



# Reform and innovation in human services and policing: Vital investments in community trust and well-being

Norman E. Taylor\*

Welcome to our special themed issue on *systemic reform*, a term that has gained significant profile in this troubled year. We hope to continue this theme through subsequent issues, and our open call for papers is ongoing in support of this broad arena of system innovation. We are also entering the run-up period to the sixth global Law Enforcement and Public Health (LEPH) conference, along with a variety of related virtual learning and engagement events coming this winter and early spring. Our *Journal of Community Safety and Well-Being* will again provide an important showcase for many of the conference's presenters, their featured research projects, and their innovative propositions for reform.

I have expressed a lot of my own thoughts on the growing urgency for long overdue change, in particular throughout much of this unusual year. Most recently, in an Editor's Corner piece in our Dispatch Newsletter titled *Taking the Plunge into Systemic Reform ... an Inevitable and Overdue End to Sameness* (Taylor, 2020), I made a case for tilting our own editorial direction more aggressively. Now, in this issue, we let the articles carefully curated by our editorial team do the talking.

Some will simply inform deeper conversations yet to come. Many will inspire. A few might make you uncomfortable and maybe even a bit angry, depending on your current mindset, or depending on the culture in which you have invested your career.

Regular readers might notice that, for this special issue, we have suspended our use of three of our regular editorial sections, *Strengths*, *Services*, and *Justice*, in favour of assembling all of our featured papers on systemic reform under the single section, *Trust*.

It is our view that at its core, systemic reform must essentially be about restoring trust. It has now become our most apparent and urgent social imperative to repair the reciprocal levels of trust between all global citizens and publicly funded human services, community-based resources, and the prevailing economic and political structures that are meant to serve them.

Without trust, these elements will become increasingly unable to nurture and support community, family, and individual *strengths*. Without trust, meaningful *services* will fail to align with real needs and will present continuing deterrents and barriers to those hoping and needing to access them. Without trust, *justice* is merely a state apparatus, disconnected from genuine human aspirations and equitable outcomes.

For those who work within these systems, we know we can all come up with a lot of reasons for staying the course, for preserving all those sacred myths that shape and protect the behaviours, the comforts, and the choices that define each and every sector of health and human services, policing and criminal justice, economic opportunity and social equity. We have finely parsed them out over the past several decades, in the pursuit of their respective administrative logic, simplicity of operations and budgetary accountability, and cautious fealty to still prevailing yet often tacit colonial assumptions about power, privilege, and prosperity.

Today, as the year 2020 draws to a close, literally nothing is resolved. Yet there is a global abundance of knowledge and thought, hard science and social science, evidence and promise, that can help us all find and implement innovative ways forward.

If only we could all relax our obstinate grip on normal. It most certainly appears to have relaxed its grip on us.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES

The author has continuing business interests that include providing advisory services to communities, police services and related human service agencies.

## AUTHOR AFFILIATIONS

\* Editor-in-Chief

## REFERENCES

Taylor, N. E. (2020). Taking the plunge into systemic reform ... an inevitable and overdue end to sameness. *The Dispatch*. <https://madmimi.com/s/d839711>

Correspondence to: Norman E. Taylor, Community Safety Knowledge Alliance, 120 Sonnenschein Way – Main, Saskatoon, SK S7M 0W2  
E-mail: [ntaylor@cskacanada.ca](mailto:ntaylor@cskacanada.ca)

To cite: Taylor, N. E. (2020). Reform and innovation in human services and policing: Vital investments in community trust and well-being. *Journal of Community Safety and Well-Being*, 5(4), 135. <https://doi.org/10.35502/jcswb.174>

© Author(s) 2020. Open Access. This work is distributed under the Creative Commons BY-NC-ND license. For commercial re-use, please contact [sales@sgpublishing.ca](mailto:sales@sgpublishing.ca).

SG PUBLISHING Published by SG Publishing Inc. **CSKA** Official publication of the Community Safety Knowledge Alliance.



# Envisioning the future: Police and public health joining forces

Marc Krupanski,\* Melissa Jardine,<sup>†</sup> Brendan Cox,<sup>‡</sup> Tim France,<sup>§</sup> Bill Stronach,<sup>#</sup> and Nick Crofts<sup>¶</sup>

From Minneapolis to Lagos, and from Rio de Janeiro to Nairobi, people are demanding fundamental change not only to the ways in which their communities are policed but more essentially to how complex social problems and challenges are responded to, and by whom.

The police killing of George Floyd in the United States on May 25 ignited mass calls for justice and for new approaches to addressing and promoting community safety and well-being. High-profile incidents of police violence and use of force have been noted in cities and countries on every continent, ushering forth new movements for police reform. These calls for change have varied in their specificity and focus but include demands for a rebalancing of investment in policing, including shifts away from punitive and militarized models of social control that have yielded an excess of police violence and incarceration. Existing models are widely recognized as reinforcing deep-rooted social, economic, and ethnic and racial inequalities. In many parts of the Global South, current models are deeply rooted in the history of colonization and the police structures, cultures, and legislation emerging from colonialism.

Meanwhile, the impact of the novel coronavirus pandemic has generated a debate on what exactly constitutes community safety and well-being, what are the best ways to encourage compliance with collective needs and concerns and who should ensure and enforce this compliance. The disparities in many countries in funding and responses between the public health and public security sectors have been stark. Many in law enforcement have also questioned the appropriateness of being tasked with enforcing quarantine measures or other public health requirements and have deplored the lack of readily available alternatives.

These debates and challenges are far from new or surprising. For years, practitioners, researchers, and advocates have articulated ways in which community safety and health are mutually reinforcing and constitutive. Likewise, they have argued for new approaches to safety and health that can build effective and appropriate partnerships between police and public health and offer alternatives to a sole focus on punitive enforcement measures. They have also argued that many

complex social problems are better understood as, and should be considered as, health issues rather than criminal matters. The role of policing in addressing complex social issues, the partnership of law enforcement with public health, and the meaning and value of “public health policing” are all being currently debated, and there is much evidence that many chronic social problems require new approaches. There have been positive developments in policing—and in the police and public health partnership approach—but these are relatively few. Indeed, there are often more examples of regression to failed strategies. Polarization increases as a consequence; there is urgent need for resolution of this polarization.

We have no illusion that these deep structural and historical problems can be solved quickly. However, it will surely be a failure if, a year on from the death of George Floyd and the subsequent uprisings in cities across the world, we are still talking simply about the problems we are facing and not about actually implementing practical measures to try to resolve them. That is where this current initiative of the Global Law Enforcement and Public Health Association (GLEPHA) comes in.

Leading up to the 6th International Conference on Law Enforcement and Public Health, in March 2021, the Centre for Law Enforcement and Public Health (CLEPH), on behalf of GLEPHA, will investigate, document, showcase, and propose ways to increase accessibility to practical, alternative, and innovative approaches to current problematic issues—and will demonstrate viable alternative futures. We will be focusing on six regions globally, as we have witnessed the value of and potential for international and comparative learning and exchange. If we are to break free from entrenched structural, cultural, and historical problems that plague our communities, we must look elsewhere for lessons learned and, most importantly, for inspiration to try something new.

This is a historic moment: the opportunity to envisage a new way of achieving community safety and well-being for the whole community. The aim of this endeavour is therefore to respond to and meet this challenge in countries around the world and to take up the questions of the role of policing in democratic societies, of the best partnerships

**Correspondence to:** Nick Crofts, 309 George Street, Doncaster, Victoria, 3108, Australia.  
**E-mail:** [nick.crofts@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:nick.crofts@unimelb.edu.au)

**To cite:** Krupanski, M., Jardine, M., Cox, B., France, T., Stronach, B., & Crofts, N. (2020). Envisioning the future: Police and public health joining forces. *Journal of Community Safety and Well-Being*, 5(4), 136–137. <https://doi.org/10.35502/jcswb.169>

© Author(s) 2020. Open Access. This work is distributed under the Creative Commons BY-NC-ND license. For commercial re-use, please contact [sales@sgpublishing.ca](mailto:sales@sgpublishing.ca).

**SG PUBLISHING** Published by **SG Publishing Inc.** **CSKA** Official publication of the **Community Safety Knowledge Alliance**.

between police, public health, and government, and of how we can best meet community safety and health needs and respect the rights and dignity of all people, especially those most marginalized.

There is hunger for alternatives. Much resistance to structural changes in policing stems from a lack of imagination, acknowledgement, or knowledge of alternatives. Rather than restate problems that have been detailed and named repeatedly, this project focuses on solutions and paths forward. While not countless, examples around the world of alternative approaches to community safety and health needs *do* exist, and they remain little known or without sufficient profile. These range in the spectrum from cooperation between health and law enforcement to the foregrounding of actors other than law enforcement in response to community needs.

This initiative will embark on a journey to document examples of these from countries around the world, conduct a series of online activities including webinars, and launch papers and documentaries detailing these experiences at the

LEPH2021 conference in March 2021 and beyond. This is the first stage of imagining a better future.

CLEPH: <https://cleph.com.au/>

GLEPHA: <https://gleapha.wildapricot.org/>

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES

This project is partly funded by the Open Society Foundations (OSF). MK is an employee of OSF.

#### AUTHOR AFFILIATIONS

\* Public Health Program, Open Society Foundations, New York, USA; <sup>†</sup> Melissa Jardine, Centre for Law Enforcement and Public Health; Global Law Enforcement and Public Health Association, Sydney, Australia; <sup>‡</sup> National Support Bureau, Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion, Albany NY, USA; <sup>§</sup> Inis Communication, Bournemouth, UK, and Chiang Mai, Thailand; <sup>#</sup> Centre for Law Enforcement and Public Health; Global Law Enforcement and Public Health Association, Melbourne, Australia; <sup>¶</sup> Centre for Law Enforcement and Public Health; Global Law Enforcement and Public Health Association; Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, Melbourne, Australia.



# Defunding the ramparts and institutional theory: The master's tools will fell the master's house

Michael J. DeValve\*

## ABSTRACT

Witnessing current events in Ferguson, and now in Milwaukee, New York, Los Angeles, Seattle, of course Portland, and now Kenosha, Wisconsin, where protests against police violence are met with *yet more* police violence, the question naturally arises: Why are police so seemingly insistent on actively working counter to their own organizational best interest? This essay poses this troubling question and derives part of an answer for it from institutional theory.

## INTRODUCTION

Apart from its wretchedness and that it was viewed by millions worldwide, the fallout from George Floyd's murder was not rooted solely in that murderous moment itself. With Dickensian irony, police have greeted protests against police force with *increased* brutality. One might conclude the police were seeking to validate the protesters' argument; the police could not do worse for themselves. The failure of policing in this moment, though, is not a failure authored solely by policing.

The more coherent and reasoned portions of the movement to defund the police seek to redirect taxpayer resources to institutions and away from police agencies. The reasoning that gets us to the point of radically reducing police budgets is nothing new. In fact, the idea of shifting responsibilities from the police is a thing for which the police themselves have advocated (e.g., Dennis, Berman, & Izadi, 2016; Kirkman, 1974). In what is perhaps the most skilled and most germane argument for defunding, Vitale (2017) concludes his scathing and insightful critique of American police by saying that although pervasive training and police-cultural changes are necessary, no technocratic solution for police is possible, because any changes would be resisted at all levels. Post-Floyd reforms like the threatened radical cuts to police budgets in Seattle, Washington, for example, not only ignore the deeper and more frightening issues, the threatened budget cuts themselves did not actually land. Not only was the political will to grapple with the real problems of policing not ever present, the scapegoat agency was brought back into the fold with little more than a scolding.

Criminal justice has been the dumping ground for the grotesque consequences of abandoned co-responsibility; justice agencies are left to clean up messes made by greed,

racism, and privilege. Defunding the police *should* be a thing for which police earnestly pray; defunding is (or should be understood to be), in policing terms, back-up. This essay examines a single question: *Why do police organizations flail against what is so evidently in their own organizational best interest in the current crisis of legitimacy?* This question is akin to the question that inspired institutional theory (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), so institutional theory is a natural source for insights. The companion question, to wit, *what can be done to bring the institution of policing into a place where its members are able to serve with love's wisdom at the helm*, is the focus of the commentary essay that accompanies this work in this volume.

## Institutional Theory

Institutional theory has had considerable influence on the discourse on organizations (e.g., Chandler & Hwang, 2015; Fredriksson, 2014; Hiss, 2009; Maier & Simsa, 2020; Suddaby, 2014). If we assume that organizations operate rationally towards particular ends, given the wide range of ends they might pursue and the settings in which they might pursue them, it is reasonable to assume that organizations' structures and operations would vary, determined by conditions and desired outcomes. It turns out, however, that organizations look and act much alike. This unexpected homogeneity is the point of departure for institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). In the shadow of the demise of principles of administration (e.g., Simon, 1946), mid-century organizational theorists sought to understand the forces that compelled organizations into unexpected symmetry.

A further concern haunted mid-century organizational theorists: if indeed efficiency is the driving force behind how and why organizations organize and act, it seems altogether

**Correspondence to:** Michael J. DeValve, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Criminal Justice, Bridgewater State University, Bridgewater, MA 02325, USA.  
**E-mail:** mdevalve@bridgew.edu

**To cite:** DeValve, M. J. (2020). Defunding the ramparts and institutional theory: The master's tools will fell the master's house. *Journal of Community Safety and Well-Being*, 5(4), 138-143. <https://doi.org/10.35502/jcswb.160>

© Author(s) 2020. Open Access. This work is distributed under the Creative Commons BY-NC-ND license. For commercial re-use, please contact [sales@sgpublishing.ca](mailto:sales@sgpublishing.ca).

**SG PUBLISHING** Published by **SG Publishing Inc.** **CSKA** Official publication of the **Community Safety Knowledge Alliance**.



odd that organizations are made in a way that seems almost counter to the optimization of efficiency. Instead of rational, goal-directed, efficiency-optimized principles guiding them like Polaris, something else was at work making organizations, and making them do what they do. Meyer and Rowan (1977) concluded that a set of values, ideas, and expectations extant in the wider community, and in particular among professional communities, worked to weave themselves into organizational culture and structure, and that these values, ideas, and expectations (which Meyer and Rowan call “myths”), once institutionalized, became the driving force of organizational structure and action. These myths worked to create homogeneity, something institutional theorists call isomorphism. Many of these myths ended up operating with the force of law or policy, while others were more normative. The internalized myths make the organization legitimate in the eyes of others.

Institutional theory hangs on the seeming tension between expectations regarding formal structure and line-level operation. Under the influence of myths, organizations decouple: a semi-intentional cleavage forms between formal structure and line-level activity. This decoupling buffers formal structure and organizational leadership from critique. A gap arises between stated and actual organizational outcomes; what is formally stated as its purpose and aim is not necessarily what the organization *actually does*, resulting in a disjointedness evident in assessments of activity. Decoupling allows organizations to “get things done” at the ground level that are “necessary,” if occluded and distasteful, while shielding leadership from critique for failing to meet stated goals. The reasoning of “good faith,” a kind of trust default setting, completes the picture, ultimately contributing to organizational legitimacy. Legitimacy is the key: the myths that end up being institutionalized operate in pervasive ways on organizations, but specifically to garner legitimacy for the organization in the eyes of its constituent communities. But *legitimate-ness-ness*, rather than legitimacy itself, becomes the overriding concern. Because they are built and operate according to environmental forces more than the force of rationality toward efficiency, organizations tend to look not only like each other but also like the forces in the environment that shape them; because they actually prize legitimacy more than success regarding stated goals, organizations tend to do things that make little practical, goal-related sense but instead serve the aim of cultivating their own legitimacy.

DiMaggio and Powell paraphrase Schelling (1978, p. 14): “organizations in a structured field respond to an environment that consists of other organizations responding to *their* environment, which consists of organizations responding to *an environment* of organizations’ responses” (emphasis added). The layered and churlish topography of environments works on organizations from many directions at once; as other organizations navigate their own paths through their own fields, the wake they issue becomes treacherous seas or still water for other organizations elsewhere (1983, p. 149).

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) offer a three-part typology for understanding environmental influences towards isomorphism. *Coercive* pressures are driven by the need for legitimacy, and by the consequences for not achieving it (e.g., the loss of accreditation). *Mimetic* pressures arise from the uncertainty which organizations confront when charged with complex and multivalent tasks; organizations often borrow

what is thought to work elsewhere to help them navigate uncertainty. *Normative* pressures arise from shared meanings and expectations of actors with influence in the organization’s environment (e.g., professionals). Coercive, mimetic, and normative forces towards isomorphism not only urge towards homogenization, however; institutional forces can be as differentiating as they are homogenizing (Beckert, 2010).

### Institutional Theory and the Institution of Policing

Institutional theory is a natural choice for examining policing (e.g., Crank, 2003; Crank & Langworthy, 1992), but the ready applicability of institutional theory to policing does not mean that it is capable of guiding critique. Questions have been raised about the capacity of institutional theory to sustain meaningful critique regarding power relations (e.g., Suddaby, 2014; Willmott, 2015).

Still, institutional theory would posit that, in an effort to achieve legitimacy in response to challenges regarding brutality, police would be *less, not more*, likely to use violence. Instead, nonviolent protests have been met with outsized, even cruel force, and the shooting of unarmed Black Americans continues, seemingly unabated.

I argue that *the cleaved and cratered topography of the policing environment, marked by deep decoupling in justice practice generally, the charged field of multivalent demands on police, and the enhancement of extant myths related to the purpose of police and the nature of justice have all resulted in the enemization of citizens and the fortification of organizational boundaries that have in turn resulted in violent conflicts wholly inconsistent with the continuation of the American police institution as such.*

Individual and systemic racism is powerfully and undeniably at work creating our current low state. But it is the failures of the institution that have revealed the ugly (i.e., racist) realities of policing, “good faith” being all but fully evaporated as the organizational cloister has become embattled (see, e.g., Janis, 1972).

Perhaps the clearest example of institutional isomorphism in policing is patrol. As we have understood for decades (see, e.g., Kelling, 1981; Kelling, Pate, Dieckman, & Brown, 1974; Crank & Langworthy, 1992), patrol is only moderately effective for interdicting crime, and yet it remains the largest, indeed defining, policing endeavour. Patrol is so central to legitimacy that a police chief is unlikely to be effective without having spent time doing patrol herself.

Evidence supports the notion that police adopt policies supported by only equivocal evidence. Consistent with DiMaggio and Powell (1983), Burruss and Giblin (2014) found centrist forces (including professionalized forces and other police agencies) to have an influence on the adoption of community policing programming.

### The Myth Minefield

Claims on police from the environment are not unidirectional, predictable, or within organizational control to influence or coopt (e.g., Beckert, 2010), and this multivalence is an essential component in the historic failure revealed in the present moment’s calamities.

### Police Have Anticriminogenic Efficacy

Police activity, we know now, is only rather weakly and locally related to changes in the presence of street crime in

communities (e.g., Andresen & Malleon, 2014; Andresen & Shen, 2019; Novak, Fox, Carr, & Spade, 2016; Uchida & Swatt, 2013) and hardly related at all to crimes that do vast harm (i.e., corporate, government, and state crime). Said another way, working with all they have currently, police can make us only *marginally* safer. Crucially, they pose a clear and present danger to the well-being of significant portions of the human community. What makes people and communities safe has relatively little to do with enforcement activities and far more to do with tracing and transforming suffering in its myriad forms.

