862 \)).

Study Findings

- The use of force by police was rare when compared to the overall number of police/public interactions, occurring only 0.07% of the time.
- Arrests occurred in only 4.6% of all police/public interactions
- Use of force by police occurred in 1.5% of all arrests, and arrests were accomplished without the use of force in 98.5% of arrest events.
- Males accounted for 93.6% of all citizens on which force was used.
- 88.1% of all subjects requiring force were under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol or some degree of emotional illness.
- The use of OC spray, when effective, resulted in injuries in 3.7% of subjects.9,10 Subjects restrained by OC spray experienced a 9.2% lower frequency of medical treatment than those subjects who were restrained with a CEW.
- Following VNR, 6% of subjects required some form of medical treatment, and 94% of subjects did not require medical treatment.11 Subjects restrained by a VNR experienced a 7% lower frequency of medical treatment than when compared to those subjects restrained with a CEW.
- The use of CEWs resulted in fewer citizen and officer injuries than either physical control or the baton. Thirteen percent of CEW use was associated with subject injury requiring some treatment in hospital, and 87% of all CEW uses
resulted in no or minor subject injuries.\textsuperscript{12} In 96.7\% of all CEW uses, officers received either no or only minor injuries. There were 9.6\% fewer officer injuries requiring medical treatment when a CEW was used when compared to when a baton was used.

- Following baton use, citizens received injuries requiring medical treatment in 29.0\% of all cases, and officers required medical treatment in 12.9\%. Of those who were controlled with a baton, 16.1\% more subjects sustained injuries requiring medical treatment than with a CEW.

**Limitations**

While the researchers would have preferred to conduct an analysis of data from multiple police agencies across Canada, this effort was confounded by the fact that there is no consistent national database for collecting police use of force information. The statistical reporting of police use of force is not mandated by the federal government nor is it consistently collected at provincial governmental levels. Many major police agencies collect their own corporate use of force data; however, the nature and type of data is inconsistent from agency to agency making a direct comparison or analysis impossible.

Since this study involves only one major Canadian city, it cannot be said to necessarily reflect a broad representation of the risk profile of police use of force in Canada in general but only to those agencies whose policing methodologies and resources are similar to the study centre. This data was also confounded by the fact that in some police/public interactions reported as one interaction more than one public person was present. For example, in a traffic stop, the police/public interaction is recorded as one although oftentimes there is more than one person present in the motor vehicle of interest. Likewise, an on view call of checking a suspicious person is recorded as one police/public interaction although more than one person may have been present at the time. It is acknowledged that the data analyzed underrepresents the total number of police/public interactions. However, this underrepresentation results in a worse case scenario with respect to the likely or anticipated harm resulting from the police application of force.

Reports of injuries to subjects require that the officer is aware of the subject injury at the time the use of force report was completed. Injuries that were either not observed by the officer or presented with delayed onset after the police/public interaction could not be included in this analysis.

Reports of injuries to officers required that the subject officer reported or recorded the injury either on the use of force report or completed a workers compensation report. Anecdotally, it is typical that many police officers work within a culture that often accepts minor (nondisabling) injuries such as soft tissue injuries to be part of “doing the job” and these injuries are not reported and could not be part of this analysis. Even so, the researchers are confident that injuries to subjects and officers of a nature above those considered being minor (no treatment or outpatient only) would be reported in the relevant police databases.
Discussion

The commonly held belief that the conducted energy weapon carries a significant risk of injury or death for the population of interest is not supported by the data. Within the force modality framework most commonly available to police officers, the CEW was less injurious than either the baton or empty hand physical control.

Although the study used the intention to treat analysis, when we removed the incidents where the use of the CEW was unsuccessful (n = 14) (thereby requiring subsequent alternative force options—typically physical control), the safety profile of the CEW rose to 88.7% (i.e., no injury or minor injury to subjects only).

The baton was the most injurious use of force method (for both officers and subjects) utilized followed next by empty hand physical control. This data suggests the need for agencies to seek out alternatives to the baton and hands-on physical control tactics if they wish to reduce the frequency and seriousness of police officer and citizen injuries.

Arising from this research project was a clearly identified need for a legislated national police use of force reporting system or, minimally, provincially mandated reporting systems that are consistently aligned on a national level. The stakeholder community would be greatly served and public confidence in its policing services improved by the implementation of a national database reporting system for police use of force.

Further Research

More research is needed to determine the impact of multiple agency variables on police use of force and injury outcome. Further investigation could reveal whether agencies of different size; in different geographical regions; and with different resources, training, and policies results in variations in the injury-risk profile from the use of force.

With respect to the use of physical control and officer and subject injury, during the data review, a noticeable pattern of relationship was observed between the number of police officers present and the frequency and nature of injuries sustained by both citizens and officers. We observed from the aggregate data that more officer and subject injuries occurred in circumstances where only one officer was present. While by no means scientific, this pattern indicates that further research should be conducted to determine how the numbers of officers working together to effect physical control of resisting subjects changes the injury outcome.

Endnotes

1 Physical control means empty hand control tactics above the level of pain compliance techniques such as joint locks and pressure points. These include techniques such as nerve motor point striking and stunning techniques and grounding techniques such as arm-bar takedowns and other balance displacement methods.

2 In the study site, the CEW utilized is the Taser® X26.
In the study site, the baton utilized is the Monadnock Autolock® expandable baton with power safety tip.

In the study site, the OC spray utilized is Sabre® Red (10% oleoresin capsicum).

In the study site, the VNR utilized is the LVNR® as authorized by the National Law Enforcement Training Center.

*Minor* injuries include visible injuries of a trifling nature which did not require medical treatment. *Minor-Outpatient* includes injuries which require medical treatment either at the scene, at the cell block, or at the hospital but which do not result in hospitalization. *Hospitalization* injuries include injuries which required hospitalization for treatment.

Charges relating to traffic offences accounted for 310,255 of the total events.

In a 1993-1995 Miami-Dade study, officers reported injury proximal to use of force events in 38% of the cases (Alpert & Dunham, 1999).

While the statistical safety profile of OC spray appears high, it must be understood that the generally accepted efficacy rate of OC spray is between 75 to 85%. Therefore, this profile is biased by the fact that in many situations experienced officers will choose not to employ OC spray as an option in circumstances where they feel it will not have the desired result. For example, subjects under the influence of drugs, experiencing emotional disturbance, or merely strongly goal-oriented are typically unaffected by OC spray.

The OC safety profile is consistent with U.S. studies (Lundgren, 1996; Watson, Stremel, & Westdorp, 1996) which have found that subjects did not receive injuries requiring medical attention in 90% of all uses ($n = 908$).

Although the study agency categorizes the VNR as physical control, for the purposes of this study, it was categorized by itself due to its higher safety profile compared to other physical control techniques.

Interestingly, in a post-implementation study by the Phoenix Police Department, it was determined that subjects did not receive an injury or received only minor injury in 87% of all CEW deployments.

**References**


Orange County Sheriff’s Office (OCSO)/Florida Gulf Coast University Division of Justice. (2004). *Use of force study*. Orlando, FL: Author.


Chris Butler, a 24-year law enforcement veteran, Acting Inspector Chris Butler is currently assigned to the Executive Office of the Calgary Police Service as the Field Training and Use of Force Coordinator. For several years, Chris was in charge of the delivery of all officer safety, subject control tactics, emergency vehicle operations, Incident Command, and Strategic Communication training for the Calgary Police Service in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, a major Canadian police agency of over 1,600 sworn officers.

During Chris’s law enforcement career, he was a member of the Crowd Control Unit for over 12 years and, during this time, was involved in conducting risk assessments and planning operational tactics for events such as the World Petroleum Congress and the G8 Summit.

Chris has been certified as an instructor or instructor trainer in numerous firearms, combatives, less lethal/chemical agents, and emergency vehicle
operation techniques. In addition, Chris has training in special event risk management and is certified as a close protection specialist (ESI-honors).

Chris has made presentations at national and international law enforcement conferences on a variety of topics. From 2006 to 2007, Chris was seconded to the Canadian Police Research Centre where he co-published a national study on the use of neck restraints in policing.

Chris has been qualified at provincial and federal court as an expert in firearms safety, police firearms training, law enforcement use of force training, and evaluation and is certified as an instructor in verbal judo and neuro linguistic programming (NLP) and is also certified in hypnosis and hypnotherapy.

**Dr. Christine Hall** received her MD from the University of Calgary in 1996 and completed her five-year residency in emergency medicine in the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons (FRCP) Program in Emergency Medicine at the University of Calgary Faculty of Medicine in 2001. During her residency, Dr. Hall completed a Master’s degree in Clinical Epidemiology and completed her thesis in 2003 as a staff physician.

Upon completion of her residency, Dr. Hall became a full-time Emergency Department physician at the Calgary Health Region. She was the Division Chief of Research; the coordinator of Resident Research; a member of the Adult Research Committee for the Calgary Health Region; a member of the departmental executive for the Department of Emergency Medicine, Calgary Health Region; and also served as the Program Director for the FRCP Program in Emergency Medicine during her tenure at the Calgary Health Region. Dr. Hall was a clinical lecturer at the University of Calgary Faculty of Medicine. She also served as a flight physician with the Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society of Alberta for six years. She is now a physician with the Department of Emergency Medicine at the Vancouver Island Health Authority.

Dr. Hall has been participating in the investigation of sudden in-custody death for several years and is the principal investigator for the RESTRAINT Study, a multicenter, international epidemiologic study of features surrounding the use of restraint in police interactions, an effort funded by both the Canadian Police Research Centre and the National Institute of Justice (USA). She collaborates in this research effort with notable experts in the field such as Drs. Ted Chan, Gary Vilke, and Bill Bozeman. Dr. Hall has contributed to the understanding of excited delirium syndrome and in-custody death evaluations through her presentations at seminars and conferences, her participation as an expert witness at relevant inquests and investigations, and in her ongoing research efforts. She has participated in several reviews of restraint methodologies, including the CPRC technical report surrounding the use of conducted energy weapons.

