



# What Works in Police Training?

**Scott Wolfe, Ph.D.**

Associate Professor, School of Criminal Justice

**Jeff Rojek, Ph.D.**

Director, Center for Anti-Counterfeiting and Product Protection

Associate Professor, School of Criminal Justice

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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.

- **One study** that speaks to whether implicit bias training will change officers' attitudes or behavior.

- Fair and Impartial Policing (FIP) evaluated in NYPD with 36,000 sworn officers.

- Survey given on day of the one-day training showed that the curriculum:

- Increased officers' knowledge of implicit bias and showed greater concern for discrimination (but, modest effect).

- 70% reportedly gained a better understanding of implicit bias.

- 66% reportedly learned new strategies and skills that they expected to apply to their work.

- Less than 50% reported that they were likely to use the strategies they learned



The Impacts of Implicit Bias Awareness Training  
in the NYPD

July 2018

Robert E. Woodson  
David A. Weisburd  
Robert E. Roper  
Matthew C. Lundman  
Dorothy M. Hoyt  
Erin M. P. Taylor  
Gabrielle T. Lopez



# What Works in Police Training?

- Implicit Bias Training
  - One study continued...
    - Fair and Impartial Policing (FIP) evaluated in NYPD with 36,000 sworn officers.
    - Follow-up survey showed that of the officers that completed the training:
      - 42% had not used FIP training in their duties during the last month
      - 31% attempted to use them sometimes
      - 27% attempted to use them frequently
    - However, with respect to actual behavior, the report concluded:
      - “Overall, we found insufficient evidence to conclude that racial and ethnic disparities in police enforcement actions were reduced as a result of the training.”
  - Conclusion = ***Implicit bias training is likely insufficient to impact excessive force by the police***



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Robert E. Woodson  
Scott J. W. Woodson  
Michael S. Ingram  
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## 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
  - **Several studies** show this type of training leads to attitude and behavior change
    - Greater Manchester Police study:
      - Officers more likely to support procedural justice
      - Officers more likely to use procedural justice during role-playing exercises
      - Citizen surveys– more satisfied with procedural justice trained officers
    - Queensland Recruit study:
      - Officers more likely to support procedural justice
      - More likely to use procedural justice with public as reported by training officers
    - Chicago Police Department studies (8,840 officers trained):
      - Officers that completed training were significantly more likely to support the use of procedural justice during interactions with the public
      - **10% reduction in complaints, 6% reduction in use of force**
  - Conclusion = *Procedural justice training offers a lot of promise but likely needs to be combined with other skill development*

## What Works in Police Training? (continued)



- De-escalation Training
  - Limited 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 not long enough
  - 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 study only focuses on the officer contribution
  - Can police officers 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)

## Components

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. ***Low 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 with the training.
    - 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 roadblocks to effective training.



## Moving Forward

- **Critical considerations in training for police-citizen interactions**
  - Be repetitious
  - Consider logistical challenges of training
  - Consider who provides the training - MUST 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).**