### Cornerstone Coercion

At the very heart of what it means to be a police officer is the capacity to use force. Police have a monopoly with regard to the use of state force (e.g., Crank, 2015), and this monopoly sets the police apart from most any other organization in the compass of human activity. The coercion-as-cornerstone myth has at least four sub-themes: militarization, war-on-crime symbology, the problem-solving efficacy of force, and that Job One is to get home at the end of one's shift.

**Militarization as Manifestly Logical for Police.** The militarization of police (e.g., Kraska, 2001; Kraska & Cubellis, 1997) is the continuation of a theme present at the founding of policing. The first of Peel's nine principles of policing (likely authored by Rowan and Mayne, the first commissioners of the Metropolitan Police (Home Office, 2012)) states that the alternative to the prevention of crime and disorder is a resort to "military force and the severity of legal punishment." We can do this the easy way, or we can do it the hard way.

Because force has become the defining attribute of American policing, organizational components from the military (e.g., rank) are thought to be essential for police organizations. As DiMaggio and Powell (1983) observe, organizations often look to other successful organizations for ideas regarding how to structure themselves in contexts of uncertainty and volatility. Quasi-military organizational components were adopted early on in the history of policing (e.g., Monkkenon, 1992, p. 549); if the new police were to be force-empowered, a forced-based organizational metaphor would help create legitimacy for it.

**War on Crime.** The war analogy for confronting crime has a long, brutal history (e.g., Shelden & Vasiliev, 2018). Perhaps the war analogy is merely rhetorical and seeks to invite reference to the totality of effort implied by a state of war. However, the analogy enemizes members of the community and fortifies the ramparts of the righteous (DeValve, 2017), encouraging a blurring of *jus ad bellum* (justification for war) and *jus in bello* (right conduct in war). If it is defensible to wage war against crime, then there should be few checks on the means of the conduct of that war.

**Force Solves Problems.** Force does not solve problems. It creates them. Force is necessary at times, but defining police in terms of the force monopoly means that force frames and interpenetrates all police action. Given the broad and vastly complex police mandate (Brodeur, 2007), understanding police in terms of the capacity to use force is like understanding

astrophysics solely in terms of the finding and tracking of extinction-capable near-earth asteroids.

**Job One: Get Home.** Common fodder in police academies and locker rooms is the idea that, at the end of all contemplation, the most important measure of success for police is that each officer goes home at the end of her shift. Survival is Job One, all other concerns are subsidiary. This idea runs diametrically opposed to the principle of public service; were this idea to have any validity, necessarily it would leach from policing any iota of nobility.

### Policing the Community Legitimately

For some, the myth of a community, something between a Norman Rockwell painting and John Cougar Mellencamp ditty, operates behind the idea of community policing (e.g., Crank, 2015). An ideal community, rooted in traditional values, is theorized, and policing, if attuned to those values, can be more impactful (really, for it being legitimate). This assumption is as flawed as it is seductive.

From the very beginning of the policing institution, its chief founder and architect recognized the central role of legitimacy in the success of the institutional endeavour. Without legitimacy of the institution, policing in a democracy is doomed to failure. Several of Peel's principles pay homage to the importance of the consent of the policed, and that consent is in turn a function of legitimacy. Of course, the only way to achieve *true* trustful legitimacy is not to seek it as such, but merely to *be* legitimate, to *be* trustworthy.

In this crisis of legitimacy for police, it makes perfect sense that representatives of embattled police agencies would engage in what seems like victim-blaming because it is *legitimate-ness-ness* they seek, not authentic trust as such. Recently we learned (e.g., Yancey-Bragg et al., 2020) that Jacob Blake had a knife in his car. Chief Miskins of the Kenosha Police Department intimated that the people killed by Kyle Rittenhouse were at fault for their own demise (Stahl, 2020) because they were out after curfew. It is far preferable for innocent civilians to take blame than for the police to be delegitimized for their inaction or incapacity. Let the bodies hit the floor.

### Enemization

Useful for the creation of a community rooted in identity and constructed values is the manufacture of out-groups. Boundaries become a key mechanism from an institutional perspective, and for boundaries to be meaningful, enemies are needed. Communities of Color are both purposefully chosen and conveniently available for enemization (e.g., Durr, 2015; Williams, 2015; Williams, 2019). The long, continued and unspeakably sickening history of the enemization of Black and Brown peoples by government agencies need not be repeated here; no treatment in this space could hope to do justice to it.

### Bad Apples

One tendency is to view instances like the murder of Michael Brown, Philando Castile, Walter Scott, and others as an instance of a poor police officer doing a bad job, and that no indictments can be lodged against the police. "Bad-appleing" officers who murder unarmed citizens is yet another effort,

if dimly understood by those who use it, to shore up fading organizational legitimacy.

### Organizational Command Presence

The idea of the continuum of force has fallen out of favour, and for good reasons, but there is a component to the continuum of force that is rarely mentioned. Officer presence, the first level in the now-defunct but still somehow influential continuum of force, is the idea of a command presence. Strong voice and authoritative body posture are the first cultivated tactics to ensure compliance. Organizations have a command presence, too, but it takes the form of staid and solid timelessness of the organizations themselves. I am fond of observing that policing as an institution is 70 years *younger* than the Guinness beer factory in Dublin; this observation is intended to challenge directly the cultivated organizational command presence.

### Deep Decoupling

A deep divide exists between stated goals and actual practice in policing. Elsewhere (DeValve, 2015), I speak about the abyssal divide between mechanisms of crime causation and the things we do to confront crime; I refer to this divide as the etiology–action divorce. Decoupling in policing, real as it is with regard to mission, action, and evaluation, is only a special case of the divide between stated purposes and street-level activity. I refer to this divide here as “deep decoupling” because the divide is so deep it splits the field entirely, even cleaving us from ourselves.

The deep decoupling can be seen at work with regard to current evaluative and accountability practices (e.g., COMPSTAT) and the simultaneously authoritative and disappointing content of best-practices repositories like [www.crimesolutions.gov](http://www.crimesolutions.gov). It is at least as present in academic criminology. Weisburd and Piquero (2008) demonstrate the tenuous and diminishing predictive power of increasingly sophisticated quantitative criminological research (notably, even as they continue to produce it). Young (2011) then rails against the disingenuous, ineffective, and curiously hubristic body of quantitative positivistic criminology, still without meaningful rejoinder.

## MYTHS ABOUT JUSTICE

### Consensus and the Law

The power of law is rooted in the assumption that it is agreed upon by a significant portion of the community. The consensus assumption of law is a special case of the social contract. After the demise of the king sovereign, the Enlightenment-era idea of the social contract was the first attempt at a post-monarchical social order creation myth, and it did the office tolerably well at the time. Today, however, the idea of a contract is a clumsy and inapt analogy for human gravity. We socialize, we organize into human communities not through some ceding of a portion of our sovereign hegemony to a Leviathan, but through and because of love (e.g., DeValve, 2015).

Yet another concern here is the idea of the criminal as a discrete human phenomenon. The implication of the law being a result of consensus is that there is some discernible corpus of humanity committed to non-consensus activities. Whether that non-consensus activity is driven by ecological

factors, differential social organization, drift, life on the corner, the dysfunctional American Dream, low self-control, or some other tired and half-baked notion, crime is not a discrete phenomenon that exists as an exogenous phenomenon outside of humans. It is, simply put, pain caused by pain.

### Justice is Fairness

Justice, it is thought, is a result of fairness. According to this school of thought, comparative calculi with regard to justice inputs (i.e., harm) and outputs (i.e., punishment) yields a precise form of justice onto which everyone can affix their approval. As a particular instance of fairness, arguably derivable from Rawls's (1971) ideas, procedural justice (e.g., Tyler, 2012) is thought to be essential to the justice project. Although procedural justice is necessary, it is hardly sufficient (e.g., DeValve, Garland, & Wright, 2018). Framing social justice in terms of procedural justice only misleads. Process is vital for justice but only in the same way hygiene is vital for surgery. Without care, a focus on procedural justice alone coronates and reifies the traditional hegemonic (i.e., oppressive) order by reaffirming extant (and oppressive) ideas and relationships.

### Concluding Thoughts on Myths

The many competing and colliding myths, some mentioned here and some unvoiced, are a function of co-created discourses that permeate and surround the police institution. These myths are perpetuated according to the degree to which they resonate with individuals. What resonates, of course, is a function of the topography of need in each of us and in terms of the wider human community, and it is for this reason that we do well to contemplate together the topographies of that need in the wider human community and the ways we can organize to address them.

The range of guiding myths for policing is not only bedecked with false and misleading ideas, it is deeply valenced in at least two wildly different vectors. On the one hand, there is a vector that urges a wisdom, a softening of the shape of boundary-spanning contacts (e.g., DeValve & Quinn, 2010). This vector is not nearly as prolific or as influential as the second one, which urges a honing of the edge (e.g., Crank, 2015) through militarization, not only of equipment, but of personnel and of the very spirit of the agency (e.g., Kraska, 2001).

## COERCION, MIMESIS, AND THE NORMATIVE AT WORK IN POLICING

The typology offered by DiMaggio and Powell (1983) serves us well in an attempt to understand the forces that act on police, moving them away from serving their (and our) wiser interests. As Beckert (2010) observed, environmental forces impel both convergence towards isomorphism and divergence from connection with the wider field of public service.

### Coercive Forces

Organizations operate uncertainly in a field of other organizations operating uncertainly in response to uncertain operations of organizations. Constant and complex interaction is daily fare for criminal justice agencies; a deep interconnectedness is at work throughout the criminal justice organizational archipelago. Influences, both formal and



informal, at executive, mid-management and street levels, work in grand and tiny ways on organizations in the system.

Police officers today understand Peel's insight that legitimacy is everything, but the means to achieve it seem occluded from view. Considerable pressure arises from the field to identify and use "best practices." Borrowing Einsteinian wisdom, agencies are incentivized to take what is measurable to be the things that matter, and to relegate things that really matter but are nearly impossible to measure to special departments, or to ignore them altogether. As a result, "*legitimate-ness-ness*" becomes the coin of the realm and actual legitimacy, true authentic service is deemphasized. Thus, coercive forces towards isomorphism not only disincentivize rational, outcome-efficient strategies, they also make it exceedingly easy not to care in the least for non-cops or their needs.

### Mimetic Forces

Contemplating retirement, a personal friend and police executive lamented, after a long and distinguished career marked by leadership and first-class heroism, that after all he had done the community seemed no better. Haberman (2016) documented a tragic, almost ritualistic sense of capacity among police executives despite evidence that the techniques they used were anemic. The sense of efficacy, as out-of-round as it is, is also perfectly natural. It is rooted in mimetic forces that act on police. There is often no clear sense of achievement, mostly because the sense of mission is contrived almost from whole cloth. There are pleasant myths related to protecting and serving, but hardly can we say that these myths make any sense in large segments of the human community (e.g., Barlow & Barlow, 2018; Durr, 2015).

The reality of policing in America is akin to a floor drain in a truck stop bathroom: a little intervention from a hose and all of the bad choices that occur there end up in the center of the room. The difference, though, is that no one blames the drain for its filth. As a society, we abandon each other whenever doing so is easy or profitable; the end result is that an already wildly complex task of squaring off against a Gordian Knot of suffering falls to the police, *and for this task we have equipped them with none of the necessary tools for the job. Of course they use force when police do not know what else to do. As we have seen, it is the only real tool at their disposal. Indeed, it is the tool that defines them as police. We should be surprised when police succeed at confronting human suffering and don't tune someone up.*

The sense of being unappreciated for the impossible job with which they have been tasked works wonders to deepen an already considerable divide between the police and the policed. That the police actually are the community matters not at all; either through reckless disregard or active disdain, the community has abdicated its responsibility to itself, and the police are stuck with the cheque.

### Normative Forces

In other areas of human activity, professionalization creates a structuring influence on organizational activity. In policing, the professionalization movement has diminished police officer discretion, and sought to prioritize goal-directed activities through the cultivation of a knowledge base (see, e.g., Crank, 2015; Joplin & Marwah, 2013). Thus, police professionalization

has contributed to the isolation and militarization of police against the communities they serve. Academic criminal justice has contributed to this isolation and militarization through a focus on studies concerned with maximizing effectiveness and efficiency of action.

## CONCLUSION

The current low state of policing in America, specifically the tendency of police agencies to operate counter to their own best interests (that is, counter to the interests of the communities they purport to serve) is one condensate of the deep decoupling that has arisen from the pursuit of *legitimate-ness-ness* over authentic trust. This legitimacy shell-game, though, is driven in no small measure by the many and competing claims made upon policing by the wider communities in their environment. The commentary companion to this essay will address in greater detail how we might prevent and repair the rot revealed in places like Ferguson, Missouri, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Kenosha, Wisconsin.

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES

The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.

### AUTHOR AFFILIATIONS

\* Department of Criminal Justice, Bridgewater State University, Bridgewater, MA, USA.

### REFERENCES

- Andresen, M., & Malleson, N. (2014). Police foot patrol and crime displacement: A local analysis. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 30(2), 186–199.
- Andresen, M., & Shen, L. (2019). The spatial effect of police foot patrol on crime patterns: A local analysis. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 63(8), 1446–1464.
- Barlow, D., & Barlow, M. (2018). *Police in a multicultural society: An American story*, 2nd ed. Long Grove, IL: Waveland.
- Beckert, J. (2010). Institutional isomorphism revisited: Convergence and divergence in organizational change. *Sociological Theory*, 28(2), 150–166.
- Brodeur, J. (2007). An encounter with Egon Bittner. *Crime Law & Social Change*, 48, 105–132.
- Burruss, G., & Giblin, M. (2014). Modeling isomorphism on policing innovation: The role of institutional pressures in adopting community-oriented policing. *Crime & Delinquency*, 60(3), 331–355.
- Chandler, D., & Hwang, H. (2015). Learning from learning theory: A model of organization adoption strategies at the microfoundations of institutional theory. *Journal of Management*, 41(5), 1446–1476.
- Crank, J. (2003). Institutional theory of police: A review of the state of the art. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 26(2), 186–207.
- Crank, J. (2015). *Understanding police culture*, 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.
- Crank, J., & Langworthy, R. (1992). An institutional perspective of policing. *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 83(2), 338–363.
- DeValve, M. (2015). *A different justice: Love and the future of criminal justice practice in America*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.
- DeValve, M. (2017). O for a muse of fire: Rebellion as sacrament. *Critical Criminology*, 25, 87–102.
- DeValve, M., Garland, T., & Wright, B. (2018). *A unified theory of justice and crime: Justice that love gives*. Lanham, MD: Lexington/Rowman & Littlefield.



- DeValve, M., & Quinn, E. (2010). Practical poetry: Thich Nhat Hanh and the cultivation of the problem-oriented officer. *Contemporary Justice Review* 13, 2, 191–205.
- Dennis, B., Berman, M., Izadi, E. (2016, July 11). Dallas police chief says “we’re asking cops to do too much in this country.” *Washington Post*. Retrieved from: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2016/07/11/grief-and-anger-continue-after-dallas-attacks-and-police-shootings-as-debate-rages-over-policing/>
- DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (1983). The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields. *American Sociological Review*, 48(2), 147–160.
- Durr, M. (2015). What is the difference between slave patrols and modern day policing? Institutional violence in a community of color. *Critical Sociology* 41, 6, 873–879.
- Fredriksson, M. (2014). Crisis communication as institutional maintenance. *Public Relations Inquiry*, 3(3), 319–340.
- Haberman, C. (2016). A view inside the “black box” of hotspot policing from a sample of police commanders. *Police Quarterly*, 19(4), 488–517.
- Hiss, S. (2009). From implicit to explicit corporate responsibility: Institutional change as a fight for myths. *Business Education Quarterly*, 19(3), 433–451.
- Home Office. (2012, December 10). Definition of policing by consent. UK Home Office. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/policing-by-consent/definition-of-policing-by-consent>
- Janis, I. (1972). *Victims of groupthink*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.
- Joplin, J., & Marwah, S. (2013). Democratizing police professionalization and division of labor. *Journal of the Institute of Justice and International Studies* 13, 115–129.
- Kelling, G. (1981). Conclusion. *The Newark Foot Patrol Experiment* (pp. 111–129). Washington, DC: The Police Foundation.
- Kelling, G., Pate, T., Dieckman, D., & Brown, C. (1974). *The Kansas City preventive patrol experiment: A summary report*. Washington, DC: The Police Foundation.
- Kirkman, G. (1974, March). A professor’s “street lessons.” *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* (pp. 14–17).
- Kraska, P. (2001). *Militarizing the American criminal justice system: The changing roles of armed forces and police*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.
- Kraska, P., & Cubellis, L. (1997). Militarizing Mayberry and beyond: Making sense of American paramilitary policing. *Justice Quarterly*, 14(4), 607–629.
- Maier, F., & Simsa, R. (2020, May). How actors move from primary agency to institutional agency: A conceptual framework and empirical application. *Organization*. doi:10.1177/1350508420910574.
- Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. (1977). Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83(2), 330–363.
- Monkkonen, E. (1992). History of urban police. *Crime and Justice* 15, 547–580.
- Novak, K., Fox, A., Carr, C., & Spade, D. (2016). The efficacy of foot patrol in violent places. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 12, 465–475.
- Rawls, J. (1971). *A theory of justice*. Belknap.
- Schelling, T. (1978). *Micromotives and macrobehavior*. W. W. Norton.
- Shelden, R., & Vasiliev, P. (2018). *Controlling the dangerous classes: A history of criminal justice in America*, 3rd ed. Waveland.
- Simon, H. (1946). The proverbs of administration. *Public Administration Review*, 6(1), 53–67.
- Stahl, J. (2020, August 26). Kenosha police chief blames protesters for their own deaths, defends vigilante groups. *Slate*. <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2020/08/kenosha-police-chief-daniel-miskinis-blames-protesters-for-own-deaths.html>
- Suddaby, R. (2014). Can institutional theory be critical? *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 24(1), 93–95.
- Tyler, T. (2012). Justice and effective cooperation. *Social Justice Research*, 25, 355–375.
- Uchida, C., & Swatt, M. (2013). Operation LASER and the effectiveness of hotspot patrols: A panel analysis. *Police Quarterly*, 16(3), 287–304.
- Vitale, A. (2017). *The end of policing*. New York: Verso.
- Weisburd, D., & Piquero, A. (2008). How well do criminologists explain crime? Statistical modeling in published studies. *Crime & Justice*, 37, 453–502.
- Williams, J. (2019). Race as carceral terrain: Black lives matter meets reentry. *Prison Journal*, 99(4), 387–395.
- Williams, K. (2015). *Our enemies in blue: Police and power in America*. Oakland, CA: AK Press.
- Willmott, H. (2015). Why institutional theory cannot be critical. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 24(1), 105–111.
- Yancey-Bragg, N., Marley, P., Volpenhein, S., Shannon, J., & Culver, J. (2020, August 26). Kenosha shooting: One officer fired seven shots into Jacob Blake’s back; teen arrested in killing of protesters. *USA Today*. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/08/26/kenosha-protests-jacob-blake-what-we-know/3441684001/>
- Young, J. (2011). *The criminological imagination*. Malden, MA: Polity Press.