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Attitudes on Crime and Criminal Justice: An Assessment of Criminal Justice Students

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Attitudes toward the criminal justice system can be influenced by a number of factors, some of which we have not identified to date. A negative experience or interaction with a police officer, a prosecutor, a judge, or a probation officer can gravely impact a person’s perception of the system’s effectiveness. Additionally, being a victim of crime, an accused person or offender, or a complainant have been found to influence attitudes about law enforcement and the system, in general (Correia, Reisig, & Lovrich, 1996; Frank, Smith, & Novak, 2005; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Priest & Carter, 1999; Tewksbury & West, 2001; Weitzer & Tuch, 2004). It can be assumed that whether or not a person believes they received good customer service when filing a complaint or whether they believe they were treated fairly and justly after an offense or victimization affects a person’s view of the system. Other researchers have suggested that young people and minorities hold more negative views of the criminal justice system than do other populations (Ackerman, Anderson, Jensen, Ludwig, Montero, & Plante, 2001; Hagan & Albonetti, 1982; Halim & Stiles, 2001; Henderson, Cullen, Cao, Browning, & Kopache, 1997; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Murdo, 1997; Taylor, Turner, Esbensen & Winfree, 2001; Weitzer, 2000). We must ask if this is perhaps a result of the ever-increasing youth and minority populations in America’s prisons.

We may be able to argue though that the public, for the most part, does not have an overall negative view of the criminal justice system. By and large, there are aspects of the system that citizens agree with—incarceration, the death penalty, community-oriented policing, restorative justice, etc. There are other aspects that are extremely controversial, with agreement changing from year to year. According to Sundt (1999), public opinion polls regarding criminal justice effectiveness demonstrate

[t]hat 78% of the public does not feel that the courts are dealing “harshly enough with criminals,” 86% believe that juveniles charged with violent crimes should be tried as adults, 73% are in favor of the death penalty for a person convicted of murder, and Americans regularly report that crime and violence are the number one issue facing our nation. Moreover, the majority of the public continues to believe that crime is on the rise (despite substantial decreases in the actual crime rate) and only 21% of high school seniors feel that the criminal justice system is doing a good or very good job. (p. 519)

Of course, these opinions may have been altered greatly by the events of 9-11, although fewer studies on the attitudes toward the criminal justice system have been completed since the focus has shifted so dramatically to terrorism and terrorist act prevention. Those that have researched this issue claim a changing
philosophy from punitive to treatment oriented. According to them, even though the “get tough on crime” approach is still dominant, Americans are realizing that treating the root causes of crime is much more successful, and potentially cheaper, than harsher and longer prison sentences (Hart Research Associates, 2002).

Of interest in all of this back and forth on attitudes and perceptions is a study by Davis (1997) in which he proposed that fixed beliefs and attitudes and the resulting survey results on crime commonly reported in the literature largely depend on how the question is asked. In his survey of 1,151 residents in the State of Michigan, he found that the respondents’ answers changed under differing scenarios. In one question on prison spending, respondents were provided a dollar amount of $23,700 to show the yearly cost of incarcerating an inmate. In a second question, they were told that 15% of Michigan’s state budget is spent on prisons and corrections. In a final question, they were given the amount of $1.3 billion as the yearly expenditure on prisons and corrections. Remarkably, in question one, respondents were twice as likely to believe that too much was spent on crime. But when provided the 15% and $1.3 billion amounts, they were less likely to say that too much was being spent. According to Davis, “from a financial perspective, the $23,700 per prison-year, 15% of the state budget, and $1.3 billion state expenditures per year are exactly equivalent to one another” (p. 4). Other findings from Davis’s experiment suggest that the fixed belief that Americans want to “get tough on crime,” particularly with adult offenders, is a stereotype of American attitudes. In actuality, support for probation and parole depends on the seriousness of the criminal offense. In cases of less serious crimes, such as drunk driving and murder by a juvenile, respondents were less punitive and supported community corrections. While in cases of child molestation and murder by an adult, the respondents were more punitive. He did not deny that attitudes as a whole were more punitive but only suggested that they may not be as rigid as other researchers would suggest.

Alongside the consistency issue raised by Davis (1997) is the fact that American assessments of attitudes on crime and the criminal justice system have not been gauged uniformly. Although the Texas Crime Commission had attempted to ask standardized questions on attitudes toward crime over periods of time, their efforts have since gone by the wayside and researchers have developed a multitude of surveys and assessments to question American attitudes—none of which have been used over and over again in the same fashion. Great Britain, though, has created a survey, the British Crime Survey (BCS), and has consistently given it to British citizens to measure their attitudes toward crime and the criminal justice system in Great Britain. The BCS is a face-to-face survey of about 40,000 adults living in private housing in England and Wales. The survey was first distributed in 1982, although it was modified and consistently employed from 2000 to 2004. The questions covered (1) the respondents’ knowledge of the criminal justice system, (2) their assessments of sentencers and sentences, (3) the sentence respondents believed should be passed in a specific case of burglary, and (4) the respondents’ views on tackling crime. As a result of the early findings (1996, 1998), the Home Office created a video, a seminar, and a booklet to provide information to participants on the criminal justice system. Remaining assessments utilized these methods as part of the survey process.

In 2002 and 2003, the BCS provided a booklet with information on the criminal justice system to a sample of 845 respondents who had previously participated in the survey process. Respondents were not told to read the booklet or that there
would be follow-up questioning at a later date. Two weeks after the booklet was supplied, respondents were contacted and asked questions from the BCS. Since they had participated in the survey previously, the questions were familiar to them. Findings from this study included the fact that a quarter of the respondents claimed the booklet had changed their views on the system, improved their knowledge of violent crime and crime trends (with the exclusion of burglars and rapists sentenced to immediate custody), increased their knowledge of prison sentence proportions, and amplified their confidence in the criminal justice system. Additionally, the survey found that some of the results were a consequence of engaging people in the topic of crime and in criminal justice rather than an improved knowledge as a result of the booklet. Only 18% read the booklet completely, 19% read some sections, 44% thumbed through it, and 20% did not read it at all (Salisbury, 2004, p. 3).

Based on the overall conclusion from the BCS surveys in Great Britain that “people who are better informed about crime and sentencing tend to rate the criminal justice system more highly” (Salisbury, 2004, p. 3; also see Hough & Roberts, 1998; Mattinson, & Mirrlees-Black, 2000; Mirrlees-Black, 2001), we decided to give the survey to criminal justice students at a Midwestern university. Since the students are enrolled or have previously been enrolled in criminal justice courses, they have some knowledge of the criminal justice system and of crimes in the U.S. We did not provide a booklet, video, or seminar to the students but only allowed them to rely on their own perceptions of crime and the criminal justice system as shaped by their coursework and/or personal experiences. Sixteen-hundred respondents ranging from first semester freshmen to senior semester internship students were included in the survey process. The BCS was used, although questions on drugs and alcohol were removed from the survey. Both quantitative and qualitative responses were accepted. Students were contacted by e-mail and provided a link to the survey located on SurveyMonkey.com. Several follow-up e-mails and verbal class announcements to complete the survey were made. A total of 422 respondents replied to the survey. All responses were anonymous and confidential. The survey consisted of 46 total questions. Demographics were not assessed as the focus was only on attitudes toward crime and the criminal justice system.

**Findings**

The respondents were asked to respond to questions relating to their beliefs about crime, attitudes towards offenders, attitudes on reduction of crime strategies and interventions, their contact with the criminal justice system, and their attitudes toward crime deterrence.

**Beliefs About Crime**

When asked about whether there is more violent crime, less, or about the same amount in the country as a whole over the last year, the majority of the respondents (45.5%) said that violent crime has stayed at about the same level; however, nearly a third of the respondents (30.1%) felt that there was a little more violent crime in the country. The lowest number of respondents, at less than 1% of the sample, felt that there was a lot less violent crime in the country over the last year.

In connection with nonviolent crime, the majority of the respondents (38.9%) said that there was a little more nonviolent crime in the country as a whole over the past year; however, there was not much of a difference in the distribution of those who felt that
there was a little more nonviolent crime and those who felt that nonviolent crime had stayed at about the same level over the past year. Such respondents amounted to 37.9% of the sample. As with violent crime, less than 1% of the respondents felt that there was a lot less nonviolent crime in the country over the last year.

Respondents were then asked for their views about the main cause of violent crimes. The majority of the respondents (22.7%) felt that drugs were the main cause of violent crime in the country as a whole. Lack of discipline from parents was cited as the next main cause for such crime by 21.1% of the respondents. On the other hand, less than 1% of the respondents said that lack of discipline from school, too few police, and peer pressure were the main causes of violent crime in the country as a whole.

In connection with nonviolent crime, the majority of respondents (33.6%) felt that poverty was the main cause of nonviolent crime in the country as a whole. The next main cause of nonviolent crime was thought by 21.3% of the respondents to be lack of discipline from parents. The lowest number of respondents, at less than 1% of the sample, felt that lack of discipline from school was the main cause of nonviolent crime in the country as a whole.

**Attitudes Toward Offenders**

The following results relate to the respondents’ attitudes towards offenders. Firstly, when asked how likely it was that someone who had committed one crime will commit another crime, the majority of the respondents (59.5%) said that it was fairly likely that such a person would commit another crime. The second highest number of respondents (32.9%) felt that it was very likely that someone who had committed one crime will commit another crime. Conversely, a tiny minority of respondents, 1.2% of the sample, said that it was very unlikely that such a person would commit another crime.

Secondly, when asked how likely it was that someone who had committed three crimes will commit another crime, an overwhelming majority of the respondents (87.2%) said that it was very likely that such a person would commit another crime. On the other hand, only 1.2% of the respondents said that it was very unlikely that someone who had committed three crimes would commit another crime.

Respondents were then asked for their views on whether or not it was alright to steal something from somebody rich who can afford to replace it. Again, an overwhelming majority of the respondents (62.1%) strongly disagreed that it was alright to steal something from somebody rich who can afford to replace it. Another 28.4% of respondents disagreed that it was alright to steal something from somebody rich who can afford to replace it. Only 1.7% and less than 1% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed, respectively, that this was alright.

Regarding whether or not it was alright to steal something from somebody rich if one was poor, just over half of the respondents (55.7%) strongly disagreed. Another 29.4% of respondents disagreed that it was alright to steal something from somebody rich if one was poor. Only 1.4% and less than 1% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed, respectively, that it was alright to steal something from somebody rich if one was poor.
Likewise, an overwhelming majority of respondents (64.2%) strongly disagreed that it was alright to take little things from a store without paying for them. Another 28.0% of the respondents disagreed with that view as well. Only 1.2% and less than 1% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed, respectively, that it was alright to take little things from a store without paying for them because stores make a lot of money.

