What Works in Police Training?

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Today's Context

- George Floyd's murder sparks a new and stronger push for police reform

- Three areas of reform that are often targeted:
  - Police hiring/selection
  - Police policy/accountability
  - Police training

- "What works" in police training?

What Works in Police Training?

- Implicit Bias Training
  - Mixed evidence regarding the extent to which police officers' implicit biases influence their behavior in laboratory settings.
  - <u>**ZERO**</u> evidence that implicit bias training will change officers' attitudes or behavior.
  - <u>**ZERO**</u> evidence that such training could work…
    - Implicit associations can sometimes be altered
    - BUT….such changes are small and <u>DO NOT</u> translate into changed behavior
    - Why?
      - Implicit associations are very difficult to change and impact behavioral change
      - Most trainings and interventions are too short to even hope they would matter
  - Conclusion = *Implicit bias training likely will not impact excessive force by the police*

What Works in Police Training? (continued)

- Crisis Intervention/Mental Health Training
  - **Some evidence** that such training is beneficial
  - But…
    - It must be longer than 1 or 2 days for repetition and skill acquisition to set in
    - It is too narrow
  - Conclusion = *CIT training may help but will not be enough to impact excessive force by the police*

What Works in Police Training? (continued)

- Procedural Justice Training
  - Allow citizens a voice, be respectful, explain the reasons for decisions
  - **Some evidence** that this type of training leads to attitude and behavior change
  - But…
    - It must be longer than 1 or 2 days for repetition and skill acquisition to set in
    - It is too narrow
  - Conclusion = *Procedural justice training may help but will not be enough to impact excessive force by the police*

What Works in Police Training? (continued)

- De-escalation Training
  - **No evidence** that it works, but several studies in progress
  - But, even if effective, it is narrowly focused
    - Doesn't focus on not getting to tense situation to begin with, or when escalation may be necessary
    - Doesn't take into consideration full dynamic nature and complexity of interactions with people
    - Also, the term tends to alienate officers which dooms the training from the start
    - And, 1 or 2 day trainings are ineffective
  - Conclusion = *De-escalation training may help but will not be enough to impact excessive force by the police*

Social Interaction Training for Police Officers

- **Project Framework:**
  - Framed in the social interaction research on police-citizen contacts and force.
  - Conceptualizes police-citizen encounters as a dynamic process – which unfold in an escalation to force or de-escalation of tense interaction away from force.

- **Underlying Assumption and Question**
  - Police-Citizen interactions involve some degree of agency in both parties, and shaping interactions to avoid incidents resulting in force require efforts from both parties.
    - Present student only focuses on the officer contribution
  - Can police officer be trained to better read and engage interactions with citizens in a way that reduces the likelihood of force while not increasing the vulnerability of officers to physical assault?

- **Program examined – Polis Solution's T-3Program (Tact, Tactics, and Trust)**
  - Product of $40 million DARPA funded "Good Stranger" program

Polis Solution's T-3 program (Policing Application)

<u>Components</u>

1. *Concepts of T-3 –*pattern detection, engagement, self-control, empathy, influence, error repair, de-escalation effects awareness, decision-making. **2 hrs**

2. *Video based training exercises* to develop decision-making in line with T-3 Concepts.– Instructor facilitated video-based decision-making exercises. **1hr each**

3. **Interactive and scenario-based sessions** geared toward rapport building based on identifying cues to another person's Goal, Identity, and Relation ("GIR factors") **4 to 8 hrs**

Key - training repetition   **Deliberate Practice**

Evaluation of T-3

Randomized Control Trial – Tucson (AZ) PD & Fayetteville (NC) PD

Officers Randomly Assigned to Three Groups:

1. *High Dose of Training* – (7 Months): T-3 Concepts session, 13 video Training sessions, 2 Scenario-Interactive sessions,

2. *Lose Dose of Training* - – (3 Months): T-3 Concepts session, 6 video Training sessions, 1 Scenario-Interactive sessions,

3. **Control Group of Officers** – No Training

Evaluation Design

- ***Officer Receptivity to Training*** (Survey and Interview Officers)

- ***Change in officer attitudes and perspectives*** (Survey)

- ***Change in officer behavior*** (Use of force Reports)

What We Found

- Officers that completed the training…
  - …more likely to prioritize procedural justice during citizen interactions
  - …more likely to focus on staying self-controlled during citizen encounters (only in one agency)

- Dosage mattered
  - 3 months of training impacted procedural justice and self-control prioritization
  - 6 months of training reduced officers' willingness to rely on physical control during citizen encounters

- What about actual behavior?
  - Fayetteville use of force was rare and, thus, no change observed
    - Policy and reporting problem
  - Tucson – both experimental and control officers experienced declines in use of force
    - Statistical artifact or diffusion of benefits

What We Found (continued)

- Receptivity matters!
  - Officers that were motivated to train, were much more satisfied with the training and more likely to have attitudinal change
  - So, how do we motivate officers?
    - Police supervisors and command staff need to communicate the value of the training, seek officers' opinions about the training, and ensure the training is administered in a fair manner.
    - Officers that felt their agency didn't do this were less satisfied and did not have attitudinal change.
    - This suggests that agencies need to "own" the training and not have it forced on them.

- Flexibility of social interaction training of this type
  - Web-based video interactive training
    - Helps with the operational tempo, time, and money issues that have always been

Moving Forward

- **Critical considerations in training for police citizen interactions**
    - Be repetitious
    - Consider logistical challenges of training
    - Consider who provides the training - <u>MUST</u> consider the audience's perspective
    - Consider interactions as dynamic and all the skills officers need to handle various trajectories

- **Be evidence based**

- **If training is going to take place, especially if required by the state, it should be evaluated (independently).**