# Reforming Indigenous policing: Understanding the context for change

Rick Ruddell\* and John Kiedrowski†

## ABSTRACT

Protests over the policing of Black and Indigenous people and people of Colour that started after the death of George Floyd in May 2020 at the hands of the Minneapolis police set the stage for debates about the role of the Canadian police in ensuring public safety. These protests have resulted in calls for police reforms, including reallocating police funding to other social spending. The public's attention has focused on urban policing, and there has been comparatively little focus on policing rural Indigenous communities. We address this gap in the literature, arguing that Indigenous policing is distinctively different than what happens in urban areas and the challenges posed in these places are unlike the ones municipal officers confront. We identify ten specific challenges that define the context for Indigenous policing that must be considered before reforms are undertaken. Implications for further research and policy development are identified, including founding a commission to oversee First Nations policing.

**Key Words:** Rural policing; police reform; police funding; Indigenous policing.

## INTRODUCTION

Unrest and protests in Canada and the United States have drawn considerable attention to the policing of Black and Indigenous people and people of colour. The magnitude and duration of these protests is unprecedented in recent years. Although a number of Canadian scholars, including the Council of Canadian Academies (2014; 2019; CCA), had previously called for incremental reforms in policing, Vitale (2017, p. 30) argues that piecemeal changes have been ineffective and “any real agenda for police reform must replace police with empowered communities working to solve their own problems.” Vitale’s arguments are not new, and scholars such as Meares (2017) have long argued for policing to be abolished (McDowell & Fernandez, 2018). While abolishing the police became a rallying point for American protesters, the number and magnitude of Canadian protests has been more subdued and the demands less extreme—although there has been some public support in favour of defunding the police (Angus Reid, 2020; Ipsos, 2020).

Despite there being less public support for defunding the police in Canada than in the United States, less than six months after Floyd’s death a number of police reforms were introduced throughout Canada, including diverting police funding to other public services (Ho, 2020; Jones,

2020). Kempa (2014) observes that transformational changes in policing are often driven by economic restructuring, and during eras of economic insecurity, policymakers and the public question the nature of government interventions, definitions of public safety, and the role the police should play in maintaining order and ensuring public safety. While demands to defund the police in 2020 are different than what typically occurs during an economic downturn, discussions about the roles and responsibilities of the police are similar. There are, however, dangers that come with making knee-jerk reactions to long-term or systemic problems, as these reforms are seldom carried out in a thoughtful or planned manner, and most reformers fail to consider the ripple effects of change on other elements of the justice and social systems. Before proposing changes to the way Indigenous policing is carried out, we should first start with understanding the context in which this form of policing exists.

The lack of scholarship on rural or Indigenous policing is a serious impediment both to our understanding of these issues and to developing inventories of evidence-based crime-reduction practices. However, our focus on municipal policing is not surprising, as rural policing is out-of-sight and out-of-mind of most police scholars and rests on the margins of policing research (Ruddell, 2017; Wooff, 2017). In what follows, we identify ten contextual challenges in policing rural

**Correspondence to:** Rick Ruddell, Justice Studies, University of Regina, 3737 Wascana Parkway, Regina, S4S 0A2.  
**E-mail:** rick.ruddell@uregina.ca

**To cite:** Ruddell, R., & Kiedrowski, J. (2020). Reforming Indigenous policing: Understanding the context for change. *Journal of Community Safety and Well-Being*, 5(4), 144-155. <https://doi.org/10.35502/jcswb.168>

© Author(s) 2020. Open Access. This work is distributed under the Creative Commons BY-NC-ND license. For commercial re-use, please contact sales@sgpublishing.ca.

**SG PUBLISHING** Published by SG Publishing Inc. **CSKA** Official publication of the Community Safety Knowledge Alliance.

Indigenous communities that should be considered prior to introducing any reforms and present a suggestion for organizing and coordinating potential reforms.

## POLICING INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Indigenous peoples were involved in formal policing roles in their communities as far back as the 1880s. Bands were empowered to elect or appoint individuals who would carry out these roles, and they could also be appointed as constables under the *Dominion Police Act* (Dominion of Canada, 1889). Despite those fledgling steps towards self-determination, there is no shortage of scholarship on the troubled relationships between Indigenous Canadians and the police, and these shortcomings are identified in the reports of task forces and commissions released by the CCA (2019), DPRA Canada (2016), the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019), and Quebec's Viens Commission (2019). These publications build on a long history of reports identifying the shortcomings in policing Indigenous communities. Between 1967 and 1990, for example, a total of 25 federal and provincial publications addressing the involvement of Indigenous persons with criminal justice systems were released (Alberta Government, 1991). A task force on policing carried out by Indian and Northern Affairs (1971) concluded:

- That the Indian peoples on reserves require better and more adequate policing to meet the needs of their communities;
- That present policing on reserves is primarily complaint-oriented;
- That much greater emphasis should be placed on preventative policing;
- That preventative policing on reserves will increase their sense of security and contribute to the growth of strong viable communities;
- That a new system of policing is required, broad and flexible enough to meet the particular needs of evolving communities in the different regions;
- That any system should offer to Indian peoples an opportunity to police themselves within the structure of an existing police force. (pp. 27–28)

Although written half a century ago—which is reflected in the language and paternalism used in the recommendations—the shortcomings identified in 1971 seem applicable today, raising the question of why there has been so little progress in delivering professional, dedicated, and culturally responsive policing to Indigenous communities, which was Public Safety Canada's (2019) mandate.

The challenges associated with responding to the distinctive needs of Indigenous peoples are not unique to Canada, and policymakers in other English-speaking nations colonized by the British, such as Australia (Office of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, 1996; Standing Committee of Attorneys' General Working Group on Indigenous Justice, 2010; The Allen Consulting Group, 2010), New Zealand (State Services Commission, 2012), and the United States (Morin & Morin, 2019; Wakeling et al., 2001; Wells & Falcone, 2008), have also struggled to provide

responsive, effective, and unbiased policing (Kiedrowski, 2013). Scholars in these four nations have identified the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in their justice systems, from arrests to incarceration, and attribute some of this prevalence to discriminatory and racist practices (see a summary in Samuelson, 1993). What differentiates Canada from other nations with Indigenous populations colonized by the British is the introduction of the First Nations Policing Program (FNPP) in 1991 to provide a national-level framework for policing these communities (Solicitor General Canada, 1996). The following section describes the evolution of the FNPP.

### The Evolution of the First Nations Policing Program

The FNPP is distinctive in English-speaking common law nations with high proportions of Indigenous peoples because of its comprehensive national strategy and cost-sharing arrangements. The FNPP is a discretionary and non-statutory transfer payment program in which tripartite agreements are made between Canada, the provinces/territories, and Indigenous communities (Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2014; OAG). The FNPP provides 100% funding for Indigenous communities to establish their own self-administered (SA) police service, much like a municipal police department. Under these arrangements, the federal government contributes 52% and the provincial/territorial governments contribute 48% of the funding. There are only 38 SA services, so most Indigenous communities contract with large police agencies, such as the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), or *Sûreté du Québec* (SQ) to provide policing services via community tripartite agreements (CTA). These arrangements were intended to increase culturally responsive policing, which has never been formally defined but is generally interpreted as increasing the proportion of Indigenous officers. A second key goal of introducing the FNPP was to enable First Nations to increase their self-determination by policing their communities. While First Nations have the capacity to form their own SA police services, only 59 of these agencies have been established and none founded after 2008.

Although the FNPP was founded with a great deal of optimism and good intentions, a series of evaluations reveals that the actual delivery of police services suffers from a number of shortcomings (Hunter-Courchene Consulting Group, 2014; OAG, 2014; Public Safety Canada, 2010; 2012; 2016). About one-third of the fledgling SA police services established after the introduction of the FNPP were disbanded, and Kiedrowski, Jones, and Ruddell (2017) question whether these agencies were set up to fail. They conclude that these organizations, like many other First Nations programs funded by provincial and federal governments, were treated with benign neglect and their struggles ignored.

There is growing agreement that a key shortcoming of SA policing is that Indigenous police services are not deemed essential services. Because they are defined as discretionary programs, they receive less funding than their municipal counterparts. Indigenous communities without an FNPP agreement are policed under the jurisdiction of the various provincial police acts. By contrast, for Indigenous communities with SA agreements, the policing service provides *enhanced* rather than *core* policing services (Clairmont, 2006; Murphy & Clairmont, 1996). Core services are considered activities such as law enforcement, protection, intelligence, and

service to communities. Enhanced services, on the other hand, are intended to advance community safety by addressing the root causes of criminal behaviour and include community engagement and mobilization, victim services, school visits, youth interactions, interagency cooperation, and liaison with the community (OAG, 2014).

While the term enhanced policing has not been formally used by the federal government since 2014, the issue of delivering enhanced policing services was examined by the OAG (2014, p. 13) with regard to the RCMP contract policing arrangements, who noted that, “In our view, the lack of clarity in the agreements and among the involved parties about what constitutes enhanced policing services—which the First Nations Policing Program is intended to fund—creates ambiguity in the delivery of those services.” A similar argument can be extended to the SA policing agreements, and the challenge for these agencies is to provide core policing while being funded as an enhanced or supplemental service (DPRA Canada, 2016; Kiedrowski et al., 2017; Prairie Research Associates, 2006).

The issue of whether FNPP policing is a core or enhanced service leads to the question of whether this form of policing is an essential service. The federal government has not legislated policing as an essential service in Indigenous communities although policing is deemed essential in other areas of federal and provincial legislation (CCA, 2019; Promislow & Metallic, 2018). This is a long-standing criticism of the FNPP, and the DPRA Canada (2016, p. 19) community consultations revealed that participants were critical of the FNPP, as “it has no formal legal basis,” and “Without a clear statutory basis, policing is arbitrary and subject to a contribution program approach which tends to see services as discretionary.” The First Nations Chiefs of Police Association (2017) unanimously passed a resolution to make First Nations policing an essential service. These criticisms resulted in the federal Public Safety Minister indicating that Indigenous policing must be made an essential service by developing a “legislative framework that ensures First Nations have the policing services they need and deserve” (Blair, 2020, p. 2; see also Bronskill, 2020). But like so many issues related to Indigenous peoples these promised reforms are slow in coming.

Police services working within the FNPP framework continue to adapt to the unmet needs and legitimate demands of Indigenous communities. The CCA (2019) points out that:

Current policing models are based on dated colonial structures in which police often operate separately from the communities they serve, rather than allowing themselves to be intertwined with a particular community and its values. Success in these models is often measured against a narrow set of metrics, such as incarceration rates and crime statistics, which are overgeneralized and affected by discriminatory and damaging societal attitudes. (p. 157)

The CCA (2019) report concludes that Canada’s approach to Indigenous policing requires reforms, specifically acknowledging the impact of colonialism. The CCA recommends adopting a holistic approach to safety and well-being that recognizes the need to promote self-determination and Indigenous rights and laws, as well as the need for police to take a leadership role in mobilizing communities (p. xiii–xvii).

Since May 2020, there has been considerable attention placed on the need to reform policing, and there are demands to “get something done.” Political and public demands to reform policing are not a new occurrence. Murphy (2004) points out that Canadian policing has been “characterized by growing political pressure for greater fiscal and operational accountability, escalating policing costs, expanding service demands, shrinking budgets, declining police growth and, ultimately, reduced police services” (p. 1). Even before the most recent crisis, a growing number of politicians, academics, policymakers, and members of advocacy groups were arguing that the traditional policing model should be redesigned, reengineered, reconfigured, or reinvented in light of contextual changes (see Corley et al., 2018). While there are gaps in our knowledge about the operational practices in Indigenous policing, we know that social problems, such as crime, are highly interconnected with unmet community needs in terms of addictions, physical and mental health, poverty, and unemployment. Thus, the problems related to policing are often symptomatic of larger community problems. Yet we must not forget that these communities also have strengths that can be leveraged to enhance well-being and community safety.

## TEN CHALLENGES CONFRONTING RURAL INDIGENOUS POLICING

Although there are many factors that might inhibit providing more responsive and effective policing, the following section highlights ten issues that need to be acknowledged as part of the context in which rural Indigenous policing exists. As is the case with other complex social problems, many of these challenges are interrelated and it may be impossible to make significant headway on any one of these issues without addressing the others.

### 1. A Small and Diverse Population Spread Throughout A Big Nation

One of the foremost challenges for policing rural and remote Indigenous communities is the relatively small number of people living in these places. In 2019, there were about 440,000 persons living in 457 First Nations and Inuit communities served by police operating under 186 agreements with the FNPP (Mugford, 2020). Policing sparse populations spread throughout a large geographical area is a complex and costly undertaking. This is particularly relevant in the three northern territories, where the average population served by a police service is about 1,900 residents, compared with 9,000 people in the Provincial North and over 44,000 residents in southern communities (Allen & Perrault, 2015).

In addition to Indigenous communities comprising small numbers of people spread across a vast territory, it is also important to acknowledge the diversity of Indigenous peoples. Although writing about Native Americans, the observations made by Wells and Falcone (2008, p. 218) are equally applicable to Canada, noting that:

Different tribes may have different names and geographic locations, but also different languages,



different family structures, different economic systems, different governmental structures, different histories of military and political domination, different relationships to the surrounding non-Indian societies, different moral and religious beliefs, and distinctive cultural traditions. In analytical terms, this means that single global descriptive statements about “Indian culture” or “Indian policing” cannot be very descriptive since the world they seek to describe is not homogeneous or unitary.

While Indigenous peoples account for about 5% of Canada’s population, O’Donnell and LaPointe (2019) report the rapid growth of this population, which rose 19.5% between 2011 and 2016 (p. 1). This rapid population growth has implications for the delivery of health, education, public safety, and social services in these communities.

## 2. Community Well-Being

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (2020) recognizes 619 First Nations, and while some are very prosperous places, the average First Nation has entrenched social problems higher than the national average. A review of the community well-being (CWB) index, which is an indicator of education, labour force activity, per capita income, and housing from 1981 to 2016 reveals that the CWB average for Indigenous communities was 58.4 while the average for non-Indigenous communities was 77.5 out of a possible 100 (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2019, p. 5). Not surprisingly, Ruddell et al. (2014) and MacDonald et al. (2019) found that the CWB tends to decrease as communities become more distant from urban centres. Although well-being has been increasing in First Nations since the 1980s, the gap between First Nations and non-Indigenous communities has remained about the same.

Rural Indigenous communities may be more vulnerable to economic downturns than non-Indigenous municipalities. Ruddell and Jones (2014) observe that in tough economic times, social programs are often the first to be cut, and this has an impact on community well-being and public safety. Montgomery and Griffiths (2017) note that “when governments cut the numbers of social workers, mental health workers, funding for shelter beds and for specialized facilities for the mentally ill, there is a direct impact on the demands placed on the police resources” (p. 9). Poverty and unemployment are only part of the challenges that many communities face. When asked about indicators of community dysfunction, responses from over 700 officers policing Indigenous communities throughout Canada in December 2014 reveal that 85.5% of them reported that family violence was a somewhat or very serious problem, 81.8% said that child welfare was a somewhat or very serious problem, and 91.7% indicated that alcohol or drug misuse was a somewhat or very serious problem (see Jones et al., 2019). Ruddell and Jones (2020) found that officers working in these communities developed a style of policing that was responsive to these conditions.

Community well-being is also eroded by high suicide rates, and 55% of the police officers in the Jones et al. (2019) survey indicated that suicide was a somewhat or very serious

problem. Other research substantiates that observation, as suicide rates for Indigenous Canadians are three times higher than for non-Indigenous people (Kumar & Tjepkema, 2019). With respect to Indigenous peoples living on-reserve, Kumar and Tjepkema (2019) found that they were about twice as likely to die by suicide, but those researchers also note that over 60% of First Nations had no suicides (p. 5). One question asked of the officers policing Indigenous communities in 1996, 2007, and 2014 was whether they agreed that dealing with mostly unsolvable problems was common. In all three waves of the survey more than four out of five respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that the problems they confronted were unsolvable (80%, 86.3%, and 84.5% respectively).

## 3. High Rates of Police-Reported Crime and Victimization

While some First Nations have rates of crime that are lower than or comparable with other Canadian municipalities, it has long been recognized that rates of crime are disproportionately high in Indigenous communities. Brzozowski et al. (2006) found that “on-reserve crime rates were about three times higher than rates in the rest of Canada,” and that “the difference was even greater for violent crime, with an on-reserve rate that was eight times the violent crime rate for the rest of the country” (p. 1). In one of the few national-level studies examining crime rates in FNPP communities, Lithopoulos (2016) reports that overall crime rates were 3.7 times higher than the national average, while rates of violent crime were 6.7 times higher than the national average. Analyses of the crime severity index—an indicator of the volume and seriousness of crime—reveal they were highest in the most remote jurisdictions (Public Safety Canada, 2012; Ruddell et al., 2014). Last, Allen (2020, p. 3) reports that in the 182 communities where the majority of the population is Indigenous, crime rates were “six times higher than crime rates reported by police services that served primarily non-Indigenous populations” and violent crime rates were almost nine times higher.

Using the results from the survey conducted by Jones et al. (2019) reported above, 60.4% of officers policing Indigenous communities indicated that high levels of property crime was a somewhat or very serious problem, while over two-thirds (67.8%) said that high levels of violent crime were a somewhat or very serious problem. High violent crime rates are also associated with high rates of victimization, as most incidents involve Indigenous perpetrators and victims. Boyce (2016) reports that the overall victimization rate of Indigenous people was more than twice that of non-Indigenous people (p. 3). Subsequent research has found that Indigenous girls and women and Northern residents are more vulnerable to victimization and unwanted sexual behaviours (Nilson & Mantello, 2019; Perreault, 2020; Rotenberg, 2019). Roy and Marcellus (2019) observe that Indigenous people were about five times more likely than non-Indigenous people to be homicide victims (p. 30).

There is growing awareness that physical and sexual victimization can have significant psychological impacts upon an individual and is associated with substance abuse, lower lifetime earnings, diminished physical health, and involvement in crime (Menard, 2002). Consequently, these

high rates of victimization and traumatization can further decrease community well-being, contributing to crime in an ongoing and self-perpetuating cycle.

#### 4. Lack of Indigenous Policing Research

Murphy (1999) observes that “Democratic policing requires research-based information and knowledge so that citizens and their governments know what the police do, how they do it, and with what effect” (p. 205). There is a dearth of research on rural policing, and not much has changed since Lithopoulos and Ruddell (2013) argued that Indigenous policing was the most under-researched aspect of Canadian law enforcement. They identified the need to develop a research-based inventory of best practices in rural and Indigenous policing. Kiedrowski (2013) points out that while most previous studies of Indigenous policing in Canada are descriptive, the extent, nature, effectiveness, and efficiencies of Indigenous policing have received scant attention in academic research or government-funded evaluations.

In order to test the proposition that Indigenous policing is under-studied, we carried out a review of Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (2020; SSHRC)-funded research and found that from 2000 to 2019, SSHRC issued \$7,046,962 in total grants and fellowships for 256 topics related to policing. Of this total, three topics—or about one percent—was awarded for projects directly on Indigenous policing.