**Attitudes on Reduction of Crime Strategies and Interventions**

The following results relate to the respondents’ views on reduction of crime strategies and interventions involving violent crime, thefts from cars, burglary, and committal of another crime.

**Reducing Violent Crime**

Exactly half of the respondents (50%) felt that CCTV cameras in town squares were fairly effective at reducing violent crime, while only 12.3% said that such cameras were very effective. Only 3.3% of the respondents said that CCTV cameras in town squares were not at all effective at reducing violent crime.

In connection with DNA, fingerprints, and other forensic evidence collected from crime scenes, the majority of the respondents (40.5%) felt that the collection of such forensic evidence was very effective at reducing violent crime. Nearly a third of the respondents (31.5%) said that this collection was fairly effective at reducing violent crime. Only 1.4% of the respondents said that the collection of DNA, fingerprints, and other forensic evidence from crime scenes was not at all effective at reducing violent crime.

When asked about the effectiveness of sentences that punish violent offenders in order to reduce violent crime, the majority of the respondents (36.5%) said that such sentences were fairly effective at reducing violent crime, while 34.4% felt that they were very effective. Only 1.9% of the respondents said that sentences that punish violent offenders were not at all effective at reducing violent crime.

With respect to sentences that help and support violent offenders and their effect at reducing violent crime, the majority of the respondents (34.4%) felt that such sentences and programs were not very effective at reducing violent crime. As much as 19.7% of the respondents said that sentences that help and support violent offenders were not at all effective at reducing crime.

In regards to respondents’ views about the effectiveness of teaching offenders about the effect of their crimes on victims at reducing violent crime, the majority of the respondents (32.7%) felt that such programs were not very effective at reducing violent crime. However, nearly a third of the respondents (30.1%) felt that these programs were fairly effective at reducing violent crime. Fewer respondents, 9.5% of the sample, said that such programs were not at all effective at reducing violent crime.

When asked about the effectiveness of better parenting and/or education of young people at reducing violent crime, over half of the respondents (54.7%) said that better parenting and/or education of young people was very effective at reducing violent crime, while 26.8% felt that such measures were fairly effective. Only a very small number of respondents (less than 1.0%) said that better parenting and/or education of young people was not at all effective at reducing violent crime.
Reducing Thefts from Cars

The majority of the respondents (40.0%) felt that CCTV cameras on residential roads were fairly effective at reducing thefts from cars, while 26.1% said that such cameras were very effective. Only 1.9% of the respondents said that CCTV cameras on residential roads were not at all effective at reducing thefts from cars.

With respect to a neighbourhood watch, the majority of the respondents (46.2%) said that such a measure was fairly effective at reducing thefts from cars, while only 16.8% felt that such schemes were very effective. A very small number of respondents (4.5%) felt that neighbourhood watch schemes were not at all effective at reducing thefts from cars.

In connection with patrols by police on foot once a day, the majority of the respondents (37.2%) felt that such patrols were not very effective at reducing thefts from cars. However, just over a third of the respondents (36.5%) said that these foot patrols were fairly effective at reducing thefts from cars. On the other hand, only a small number of respondents (5.2%) said that foot patrols by the police once a day were not at all effective at reducing thefts from cars.

With regard to patrols by police in cars twice a day, the majority of the respondents (41.2%) felt that such patrols were fairly effective at reducing thefts from cars, while 14.7% said that these patrols were very effective at reducing thefts from cars. However, a small number of respondents (4.0%) said that patrols by the police in cars twice a day were not at all effective at reducing thefts from cars.

The respondents’ views on DNA, fingerprints, and other forensic evidence collected from crime scenes indicate that the majority of the respondents (36.0%) felt that such forensic evidence was fairly effective at reducing thefts from cars. On the other hand, 24.9% of the respondents said that that type of evidence would be very effective at reducing thefts from cars. However, a very small number of respondents felt that the collection of DNA, fingerprints, and other forensic evidence from crime scenes was not at all effective at reducing thefts from cars.

When asked about the effectiveness of sentences that punish thieves in an effort to reduce thefts from cars, the majority of the respondents (38.6%) said that such sentences were fairly effective at reducing thefts from cars, while 29.4% felt that they were very effective. Only 2.8% of the respondents said that sentences that punish thieves were not at all effective at reducing thefts from cars.

With respect to sentences that help and support thieves in an effect to reduce thefts from cars, the majority of the respondents (40.3%) felt that such sentences and programs were not very effective at reducing thefts from cars. As much as 22.0% of the respondents said that sentences that help and support thieves were not at all effective at reducing thefts from cars.

When asked about the effectiveness of better parenting and/or education of young people at reducing thefts from cars, nearly half of the respondents (45.5%) said that better parenting and/or education of young people was very effective at reducing thefts from cars, while 32.0% felt that such measures were fairly effective. Only a very small number of respondents (1.2%) said that better parenting and/or education of young people was not at all effective at reducing thefts from cars.
Reducing Burglary

The result relating to the respondents’ views on effective methods of reducing burglary suggests that the majority of the respondents (40.0%) felt that CCTV cameras on residential roads were fairly effective at reducing burglary, while 25.1% said that such cameras were very effective. Only 2.6% of the respondents said that CCTV cameras on residential roads were not at all effective at reducing burglary.

With respect to a neighbourhood watch, the majority of the respondents (45.7%) said that such a measure was fairly effective at reducing burglary, while only 26.1% felt that such schemes were very effective. A very small number of respondents (2.1%) felt that neighbourhood watch schemes were not at all effective at reducing burglary.

In connection with patrols by police on foot once a day, the majority of the respondents (36.7%) felt that such patrols were fairly effective at reducing burglary. However, nearly a third of the respondents (32.0%) said that these foot patrols were not effective at reducing burglary. Conversely, only a small number of respondents (4.7%) said that patrols by the police once a day were not at all effective at reducing burglary.

With regard to patrols by police in cars twice a day, the majority of the respondents (44.3%) felt that such patrols were fairly effective at reducing burglary. However, 24.6% of the respondents said that these patrols were not very effective. On the other hand, a small number of respondents (3.3%) said that patrols by the police in cars twice a day were not at all effective at reducing burglary.

The next question was in regards to the collection of DNA, fingerprints, and other forensic evidence from crime scenes as a method of reducing burglary. The majority of the respondents (38.2%) felt that the collection of such forensic evidence was fairly effective at reducing burglary. Nearly a third of the respondents (29.9%) said that the collection of this type of forensic evidence was very effective. Only 2.1% of the respondents said that the collection of DNA, fingerprints, and other forensic evidence from crime scenes was not at all effective at reducing burglary.

When asked about the effectiveness of sentences that punish thieves in order to reduce burglary, the majority of the respondents (37.0%) said that such sentences were fairly effective at reducing burglary, while 30.3% felt that they were very effective. Only 2.1% of the respondents said that sentences that punish thieves were not at all effective at reducing burglary.

With respect to sentences that help and support burglars and in order to reduce the likelihood that they would commit burglary again, the majority of the respondents (39.6%) felt that such sentences and programs were not very effective at reducing burglary. As much as 20.9% of the respondents said that sentences that help and support thieves were not at all effective at reducing burglary.

In connection with the effectiveness of better parenting and/or education of young people at reducing burglary, nearly half of the respondents (44.8%) said that these would be very effective at reducing burglary, while 29.9% felt that such measures were fairly effective. Only a very small number of respondents (2.4%) said that better parenting and/or education of young people was not at all effective at reducing burglary.
Reducing the Chance of Committing Another Crime

The result pertaining to the effectiveness of a fine at reducing the chance that an offender will commit another crime suggests that the majority of the respondents (43.6%) felt that a fine was not a very effective measure of doing so, while just over a quarter of the respondents (25.8%) said that such fines were not at all effective at reducing the chance that an offender will commit another crime. Only a small number of respondents, 2.8% of the sample, felt that a fine was very effective at reducing the chance that an offender will commit another crime.

With respect to a community penalty or probation order, the majority of the respondents (37.2%) said that such measures were not very effective at reducing the committal of another crime, while 14.2% felt that the measures were not at all effective. However, nearly a third of the respondents (30.8%) felt that a community penalty or probation order was fairly effective at reducing the committal of another crime. Only a very small number of respondents (6.4%) felt that a community penalty or probation order would be very effective.

When asked about the effectiveness of a short prison sentence of one month or less at reducing the chance that an offender will commit another crime, the majority of the respondents (39.3%) said that such a prison sentence was fairly effective at reducing the chance that an offender will commit another crime. However, nearly a third of the respondents (27.3%) felt that a short prison sentence of one month or less was not very effective at reducing the chance that an offender will commit another crime, while 8.3% said that such a prison sentence was not at all effective. On the other hand, 13.7% of the respondents felt that a short prison sentence of one month or less was very effective at reducing the chance that an offender will commit another crime.

In connection with the effectiveness of a long prison sentence of two years or more at reducing the chance that an offender will commit another crime, the majority of the respondents (38.9%) said that such a prison sentence was very effective at reducing the chance that an offender will commit another crime, while 32.7% felt that a prison sentence of that magnitude was fairly effective at reducing the chance. Only a very small number of respondents (4.3%) felt that a long prison sentence of two years or more was not at all effective at reducing the chance that an offender will commit another crime.

Attitudes Toward Deterrence

The following results relate to the respondents’ views on deterrence in connection with burglary and theft, violent attacks, and shoplifting.

Deterring Burglary and Theft

The result relating to the respondents’ views on what the likely outcome would be for someone who was caught by the police for burglary for the first time suggests that the majority of the respondents (42.4%) felt that a community penalty supervised by the probation service would be the most likely outcome, while 23.7% said that a fine would be the outcome. Only 9.5% of the respondents felt that a prison sentence was the most likely outcome when someone was caught by the police for burglary for the first time.
With respect to the outcome for a person who was caught by the police for burglary for the third time, the vast majority of the respondents (66.1%) said that a prison sentence would be the outcome. Only 13.3% of the respondents felt that a community penalty supervised by the probation service would be the outcome for this individual.

**Deterring Violent Attacks**

The majority of the respondents (32%) felt that a fine was the most likely outcome when someone was caught by the police for a violent assault in a bar for the first time, while 25.8% said that a community penalty supervised by the probation service would be the outcome. Only a small number of respondents (4.0%) felt that a prison sentence was the most likely outcome for someone caught by the police for a violent assault in a bar for the first time.