For the reasons described above regarding diversity of the population, the outcomes of research might also be dependent upon what group(s) of Indigenous peoples are studied. Wells and Falcone (2008, p. 218) contend that “case studies of a single tribe or tribal group—no matter how well done—cannot be confidently generalized to be true of all Indian communities, at least not without a systematic survey to document what is true in other tribal contexts.” That observation should not discourage us from conducting Indigenous police research, but we should also be aware that our findings might not be representative of all First Nations peoples, including people of Inuit and Métis ancestry.

#### 5. Chronic Under-Funding of SA Police Services

Although a number of Canadian municipalities are in the process of reallocating police funding to social service agencies, a series of evaluations found that SA police services are underfunded. Writing about these agencies, the OAG (2014) observes that the “FNPP is not adequately designed to deliver and does not adequately ensure that policing services are delivered in a manner consistent with the principles of the First Nations Policing Policy that we examined” (Chapter 5, Conclusion 5.72). Inadequate and short-term funding arrangements make it difficult for SA police services to deliver effective services or make long-term plans.

Although longer-term funding arrangements were introduced in 2018, the First Nations Chiefs of Police Association argues that their agencies continue to be underfunded (Deer, 2019). The impact of funding shortfalls is exacerbated in communities experiencing high crime rates and when first responders are expected to carry out duties not typically re-

quired of municipal police services (Viens Commission, 2019, p. 268). Inadequate funding has also resulted in a wage gap between officers working in SA services and their municipal counterparts, which can contribute to problems retaining officers (see below). Moreover, officers are sometimes using outdated equipment, such as wearing expired body armour, and many SA services lack the physical infrastructure—such as detachment buildings in remote communities—required to ensure the safety of officers and people detained in custody (Viens Commission, 2019).

Not only is FNPP funding inadequate, but there has been a lack of consistency in the per capita funding allocated to different SA police services. Kiedrowski et al. (2016) examined funding for ten SA police services and found a substantial interprovincial variation in per capita police funding. Inconsistent with expectations, geographic isolation does not appear to be a factor in allocating funds to these agencies. The three SA agencies with the highest per capita funding, for instance, are all located in communities close to urban areas. By contrast, the agencies in the two most isolated communities received less per capita funding. When asked about allocating funding, a police executive from an SA service stated that “the only thing consistent about the FNPP is the inconsistency in funding policing services” (Kiedrowski et al., 2016, p. 17).

#### 6. Expectations of Officers Policing Indigenous Communities

Most Indigenous communities are policed by the RCMP, and Leuprecht (2017; 2020) and Watt (2008) have described the shortcomings of that organization’s contract policing arrangements and institutional culture. Although acknowledging that officer misconduct can flourish in a dysfunctional organizational culture, we must also recognize the high expectations placed on the front-line officers policing Indigenous communities regardless of whether they are employed by the OPP, SQ, RCMP, or an SA police service. Many of them are working in their first policing jobs, and they are often in their early twenties when first deployed. They soon learn that, in the absence of other health and social services, they are required to intervene in situations that their urban counterparts are not expected to confront.

In many rural and remote communities, for instance, there may be no full-time social worker, public health nurse, or addictions worker to respond to people experiencing psychological distress, going through withdrawal, engaging in a family conflict, or requiring other immediate supports for a personal crisis. Some mental health and social service professionals travel to these places and are only available a few days a month, and it may take hours to access crisis services in small towns or First Nations. As no alternatives exist, officers in remote communities are expected to devote a significant proportion of their time to what they call social work activities (Huey & Ricciardelli, 2015). Few cadets, however, receive more than a few hours of academy training preparing them for these roles (Coleman & Cotton, 2010). One possible technological solution to this shortcoming is using body-worn cameras to livestream interactions between the police and mental health professionals, who can provide expert advice to the officers (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2020; CBC).

One of the goals of the FNPP was to increase the prevalence of Indigenous officers, but survey results from 1996, 2006, and 2014 show that the proportion of Indigenous officers has been *decreasing* over time; from 90% in 1996 to 27% in 2014 (although this finding may be an outcome of the officers participating in these studies, see Jones et al., 2019). Marcoux et al. (2016) found that, in Nunavut, where the population was almost 90% Indigenous, only 12% of the police officers were of Indigenous ancestry, and over 80% of the police in the Northwest Territories were White. One question that emerges from those observations is why the number of Indigenous officers is decreasing.

One reason for decreasing numbers of Indigenous officers could be related to problems in retaining personnel. There are very high levels of turnover in some SA agencies, and Rogers (2019, para. 2) observes that the Kativik Regional Police Force in northern Quebec is “considered fully staffed with 65 officers” but observes that “an average of 70 officers leave the force each year—more than the number the force even employs at one time” (para. 5). New officers often treat jobs with SA agencies as stepping stones to careers with larger police services that offer higher salaries and more diverse occupational opportunities throughout their careers. Yet there are also problems retaining officers in larger police services such as the OPP, RCMP, or SQ in rural and remote postings. These officers are said to “put in their time, save some money, but eventually apply for a promotion and leave” (Leuprecht, 2017, p. 28).

High turnover rates impact service delivery, as it often takes a year or longer before officers develop a solid understanding of general duty policing, not to mention a community’s culture and dynamics. As a result, when turnover rates are high, it lowers the average experience level of the entire agency, which can also lower the agency’s effectiveness. Mass turnover also has an impact on organizational efficacy, as the time, energy, and resources of an agency’s leadership are focused on recruiting, training, and retaining officers rather than crime prevention activities.

## 7. Community Expectations

When asked about their expectations of the police, Indigenous stakeholders told DPRA Canada (2016) researchers they needed quick responses to their calls, they wanted the police to help solve their problems, and they wanted those problems resolved in a respectful manner. Similar expectations were expressed by community members from the Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation in the Kamloops area, who said that professionalism, quick response times to calls for service, police visibility, and maintaining independence from inappropriate political influence were key priorities (Kiedrowski, 2017). There is, however, some variation within the nation about different policing priorities, with Inuit respondents indicating that officers lacking maturity, as well as arrogant and/or aggressive officers who had no real interest in Northern peoples, were barriers to establishing collaborative relationships (Marchand et al., 2020). Interviews with Indigenous people in Nova Scotia reveal that many of these respondents mistrust the police and feel that officers did not protect their families when they failed to conduct proper investigations (McMillan et al., 2020). Nilson

and Mantello (2019) carried out interviews with Indigenous peoples and subject matter experts from across the nation to determine the key ingredients to effective collaboration between their communities and the police. They found that, in order for this to happen, the police must secure community confidence and legitimacy and seek shared goals and values. Altogether, these results suggest that priorities about policing arrangements may vary according to the organizations providing police services, as well as the histories between those agencies and the First Nations they serve.

One way to gauge the well-being of police and community relationships is to examine the number of complaints about the police arising in Indigenous communities. Kiedrowski et al. (2020) analyzed the number of complaints filed with the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP in Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan First Nations for a three-year period. They found high rates of on-reserve complaints relative to the small populations in these places. Those results are not surprising given the higher-than-average levels of crime—and therefore interactions of community members with the police—in some First Nations in the prairie provinces. Those researchers, however, also found that organizational barriers to lodging and investigating complaints existed. Furthermore, a lack of demographic information about the people launching the complaints makes it difficult to make meaningful statements about the relationships between the police and the community members they serve.

One longstanding challenge in policing Indigenous communities, whether it is by contracted or SA services, is balancing under- and over-policing. Manitoba’s Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission (2001) observes that under- and over-policing can occur simultaneously. According to the Commission, over-policing results in higher levels of contact with the police—usually for minor offences—that non-Indigenous people do not experience. Under-policing, by contrast, occurs when police are less engaged in crime prevention activities and are only perceived as coming to a community when investigating crimes (Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission, 2001). Members of the Commission observe that under- and over-policing are consequences of officers adopting a narrow view of policing based on enforcement rather than a broader approach addressing the underlying community problems that contribute to crime.

Balancing under- and over-policing can become a contentious issue in rural and remote communities. Officers responding to calls for service, for example, use their discretion and often caution or warn someone who has committed a crime rather than arresting them. But what if the people who called the police believe the wrongdoer should receive a tougher sanction? Brunson (2020) explains that under-policing leaves people feeling underserved and unsafe, potentially reducing police legitimacy and fuelling the public’s reluctance to cooperate with the police. Moreover, if calling the police is perceived to be a waste of time, some individuals may bypass involving them altogether and handle matters themselves by destroying property or physically harming someone who has wronged them, what Black (1983) has termed “self-help.” There is some speculation that pullbacks of RCMP policing on First Nations in the 1960s and 1970s in



Ontario and Quebec contributed to higher rates of crime in these places. Although there is no scholarship conclusively supporting that contention, examining the outcomes of those cutbacks in police services may provide us with insights into the historical impacts of defunding Indigenous policing.

## 8. The Fragility of Stand-Alone Self-Administered Police Services

Soon after the establishment of the FNPP there was a rush to establish new SA services; 58 were founded prior to 2000, although 20 of these disbanded between 2000 and 2010. Lithopoulos (2016) observes that stand-alone police services with fewer than ten officers were more vulnerable to disbanding than their larger counterparts. Small police services, regardless of the populations they serve, are often disadvantaged because of their inability to benefit from economies of scale to reduce costs, and rural policing is more expensive to deliver due to the need to serve large sparsely populated geographical areas. This is especially true in remote communities lacking year-round roads, as police equipment—such as vehicles, fuel, and parts—must be transported by boat or plane (Ruddell et al., 2014). Personnel costs are also higher in these agencies because of the frequent requirement for officers to be on-call, the need to transport arrestees or prisoners lengthy distances to court appearances, and costs related to overtime and salary supplements for remote postings (Leuprecht, 2017; Ruddell, 2017; Ruddell et al., 2014).

The vulnerability of stand-alone police services to disbanding is consistent with what has been happening across Canada since the 1980s, as smaller non-Indigenous police services are also disbanding and several smaller stand-alone agencies will sometimes regionalize to form a single agency (Lithopoulos, 2015). Several large SA regional police services have emerged, including Ontario's Nishnawbe Aski Police Service (NAPS), founded in 1994. This police service's 134 officers and 30 civilian personnel serve 34 communities spread across a geographical area that covers about two-thirds of the province. Given the success of this agency, this regional approach may serve as a model for the rest of the nation.

Kiedrowski and colleagues (2015) and DPRA Canada (2016, pp. 19–20) researchers identify several bureaucratic and legislative barriers to regionalizing Indigenous police services, including limiting some SA policing to on-reserve activities. These restrictions reduce the effectiveness of these agencies in responding to crimes that may originate on First Nations but extend beyond their geographical boundaries. These jurisdictional restrictions originate with the federal *Indian Act*, which allows First Nations to establish police services but with officers appointed under provincial *Police Service Acts*, which give First Nations constables their peace officer status. Geographical factors also reduce the likelihood of regionalization since many First Nations are hundreds of kilometers from the next nearest First Nation, making it difficult to establish a regional operation.

## 9. Civilianization and Indigenous Policing

Kiedrowski et al. (2019) describe how the proportion of civilian employees of Canadian police services has been

increasing and how these personnel are carrying out duties formerly performed by sworn officers, including crime prevention duties and responding to antisocial behaviour and disorder. Indigenous personnel—who had limited police powers—were introduced by the 1880s to support the formal police (Jacobs, 2012). These officials became known as band constables by the 1960s, their primary role being, on the one hand, to form bridges between sworn police officers and the First Nations they served and, on the other, to enforce bylaws and engage in crime prevention activities (Clairmont, 2006). Rigakos (2008) found that these non-sworn officials play an important role in some First Nations communities by increasing police visibility, improving response times, enhancing community relations with the police, and increasing the flow of information from sworn officers to community members (p. 7).

Since 2010, a growing number of civilians have been deployed on First Nations as community safety officers (CSO), peacemakers, First Nations safety officers, or special constables. DPRA Canada (2016) researchers found these officials in communities lacking formal police services sometimes engaged in police activities, which may place their band at some risk of liability (p. 19). Rigakos (2008) found that one of the shortcomings limiting the effectiveness of these officials was their lack of training. Since Rigakos's research was published, a number of colleges have begun offering academic programs to prepare individuals for CSO and peacemaking roles.

Although there is an intuitive appeal to diverting non-emergency and low-risk activities to non-sworn personnel, there is a lack of research about their effectiveness in Canada. Sworn officers can harbour ambivalent feelings towards these civilian personnel, who, while they provide welcome support, received less respect than sworn officers within the organizations (Kiedrowski et al., 2019). Moreover, the researchers also found that these civilian positions were the first to be cut in response to budget downturns in the United Kingdom. Alaska's Public Safety Officer Program, which deploys uniformed non-sworn officials to police remote Alaskan villages, may be a cautionary tale for Canada with respect to placing high expectations on these community residents to increase a community's informal controls. Like band constables in Canada, these officials can play an important role in order maintenance in rural and remote places, but the effectiveness of the Alaskan officers suffers from a lack of funding and organizational support (Hopkins, 2019). As a result, if we are considering expanding the roles of non-sworn officials in Indigenous communities, that support should be adequate to do their jobs and be sustainable over time.

## 10. Officer Risks

Officers policing Indigenous communities are at a higher risk of physical victimization or unintentional injuries (such as being involved in traffic collisions), and policing rural, Northern, Indigenous, and remote communities exerts a greater psychological toll on these officers than on their municipal counterparts (Carleton et al., 2018a). Ricciardelli's (2018) interviews with officers policing rural communities reveal that they understand the



inherent risks of this type of policing but grapple with the realities of working in unsafe conditions, for example when there is chronic understaffing, when they have to use compromised equipment, or when a police service lacks the physical infrastructure to enhance officer safety, such as a detachment with holding cells (p. 433). Having sufficient funding and organizational supports would allay many of their concerns.

Understaffing, high turnover, working in isolation, and responding to high levels of antisocial behaviours, crime, and victimization contribute to operational stress injuries. Carleton and colleagues (2018a) examined surveys from almost 6,000 Canadian public safety personnel about their reactions to job-related stressors. These researchers found that over one-half of RCMP officers report having one or more symptoms of mental health disorders such as anxiety, depression, alcohol abuse, or post-traumatic stress disorder. Rural officers were also more likely than their urban counterparts to report suicidal ideation and having a plan to kill themselves, and RCMP officers were more likely than municipal officers to attempt suicide (Carleton et al., 2018b).

Police officers are also at high risk of victimization, and officers working in some rural and remote communities are at elevated risk. For example, between 2013 and 2019, there were 421 assaults per year, on average, on Nunavik police officers (Nunavik Statistics, 2020). As there was an average of about 80 officers per year employed during that era, it suggests that, on average, an officer was assaulted more than five times per year. Ruddell (2017) found that rural officers were about *four times* more likely to be killed on the job—from unintentional injuries as well as being murdered—than their counterparts working for municipal police services.

## POLICE REFORMS AND THE FUTURE OF INDIGENOUS POLICING

Polls reveal that the public's trust and confidence in the police, courts, and corrections is waning, although it is the police—as one of the most visible forms of the criminal justice system—who have received most of the public's attention since the death of George Floyd (Angus Reid, 2020; Ipsos, 2020). Our commentary focuses on contextual changes in rural Indigenous policing in order to better understand the challenges SA and contract policing organizations must overcome in order to deliver good policing. Although the FNPP was introduced to provide a national framework to deliver Indigenous policing, there is growing recognition of shortcomings in both the funding arrangements and the manner that contracted and SA policing services are delivered (CCA, 2019; Deer, 2019; Kiedrowski et al., 2017; Leuprecht, 2017; 2020). Having identified the changing context for Indigenous policing, we found that many stakeholders are critical of the existing policing model. There is far less agreement, however, about how the police should respond to these challenges, the need for reform, what changes should be enacted, and how these proposed reforms will be planned, funded, implemented, and overseen.

Predating the 2020 crisis, police scholars were already documenting the need for changes in policing. For example, Corley et al. (2019) identified the changing policing environment in Canada and found that:

Most policy-makers, police leaders and scholars would correctly predict that the next call for reforms will be driven by an economic, political, or legal crisis, or a highly publicized case of police misconduct or mistake. When these crises occur reformers advocate for rapid changes to police practices and are frustrated when changes do not occur, when reforms are incremental rather than revolutionary, or if the *status quo* prevails. Our knowledge of organizational change, however, tells us that knee-jerk changes in law or policy seldom have the desired results and poorly planned and implemented reforms can result in unforeseen outcomes. Instead, most police scholars suggest that potential reforms be based on a long-term strategy that carefully considers the external and internal organizational environments, be properly resourced, and be the end product of consultation that is carried out by police leaders who secure the buy-in and participation of reform-weary officers. (pp. 37–38)

Although policing Indigenous communities comes with many challenges, we know very little about what happens in these places, and an ongoing concern is that the one-size-fits-all approach offered by large policing agencies, such as the OPP, RCMP, or SQ, is not always applicable nor entirely responsive to the needs of these diverse communities.

Another key finding in recent police scholarship is the recognition that public safety is not solely dependent upon the police: community and non-enforcement agencies play an important role in crime prevention (CCA, 2014; 2019). One question emerging from that observation is how we can build on existing community strengths and the presence of other organizations to enhance community well-being and public safety. The well-being of Indigenous peoples seems to be a low priority for the federal government: if First Nations residents cannot access safe drinking water, how do we deliver something inherently more complex, such as providing effective, responsive, and culturally appropriate policing?

If provincial or federal police agencies are not able to meet the needs of Indigenous communities, some believe that the most effective strategy to policing these places might be delivered by large SA agencies serving entire regions, enabling them to benefit from economies of scale, providing more lateral and promotional opportunities for their personnel (and thereby reducing turnover), and increasing the organizational stability of these agencies. It is important to note that no newly founded SA agencies have been established since 2008, although a number of communities have expressed interest in founding new agencies. Both expanding the number of SA agencies and facilitating their growth as regional operations would enable a greater number of Indigenous communities to exercise self-determination over their justice systems.

## The Devolution of Policing Services to Indigenous Communities

There is no shortage of scholarship showing the shortcomings of the FNPP, originally introduced as an innovative approach to increase the effectiveness of policing Indigenous communities (CCA, 2019; DPRA Canada, 2016; National Inquiry into

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019; OAG, 2014; Public Safety Canada, 2010; 2012; 2016; Viens Commission, 2019). Our commentary identified ten challenges and/or shortcomings associated with the current approach to Indigenous policing. We question whether an entirely new model to serving these places should be considered, given the changes in First Nations governance, including Court decisions and government policies, giving First Nations more control over their lands, financing, and the allocation of those resources.

Since the FNPP was introduced, for example, the Supreme Court of Canada has made decisions increasing the ability of First Nations to exercise their self-determination with respect to issues such as resources (*R. v. Sparrow*, 1990; *R. v. Marshall*, 1999), land titles (*Delgamuukw v. British Columbia*, 1997; *Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia*, 2014), and self-government (*R. v. Van der Peet*, 1996; *R. v. Pamajewon*, 1996). Furthermore, the federal government has been transferring various programs to Indigenous communities to extend their control over the management of their lands (*First Nations Land Management Act*), property taxation and financing for infrastructure and economic development (*First Nations Fiscal Management Act*), and health (First Nations Health Authority), and they announced the creation of an Indigenous Fire Marshall Office (Indigenous Services Canada, 2019).