In connection with an outcome for a person who was caught by the police for a violent assault in a bar for the third time, the majority of the respondents (45.0%) said that a prison sentence would be the outcome. On the other hand, nearly a third of the respondents, 29.6% of the sample, felt that a community penalty supervised by the probation service would be the outcome for a person who was caught by the police committing this crime for the third time.

**Deterring Shoplifting**

The result relating to respondents’ views on shoplifting outcomes suggests that the majority of the respondents (42.2%) felt that a fine would be the most likely outcome for someone who was caught by the police for shoplifting for the first time, while 14.7% said that a community penalty supervised by the probation service would be the outcome. Only a very small number of respondents (1.7%) said that a prison sentence would be the most likely outcome for this individual. On the other hand, there was an even distribution of respondents who felt that the most likely outcome for someone caught by the police for shoplifting for the first time would be an informal warning from the police, a formal police caution, or a conditional discharge (a formal warning from the court), at 8.1%, 8.5%, and 9.0% of the sample, respectively.

With respect to an outcome for a person who was caught by the police for shoplifting for the third time, slightly over a third of the respondents (33.9%) said that a community penalty supervised by the probation service would be the outcome. On the other hand, nearly another third of the respondents (32.7%) said that a prison sentence would be the outcome for a person who was caught by the police for shoplifting for the third time. Only 13.7% of the sample felt that a fine would be the outcome.

**Discussion**

The survey results reported in this paper relate to the current views of law enforcement and criminal justice students in an American Midwestern university toward crime and criminal justice. The respondents’ views on specific issues were mixed. Overall, it can be concluded that the respondents in this study held views that were unsympathetic toward programs designed to help offenders address their offending and other antisocial behaviors. In most cases, their attitude toward offenders appeared to be rather punitive.
As mentioned earlier in this paper, attitudes toward the criminal justice system can be influenced by a number of factors, such as a negative experience or interaction with a police officer, a prosecutor, a judge, or a probation officer, as well as being a victim of crime, an accused person or offender, or a complainant, to mention a few. The only level of contact with the criminal justice system that our respondents had from which they may have derived their perceptions of crime and criminal justice involved being on a jury once (14.7% of the sample), attending court as a witness once (9.5% of the sample), being arrested by the police once (12.2% of the sample), being fined by a court once (26.8% of the sample), being given a community penalty supervised by the probation service once (12.8% of the sample), and being sent to prison by a court more than once (0.3% of the sample).

It should also be noted that public perceptions of crime and the criminal justice system may be heavily influenced by the media. Crime, law enforcement, or policing and criminal justice issues have always been the staple parts of the mass entertainment media. According to Reiner (1997), the proportion of news devoted to these issues has tended to increase over time. Arguably, media representations of these issues do have significant consequences, not only in terms of “how the media make us act or think, but rather how the media contribute to making us who we are” (Livingstone, 1996, as cited in Reiner, 2003, p. 262) and in influencing policy.

However, studies of this nature may be necessary on additional college campuses. Researchers can develop a series of questions that focus specifically on college policing, criminal justice processes, and crime in university settings. According to Nichols (1995), changing political, social, cultural, and financial factors in broader communities impact college campuses as well. Those that were traditionally protected from crimes in the community are now subjected to crimes in the collegial environment. How this impacts the learning environment and pedagogy used on campuses is unclear. Previous studies done on college campuses have shown that victims tend to report the victimization to campus police. Students also feel relatively safe and are highly satisfied with campus policing services (Griffith, Hueston, Wilson, Moyers, & Hart, 2004). Although colleges have been virtually isolated from violent crimes, things appear to be changing. With the recent shootings at Northern Illinois University and Virginia Tech, the crime-free bubble around universities has burst. It is likely that students have a heightened awareness of crime and potential crime and that their attitudes toward campus policing and toward the criminal justice system in general may be altered. Now is a good time to test for changes in opinions and attitudes.

References


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Culture and the Hostage Negotiation Process

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Introduction

A hostage negotiator is skilled in the art of defusing a crisis under very difficult situations. However, when the negotiator enters the arena, he or she has very little to say about the hand that the offender has dealt them. In fact, the negotiator must adjust to meet the needs of the offender, utilizing the following skill sets: active listening, the use of empathy, paraphrasing, and knowledge. Yet the success of the process hinges on the negotiator’s knowledge of life’s successes and failures. More importantly, he or she must understand and make a connection with the offender when that person is at the lowest point in his or her life. One arena that is most often overlooked is the role that culture plays in the outcome of the scenario. What is missing in that equation is that although we are one nation, we have many different subcultures, value systems, languages, and ethnicities, which are unique and demand special attention during critical incidents. Understanding diversity and its impact on the negotiation process could help resolve incidents more efficiently.

Literature Review

The Police Personality

The police personality is unique within American culture and also is responsible for the development of certain traits that are ostensibly found in policing. Skolnick (2004) offers an analysis of the police personality, stating that it consists of two elements: (1) danger and (2) authority. Danger is associated with potential violence and lawbreaking and, as a result, the officer is suspicious and becomes isolated socially because of his or her role. Authority is associated with enforcing laws and regulating public activity (p. 101).

In contrast, Jones (1995) asserts that there are at least six attributes that are unique to the police subculture: (1) conservatism, (2) machismo, (3) pragmatism, (4) mission orientation, (5) prejudice, and (6) suspiciousness. At face value, each of these could interfere with successful negotiations, especially when an offender does not fit the mindset of the negotiator:

1. **Conservatism** – Police are generally more conservative than the general population, and this is not necessarily negative. However, it is often seen as being closed-minded with traditional views of the world and American culture (p. 209). What reinforces this belief system is training, enforcing the law, and their peers.

2. **Machismo** – Policing is a profession that requires the ultimate in physical and mental toughness (p. 209). This aspect of the personality can hamper the negotiation process because it may keep the negotiator from utilizing empathy as a way to reach the offender.
3. **Pragmatism** – By nature of the profession, police are very practical, look for functionality, and are response oriented. By being pragmatic the mission is less complicated. However, in doing so, police overlook such concepts as innovation, experimentation, and/or research (p. 209). As an organization, change is very difficult and slow. In the past, change has not taken place unless it was associated with a tragedy.

4. **Mission Orientation** – Police view themselves as protectors or guardians of society. There is a tendency to stereotype, and this is especially evident in minority communities (p. 209). If this is a tendency, then how can an officer effectively negotiate with a minority offender?

5. **Prejudice** – Although this issue is hotly debated, organizations are consistently attempting to defend their actions in minority communities. It is important to understand that the community’s perception is their reality, not the agency’s. Unfortunately, this issue is not limited to the agency in question. One major incident can make every department and officer suspect.

6. **Suspiciousness** – This attribute is a personality dynamic of all police officers. However, when it is applied to the issue of diversity, it often has a negative connotation. The most profound example to date is racial profiling. The difficulty arises in ferreting out the criminal element from the average citizen.

After examining the sketches of the police personality provided by Skolnick (2004) and Jones (1995), one has to wonder if this will hamper the negotiation process. Policing by its very nature can create several barriers for the most savvy negotiator. This issue may be compounded by one who has few multicultural competencies.

**Multiculturalism**

In addition to the police personality, it is important to understand the impact that multiculturalism has on the negotiation process. One of the best resources for information can be found in the field of counseling. Although there is a difference in the negotiation process and counseling, both deal with clients/offenders who are in crisis.

Helms and Richardson (1997) assert that multicultural competency does not require a unique set of skills, but, rather, a specific philosophical orientation. This orientation must be responsive to cultural socialization and sociopolitical dynamics be they race, religion, or gender (p. 60). When a negotiator is developing an intervention strategy, it is important to understand that the approach should be idiographic in the sense that it is tailored to that individual. This approach gives the negotiator a great deal of flexibility and allows him or her to be sensitive to the cultural cues sent and received by an offender (Ridley, Espelage, & Rubenstein, 1997). When assessing a crisis situation, it should be noted that cultural and environmental issues must be taken into account. However, they are not independent variables; it is the totality of the individual which is important. In such cases, intelligence gathering is a must in order to be successful. Ultimately, failing to address these issues will hamper the ability to connect with the person on the other end of the phone.
Using Empathy Statements

The use of empathy statements is an interesting concept in the negotiation process. Based on the profession and the discussion of the police personality, it can and has been seen as a form of sympathy. Police are in a unique position because the use of force is always available as an option.

Rogers (1961) defines empathy as “an accurate empathetic understanding of the client’s world as seen from the inside. To sense the client’s private world as if it were your own, but without losing the ‘as if’ quality—this is empathy” (p. 284). Martinovski, Traum, and Marsella (2007) examine the definitions of empathy offered by Mead and Hogan: Mead (1993) defines empathy as “the capacity to take the role of the other and to adopt an alternate perspective” (p. 27); and Hogan (1969) defines it as “the ability to take the intellectual or imaginative apprehension of another’s condition or state of mind” (p. 308).

Martinovski et al. (2007) note that most of the research on empathy is focused on the ability or skill of giving empathy not the acceptance or rejection of empathy. However, acceptance and rejection of empathy should be seen as coping strategies, and when one introduces the skill set, it is dependent on the offender’s state of mind at the time (p. 61). In essence, a negotiator may have to de-escalate the situation first before utilizing this tactic.

Greenstone (2007) notes that there are 25 errors in the negotiation or crisis process with the most notable dealing with communication skills: Error Number Eight, Not understanding the mindset of the other party; Error Number Thirteen, Failure to understand the interests of the other side; Error Number Fourteen, Not appreciating the validity of an argument; and Error Number Seventeen, Utilizing ineffective communication skills (pp. 1098-1109). If you examine each of the aforementioned errors, they are all linked to understanding or the lack of understanding of the party in crisis.