The federal government continues to advance reconciliation with Indigenous peoples by transferring the delivery of various health, educational, and social services to Indigenous control (Government of Canada, 2019; Indigenous Services Canada, 2019). In addition, in the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019), the Commissioners made a series of recommendations to improve Indigenous policing that include the following: creating a civilian oversight body with jurisdiction to audit Indigenous police services and investigate claims of police misconduct; building the relationships between the police and Indigenous peoples; reviewing and revising policies and procedures to ensure service delivery that is culturally appropriate; increasing recruitment of Indigenous peoples for policing; and building capacity and partnership with other agencies working in Indigenous communities to address crime and related social problems.

In keeping with the findings reported above, it may be time to establish a new national policing model designed to better meet the needs and demands of Indigenous communities and based on the lessons learned in the past three decades of the FNPP. One possible mechanism to carry out this change is for the federal government to transfer the delivery of Indigenous policing to a national-level commission responsible for the planning, funding, delivery, and oversight of Indigenous policing. Such an agency can become responsible for the operations and policies associated with the current FNPP, including the delivery of services to support the FNPP, fund the research and development of crime prevention programs, and provide oversight of those agencies. Such a commission would be in a better position to address how to best police First Nations communities in a culturally appropriate manner. This approach may also revisit the funding model for Indigenous policing to make it similar to the way policing in off-reserve communities is funded. The proposed commission may also be responsible for overseeing the investigation of

police-related complaints for persons residing in First Nations communities, thus centralizing complaints to one body.

## CONCLUSION

Almost half a century ago, the Solicitor General for Ontario (1974) observed that “the police service provided to Indian Bands has not been of a standard as high as that provided to most communities in the province, a standard of service to which they are equally entitled” (p. 59). Despite the introduction of the FNPP, there is a growing realization that the people living in a large proportion of Indigenous communities do not receive policing that is comparable to what other Canadians receive. The issues addressed in this commentary represent only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the challenges of policing rural and remote Indigenous communities. The existing FNPP framework has not succeeded in ameliorating these shortcomings, and it may be time to consider other options founded on appropriate funding, community participation, a reliance upon evidence-based policing practices, and self-determination.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

## AUTHOR AFFILIATIONS

\*Justice Studies, University of Regina, Regina, SK; †Compliance Strategy Group, Ottawa, ON.

## REFERENCES

- Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission. (2001). *Final report of the Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission*. Winnipeg: Author.
- Alberta Government. (1991). *Justice on trial: Report of the task force on the criminal justice system and its impact on the Indian and Metis people of Alberta*. Retrieved from <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/1369434>
- Allen, M. (2020). *Crime reported by police serving areas where the majority of the population is Indigenous, 2018*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.
- Allen, M., & Perreault, S. (2015). *Police-reported crime in Canada's provincial north and territories, 2013*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.
- Angus Reid. (2020). *Policing in Canada: Major study reveals four mindsets driving current opinions and future policy preferences*. Retrieved from <http://angusreid.org/policing-perspectives-canada-rcmp/>
- Black, D. (1983). Crime as social control. *American Sociological Review*, 48(1), 34–45.
- Blair, B. (2020). *Standing committee on public safety and national security*. Retrieved from <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/431/SECU/Evidence/EV10819343/SECUEV07E.PDF>
- Boyce, J. (2016). *Victimization of Aboriginal people in Canada, 2014*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.
- Bronskill, J. (2020). Feds will make First Nations policing an essential service. *National Observer*. Retrieved from <https://www.nationalobserver.com/2020/06/24/news/feds-will-make-first-nations-policing-essential-service>
- Brunson, R. K. (2020, June 12). Protests focus on over-policing. But under-policing is also deadly. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com>
- Brzozowski, J., Taylor-Butts, A., & Johnson, S. (2006). *Victimization and offending among the Aboriginal population in Canada*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.

- Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). (2020). Fredericton police to use body cams for mental health calls. *CBC News*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/police-body-cam-mental-health-pilot-1.5767961>
- Carleton, R. N., Afifi, T. O., Turner, S., Taillieu, T., Duranceau, S., LeBouthillier, D. M., ... Asmundson, G. J. G. (2018a). Mental health disorder symptoms among public safety personnel in Canada. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 63(1), 54–64.
- Carleton, R. N., Afifi, T. O., Turner, S., Taillieu, T., LeBouthillier, D. M., Duranceau, S., ... Asmundson, G. J. G. (2018b). Suicidal ideation, plans, and attempts among public safety personnel in Canada. *Canadian Psychology*, 59(3), 220–231.
- Clairmont, D. (2006). *Aboriginal policing in Canada: An overview of developments in First Nations*. Halifax, NS: Atlantic Institute of Criminology, Dalhousie University.
- Coleman, T. G., & Cotton, D. (2010). *Police interactions with persons with a mental illness: Police learning in the environment of contemporary policing*. Ottawa: Mental Health Commission of Canada.
- Corley, C., Reber, M., Ruddell, R., Lins, C., Thorne, D., Catte, R., & Brown, C. (2019). *Provincial policing in Saskatchewan: An independent review from a values lens*. Saskatoon: Community Safety Knowledge Alliance.
- Council of Canadian Academies (CCA). (2014). *Policing Canada in the 21st century: New policing for new challenges*. Ottawa: Author.
- Council of Canadian Academies (CCA). (2019). *Toward peace, harmony, and well-being: Policing in Indigenous communities*. Ottawa: Author.
- Deer, J. (2019). Underfunded and under-resourced, Indigenous police services struggle with MMIWG cases. *CBC News*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/mmiwg-indigenous-policing-program-1.5339727>
- Dominion of Canada. (1889). *Annual report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the year ended 31 December 1889*. Ottawa: Maclean, Roger & Co.
- DPRA Canada. (2016). *A renewed approach to policing in Indigenous communities – Engagement summary report: What we heard*. Ottawa: Author.
- First Nations Chiefs of Police Association. (2017). *The “benign neglect” of policing is failing First Nations communities*. Retrieved from <https://www.fncpa.ca/first-nations-chiefs-of-police-call-for-first-nations-policing-to-be-entrenched-as-an-essential-service/>
- Government of Canada. (2019). *Investing in the middle class: Budget 2019*. Ottawa: Author. <https://www.budget.gc.ca/2019/docs/plan/toc-tdm-en.html>
- Ho, S. (2020). Defund the police? This is how much Canadian cities spend. *CTV News*. Retrieved from <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/defund-the-police-this-is-how-much-canadian-cities-spend-1.5018506>
- Hopkins, K. (2019). The last police officer. *Anchorage Daily News*. Retrieved from <https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/lawless/2019/10/24/the-last-police-officer/>
- Huey, L., & Ricciardelli, R. (2015). “This isn’t what I signed up for”: When police officer role expectations conflict with the realities of general duty police work in remote communities. *International Journal of Police Science & Management*, 17(3), 194–203.
- Hunter-Courchene Consulting Group. (2014). *Comprehensive review of the First Nations Policing Program: National report from the community engagement sessions*. Ottawa: Author.
- Indian and Northern Affairs. (1971). *Report of task force: Policing on reserves*. Ottawa: Author.
- Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. (2019). *National overview of the community well-being index, 1981 to 2016*. Ottawa: Author.
- Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. (2020). *Welcome to first nation profiles*. Retrieved from <https://fnppn.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/fnp/Main/index.aspx?lang=eng>
- Indigenous Services Canada. (2019). *Investing to support the creation of an Indigenous Fire Marshal Office* (News Release, August 16). Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada/news/2019/08/investing-to-support-the-creation-of-an-indigenous-fire-marshal-office.html>
- Ipsos. (2020). *Factum: Canadians divided on whether to defund the police: 51% support the idea, 49% oppose it*. Retrieved from <https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2020-07/defundpolice-pressrelease-2020-07-27-v1.pdf>
- Jacobs, M. C. (2012). *Assimilation through incarceration: The geographical imposition of Canadian law over Indigenous peoples*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Kingston: Queen’s University.
- Jones, R. P. (2020). Ottawa police to restructure, focus on community policing and social services. *CBC News*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/ottawa-police-changes-chief-defund-1.5664812>
- Jones, N. A., Ruddell, R., & Summerfield, T. (2019). Community policing: Perceptions of officers policing Indigenous communities. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 61(1), 41–65.
- Kempa, M. (2014). *Understanding the historical relationship between economics and change in policing: A policy framework*. Ottawa: Canadian Police College.
- Kiedrowski, J. (2013). *Trends in Indigenous policing models: An international comparison*. Ottawa: Compliance Strategy Group.
- Kiedrowski, J. (2017). *Review of policing services for Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc, Skeetchestn and Whispering Pine Clinton*. Ottawa: Compliance Strategy Group.
- Kiedrowski, J., Jones, N. A., & Ruddell, R. (2017). “Set up to fail?” An analysis of self-administered Indigenous police services in Canada. *Police Practice and Research*, 18(6), 584–598.
- Kiedrowski, J., Melchers, R. F., Petrunik, M., & Ruddell, R. (2015). *Amalgamation of police services*. Ottawa: Public Safety Canada.
- Kiedrowski, J., Petrunik, M., & Irving, M. (2020). *An exploratory study of the apparent reluctance of Indigenous Canadians residing on reserve to complain against the Royal Canadian Mounted Police*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Kiedrowski, J., Petrunik, M., & Ruddell, R. (2016). *Illustrative case studies of First Nations policing program models*. Ottawa: Public Safety Canada.
- Kiedrowski, J., Ruddell, R., & Petrunik, M. (2019). Police civilianization in Canada: a mixed methods investigation. *Policing and Society: An International Journal of Research and Policy*, 29(2), 204–222.
- Kumar, M. B., & Tjepkema, M. (2019). *Suicide among First Nations people, Metis and Inuit (2011-2016): Findings from the 2011 Canadian census health and environment cohort*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.
- Leuprecht, C. (2017). *Force 2.0: Fixing the governance, leadership and structure of the RCMP*. Ottawa: Macdonald-Laurier Institute.
- Leuprecht, C. (2020). *Submission re: SECU hearings on systemic racism in policing in Canada*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Committees/en/SECU/StudyActivity?studyActivityId=10892590>
- Lithopoulos, S. (2015). *A literature review on the amalgamation of police services in Canada*. Ottawa: Public Safety Canada.
- Lithopoulos, S. (2016). *Lifecycle of First Nation administered police services in Canada*. Ottawa: Public Safety Canada.
- Lithopoulos, S., & Ruddell, R. (2013). Aboriginal policing in Canada: Establishing a research agenda. *International Journal of Rural Criminology*, 2(1), 101–125.



- Marcoux, J., Nicholson, K., & Kubinec, V. (2016). Police diversity fails to keep pace with Canadian populations. *CBC News*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/police-diversity-canada-1.3677952>
- MacDonald, T., Kiedrowski, J., Prno, J., Gravill, L., and Osborne, M. (2019). *Anishinabek Police Service (APS) Organizational Review*. Author.
- Marchand, M. E., Laneville, P., Herve, C., & Levesque, F. (2020). *Police services and Inuit in Nunavik (Arctic Quebec). Knowing each other better to help each other better*. Montreal: Université Laval.
- McDowell, M. G., & Fernandez, L. A. (2018). Disband, disempower, and disarm: Amplifying the theory and practice of police abolition. *Critical Criminology*, 26(3), 373–391.
- McMillan, L. J., Glode-Desrochers, P., & Marshall, P. (2020). *Examining police practices in Mi'kma'ki pathways to positive policing relationships*. Retrieved from <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/rvw-plc-prctcs-stf/rvw-plc-prctcs-stf-en.pdf>
- Meares, T. L. (2017). Policing: A public good gone bad. *Boston Review*. Retrieved from <https://bostonreview.net>
- Menard, S. (2002). *Short- and long-term consequences of adolescent victimization*. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
- Montgomery, R., & Griffiths, C. T. (2017). *Contemporary policing responsibilities*. Ottawa: Public Safety Canada.
- Morin, R., & Morin, C. (2019). Policing Native American lands in the United States. In J. F. Albrecht, G. den Heyer, & P. Stanislas (Eds.) *Policing and minority communities* (pp. 181–193). Springer.
- Mugford, R. (2020). *FNPP populations served*. Unpublished Public Safety Canada data.
- Murphy, C. (1999). The current and future state of police research and policy in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Criminology*, 41(2), 205–216.
- Murphy, C. (2004). The rationalization of Canadian public policing. *Canadian Review of Policing Research*, 1(1). Retrieved from <http://crpr.icaap.org/index.php/crpr/article/view/11/11>
- Murphy, C., & Clairmont, D. (1996). *First Nations police officers survey*. Ottawa: Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada.
- National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. (2019). *Reclaiming power and place*. Ottawa: Author.
- Nilson, C., & Mantello, B. (2019). *Joining the circle: Identifying key ingredients for effective police collaboration within Indigenous communities*. Saskatoon: Community Safety Knowledge Alliance.
- Nunavik Statistics. (2020). *Crimes against the person, Nunavik, 2013–2019*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nunivaat.org/doc/document/2019-10-17-01.pdf>
- O'Donnell, V., & LaPointe, R. (2019). *Response mobility and the growth of the Aboriginal identity population, 2006–2011 and 2011–2016*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.
- Office of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner. (1996). *Indigenous deaths in custody 1989–1996*. Sydney: Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.
- Office of the Auditor General of Canada (OAG). (2014). *Chapter 5: First Nations Policing Program-Public Safety Canada. 2014 Spring Report of the Auditor General of Canada*. Ottawa: Author.
- Perreault, S. (2020). *Gender-based violence: Unwanted sexual behaviours in Canada's territories, 2018*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.
- Prairie Research Associates. (2006). *Evaluation of the First Nations policing program: Final report*. Winnipeg: Author.
- Promislow, J., & Metallic, N. (2018). Realizing Aboriginal administrative law. In C. M. Flood & L. Sossin (Eds.), *Administrative law in context* (pp. 87–100). Emond Publishing.
- Public Safety Canada. (2010). *2009–2010 evaluation of the First Nations policing program*. Ottawa: Author.
- Public Safety Canada. (2012). *First Nations policing policy: Program performance and analysis*. Ottawa: Public Safety Canada.
- Public Safety Canada. (2016). *2014–2015 evaluation of the First Nations policing program*. Ottawa: Author.
- Public Safety Canada. (2019). *Policing in Indigenous communities: First Nations Policing Programs*. Retrieved from <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/cntrng-crm/plcng/brgnl-plcng/index-en.aspx>
- Ricciardelli, R. (2018). "Risk it out, risk it out": Occupational and organizational stresses in rural policing. *Police Quarterly*, 21(4), 415–439.
- Rigakos, G. S. (2008). *Plural policing in Saskatchewan First Nations*. Ottawa: Aboriginal Policing Directorate of Public Security and Emergency Preparedness Canada.
- Rogers, S. (2019). Nunavik police force faces staffing shortage. *Nunatsiaq News*. Retrieved from <https://nunatsiaq.com/>
- Rotenberg, C. (2019). *Police-reported violent crimes against young women and girls in Canada's provincial north and territories, 2017*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.
- Roy, J., & Marcellus, S. (2019). *Homicide in Canada, 2018*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.
- Ruddell, R. (2017). *Policing rural Canada: The police, partners and public safety*. de Sitter Publications.
- Ruddell, R., & Jones, N. A. (2014). *The economics of Canadian policing five years into the great recession*. Regina: Collaborative Centre for Justice and Safety.
- Ruddell, R., & Jones, N. A. (2020). Policing the "middle of nowhere": Officer working strategies in isolated communities. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 14(2), 414–427.
- Ruddell, R., Lithopoulos, S., & Jones, N. A. (2014). Crime, costs, and well-being: Policing Canadian Aboriginal communities. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 37(4), 779–793.
- Samuelson, L. (1993). *Aboriginal policing issues: A comparison of Canada and Australia*. Ottawa: Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada.
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. (2020). Awards. Retrieved from: [https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/results-resultats/award\\_search-recherche\\_attributions/index-eng.aspx](https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/results-resultats/award_search-recherche_attributions/index-eng.aspx)
- State Services Commission. (2012). *Formal review of the New Zealand police*. Wellington: Author.
- Standing Committee of Attorneys' General Working Group on Indigenous Justice. (2010). *National Indigenous law and justice framework 2009–2015*. Commonwealth of Australia.
- Solicitor General Canada. (1996). *First Nations policing policy*. Ottawa: Author.
- Solicitor General for Ontario. (1974). *Task force on policing in Ontario*. Toronto: Author.
- The Allen Consulting Group. (2010). *Independent review of policing in remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory*. Melbourne: Author.
- Viens Commission. (2019). *Final report*. Quebec City: Author.
- Vitale, A. S. (2017). *The end of policing*. New York: Verso.
- Wakeling, S., Jorgensen, M., Michaelson, S., & Begay, M. (2001). *Policing on American Indian reservations (Research report)*. Washington: U.S. Department of Justice.
- Watt, S. (2008). *RCMP FNCPS review: A review of the First Nation Community police service in British Columbia for Canada, the province of BC and the CTA Steering Committee*. Vancouver: CMLS Global.
- Wells, L. E., & Falcone, D. N. (2008). Rural crime and policing in American Indian communities. *Journal of Rural Social Services*, 23(2), 199–225.
- Wooff, A. (2017). Soft policing in rural Scotland. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 11(2), 123–131.



## CASES CITED

*Delgamuukw v. British Columbia*, [1997] 3 S.C.R. 1010  
*R. v. Marshall* [1999] 3 S.C.R. 456  
*R. v. Pamajewon* [1996] 2 S.C.R. 821  
*R. v. Sparrow* [1990] 1 S.C.R. 1075  
*R. v. Van der Peet* [1996] 2 S.C.R. 507  
*Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia* [2014] 2 S.C.R. 256



# Delineating policing towards a social and health profession

Uzma Williams\* and Daniel J. Jones\*

## ABSTRACT

This article suggests potential reforms required to address shortcomings of the policing profession in response to contemporary challenges. Police reforms that de-emphasize enforcement and promote policing as a helping profession are discussed. This stance is presented because police calls for service commonly involve complex human behaviour that includes mental health factors (including addictions) and diversity. Police officers require extensive training and education on mental health and diversity, which should include regular specialized training advancements in professionalism, interpersonal skills, and behavioural (non-verbal and verbal) response. All police officers have to deal with mental health and diversity, and, as such, an appropriate helping model (that adopts certain skills from health and social professions) should be incorporated into law enforcement practices and training. The Compass Police Response (CPR) Model is presented for consideration in police reform as well as a revised representation of the Police Use of Force Framework. The authors posit that policing should include increased collaboration with health and social professions. The support of other community disciplines and health systems is necessary to adequately address reforms required in the policing profession.

**Key Words:** Interprofessional and multi-disciplinary collaboration; diversity; mental health; police; Compass Police Response (CPR) Model; Police Use of Force Framework.