With that said, think of empathy as getting into “The Well” with the offender/person in crisis. Knudson (1999) describes “The Well” as a place where you meet the person in crisis one on one. It is an indication that you and the offender have the same level of understanding. Jones (2000) recognizes that this process must take place before the negotiation process can move forward. He identifies Step 2 in his Modified F.I.R.E. Model of Crisis Negotiations as “Moving Toward,” which consists of four components:

1. **Cooperative behavior emerges** – This can only be established once there is trust or some sort of mutual understanding established between the offender and the negotiator.
2. **Us emerges over me** – Here again this is due to the bond and trust established in the process.
3. **The offender accepts the negotiator’s requests or instructions** – As a result of the bond that has been established, the offender is now willing to follow the instructions of the negotiator.
4. **Power and control issues** – These are not contended and who is in control is not important because of the established mutual atmosphere.
To further understand empathy, Kulis (1991) identifies three categories of empathy statements and asserts that they can be useful or harmful in any negotiation situation. The key is timing and the stage of the crisis at the time:

1. **High Empathy Statements** – Capture the surface information and feelings in addition to meanings and feelings below the surface. This level of empathy should be used sparingly to move stalled negotiations. This type of statement may require the negotiator to enter his or her own personal life. It is important to understand as discussed earlier that the offender must be willing to receive this information and process it accordingly. If not, the negotiator may be seen as weak and ineffective. Here, the negotiator is truly in “The Well” with the offender; however, the cost to the negotiator may be personal.

   **Example:**

   **Offender:** I had no choice because this bastard killed my child and I am going to kill him.

   **Negotiator:** I understand. I lost a child under similar circumstances and know exactly how you feel. With that said, do you believe that killing this guy is worth it? What about your other children?

2. **Medium Empathy Statements** – Capture surface information and feelings yet avoid in-depth probes. They go no deeper than the offender has gone and can be used repetitively without harm, understanding that negotiations are free flowing and productive. This is where most negotiations should take place because the negotiator does not have to go deep into “The Well.”

   **Example:**

   **Offender:** I had no choice because this bastard killed my child and I am going to kill him.

   **Negotiator:** I could not possibly understand what it feels like to lose a child under any circumstances, so I am not going to pretend that I do. However, I do understand that you want revenge, but you have to know that killing this guy will only create another set of problems for you and your family. What about your other children?

3. **Low Empathy Statements** – Eliminate the offender’s frame of reference from the dialogue. Low empathy statements are detrimental because the offender’s point of view is completely missed. This can be damaging because, in most cases, the offender has the expectation that you can and should attempt to understand.

   **Example:**

   **Offender:** I had no choice because this bastard killed my child and I am going to kill him.
**Negotiator:** I understand that you lost a child, but we need to end this. We need to get these people back in their homes.

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**Culture and the Negotiation Process**

American culture has as its focus Anglo-American values, yet the United States is the great melting pot. Before we move on in this discussion, let’s take a moment and define culture and, to be more precise, let’s define American culture. Williams (1983) states that “culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English Language” (p. 87). If you are having a difficult time with your definition of culture, you are not alone. Avruch (2006) states that Kroeber and Kluckhon (1952, as cited in Avruch, 2006) surveyed the field for definitions of culture and found that there were 150 of them, with the understanding that the definition of culture evolves over time (p. 6). The most comprehensive definition of culture was offered by Schwartz (1992):

> Culture consists of the derivatives of experience, more or less organized, learned or created by the individuals of a population, including those images or encodements and their interpretations (meanings) transmitted from past generations, from contemporaries, or formed by individuals themselves. (p. 324)

The problem with culture is that we make basic assumptions, with the most obvious being that we are all Americans and, thus, we are all alike. This is compounded for police because they have been indoctrinated that “the law is law” and that there is only one value system from which our legal system operates. What is lost in this translation of equal enforcement is the concept that the United States is truly a melting pot with many neighborhoods deeply entrenched in the culture of one’s mother country. This phenomena can be found in any city in the U.S. such as in Miami with Little Havana; San Francisco with its China Town; New York, which is so vast that it hosts virtually every nationality with most having their own neighborhood; and Dearborn, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit, the home of Ford Motor Company, which has the largest concentration of Arab Americans in the United States. Every city in the United States has some form of diversity, although it may be limited by what the city has to offer.

Rogan, Hammer, and Van Zandt (1996) observe that there is not one universal approach to negotiating across the cultural divide (Cohen, 1991). However, there are two different intercultural models: (1) **low context negotiation style**, which is common in the majority of the United States and in which negotiations place great trust and emphasis in the use of precise language for resolving conflicts; and (2) **high context negotiation style**, which places the emphasis on vague, ambiguous, and nonconfrontational language to lessen the intensity of the conflict (pp. 109-111). Considering that both communication styles are diametrically opposed, it could cause total chaos if they were to collide in an actual encounter. A low context negotiator would be seen by a high context offender as looking to escalate the situation because the low context negotiator is direct and seeking dialogue.

The disadvantage for police in these communities is that they must understand the values of their respective subcultures in order to be successful. Avruch (2006) offers that in order to understand culture, we must first recognize that most of our ideas
regarding culture are built upon six inadequate beliefs or assumptions: (1) culture is homogenous; (2) culture is a thing; (3) culture is uniformly distributed among members of a group; (4) an individual possesses but a single culture; (5) culture is custom; and (6) culture is timeless (pp. 14-15). Below you will find the three most relevant of these:

1. **Culture is homogenous.** This presumes that a local culture is free of internal paradoxes and contradictions such that it provides clear and unambiguous behavioral instructions to individuals or a program of how to act. Certainly, in every culture there is a process of socialization, but there are also nuances that outsiders have little knowledge of. (p. 14)

   An example can be found in the African-American community. The assertion is that HIV/AIDS is the government’s attempt to rid the United States of African Americans. To an outsider, this may be seen as an excuse or a form of paranoia. Yet there is some reason for African Americans to feel this way. The basis for such a belief can be found in the Tuskegee Experiment:

   For forty years between 1932 and 1972, the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) conducted an experiment on 399 black men in the late stages of syphilis. These men, for the most part illiterate sharecroppers from one of the poorest counties in Alabama, were never told what disease they were suffering from or of its seriousness. Informed that they were being treated for “bad blood,” their doctors had no intention of curing them of syphilis at all.

   The data for the experiment was to be collected from autopsies of the men, and they were thus deliberately left to degenerate under the ravages of tertiary syphilis—which can include tumors, heart disease, paralysis, blindness, insanity, and death. “As I see it,” one of the doctors involved explained, “we have no further interest in these patients until they die.” (Brunner, n.d.)

2. **Culture is a thing.** To regard culture as a thing leads to the notion that “it” is a thing that can act, almost independently, of human actors. Although Avruch (2006) argues that culture is not an independent entity, he does recognize that it evolves or changes and that it is important to look at intracultural diversity (p. 14). Based on Avruch’s premise, it is safe to say that culture evolves based on many outside influences. An example of influence and change can be found in the evolution in one’s passion for music. It wasn’t very long ago that music was defined by race and/or ethnicity. However, if we look at what is considered the Hip-Hop generation, there are no boundaries when it comes to music, clothing, use of technology, and even substance abuse.

3. **Culture is uniformly distributed among members of a group** (p. 14). For many of us, we would like to think that there are few if any differences. In the case of Americans, we are all one and have the same cultural values. However, this defies logic and to have this be so would mean that we have all been programmed like computers. If we examine the generational differences within a police organization, there are those who are considered dinosaurs who possess certain traits which include dislike or hatred for technology, even such advances as moving from the revolver to the semi-automatic pistol, and the
use of fax machines and computers, who miss the good old days. The future of policing hinges on a generation of police officers who embrace technological advances and prefer computers to people.

Identifying an offender’s culture and its influences during a time of crisis may be extremely difficult. The inability to understand and offer some degree of empathy may cost a suicidal individual his life—even worse, the life of a hostage. Yet, it is important to understand from the negotiator’s standpoint that he or she must be ready for the challenge. Here are just a few influences: generational, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and religion. Before moving on, take a moment and see if you can expand on this list. You will find that it is limitless because there are so many variables which influence human behavior. However, it is important to understand that any number of issues associated with culture will probably be central and the motivation in a time of crisis.

**Generational Influences**

If we examine American culture, this is truly a unique time in our history. As Americans, we are living longer, and there is truly a clash of cultures solely based on generations. Gravett and Throckmorton (2007) describe the workforce of today with the following labels: *Radio Babies* (or the *Silent Generation*) born 1930 to 1945; *Baby Boomers* born 1946 to 1964; *Generation Xers* (or *Baby Busters*) born 1965 to 1976; and *Generation Ys* (or *Generation Why*, *Millennials*, or *Echo Boomers*) born 1977 to 1991. Associated with these labels are a host of cultural and communications conflicts. The common characteristics of each is outlined below:

- **Radio Babies** – Born between 1930 and 1945. This generation is labeled as such because radios were the form of mass communication of the day and television had not arrived. They are described as conservative, fiscally prudent, and loyal to their employers. The parents of this group were survivors of the Great Depression of the early 1930s and stressed the importance of a steady paycheck and saving money. The three factors that shaped their belief system are (1) parent’s views, (2) values held in the community, and (3) the views of respected political leaders (pp. 33-36). In a crisis, would Radio Babies be a low context communicator or a high context communicator and why?

- **Baby Boomers** – Born between 1946 and 1964. This generation was labeled as such because of the growth of the American family after the Korean War. Boomers were the generation of several revolutions in our culture: birth control, the sexual revolution, the Civil Rights Movement, conscientious objectors to the Vietnam War, and are most noted as flower children who espoused the famous expression, “Make Love Not War.” They are also the most educated of all of the generations discussed. The three factors that shaped their belief system are (1) the views of their immediate family, (2) peer values, and (3) political events such as the Civil Rights Movement (pp. 36-39). In a crisis, would a Baby Boomer be a low context communicator or a high context communicator and why?

- **Generation Xers** – Born between 1965 and 1976. Generation Xers represent the smallest segment of the population. They are the generation with the highest number of divorced parents, dual income families, and were reared as latchkey kids. As a result, they learned very early to fend for themselves and become
independent. The three factors that shaped their belief system are (1) world events as seen on television, (2) peers value and views, and (3) a handful of respected coworkers (pp. 39-42). In a crisis, would a Generation Xer be a low context communicator or a high context communicator and why?

- Generation Y, Millennials, and Echo Boomers (the names are interchangeable and synonymous with one another) – Born between 1977 and 1991. They are sixty million strong and three times the size of Generation Xers. Generation Y grew up with dual income parents, divorces, and day care. However, the parenting styles were different. Time outs became the norm, and spanking was considered child abuse. Parents protected their children from the realities of the world. Technology has had the greatest impact on this generation (pp. 44-46). According to Teenage Research Unlimited, more than 80% of teenagers have Internet access, whether at home, school, work, a friend’s home, or the library. A recent study by the Fortino Group further predicts that current 10 to 17 year olds will spend one-third of their lives (23 years) on the Internet (The Kellogg School of Management, n.d.). In a crisis, would a Generation Y, Millennial, or Echo Boomer be a low context communicator or a high context communicator and why?

It should be noted that Generation Y, Millennials, and Echo Boomers pose a unique set of problems in that they do not like to communicate verbally as do the other generations. A negotiator may find themselves in a position where a member of this generation chooses to use instant messaging or texting. The three factors that shaped Generation Y’s belief system are (1) community values and lifestyles, (2) grandparents’ views, and (3) world events as seen on television.

The generational picture details the evolution of culture within American society. However, the key in each assessment can be found in each generation’s belief system. If you examine each, you will observe that there is “a disconnect” from the parents as we move from the Baby Boomers to Generation X and Generation Y. In fact, two of their greatest influences are television and peers. Another profound fact with Generation Y is they have been protected from the harsh realities of life. The idea that they have been protected and not allowed to resolve conflict needs to be understood because it suggests that this generation has little or no coping skills. Finally, Generation Y is the most technologically savvy of the generations and spends a considerable amount of time texting, playing video games, or on the Internet.

Lancaster and Stillman (2005) offer the following observations regarding generational collisions:

For years people have analyzed factors like age, life stage, gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion, educational background, thinking styles, Myers-Briggs profiles, and even signs of the zodiac to find ways to understand each other better. Yet somehow we’ve failed to recognize the form of diversity that affects every human being on a daily basis, generational differences. (p. 13)

Demographics

It goes without saying that the United States is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. For years, law enforcement agencies have been pressured to diversify the workforce because an agency should be reflective of the community.
that it serves. This diversification brings with it different points of view and should offer insight into cultural issues. Where the doors may have been closed in the past, such insight would be especially helpful in the negotiation process. Passel and Cohn (2008) of The Pew Research Center state that the U.S. population will soar to 438 million by 2050; however, the most startling change can be found in the demographics:

- Nearly one in five Americans will have been born outside the U.S. versus one in eight in 2005. Some time between 2020 and 2025, the percentage of foreign-born will surpass the historic peak reached a century ago during the last big immigration wave. New immigrants and their children and grandchildren born in the U.S. will account for 82.0% of the population increase from 2005 to 2050.

- Whites who are not Hispanic, now two-thirds of the population, will become a minority when their share drops to 47.0%. They made up 85.0% of the population in 1960.

- Hispanics, already the largest minority group, will more than double their share of the population to 29.0%.

- Blacks will remain at 13.0% of the population. Asians will go to 9.0% from 5.0%.

In contrast to the future, the 2000 census of the U.S. provides the following demographic portrait of the population: White, 75.0%; Black, 12.3%; American Indian/Alaskan Native, 0.9%; Asian, 3.9%; Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 0.1%; Some Other Race, 5.5%; Two or More Races, 2.4%; and Hispanic/Latino, 12.5% (p. 3).

Based on the demographics alone it would be impossible to know every nuance of these cultures. However, there are two things to consider when evaluating a team’s needs: (1) the demographics of your jurisdiction and (2) team composition. Let me be clear here. I am not saying select a member because of their race or gender; they must still pass the team’s selection process. In addition, jurisdictional demographics are constantly changing and, thus, an agency’s training should reflect those changes.

**Entitlement**

When discussing culture, one issue that cannot be overlooked is that of entitlement. In every relationship, there is a belief that we as individuals should be treated fairly and with a sense of justice. This expectation is understood in a host of relationships to include husband-wife, employer-employee, government-citizens, teacher-student, and doctor-patient, to name a few. The underlying belief in each of these relationships is equity and fairness. However, when this trust is violated, it creates a sense of hostility, betrayal, or the feeling of being exploited or used. In the worst case scenario, the victim loses his or her dignity and value as a human being. If the system fails or expectations are not met, either perceived or real, then entitlement changes to what can be defined as *destructive entitlement*.

*Destructive entitlement* is a term that is often associated with familial relationships. Paul (1999) defines *destructive entitlement* as the unwillingness to care about others and says that it results from being mistreated, neglected, or exploited by parents (p. 1). However, I would have to argue based on the concepts of negotiation and the incidents
that negotiators have been involved in over the last 30 years that this concept is one that can be attributed to all relationships where there is an expectation of fairness and/or justice. Below you will find some examples of destructive entitlement. As you review these, take a moment and reflect on what caused these to happen:

- A high school boy who has been bullied and the administration refuses to intervene.
- An African-American male who believes that this country has failed him with a subpar education which has made him unable to get a job.
- White American who believes that this country is no longer his because the demographics are changing.
- A returning veteran who cannot get the medical assistance that he needs after proudly serving in the Iraq War.
- A factory worker employed for 25 years loses his job and pension as his job is shipped to Mexico.
- A police officer who is in crisis and is afraid to seek counseling services because he would be considered weak by his peers.
- A Pakistani father who has committed an “Honor Killing” and is holding the rest of his family hostage.
- A rape victim who is portrayed as a slut/whore in court and her attacker goes free.

This is a short list, but it without question could go into infinitum. The question is, “Do you have what it takes to get into ‘The Well’ with these individuals and see their crisis as they do?”

Research Question and Methodology

On September 25, 2008, I developed an exercise with nine graduate students who were attending Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU). Each of the students is enrolled in the Forensic Behavioral Analysis Program. This exercise was developed for a class entitled Research in Violent Behavior. The students were paired in groups of two, with one student having to participate twice. One week before the exercise, each group was given a small profile of the subject who they were going to negotiate with and were told to research subjects who have similar profiles to learn their nuances. All of the offenders were minorities except one. For consistency and control, I played each of the hostage takers in the scenario. The scenarios were assigned to each group randomly without consideration of gender, race, or nuances that may have been observed in class.

Student Profiles
- Average age: 39 years old
- Number of females: 6
- Number of males: 3
- Race: 9 Whites
- Country of origin: 8 U.S./1 France
- Number of Psychology courses: 3
- Most common courses: Forensic Psychology, Advanced Forensic Psychology, Criminal Behavior, and General Psychology
Research Question: Can graduate students who have been trained to assess violent human behavior successfully negotiate with a violent offender who is in crisis and has taken hostages?

Hypothesis: Based on their educational background and life experience, they will be able to successfully negotiate such a crisis.

Null Hypothesis: Based on their education and life experience, they will not be able to successfully negotiate such a crisis.

Limitations of the Study: The size of the group examined was extremely small—nine participants. In addition, there were no trained hostage negotiators participating in the exercise.

Scenarios: Each exercise was limited to 20 minutes. The scenarios were as follows:

- Your person is a Haitian immigrant by the name of Richard who has lived in this country for five years. He is married, and he and his wife have a daughter who is 15 and a son who is 10. The practicing religion of the family is Voodoo. His daughter rejects everything Haitian, has adopted an Anglo-American lifestyle, practices pre-marital sex, and is pregnant by a White male. The father has taken the family hostage.

- Your person is Marla, a biracial mother of five—specifically, she is African American and Caucasian. Marla is also a crack addict, and each of her five children has a different father. Tonight, she has spent all of her welfare check on crack cocaine and is holding her five children hostage. This scenario changed when the negotiator called, and it was Marla’s boyfriend who was holding the family hostage. The boyfriend was a Black male.

- Your guy is a police officer named Paul. He is a White male, and his wife is a Black female. They have one child together. Paul has been having problems in his personal life. His wife has tried to pinpoint the problem, but he refuses to discuss the matter. In fact, she describes him as obsessing over the issue and has been doing so for the last month. His behavior has changed in that he began drinking heavily and showing signs of paranoia. She is worried because he has barricaded the doors with furniture and refuses to let his wife and child leave the house. In fact, he has locked them in a bedroom. There is no more communication with the family because he will not answer the phone.

- Your guy is a Black male who is a devout Black Muslim. His name is Hayward X. He was stopped for speeding by two White police officers. Witnesses state they saw the officers pull Hayward from the car and beat and kick him. During the officers’ assault, Hayward took one of the officer’s firearms and shot and killed them both. He has fled the scene and has been located on the campus of FGCU. He has barricaded himself in a classroom in AB3, which is believed to be full of students. He is not responding to the University Police Department.

- Your guy is a Latino male by the name of Michael Hernandez. Mike is a Gulf War Veteran and has just returned from a second tour in Iraq. We received a call that
the neighbors could hear yelling coming from the residence. Mrs. Hernandez called the police when Mike left the house, explaining that he had threatened to burn the house down. Police attempted to stop him, and he fled, making it back to the residence holding a 10-gallon gas can. His wife could only tell the police that she and the kids were in the house before Mike ran over and hung up the phone. Mike is not responding to the officers on the scene.

- Your subject is White male by the name of Thomas Short. Thomas is an FGCU student who is in love with another student and has been stalking her. When he approached her, she called him a "Pig." He has taken her hostage and has locked them both in an office. He is currently threatening murder/suicide.

Upon completion of the exercise, participants were given a survey and asked the following questions:

1. Do you feel that your education to date prepared you for this exercise?
   a. 63% of the respondents replied "No." (N = 6)
   b. 37% of the respondents replied "Somewhat." (N = 3)

2. Could you identify or get into "The Well" with the subject?
   a. 90% of the respondents replied "No." (N = 8)
   b. 10% of the respondents replied "Yes." (N = 1)

3. Did your research prepare you for your scenario?
   a. 90% of the respondents replied "No." (N = 8)
   b. 10% of the respondents replied "Yes." (N = 1)

4. What was the most difficult thing about this exercise? (The answers here were not consistent so I will summarize them.)
   • Not being able to connect with the suspect because of his race.
   • No control of the situation.
   • Fear that I might say the wrong thing and get the hostages killed.
   • A lack of preparation.
   • Feeling useless and hopeless.

During the debriefing stage, it was apparent that many found that they were lacking in the necessary skills to engage someone who was in crisis. The issue of race came up several times in our discussion. The students offered that they did not have it as a reference point and felt inadequate. Of the six scenarios, only one student was successful in that she related to the hostage taker on a personal level in that they both had children.