On May 25, 2020, 46-year-old George Floyd was arrested and died at the hands of the arresting officer in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in the United States of America. The police officer was eventually charged with murder in the case (*State of Minnesota v. Derek Chauvin*, 2020). Instant outrage at the police action that caused the death of Mr. Floyd resulted in riots and calls for police abolition—or at least massive police reform. Mishandling wellness calls across Canada has also contributed to loss of community support. Community hostility towards police has increased in response to incidents of police brutality, legitimacy, competency, and accountability.

Communities are advocating to defund, de-task, and abolish the police. However, this begs the question: How will things be different from before if we de-task and defund the police? Police will still be required to respond to calls that may, unknowingly to the officer or callers, require competency to address mental health wellness and diversity. In this paper, mental health competency refers to an officer's awareness of mental health disorders and crisis symptoms and the corresponding ability to respond appropriately using interpersonal and behavioural skills. Diversity competency refers to fair treatment of vulnerable populations based on

ethnicity and on sexual and gender diversity. We make the case that mental health will never be detangled from policing and that policing is not only law enforcement. In order to respond appropriately to issues involving mental health and diversity, a new model of police response is required that rectifies current shortcomings in police education and culture and reimagines policing as a helping profession.

## POLICING IS A HEALTH PROFESSION INVOLVING HUMAN SOCIAL COMPLEXITIES

Police are experiencing turmoil due to the increasing use of video cameras and social media that is exposing police incompetency and abuse of powers (Ariel et al., 2015). It is possible that police brutality is actually decreasing, because officers are now under a microscope (Ariel et al., 2015). The concept of police legitimacy, where the community sees the police as a legitimate power holder, is often discussed. The concept of self-legitimacy is less commonly discussed and refers to whether police officers see themselves as legitimate (Nix & Wolfe, 2017; Tankebe, 2014). Negative media coverage impacts officers' sense of self-legitimacy, and reduction of

**Correspondence to:** Uzma Williams, 9-411A Robbins Health Learning Centre, 10910 104 Ave NW, Edmonton, AB T5J 4S2  
**E-mail:** uzma.williams@macewan.ca

**To cite:** Williams, U., & Jones, D. J. (2020). Delineating policing towards a social and health profession. *Journal of Community Safety and Well-Being*, 5(4), 156-163. <https://doi.org/10.35502/jcswb.171>

© Author(s) 2020. Open Access. This work is distributed under the Creative Commons BY-NC-ND license. For commercial re-use, please contact sales@sgpublishing.ca.

**SG PUBLISHING** Published by **SG Publishing Inc.** **CSKA** Official publication of the **Community Safety Knowledge Alliance**.

officer self-legitimacy can result in higher rates of police mental health crisis (Nix & Wolfe 2017).

When we examine flawed responses to wellness checks or calls involving a visible minoritized individual, it is likely that police, like the general public, are fearful of mental health symptoms and persons visually different from themselves (Mimiaga et al., 2010; Sweeney et al., 2015). Some investigators suggest that inappropriate police response may result from a lack of formal education, knowledge, or familiarity (Laurance, 2003; Smith & Robinson, 2019). We focus on familiarity in the next few sections.

In psychology, an acute stress response is experienced when a person feels threatened by too many strong emotions and perceives danger. This acute stress response is activated by the sympathetic nervous system consisting of flight (fleeing the environment), fight (confronting the threat), or freeze (Donahue, 2020; Webster et al., 2016). The acute stress response of fight is more likely to initiate among police officers because their training involves being able to respond to perceived threats (whereas freeze or flight are the least trained responses in policing). So when police perceive people acting bizarrely due to mental health symptoms or as physically different from themselves, one possible explanation for the use of excessive force is that the officer is reacting out of fear and responds extremely due to the trained fight response. This response of fear may be activated because officers' knowledge of and familiarity with mental health, in some cases, is no different than a lay person's whose understanding of mental health is based on news outlets or popular media (e.g., true crime, movies), which falsely depict persons with mental health as dangerous and homicidal. Many officers lack formal knowledge in the area of mental health disorders (as well as diversity). Once the officer is exposed to immersive mental health training, they can shift from sympathetic arousal of fight to social engagement, which is optimal arousal with a range of emotions where the person feels safe (Porges, 2010).

While police agencies employ special response teams that consist of police and mental health professionals, all officers should be trained in mental health because police are the first point of contact for many individuals critically requiring mental health services. The BC Division of the Canadian Mental Health Association (2005) found that police were the first point of contact for over 30% of individuals with serious mental health concerns.

Typical police calls often have an element of mental health concerns, and if the caller doesn't know about mental health or cannot identify mental health as a concern during the situation, then the special mental health police team may not be deployed to the call. For instance, odd, reckless behaviour, such as a person throwing objects onto cars in traffic, may be perceived as requiring law enforcement. On the surface, there is a disruption and a disregard for safety, which is a law enforcement issue. However, on a deeper level, an officer lacking knowledge about mental health would not have the skills to effectively deal with this situation. The mental health component would be ignored rather than addressed, such as through referral to appropriate services for a comprehensive and preventive response. This notion of mental health competency extends to police culture, where people are called "subjects" rather than "persons," enabling a mental reference of dehumanization.

Community-based policing models must encompass competency and professionalism in areas similar to what is required of the health and social professions (social work, psychology, medical practices, etc.) when dealing with mental health and diversity. When policing agencies are trying to lead a community-based response, it is necessary to view adequate response through a helping profession lens. Policing must become more interdisciplinary and involve and collaborate with health and social professionals rather than working in its own silo. This can be accomplished by enhancing the key components of professionalism, interpersonal skills, and appropriate behavioural and nonverbal/verbal response, which are discussed later in the Compass Police Response model.

A psychology-based response to many questions related to human behaviour is "it depends." Research pertaining to human behaviour presents much lower research scores (such as lower correlations at the most basic level) than research in science-, health-, and police-based fields. This is because research in the latter fields usually explores direct measures such as speed, hand strength, levels of chemical/substance contamination, autopsy findings, for instance, which are measured directly, with minimal margins of error. On the other hand, understanding human behaviours, in the field of psychology or sociology, for instance, involves abstract notions known as constructs, such as personality, intelligence, mental health, and diversity. By merely looking at someone you cannot determine their intelligence or mental health functioning, because there is much variation in and many contributors to these constructs. One presentation of post-traumatic stress disorder, with consideration given to age, incident type (e.g., sexual assault versus witnessing a murder), and severity, may present completely differently from someone else's despite the same factors of age, incident, and severity. The symptoms a person experiences depend on a multitude of factors that include the person's resiliency, family mental health conditions, biological disposition, etc. Human behaviour is intricate and complex. There are layers to unfold, and the police are in a position where they need to understand and respond to complex human behaviour—they work with individuals and their health, situating policing as a health and social profession.

Of particular interest are police-related custody deaths. A plethora of research indicates that up to 40% of police custody deaths are due to natural causes such as cardiac arrest (Wobeser et al., 2002) and mental health issues such as excited delirium resulting from substance use and physical constraint (Hall et al., 2015; Ross, 1998; Vaughan et al., 2017). Because a multitude of factors exist in the cause of death (Hall et al., 2015; Lindon & Roe, 2017), the use of particular safe postures which do not compromise breathing and other physiological functions is recommended (Hall et al., 2015), as well as seeking medical advice if the person appears to be in medical distress (Ross, 1998). Training from a medical perspective is therefore required to deter police-related custody deaths.

Some people—including some police officers—may hold the position that policing should focus only on law enforcement. However, this route of action would be no different than the current state. A single focus on law enforcement in policing is impossible as policing involves people with complex behaviours (i.e., a range of mental health functioning and

diverse visible backgrounds). Furthermore, the persons police encounter typically have lower-than-average mental health functioning or include a higher representation of minoritized groups (Goldberg et al., 2019; Thompson & Kahn, 2016), once again positioning policing as a profession within the social and health branches.

A community-based approach and adopting the values of a helping profession within policing organizations will attract recruits who believe in and follow the tenets of a person-centred approach when helping individuals rather than emphasizing traditional law enforcement. Tables I and II describe the skills and values that contribute to making policing more person-centred—see Police Response to

**TABLE I** Values of a person-centred profession (Egan, 2013)

Respect and Dignity
Care
Trust
Genuineness
Empathy
Patience, Reasonable Flexibility, and Dependability
Non-Judgement
Proper Attitude, Social Modelling, and Avoiding Hostility
Confidentiality and Privacy

**TABLE II** Social skills of high-performing police officers

Speaking skills: Being able to use words and elements of language to instruct, inspire, and open dialogue while maintaining respectful eye contact.

Active listening and awareness in a situation: Attending, observing, and listening needed to develop an understanding of individuals and their world as well as avoiding distractions and being attuned to the situation through maintaining eye contact.

Extroverted, charismatic personality: A likeable sociable trait that also involves being open to diversity and being responsive to the needs of others.

Maturity and credible professional conduct: All professions have their own code of ethics and their members commit to adhering to that code upon assuming their role. The credibility of their profession relies on the honest, discrete, and everyday commitment to this code of ethics.

Practical reasoning skills: Accurate diagnosis of a problem by gathering information and taking the time to deliberate before acting.

Self-presentation: Appearing self-assured, genuinely confident (both in posture and voice), genuine, and self-controlled.

Good judgement: Ability to make immediate, informed decisions.

Self-awareness: Ability to reflect and learn from experiences as well as willingness to grow.

Effective dialogue: Techniques learned from counselling psychology such as validation, ratio of open to closed ended questions, summarizing, clarification.

Mental Health in Canada (Williams, Jones, & Reddon, 2019) for a full description.

## OUR PROPOSITION: COMPASS POLICE RESPONSE (CPR) MODEL

The Compass Police Response (CPR) model was created by the authors as one option to guide police officers who are seeking to improve their skills when dealing with individuals during police calls. In summer 2020, the authors received countless media calls to comment on the concerning nature and number of wellness calls where excessive force was used by police across the country. The authors were asked for a more appropriate model than what was currently being practiced when police respond to wellness and diversity calls. The CPR model originated from shortcomings of the Police Use of Force Framework. The CPR model (Figure 1) combines components of helping professions and law enforcement for an effective response to police calls, making it more appropriate when responding to wellness and diversity calls than the traditional and outdated Use of Force Framework. The CPR model is analogous to using a map while driving. The prerequisite to using the map is that the officer have an education in and understanding of mental health, which is crucial and necessary for all police officers—merely by working with people, policing requires social understanding and compassion. The appropriate response always moves from West to East and the disposition is from North to South.

The officer begins on the far West route when responding to police calls. The officer should always default to the West area, and should only venture into the East area as required. Weapons are based outside the map as they are a last resort, when there is an imminent danger posed to the officers or others in the immediate area, there are no choices, and weapons are deemed absolutely necessary.

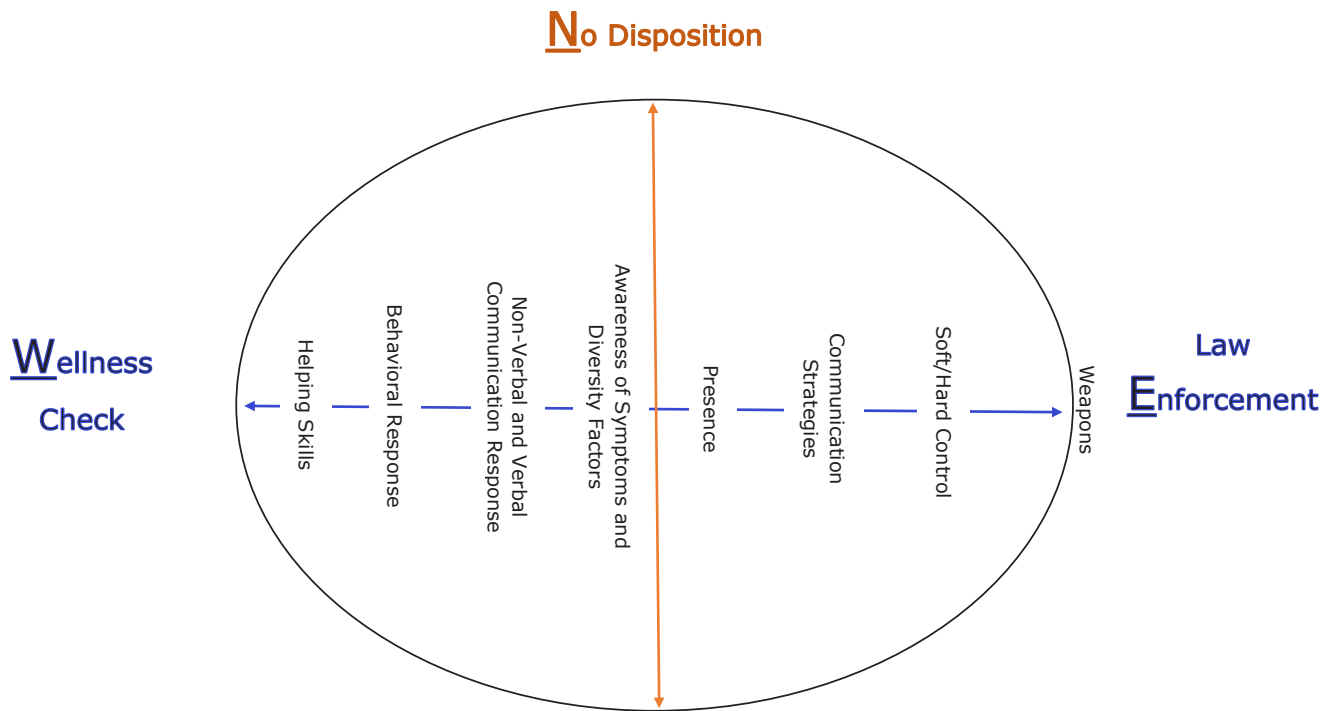
When officers are deciding on a disposition, they need to “drive” North and South and stop where it’s most appropriate. The disposition can range from no arrest to connecting to community and health services to ensure the most preventive approaches. Once officers arrive at their destination, they need to do a self-check similar to other professions at high risk for trauma and experiencing serious incidents. Similar to traditional policing, discretion and “clinical” judgement are necessary for positive outcomes.

### Step 1: West and East (De-Escalate and Disengage)

The first step is *de-escalating* any situation, especially in calls with mental health or diversity factors. Most calls can be de-escalated. The multiple areas involved are briefly described in Table III (Williams et al., 2019). Some questions that police in the West area use include:

1. What is your name?
2. Identify yourself. “Hi my name is....” and “I want to help you”
3. How can I help you?
4. Where do you live?
5. When did you last eat?
6. When did you last sleep? For how long?
7. Tell me what is going on?
8. What kind of problems are you having?





## Services in Community and Health Systems

**FIGURE 1** Compass Police Response (CPR) Model.

9. Do you take medications? What medications are you supposed to take? When was the last time you took your medication?
10. When was the last time you saw a doctor? What is your treatment for?
11. What types of fears do you have? What is causing those fears?
12. What are your plans? What are you going to do now?
13. Do you have any suicidal intents?
14. How is your mental health? Do you have any mental health concerns you want us to be aware of in order to assist you?

Always default to the West area, and return towards the West area if you enter the East. The East side of the map represents traditional tenets of police response from a law enforcement and safety perspective. When dealing with general mental health conditions or crises, the far East is not where your compass should be unless you are in the rare situation where law enforcement is required to provide immediate safety. If you enter the East, re-navigate to the West when appropriate. A key aspect symbolic of being a good driver and avoiding collisions is accurately appraising the true level of threat perception as you navigate a situation.

Weapons are placed outside the map as a means of last resort and it is not necessary to go out to that area unless you are absolutely left with no choice. If the person perceives you as a threat and they are suicidal, disengage and defer to the appropriate clinical experts. Always remain professional and follow officer safety tactics.

In this step, police need to also focus on diversity, although this paper does not provide an in-depth treatment of diversity. One element to consider is ideas that will break through current biases and barriers that exist in police culture, such as isolation and hyper-masculinity (Joseph Hayes, personal communication, July 16, 2020).

### Step 2: North and South (Disposition)

Decide on an appropriate disposition that focuses on a preventive or rehabilitative approach that will enhance the ability or functioning of the individual to effectively resolve the issue. For example, the officer can simply provide support or comfort to the person, or if the person asks for help, the officer can connect the person with the appropriate services. The officer, if they choose, can provide their business contact information in case a person decides to seek assistance in the future. Each police organization or unit should lay out the dispositions available to the officers because the disposition component of the CPR model should be customized to the police organization and its relationships in the community. To appropriately decide on disposition options, it is imperative police units are knowledgeable about and connected to community and health resources (as well as other systems such as government and education services).

### Step 3: Arrival (Destination)

Self-check of health and reflection. Did you experience any distress? Based on your experience, do you wish to undertake more learning about the issue encountered? If weapons were deployed, it is crucial that the officer partake in counselling

**TABLE III** Components of the West Area of the Compass Police Response (CPR) Model (see Williams, Jones, & Reddon, 2019)

<b>Awareness of Symptoms and Diversity Factors</b>
Knowledge of mental health and mental health disorders including signs of crisis and symptoms of disorders. Empathetic awareness of current issues experienced by visible minorities, from developmental disabilities to ethnicities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Historical treatment of persons with mental health disorders</li> <li>■ History of policing with minoritized populations</li> <li>■ Issues of diverse populations</li> <li>■ Knowledge of mental health disorders (anxiety, mood, psychosis, trauma, childhood, personality, substance use disorders, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Non-Verbal Communication Response</b>
Use of body stance and posture Understanding of facial expressions Distance and personal space Remaining calm and alert Awareness that weapons can exacerbate the situation
<b>Verbal Communication Response</b>
Use of appropriate tone Use of appropriate volume Choice of words and use of simple words Initiation of discussion without forcing discussion Not ridiculing or using inflammatory language Not speaking over the individual Not giving orders rapidly, shouting, or arguing Not lying about outcomes Not expecting a rational discussion or engaging in a debate
<b>Behavioural Response</b>
Getting person's attention Gathering all possible information from nearby bystanders and family Being aware of the effects of equipment and presence Removing distractions, upsetting influences, and disruptive persons Providing reassurance that officer is there to assist the person and not cause them more problems Not responding to criticism/verbal abuse, focusing on the objective of the person's safety
<b>Helping Skills</b>
Respect, Dignity, Care, Compassion, Courtesy, Empathy, Genuineness, Trust, Patience, Reasonable flexibility, Dependability, Non-judgement, Proper attitude, Social modelling, Avoiding hostility, Confidentiality, Privacy, Professionalism (minimize swearing, value judgements, be objective)

to debrief and assess trauma. In Canadian policing, 89% of time-loss claims were due to trauma injury or traumatic disorder (Cohen & Garriss, 2018).

### CONTEMPORARY SHORTCOMINGS OF THE USE OF FORCE FRAMEWORK AND WHY IT IS NO LONGER SUFFICIENT FOR COMPASSIONATE POLICING

The National Use of Force Framework is a depiction of the various response methods used by police and “elements involved in the process by which a police officer assesses a situation and acts in a reasonable manner to ensure officer and public safety” (Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, 2000). The current Use of Force Framework used in Canada has many limitations. The framework was created

by 21 individuals who are predominantly White males in policing, so little insight into mental health and diversity was offered. We will highlight some significant aspects that render it outdated and ineffective in today's policing profession, and potentially compromise police practice.