There was one other phenomena noted and that is the inability to communicate when a criminal act had been interjected: dry firing a weapon; stating that, "I had tied my family up and poured gasoline on them"; or breathing heavy and stating, "I just finished raping the bitch and I am going to do it over and over until I am ready to kill her." The students stated that they had expected such statements but were shocked when they heard them and could not find the necessary words to engage the offender.

Due to the average age of the class, their life experience, and their past education, it was my belief that the class would have at least a 50% success rate when, in
actuality, they only had a 10% success rate. What can be deduced from the conclusion of the experiment is as follows:

- It is not life experience by itself; it is the quality of and diversity of life experiences which foster growth and understanding.

- Education alone is not enough; it is exposure to the nature and types of experiences that prepares one to understand human behavior.

- In addition to education, one needs to be trained to handle such situations and that training needs to be ongoing and varied.

It is impossible to prepare for every situation. However, training is central to the success of any negotiation team. With this in mind, it is important to go outside the norm on a negotiation training day. Explore religion. There are a host of religions in this country, with Christianity being the most common. Even though it is the most common belief system in the U.S., there are a host of splinter groups and cults. Examine, understand, and train with the extremes in fanaticism associated with that doctrine. Some of the other religions include Muslim/Islam, Jewish, New Age, Rastafarian, Sikh, Santeria, Pagan, Hindu, and Buddhist.

In addition, schools have been a constant source of problems since Columbine. Remember that Generation X and Y learn from the media and are generations with whom parents have little influence. One key issue here is that these generations were protected and have little or no coping and/or problem-solving skills so their role modeling comes from television and the Internet.

Finally, the skill sets in good negotiating are active listening, empathy, and paraphrasing. Yet the success of the process hinges on one’s knowledge of life’s successes and failures. More importantly, it is essential for negotiators to understand and make a connection with the perpetrators when they are at the lowest point in their lives.

References


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Ethics and the Culture of Law Enforcement

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Introduction

The subject of ethics and the need for ethical behavior within the police profession have become significant considerations in police leadership and training. A great deal of emphasis has been placed on ethics training as a foundational and transformational way of improving officer performance when officers confront ethical dilemmas on the street and within the organizational framework. Almost an entire generation of police officers has been trained in the theories and realities of ethics-based performance. Policing continues, however, to be faced with ethical dilemmas and unacceptable behaviors.

This article discusses how the police culture can affect behaviors that are seen among police officers as they perform their duties and responsibilities. Additionally, the article will emphasize how the police profession and organizational constructs can shape organizational performance into expected results and anticipated conformity.

Police Culture and Subcultures

As with other professions, the police culture comprises ideas, knowledge, behaviors, signs, rituals, norms, and values. These characteristics are common to any culture, but are perhaps most unique to the police profession.

Many experts agree that the single greatest obstacle to achieving accountability for police behavior is the subculture (Walker, 2001). The question must then be asked, “What is in the police subculture that makes it difficult for organizational change and the establishment of professional standards?” Researchers have long held that occupation-related stressors provide significant distinguishing characteristics between police work and other occupations. The presence of danger in police work reinforces the subculture and fosters group solidarity (Cohen & Feldburg, 1991; Delattre, 1989; Murphy & Caplan, 1993). The same authors agree that an inordinate amount of attention and misinformation concerning the dangers of police work is disseminated to police recruits during their initial training. The influence of group solidarity is therefore profound and establishes a social process whereby officers feel isolated from their superiors, other organizational environments, and, most unfortunately, the public.

The question for police management is how can it change or alter the subculture for ethical conduct. Evidence suggests that many police agencies fail to appropriately discipline officers who are guilty of misconduct (Walker, Spohn, & DeLone, 2002). Moreover, police abuses could be reduced through improved supervision; administration sanctions; and training in ethics, interpersonal skills, and cultural awareness (Byers, 2000).
Ethical Leadership

Strict chain-of-command principles and elaborate bureaucratic rules are no longer effective for contemporary police organizations comprising a workforce that is becoming more diverse and college educated. Bratton (1999) suggested that the role of police in general and the role of the front-line officer should be reconceptualized and that officers must be treated as responsible decisionmakers, not just policy implementers. His reasoning is consistent with the fact that the nature of police work in today’s society is far more decentralized and discretionary. What is typically found in today’s police organization is a highly decentralized structure with a centralized management philosophy. In other words, a tight chain-of-command philosophy rules the organization, disallowing empowerment to the extent that the decentralized structure expects. Ethical leadership implies that decisions should be made on principles that empower officers and other subordinates while contributing equally toward organizational success and recognition.

The behavior of police officers is mostly controlled through a militaristic chain of command, through internal affairs units, through elaborate bureaucratic rules, and through complex operating procedures (Crank, 2004). Due to the increase in higher education standards in the police workforce, officers increasingly experience conflict more often during their interchanges with supervisors who subscribe to a more militaristic style of policing. As a means to overcome this condition, Carlson and Jones (2004) believe that officers should undergo extensive formal and experiential training that emphasizes values, ethics, and diagnostic skills to assist with the identification of the peculiar characteristics of a given situation, the articulation and attainment of goals, and the ability to alter behaviors to achieve desired outcomes. Clearly, many police academies throughout the nation are moving toward more experiential training and role-playing exercises, which are consistent with a more contemporary training model.

Enough cannot be said about the importance of goals for the direction of police personnel and within the organization’s expectations of individual performance. There is a pressing need to redefine and redesign performance evaluation processes that are more goal oriented, with less emphasis on traditional measures of arrests’ numbers and activity generation. To continue and foster the development of ethical leadership within police organizations, the need exists to change how officers are supervised and rewarded. Officers on scene can directly evaluate and respond to situations and problems (Vinzant & Crothers, 1998). A management philosophy should embrace the importance of empowerment and the recognition that officers, who are closer to the realities of policing, experience daily the understanding of what constitutes effective policing. In many instances, officers who perform community-oriented policing activities have been evaluated unsuccessfully when measured against traditional evaluation instruments focused almost exclusively on quantity rather than quality policing.

Appropriately empowering police officers with ethical leadership skills enhances the public’s perception of the police and enables officers to assist with the creation of solutions to community problems (Stevens, 2002). Stevens reinforces the belief that ethical leadership is not restricted to a few with rank and privilege, which has also been stated by Johnson (2001). The principles of ethical leadership should apply to all personnel levels within the organizational structure. A notion that
only the top brass are the organization’s leaders is no longer consistent with a
contemporary police organization that embraces the philosophies of empowerment
and decentralized decisionmaking.

Furthermore, ethical leadership embraces the need for a moral dimension,
demanding that anyone who assumes a leadership role should develop an
awareness of how one’s values and ethics define leadership (Northouse, 2001). The
importance of values in policing and within leadership concepts have led to what
is frequently called values-led leadership. Whisenand and Ferguson (2002) believed
that values-led leadership in policing maximizes efforts by integrating community
values into an agency’s mission, vision, strategy, operating plans, and services.
From the bottom-up and from the top-down, therefore, police organizations can
more honestly say that their operational strategies and philosophies of management
are based entirely on important values held within both the organization and the
community.

**Why Organizations Fail**

In his work entitled *Leading Change*, Kotter (1996) listed several reasons why
organizations fail. Although not unique to just the police profession, the following
reasons are certainly applicable to police organizations of all types:

- They allow too much complacency.
- They do not create powerful coalitions.
- They permit obstacles to block visions.
- They do not create short-term successes.
- They declare victory prematurely.
- They neglect to anchor changes in the organizational culture. (pp. 4-14)

Most of these reasons for failure characterize the history of policing in the U.S.
First, police organizations often allow too much complacency by not disciplining
police officers when the need exists and by failing to take appropriate actions
and sanctions against leadership as well as officers whenever organizational
policy is violated or goals and objectives are not met. The standards associated
with progressive management mandate models of superior organizational and
individual performance. Unfortunately, the element of complacency continues to
exist within the ranks of management and among line officers.

Perhaps one of the greatest contributions that the Community Policing Model
has given to law enforcement has been to recognize the importance of building
important strategic alliances and coalitions between the community and
elements of the police organization. Much of the success that police organizations
experience from practicing the principles of community-oriented policing can be
attributed to partnerships, both within the organizational framework and within
the community. The need to maintain those partnerships with coalitions is vital
since police organizations tend to alter their practices and philosophies over time,
and community needs and expectations also change contemporaneously with
policing. Therefore, it is critically important for police executives to ensure that
close interactions and relationships with their coalitions are not just minimally
functional. They should contribute continually to operations of the police
organization.
Opportunities for police leaders to anchor changes in their cultures can be problematic because the average tenure of a police chief in the United States is less than five years, much less than for other professions. Opportunities for programmatic changes and their eventual applications are also short-lived since new leaders tend to take organizations in new directions. Therefore, the need is great for long-term goals with strategic plans for police leaders to implement, thus increasing opportunities for organizational change on a more protracted basis.

Changing the Organizational Culture

Several principles in organizational development apply to the process of changing the police organizational culture. Organizational development researcher W. W. Sikes (1989) listed seven principles inherent within the change process. First, Sikes asserts that leaders must understand something thoroughly before they try to change it. Elements of an organization are often changed without thoughtful and analytical reviews of existing operations to ensure exactly what needs to be changed. To ensure that something is thoroughly understood requires that leaders listen to members at various strategic levels within the organization so they acquire firsthand the application of operational policies and practices.

Secondly, Sikes (1989) says that just one element of a system cannot be changed. It is easier and less painful for police leaders to change a division or unit without considering other organizational elements and the interrelationships that make for an effective organization. The change process should come about, however, only after a comprehensive strategic planning exercise that identifies comprehensive organizational strengths and weaknesses.

Sikes’ (1989) third principle is that people will resist anything they think is punishment. Unfortunately for police leaders, many employees feel that proposed changes are threatening or constitute punishment. This occurs whenever police leaders fail to adequately inform employees about the reasons for change or to convince employees of the value in the proposed changes. In such cases, employees tend to resist the change process as they see it as threatening their security and jobs. The key to lowering the resistance to change lies in involving employees in the proposed change process and eliciting their views and opinions about change and how it may affect them professionally and personally. Along with the resistance factor, Sikes states in his fourth principle that people are reluctant to endure discomfort even for the sake of possible gains. Attempts to instill higher ethical standards and improve ethical conduct within the police organization are, unfortunately, seen by many employees as discomforting to their spheres of responsibility and their personal commitments to the organization. Again, stressing the importance of change and the values inherent in the proposed changes would substantially improve the organizational climate. Employees would feel less threatened and more willing to endure some discomfort to experience gains in areas such as improvement in ethical conduct by the organization and its employees.