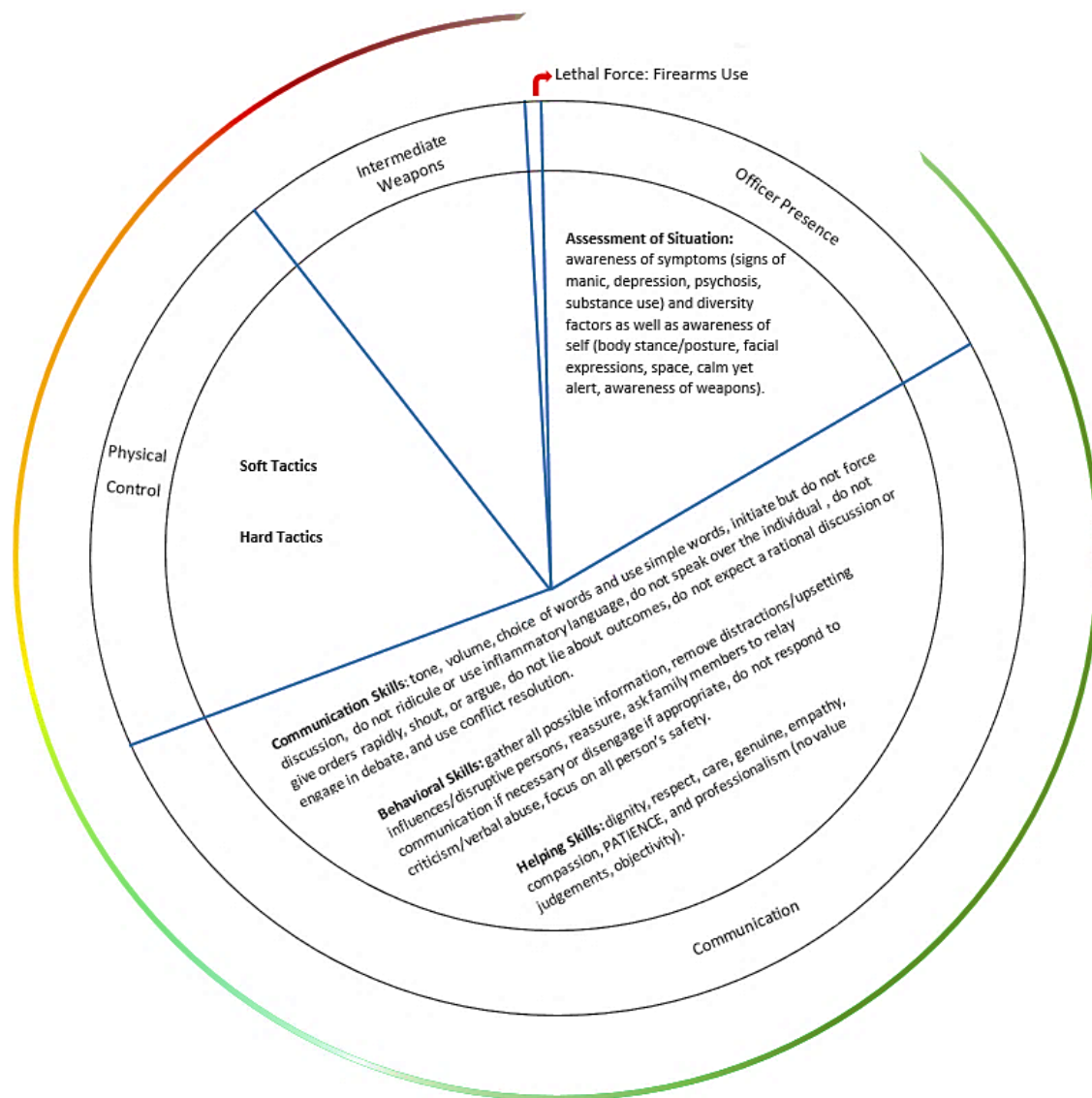
First, a shortcoming of this framework is that it teaches officers to assume the worst case scenario because it predicates a need for constant, immediate safety. Policing is a dangerous profession, with most fatalities resulting from acts of violence or car accidents. However, the police officer fatality rate in Canada is 0.7 per 1,000, consisting of 45 fatalities from 2006 to 2015 based on an average of 67,395 officers (Cohen & Garriss, 2018). While police work does involve danger, the extreme responses of force used by some police officers in wellness calls are disproportionate to the risk involved.

Second, the name itself implies the use of force. The first recommendation is therefore to rename the framework to Police Response Framework.

Third, the current framework provides no visual graphic to guide officers in the handling of persons experiencing mental health crises—there is no visual indication of de-escalation and disengagement or returning to a safer point once the situation is controlled; de-escalation is therefore deemphasized compared with response escalation. For example, the communication section should visually include interpersonal and behavioural skills essential in police work. While each police agency is afforded robust additions to the Use of Force Framework in advancing de-escalation training, public and critic perception shows a police response where de-escalation is not highlighted or considered a priority. Figure 2 shows the revision of the Use of Force Framework to incorporate an appropriate response to mental health as suggested in sections of this manuscript. The current framework is reactive to others' behaviour and requires a focus on

the officer's perception, techniques, and control (see Taylor (2020) for an in-depth discussion on officer presence and self-awareness). The Use of Force Framework needs to be more officer-internal focused than officer-external focused in addition to visually emphasizing de-escalation and responding to mental health crises.

Finally, subconsciously, the use of force framework depicts erroneous perceptions in escalation and proportions of engagement in response through a reactive black and white centre rather than one that allows the officer to evaluate their response. For example, the proportion of red to represent lethal response is approximately 16% to 20% of the circle. In reality, lethal response equates to 2% of police calls; as well, injury to officers is higher when any type of force is used, whether the person was compliant or resistant (Kiedrowski, et al., 2015). Approximately 50% to 80% of police calls are non-criminal, and a high proportion of calls consist of mental health and addictions (Mazowita & Rotenberg 2019). As such, the progression from communication to soft



**FIGURE 2** Revised national use of force framework.

tactics is too immediate, sudden, and over-responsive. The yellow physical control must begin much further on from the time a call begins than what is depicted in the original Use of Force Framework.

## DISCUSSION

An appropriate response to any police situation begins with professionalism and proper treatment of vulnerable groups, which means humanizing individuals by adopting the basic tenets of the helping profession—specifically that every person deserves respect, care, dignity, compassion, and empathy (Egan, 2013). These tenets promote a person-centred approach and need to be incorporated in the policing profession.

Too often, officers, much like other health and social professionals, become jaded and develop cognitive schemas that people who are “junkies” are different from “normal” people. However, from a mental health perspective, we learn that addiction is a disease embedded in a biological system, complemented by complex environmental and personal factors, such as trauma, grief, and social modelling.

Policing professionalism must address the treatment of high-risk groups, such as gangs and sex-trade workers, whose lives are often devalued. A simple reminder to all officers is that people in gangs or the sex trade are loved parents, siblings, and children. Persons living a high-risk lifestyle experience immense turmoil throughout their lives and often die at a younger age, which impacts their families and friends, who have to endure grief and heartache. The family and friends may despise society and police who demonstrate a lack of care, empathy, compassion, and justice for their loved one, and the impact can last generations.

Another aspect of police professionalism that needs to be addressed is the use of profanity. Profane language may be effective in an immediate situation, but it embodies aggression and coercion—a path police need to steer 180 degrees from in order to get to the “West” area. Police should be reminded that the health and social professions empathize and admire police officers in their ability to maintain calmness and composure in difficult situations.

Detasking police wellness checks into the community may offload law enforcement onto community/health professionals who are not adequately trained if a situation becomes potentially violent (this is a potential risk for some symptoms such as persecutory delusions and hallucinations). While it is questionable whether police have the capacity to deal with mental health challenges, before detasking to shift response to mental health from the police to community or health agencies, it is important to evaluate whether these agencies have the capacity and training to manage mental health crisis situations. It is fruitless to detask or defund police as a means of punishment. Instead, the policing profession needs support to develop further competency and become more collaborative with other professions because, mirroring the community itself, police work does not occur in silos.

On the other hand, we need to acknowledge that further education and training are necessary to adequately equip police for their work duties in addition to regular burnout and trauma assessments. Research has shown that officers who are reprimanded often tend to have lower education levels (Paoline & Terrill, 2007). Paoline and Terrill recommend

that a two-year police-focused diploma or a four-year degree be considered the minimal level of qualifications for police, respectively, to decrease use of verbal force and physical force. The quality, rigor and depth of interpersonal training can be aligned to other health and social professions by requiring a two- or four-year education program among newly recruited police officers as well as requiring mental health and diversity refreshers on an ongoing, regular basis.

Even with the existence of mental health teams and abundant mental health community and health services, police will always have calls that have an element of mental health. While communities can lead prevention activities, police will always be involved in mental health calls, some of which pose an immediate threat of violence, which is not typically encountered in other frontline professions. As such, the policing profession is positioned to address, and even lead, mental health crisis intervention and diversity competency in the future if current shortcomings are addressed.

## CONCLUSION

The rare circumstances in which police have lacked compassion and professionalism have led to the current “war” on police brutality that all officers are now facing. The recent events surrounding George Floyd and wellness checks gone wrong in Canada have paved the way for police reform. Police will always deal with individuals who live with psychopathology, addictions, poverty, and cognitive deficits. As such, the amount of mental health and diversity training they receive needs to complement the time spent learning about law enforcement and police science. It is crucial for police to build their helping skills and build policing as a person-centred profession in order to gain respect and community trust and be effective in their roles in crime prevention and law enforcement. Most officers go into policing to help people. They need to remember that the most vulnerable people suffer the greatest impact when officers develop a jaded view. Due to the positive impact policing can have among underprivileged groups (Tyler & Fagan 2008), policing is required in communities, but all officers must show a higher standard of professionalism and ethical treatment of vulnerable groups.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

## AUTHOR AFFILIATIONS

\* MacEwan University, Edmonton, AB.

## REFERENCES

- Ariel, B., Farrar, W. A., & Sutherland, A. (2015). The effect of police body-worn cameras on use of force and citizens' complaints against the police: A randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 31(3), 509–535.
- Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. (2000). A National use of force framework. Retrieved from: [https://cacp.ca/policiesguidelines.html?asst\\_id=199](https://cacp.ca/policiesguidelines.html?asst_id=199)
- Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division. (2005). Police and mental illness: Increased interactions. Retrieved from: [https://cmha.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/policesheets\\_all.pdf](https://cmha.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/policesheets_all.pdf)
- Cohen, I. M., & Garis, L. (2018). *Determinants of injury and death in Canadian police officers*. Abbotsford: Centre for Criminal Justice Research.



- Donahue, J. J. (2020). Fight-flight-freeze system. *Encyclopedia of personality and individual differences*, 1590–1595.
- Egan, G. (2013). *The skilled helper: A problem-management and opportunity-development approach to helping*. Cengage Learning.
- Goldberg, V., White, C., & Weisburd, D. (2019). Perspectives of people with mental health problems at hot spots: Attitudes and perceptions of safety, crime, and the police. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law*, 37(6), 650–664.
- Hall, C., Votova, K., Heyd, C., Walker, M., MacDonald, S., Eramian, D., & Vilke, G. M. (2015). Restraint in police use of force events: examining sudden in-custody death for prone and not-prone positions. *Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine*, 31, 29–35.
- Kiedrowski, J. S., Melchers, R. F., Petrunik, M., & Maxwell, C. (2015). *A discussion of the collection and analysis of data on the use of force in encounters between the police and members of the public*. Public Safety Canada.
- Laurance, J. (2003). *Pure madness: How fear drives the mental health system*. Psychology Press.
- London, G., & Roe, S. (2017). *Deaths in police custody: A review of the international evidence*. London: Home Office.
- Mazowita, B., & Rotenberg, C. (2019). The Canadian police performance metrics framework: Standardized indicators for police services in Canada. *Juristat: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics*, 1–13.
- Mimiaga, M. J., Safren, S. A., Dvoryak, S., Reisner, S. L., Needle, R., & Woody, G. (2010). "We fear the police, and the police fear us": Structural and individual barriers and facilitators to HIV medication adherence among injection drug users in Kiev, Ukraine. *AIDS Care*, 22(11), 1305–1313.
- Nix, J., & Wolfe, S. E. (2017). The impact of negative publicity on police self-legitimacy. *Justice Quarterly*, 34(1), 84–108.
- Paoline III, E. A., & Terrill, W. (2007). Police education, experience, and the use of force. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 34(2), 179–196.
- Porges, S. W. (2009b). Stress and parasympathetic control. In L. R. Squire (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of neuroscience* (Vol. 9, pp. 463–469). Oxford: Academic Press.
- Porges, S. W. (2010). Stress and parasympathetic control. In L. R. Squire (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of neuroscience* (Vol. 9, pp. 463–469). Academic Press.
- Ross, D. L. (1998). Factors associated with excited delirium deaths in police custody. *Modern Pathology*, 11(11), 1127–1137.
- Sweeney, A., Gillard, S., Wykes, T., & Rose, D. (2015). The role of fear in mental health service users' experiences: A qualitative exploration. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, 50(7), 1079–1087.
- State of Minnesota v. Derek Chauvin. File No. 27-CR-20-12646 (Minnesota District Court, Fourth Judicial District. June 2020). Retrieved from: <https://web.archive.org/web/20200604085340/http://mncourts.gov/mncourtsgov/media/High-Profile-Cases/27-CR-20-12646/AmendedComplaint06032020.pdf>
- Smith Lee, J. R., & Robinson, M. A. (2019). "That's my number one fear in life. It's the police": Examining young black men's exposures to trauma and loss resulting from police violence and police killings. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 45(3), 143–184.
- Tankebe, J. (2014). Rightful authority: Exploring the structure of police self-legitimacy. Available at SSRN 2499717.
- Taylor, N. E. (2020). Systemic or systematic: Officer presence and the eye of the beholder. *Journal of Community Safety and Well-Being*, 5(3), 87–88.
- Thompson, M., & Kahn, K. B. (2016). Mental health, race, and police contact: Intersections of risk and trust in the police. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 39(4), 807–819.
- Tyler, T. R., & Fagan, J. (2008). Legitimacy and cooperation: Why do people help the police fight crime in their communities? *Ohio State Journal of Criminal Law*, 6, 231.
- Vaughan, A. D., Zabkiewicz, D. M., & Verdun-Jones, S. N. (2017). In-custody deaths of men related to mental illness and substance use: A cross-sectional analysis of administrative records in Ontario, Canada. *Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine*, 48, 1–8.
- Webster, V., Brough, P., & Daly, K. (2016). Fight, flight or freeze: Common responses for follower coping with toxic leadership. *Stress and Health*, 32(4), 346–354.
- Williams, U., Jones, D. J., & Reddon, J. R. (2019). *Police response to mental health in Canada*. Canadian Scholars.
- Wobeser, W. L., Datema, J., Bechard, B., & Ford, P. (2002). Causes of death among people in custody in Ontario, 1990–1999. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 167(10), 1109–1113.



# COVID-19 should be considered an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE)

Michelle A. McManus\* and Emma Ball

Growing up with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) such as abuse, neglect, community violence, and homelessness, or growing up in a household where adults are experiencing mental health issues or harmful alcohol or drug use, has been shown to have long-lasting effects on people's lives. This is why the identification and prevention of ACEs and supporting children and adults affected has become a priority for government. Frontline organization practitioners are being encouraged to ask "what happened to you?" rather than "what is wrong with you?" (Centre for Health Care Strategies, 2016). The emphasis is on a personal experience and individual interpretation of an event(s). With COVID-19 being experienced so differently by different groups of people, we argue that the COVID-19 pandemic should be treated as an ACE, which could have short- and/or long-term impacts on a range of health and life outcomes. However, as with the existing dangers of ACE enquiry (Bateson, McManus, & Johnson, 2019), we must remember it is not the ACE itself, but the perception and experience of the ACE which is key.

## What are ACEs?

Adverse childhood experiences were first identified by Felitti et al. (1998), who explored the relationships between experiences of trauma in childhood and detrimental effects on health outcomes later on in life. There are 10 main categories of ACE: physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, physical and emotional neglect, parental abandonment, parental imprisonment, mental illness, domestic violence, and substance misuse (Public Health Scotland, 2020). Experiencing ACEs without supportive/protective factors to mitigate their effects, can impact on well-being and mental health and is often correlated with health-harming behaviours that can lead to long-term consequences such as increased risk of diabetes, heart disease, and cancer (Bellis et al., 2016). These non-communicable diseases reportedly kill 41 million people a year (World Health Organisation, 2018). Felitti also found a correlation between ACEs and poor educational outcomes, higher unemployment, and increased involvement with the criminal justice system. A recent report by Jones et al. (2020) found that violence costs the economic health system an estimated £46.6 million just in short-term consequences.

Adverse childhood experiences often co-occur (Hughes et al., 2017), with the two most common ACEs from the 21st century being those related to alcohol and substance misuse (Finkelhor, 2020), both of which have been exacerbated due to the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown restrictions (Public Health England, 2020; Yougov Poll, 2020). While this paints a bleak picture, it is crucial to remember that ACEs are a risk factor and not a predetermined fate. Experiencing an ACE does not necessarily lead to poor outcomes. Adverse childhood experiences are not inevitable nor do they determine a child's future destiny (Burke, 2020). Furthermore, if we understand the potential impact of an ACE we can take action. By considering COVID-19 as an ACE in its own right, we hope to raise awareness of potentially harmful effects, both short- and long-term, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and its restrictive measures. Moreover, we advocate that, as with all experiences of childhood adversity, this calls for understanding the individual and personal experience and responding with a trauma-informed approach to support children and families.

## International impact of ACEs

Research has been carried out throughout the world, providing a variety of statistics on ACEs. It has been reported that, within North America, ACEs cost the economy US\$748 million (America's Health Rankings, 2020). Across the globe, Kezelman et al. (2015) estimate the cost of unresolved childhood trauma in Australia at AU\$9.1 billion. The World Health Organisation (2019) notes that ACEs cost North America and Europe US\$1.3 trillion dollars a year. In response to this, money is being invested in support for those who have experienced ACEs. Kaiser Permanente, a network of health care providers in the United States and founder of the ground-breaking 1998 ACE study, has recently invested £2.75 million in research in the prevention and reduction of ACEs (Kaiser Permanente, 2019). The ACEs movement has been expanding massively, evidenced by the worldwide network ACEs Connection, which has over 40,000 members and advocates for trauma-informed resources based on a growing body of science.

Within the United Kingdom, all countries have shown a commitment to tackling ACEs (Public Health Scotland,

**Correspondence to:** Dr. M. A. McManus, Head of Criminal Justice, School of Justice Studies, Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool, UK.  
**E-mail:** m.a.mcmanus@ljmu.ac.uk

**To cite:** McManus, M. A., & Ball, E. (2020). COVID-19 should be considered an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE). *Journal of Community Safety and Well-Being*, 5(4), 164-167. <https://doi.org/10.35502/jcsbw.166>

© Author(s) 2020. Open Access. This work is distributed under the Creative Commons BY-NC-ND license. For commercial re-use, please contact sales@sgpublishing.ca.