Sikes’ (1989) fifth principle in changing the organizational culture is that change always generates stress. No one would dispute the fact that policing is highly stressful. Coupling professional stress with the additional stress generated by change results in stress levels for police that may exceed those of almost any other profession. Police leaders should emphasize the importance of stress management.
for employees in both operational and administrative capacities. Stress will naturally increase whenever police leaders talk more about the need to improve ethical conduct for officers. Many officers see the need to raise ethical standards as a threat and an indictment against their existing practices. Therefore, management must ensure that raising standards for ethical conduct should not contribute to stress but should be seen as a positive intervention in the lives of the employees and their surrounding environments.

Another important principle of Sikes (1989) is to allow employee participation in setting goals and devising strategies in an organization. Much has been written and discussed about the need for police organizations to increase employee involvement in developing mission statements and goals and objectives. Police organizations have come a long way in this effort in the past couple of decades as more progressive officers and civilian employees have assumed positions of increased responsibility. However, they must continually recognize the importance of allowing everyone to have input into the organization’s goals and the development of strategies and tactics that directly impact their duties and responsibilities. When confronted with the need to increase ethical standards, most employees would support the need for goals and programs to bring about improvements in organizational and individual performance. Most police officers do not want to work in unethical environments and do not want to see other officers involved in unethical behaviors. Therefore, allowing officers to make recommendations for policy enhancements and improvements in ethical conduct is a formidable way to increase acceptance of the change process as it relates to ethical behaviors.

Lastly, Sikes (1989) suggests that behavioral change must come in small steps. This principle relates well to the police occupation that is generally more closed than other professions and more resistant to change. The decentralized nature of policing tends to create an environment in which police officers feel more in control in their neighborhoods and beats rather than functioning under a strong centralized form of authority. Police officers seek and need empowerment to be effective in their neighborhoods and communities. Therefore, the change that leaders want to see must be clearly related to those behaviors demonstrated by officers. The nexus between establishing standards, training, and promulgating policy with actually demonstrating improved behaviors is a struggle for most police organizations. Police leaders must therefore understand that behaviors will improve in small increments rather than from a massive or wholesale change process. A Behavioral Change Model must embrace a more systematic and methodical way to modify employee behaviors to a point where they demonstrate improvement. Police leaders must continue to rely on management and supervisory personnel to monitor employees closely through more structured behavioral modification programs and practices.

**Models of Organizational Change**

The importance of changing the police organizational culture is tantamount to improving behavioral conduct among officers and improving organizational behaviors. Employees, however, do not embrace the change process as readily or as thoroughly as police leaders would like. The political atmosphere that exists in many organizations seemingly contributes to reluctance to change at times when
change is being forced on many employees. There must be more methodical and systematic ways to bring about the change process in order to achieve the targeted improvements in organizational effectiveness and employee performance.

According to Champoux (2003), organizations tend to change primarily through the Evolutionary Model, characterized by a slower change process that occurs incrementally. The Evolutionary Model tends to be a safer approach for bringing about organizational change since it tends to be less disruptive to employees and has higher levels of predictability within its conceptual design. A good example of following the Evolutionary Model is whenever a police leader makes a minor procedural change in a pursuit policy when the community is experiencing significant civil liability issues.

Champoux (2003) also identified the Revolutionary Model of organizational change. The political nature of public organizations frequently demonstrates the Revolutionary Model. The elective process as it relates to policing in America consists of sheriffs, mayors, and city council members who are elected at regular intervals, usually every two or four years. This political atmosphere creates many opportunities for newly elected mayors to appoint new police chiefs, giving them specific responsibilities and direction to affect change in local policing practices. A political agenda can be aggressive and direct for police executives to implement within their term of appointment. The Revolutionary Model is used in these instances whereby an agenda must be accomplished within specific timeframes and for specific reasons. Unlike its Evolutionary Model counterpart, this model embraces a compressed timeline to achieve anticipated results. It typically does not allow for much employee input, but, rather, requires forced compliance within the constraints of perceivable threats and punishments. Implementing this model usually takes several years for a settlement period to occur. Nevertheless, when introduced properly, the Revolutionary Model can yield some lasting results and can require high levels of adaptability to present and future conditions.

Perhaps one of the best examples of revolutionary change in law enforcement came with the creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Numerous federal law enforcement and public health agencies were consolidated into one massive bureaucracy. The organizational values and cultures that were present in the former agencies were suddenly challenged and seemed less important than when they were more independent.

As they relate to improving ethical standards and performance, elements of both models are appropriate for changing the traditional police organizational culture. Police leaders should emphasize both officer and organizational successes as they relate to ethical conduct and continue to highlight those accomplishments as benchmarks. Having said that, new police chiefs may want to follow the Revolutionary Model upon coming into office if they observe some serious ethical lapses in officers’ conduct. Under either model, it is vitally important for police leaders to take decisive actions and commit to a change process that will allow for repudiation of unethical conduct on the part of any officer. Most police organizations choose to follow a more evolutionary approach through scheduled ethics training programs that ideally should build upon the levels of officers’ expertise to follow higher ethical standards.
A Leadership Organization

The majority of the literature on organizational behavior in the past decade has emphasized the importance of transforming traditional organizations to leadership organizations. The leadership organization embodies important principles such as empowerment, goal setting, and continuous learning.

In his book entitled *Every Officer Is a Leader: Transforming Leadership for Police, Justice and Public Safety*, Anderson (2000) lists elements of the transformational process from a traditional organization to one that is more focused on being a leadership organization:

- Shift paradigms from managing the status quo to leading toward a preferred future.
- Involve all members in the development and communication of an inspiring vision of a preferred future that will motivate individuals and performance teams.
- Assess the needs, wants, problems, and fears of the organization’s internal and external customers.
- Use a systems approach to change management and set realistic, achievable goals that will help realize the preferred future.
- Plan and implement measurable objectives while removing obstacles to progress.
- Identify and train those who are willing and able to develop leadership competencies in all members of the organization.
- Assess outcomes of change initiatives, reporting results in a timely manner so accomplishments can be celebrated and unexpected obstacles to progress removed or managed.
- Intentionally engage in continuous learning that promotes personal, professional, team, organization, family, and community development. (p. 6)

Preventing Unethical Behavior

The initial step in the staffing process is recruitment. Therein lies the greatest opportunity for police organizations to transform themselves into leadership organizations characterized by higher ethical standards. Organizations should continually strive to attract the brightest and most competent individuals as police officers. Since some pitfalls exist in the recruitment process, the need exists to recruit with great care (McCarthy, 2000). Lowering employment standards represents perhaps the greatest pitfall for many law enforcement agencies. The best example of this is when agencies lower their educational standards in an effort to increase the numbers of minority applicants. The need to balance personnel numbers with standards is always a challenge for administrators. However, police organizations should never lower their professional standards solely for the purpose of adding to their total applicant pool.

Formulating sound policies and procedures that reflect ethical values and standards is an essential foundation to prevent unethical behavior in police organizations. Once policies and procedures are developed, it is equally important to train officers in various aspects of the policies to ensure they thoroughly understand
management’s intent, both in the philosophy and the practice of operational procedures.

The rigid chains of command that exist in most police organizations can frequently be barriers to organizational success. Therefore, each officer in the chain of command must share management’s philosophies and values to ensure that goals and objectives are being complied with and that line officers in particular are implementing procedures and tactics that are consistent with policy intent.

The success of a police organization can be directly related to its ability to be introspective, thereby ensuring that organizational components and personnel alike are complying with organizational goals and objectives. Perhaps the most effective way to achieve and maintain organizational compliance is for regular self-inspection. The concept of police staff inspections has been commonplace since the 1960s. However, the structures and functions of police organizations have become increasingly complex. The inspections process in a contemporary police organization should be more proactive and structured, with audit designs rather than the checklist mentality that characterized past line and staff inspection functions.

Every police organization should use operational control systems primarily consisting of an audit-and-compliance function. The primary objective of these units would be to ensure that goals and objectives are being met and that every aspect of an organization is in compliance with its policies and procedures. The audit-and-compliance function is an excellent forum by which police leaders can determine the level of ethics and values compliance as well as ascertain that every organizational component is honoring the organization’s commitment to its ethical standards.

**Conclusion**

The majority of police agencies in the United States engage in some form of ethics training and development. Many of them, however, devote just a small portion of their training agendas to ethics, and much less learn the need to assess organizational behaviors through the cultural-change process. Most basic training curricula focus primarily on practical skill development such as firearms, physical fitness, and defensive tactics. Important as they are, practical skills are not enough in the police culture to influence officers in positive ways to achieve ethical behavior.

The recent trend is to emphasize intellectual skill development in basic academies. The need to engage in critical thinking and using good judgment skills is critically important in today’s police environment. Developing intellectual and mental-thought processes are excellent forums by which police agencies can incorporate ethics training and development on a more protracted basis. Using real-life experiences and situational dilemmas with a progressive review and analysis of choices and consequences are excellent avenues by which adult learners become more immersed in the importance and relevancy of ethics in the police profession.
Basic training curricula should be significantly modified to allow for this type of training, perhaps with correspondingly less emphasis on practical skill development. The focus should be on inculcating important values in ethics and organizational cultures into the mainstream of thinking and performance among officers and civilian employees. Once achieved, police leaders will start seeing vast improvements in the ethical performance of their officers and within the context of the organizational structure.

References


**Dennis W. Bowman** joined the School of Law Enforcement and Justice Administration at Western Illinois University as an assistant professor in August 1999. He now holds the tenured rank of associate professor after serving almost ten years as an instructor of undergraduate- and graduate-level courses. Dr. Bowman has authored and lectured on topics of ethics, community policing, police accreditation, quality assurance in policing, criminal investigations, police culture, leadership, management, and supervision. He is a retired captain with the Illinois State Police where, among many of his command assignments, he served as the commander of community policing, research and development, staff inspections, and as a district commander. He completed his doctorate in Workforce Education and Development from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale in 2001, having previously earned his Master’s degree in Administration of Justice from there in 1978.
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