**SG PUBLISHING** Published by SG Publishing Inc. **CSKA** Official publication of the Community Safety Knowledge Alliance.

2020; Department for Health and Social Care, 2018; Bellis et al., 2016; Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland, 2018), and the ACE movement is continuing to evolve. There are various tools used to capture the prevalence of ACEs, such as The World Health Organisation's international questionnaire (n.d.), resulting in ACE scores. Whilst it is positive to recognize potential trauma a person has experienced, it is important to remember that the narrative must go deeper and that experience is not accurately reflected simply in a score (Hambrick et al., 2019).

### How can COVID-19 be an ACE when the whole world has experienced it?

Our whole argument since working on the adoption of ACEs within the criminal justice system (see Early Action Together, 2018) has been warning about the simplification of the model that allows practitioners to use ACEs as a checklist. In our paper discussing the misuse of ACEs (Bateson et al., 2019), we warned about organizations that were either refusing or including an individual for treatment, intervention, or service based on the number of ACEs they checked. However, like COVID-19, it is not the presence of the ACE but the personal experience we need to focus on.

We have all experienced the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic one way or another. Lots of families have talked about the great positives of COVID-19 in theirs and their children's lives, such as spending more time together and "strengthening family bonds" (Clayton & Potter, 2020). A recent article also highlighted additional positives, such as embracing a much more dynamic and less routine-based lifestyle with our families (Pope, 2020). Then there are those families that have had to balance full-time jobs with children at home (Craig & Churchill, 2020). Some parents have stated that they have seen changes in their children's behaviour, agreeing that this has worsened in lockdown (University of Oxford, 2020). The knock-on effect of this can be increased screen time due to isolation at home, with parents at home working and providing reduced levels of supervision of their children's online activities and engagement. The World Health Organisation (2020) has warned this could lead to increases in sedentary lifestyle, changes in mood and behaviour, and, of course, the risk of being exposed to harmful content, exploitation, and cyberbullying.

The impact of lockdown is diverse, but while most people will recover from the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the assumption cannot be made that all children will simply "bounce back."

The danger surrounding COVID-19 is that we may consider that *everyone* has been adversely affected by COVID-19 and that, therefore, any changes in behaviour, mood, physical appearance, emotions, and so on are just a natural consequence of COVID-19 and the social restrictions that we all had to abide by. Thinking this way is simply wrong. It assumes that there was an equal playing field prior to COVID-19 and ignores the protective factors, often taken for granted, in place for some children (Madigan et al., 2018). These include stable attachments (Stacy, 2006) and strong relationships (Bright, 2017) with loving extended family or friends, as well as permanent and secure accommodation. It also implies a life free from the horrors of hunger, domestic abuse, parental long-term unemployment, mental illness, and substance misuse. If these

protective factors were absent before, there is a strong possibility that the situation is deteriorating rapidly, as evidenced by the Office of National Statistics (2020) reporting increased unemployment, increased risky alcohol consumption (Public Health England, 2020), and increased referrals for urgent mental health cases (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2020). In addition to this are the national spikes in domestic abuse cases: the *Telegraph* newspaper reported an increase of 54% in women needing emergency accommodation in July alone and an 800% increase in calls to Refuge's National Domestic Abuse Helpline (Davies, 2020). Are we expecting children from these chaotic households to have experienced the same ups and downs of lockdown as those who have regular and sustained protective/supportive factors? And let's remember, the restrictions are far from over.

### What are the benefits of including COVID-19 as an ACE?

It is well known that many organizations have now bought into the concept of trauma-informed practice. The College of Policing (2018), England's National Health Service (2019), Trauma Informed Schools UK (2020), and Criminal Justice agencies (Papamichael, 2019) have all come to the conclusion that considering ACEs is an essential component when dealing with people, often vulnerable, on a daily basis. These organizations are spending thousands on trauma-informed training and are no doubt already talking about COVID-19, but are they considering this as a traumatic, individualized experience?

## CONCLUSION

Our point has always been that the simplification of ACEs could be the potential downfall of the concept. The frequency, severity, chronicity, and type of ACE, along with such factors as the age of the child and other socio-demographic factors, will vary the impact of each ACE experience (Bateson et al., 2019). It is likely that, upon returning to schools, teachers will have witnessed changes in the behaviour of children who have experienced trauma as a result of the lockdown. Welcome guidance has already begun to be circulated by Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership (2020) and Lancashire Violence Reduction Unit (2020) to assist schools in recognizing the potential signs of trauma.

Adverse childhood experiences can affect people either directly or indirectly. The same is true for COVID-19. In a world where we look to be informed by evidence and are "guided by science," the ACE-awareness movement needs to become mainstream and consider a variety of adverse experiences, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. If individuals are aware of the impact of ACEs and their relevance to COVID-19, they are more likely to be empowered to make decisions for themselves and their families. The pandemic has impacted upon all children, but not all children will have experienced COVID-19 as an ACE.

Adopting COVID-19 into the ACEs framework will encourage practitioners to ask the question "how was lockdown for you?" Simply pausing to consider the varied impact of COVID-19 and basing next steps in decision-making on *their* experience, not on *our assumptions* of their experience, can be the difference between making people safe and allowing them to continue to be harmed.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

## AUTHOR AFFILIATIONS

\* Dept. of Criminal Justice, School of Justice Studies, Liverpool John Moores University, United Kingdom.

## REFERENCES

- America's Health Rankings. (2020). Retrieved from: <https://www.america'shealthrankings.org/explore/health-of-women-and-children/measures/ACEs/state/U.S>
- Bateson, K., McManus, M., & Johnson, G. (2019). Understanding the use, and misuse, of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in trauma-informed policing. *The Police Journal*, 93(2), 131–145.
- Bellis, M. A., Ashton, K., Hughes, K., Ford, K., Bishop, J., & Paranjothy, S. (2016). Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in Wales and their impact on health in the adult population: Mariana Dyakova. *European Journal of Public Health*, 26(1 Suppl 1). doi:10.1093/eurpub/ckw167.009.
- Burke, N. (2020). Adverse childhood experiences. Retrieved from: <https://burkefoundation.org/what-drives-us/adverse-childhood-experiences-aces/>
- Bright, M. (2017). Why stable relationships are "poison control" in fighting trauma and stress in kids. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from: <https://theconversation.com/why-stable-relationships-are-poison-control-in-fighting-trauma-and-stress-in-kids-77387>
- Clayton, C., & Potter, M. (2020) British families in lockdown. Leeds Trinity University. Retrieved from: <https://www.leedstrinity.ac.uk/news/archive/2020/covid-19-study-reveals-positive-impact-of-lockdown-on-family-dynamics-and-wellbeing.php>
- College of Policing. (2018). Responding to trauma in policing. Retrieved from: <https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Support/Health-safety/Documents/Responding-to-trauma-in-policing.pdf>
- Craig, L., & Churchill, B. (2020). Dual-earner parent couples' work and care during COVID-19. Gender, Work & Organization. Retrieved from: doi:10.1111/gwao.12497
- Davies, G. (2020, July 23). Domestic violence helpline calls up by 80% in June amid warnings that surge will continue in autumn. *The Telegraph Newspaper*. Retrieved from: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/07/23/domestic-violence-helpline-calls-80-june-amid-warnings-surge/>
- Department for Health and Social Care. (2018). Routine enquiry about adverse childhood experiences: implementation pack pilot evaluation, final report. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/routine-enquiry-about-adverse-childhood-experiences-implementation-pack-evaluation>
- Early Action Together. (2018). Royal Society for Public Health. Retrieved from: <https://www.rsph.org.uk/our-work/resources/early-action-together-learning-network.html>
- Felitti, V. J., Anda, R. F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D. F., Spitz, A. M., Edwards, V., ... Marks, J. S. (1998). Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults: The adverse childhood experiences (ACE) study. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 14(4), 245–258.
- Finkelhor, D. (2020). Trends in adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in the United States. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 108, 104641.
- Hambrick, E., Brawner, T. W., Perry, B. W., Brandt, K., Hofmeister, C., & Collins, J. O. (2019). Beyond the ACE score: Examining relationships between timing of developmental adversity, relational health and developmental outcomes in children. *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing*, 33(3), 238–247.
- Hughes, K., Bellis, M. A., Hardcastle, K. A., Sethi, D., Butchart, A., Minton, C., ... & Dunne, M. P. (2017). The effect of multiple adverse childhood experiences on health: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *The Lancet Public Health*, 2(8), 356–366.
- Jones, L., Bigland, C., & Quigg, Z. (2020). Costs of violence to the Welsh health care system. Public Health Institute, Liverpool John Moores University. Retrieved from: <https://www.violencepreventionwales.co.uk/cms-assets/research/Costs-of-violence-to-the-healthcare-system-in-Wales.pdf>
- Kaiser Permanente. (2019). Funding new research to prevent childhood trauma. Retrieved from: <https://about.kaiserpermanente.org/community-health/news/funding-new-research-to-prevent-childhood-trauma>
- Kezelman, C., Hossack, N., Stavropoulos, P., & Burley, P. (2015). The cost of unresolved childhood trauma and abuse in adults in Australia: A report for adults surviving child abuse. Retrieved from: [https://www.qldfamilylaw.net.au/sites/qldfamilylaw.net/files/qflpn/The%20cost%20of%20unresolved%20trauma\\_budget%20report%20fnl.pdf](https://www.qldfamilylaw.net.au/sites/qldfamilylaw.net/files/qflpn/The%20cost%20of%20unresolved%20trauma_budget%20report%20fnl.pdf)
- Lancashire Violence Reduction Unit. (2020). Post COVID-19 trauma-informed guidance for schools. Retrieved from: <http://www.lancshiresafeguarding.org.uk/media/19155/LVRN-Post-COVID-19-Trauma-Informed-Guidance-for-Schools-FINAL.pdf>
- Madigan, S., Racine, N., & Tough, S. (2018). How compassion can triumph over toxic childhood trauma. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from: <https://theconversation.com/how-compassion-can-triumph-over-toxic-childhood-trauma-90756>
- Menschner, C., & Maul, A. (2016). Key ingredients for successful trauma-informed care implementation. Centre for Health Care Strategies. Retrieved from: <http://www.chcs.org/media/Brief-Key-Ingredients-for-TIC-Implementation-1.pdf>
- Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership. (2020). Additional guidance when considering permanent exclusion. Retrieved from: <https://merseysidevrp.com/media/1200/mvrp-extra-guidance-for-head-teachers-re-permanent-exclusion-sept-2020.pdf>
- National Health Service. (2019). Providing effective trauma informed care for women. Retrieved from: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ltpimenu/mental-health/providing-effective-trauma-informed-care-for-women/>
- Office of National Statistics. (2020, September). Labour market overview, UK. Retrieved from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/september2020>
- Papamichael, D. (2019, July 22). Can trauma-informed practice transform the criminal justice system? Rocket Science. Retrieved from: <http://rocketsciencelab.co.uk/2019/07/22/can-trauma-informed-practice-transform-the-criminal-justice-system/>
- Pope, D. (2020). Routine: Less is often more when it comes to children's development. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from: <https://theconversation.com/routine-less-is-often-more-when-it-comes-to-childrens-development-145900>
- Public Health England. (2020). Wider impacts of COVID-19 on health (WICH) monitoring tool. Retrieved from: <https://analytics.phe.gov.uk/apps/covid-19-indirect-effects/>
- Public Health Scotland. (2020). Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Retrieved from: <http://www.healthscotland.scot/population-groups/children/adverse-childhood-experiences-aces/overview-of-aces>
- Royal College of Psychiatrists. (2020). Psychiatrists see alarming rise in patients needing urgent and emergency care and forecast a "tsunami" of mental illness. Retrieved from: <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/news-and-features/latest-news/detail/2020/05/15/psychiatrists-see-alarming-rise-in-patients-needing-urgent-and-emergency-care>
- Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland. (2018). Evidence review – developing trauma-informed practice in Northern Ireland. Retrieved from: [https://pureadmin.qub.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/168311525/ACEs\\_Report\\_A4\\_Feb\\_2019\\_Developing\\_a\\_Trauma\\_Informed\\_Approach\\_Full\\_Evidence\\_Review.pdf](https://pureadmin.qub.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/168311525/ACEs_Report_A4_Feb_2019_Developing_a_Trauma_Informed_Approach_Full_Evidence_Review.pdf)



- Stacy, P. D. (2006). Early childhood attachments as a protective factor. *Journal of Evidence-Based Social Work*, 3(2), 49–65.
- Trauma Informed Schools UK. (2020). Retrieved from: <https://www.traumainformedschools.co.uk>
- University of Oxford. (2020). Children show increase in mental health difficulties over COVID-19 lockdown. Retrieved from: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2020-06-16-children-show-increase-mental-health-difficulties-over-covid-19-lockdown>
- World Health Organisation. (2018). Noncommunicable diseases fact-sheet. Retrieved from: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/noncommunicable-diseases>
- World Health Organisation. (2020). Excessive screen use and gaming considerations during #COVID19. Retrieved from: <http://www.emro.who.int/mnh/news/considerations-for-young-people-on-excessive-screen-use-during-covid19.html>
- World Health Organisation. (n.d.). Adverse childhood experiences international questionnaire (ACE-IQ). Guidance for analysing ACE-IQ. Retrieved from: [https://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/activities/adverse\\_childhood\\_experiences/guidance\\_for\\_analysing.pdf?ua=1](https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/activities/adverse_childhood_experiences/guidance_for_analysing.pdf?ua=1)
- World Health Organisation. (2019). Preventable trauma in childhood costs North America and Europe US\$1.3 trillion a year. Retrieved from: [https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/noncommunicable-diseases/mental-health/news/news/2019/9/preventable-trauma-in-childhood-costs-north-america-and-europe-us\\$-1.3-trillion-a-year](https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/noncommunicable-diseases/mental-health/news/news/2019/9/preventable-trauma-in-childhood-costs-north-america-and-europe-us$-1.3-trillion-a-year)
- Yougov. (2020). How are British drinking habits shifting under lockdown? Retrieved from: <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/food/articles-reports/2020/04/08/how-are-british-drinking-habits-shifting-under-lo>



# Defunding the ramparts: A home remade

Michael J. DeValve\*

Institutional theory reveals for us what is broken in policing, but, beyond that, it highlights why it is so broken and where work must be focused. A justice founded on love is more than just possible, but the work to be done is considerable and frightening. It is, however, wildly fruitful and also blindingly beautiful.

Institutional theory is useful for understanding policing, certainly, but primarily in a *revelatory* sense; in the current crisis of police legitimacy (see Vitale, 2017), institutional theory rends the veil and sharpens the focus on what, precisely, is so broken in policing. It also reveals that what is broken has been so for quite some time. What is more, institutional theory places responsibility for police brokenness squarely on the shoulders of you and me. Through boundary-spanning interactions, organizations like the police ingest and metabolize myths because doing so makes them more viable long-term as organizations, not because those myths serve the broader organizational purpose. Those myths are a result of our understandings—and misunderstandings—about the police and about justice writ large. Organizations do what they do so as to keep existing, not necessarily to succeed in their mission. Clearly, then, the onus is on the policed to understand well what precisely the police *can* do, what they *should* do, what they are *asked* to do, and most of all, what justice means in fullness.

Decoupling, or the gap between stated purpose and actual action, is particularly evident in policing, where it is also particularly toxic because of the nature of the police role. Proactive, direct enforcement strategies offer marginal deliverables regarding safety, and likely victimize segments of the community, yet other segments of the same community urge the police to use those same strategies in the interest of “order” or “community safety.”

The competing and colliding myths that disrupt the environment of the police institution are a function of co-created discourses related to police purpose, police action, and the meaning of justice. These myths even embody the deep decoupling itself that is emblematic of the institution.

Crucially, these myths, tugging the police in various directions at different strata, are perpetuated according to the degree to which they resonate with individuals. What resonates, of course, is a function of the topography of need in each of us and in terms of the wider human community, and

it is for this reason that we do well to contemplate together the topographies of that need in the wider human community and the ways we can organize to address them.

The range of guiding myths for policing is not only bedecked with false and misleading ideas, it is deeply valanced in at least two wildly different vectors. On the one hand, there is a vector that urges a wisdom, a softening of the shape of boundary-spanning contacts (e.g., DeValve & Quinn 2010). This vector is not nearly as prolific or as influential as the second one, which urges a honing of the edge (e.g., Crank, 2015) through militarization, not only of equipment, but of personnel and of the very spirit of the agency (e.g., Kraska, 2001).

The might of myths, as indicated earlier, is a function of their appeal, which is in turn a function of their analgesic capacity. A very brief consideration of the shoreline of America suffering in the body of certain addictions is warranted.

## Addictions

We have an opiate problem in the United States, *in addition to* the one everyone has been discussing of late. The failure of the police institution is predominantly historic rather than merely recent; in this moment we are seeing *revealed* the collapse of meaningfulness in policing that occurred well in the past. Of course, some officers and even some agencies serve with dignity and integrity, but that dignity and integrity have been more the exception than the rule, and this for quite some time. This yawning chasm between perceived (or desired) and actual policing service in America frames a series of soothing fairy tales for us, appealing for their analgesic effects. As a result, we have tended to become addicted to these soothing stories. The fairy tales are themselves instructive precisely because they are so effective, telling us almost directly about the nature of our suffering. Here we will consider the fairy tales to which we have become addicted so as to learn about the pain they mask.

## Certainty

First among the fairy tales is the craving for certainty. We want to know what is going to happen, we want to be sure everything will be okay. Entire industries are built on the idea of providing insurance against the unforeseen, over which we have no control. We stuff cash in mattresses and arm ourselves against intruders because we fear what could

**Correspondence to:** Michael J. DeValve, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Criminal Justice, Bridgewater State University, Bridgewater, MA 02325.  
**E-mail:** mdevalve@bridgew.edu

**To cite:** DeValve, J. M. (2020). Defunding the ramparts: A home remade. *Journal of Community Safety and Well-Being*, 5(4), 168-170. <https://doi.org/10.35502/jcswb.161>

© **Author(s)** 2020. Open Access. This work is distributed under the Creative Commons BY-NC-ND license. For commercial re-use, please contact [sales@sgpublishing.ca](mailto:sales@sgpublishing.ca).

**SG PUBLISHING** Published by **SG Publishing Inc.** **CSKA** Official publication of the **Community Safety Knowledge Alliance**.

happen instead of living our lives in celebration of them happening (e.g., Jones, 2011).

As I have said elsewhere (e.g., DeValve, 2020), we humans tend to struggle for a toehold as we bob like desperate corks in the surf. We long for certitude, even though uncertainty is endemic to the human experience. Legitimacy, coercion, fairness, and the rest are rooted in this clawing after certainty. The search for best practices, fully illustrative of institutional theory's fecundity, is itself a bad practice. The pursuit of certitude is in actuality laziness; this point deserves emphasis: it is far easier to build a repository of empirically derived tests of marginally effective justice practices than it is simply to connect, bodily, humanly, with what is actually broken.

The notion of police effectiveness vis-à-vis crime is deeply held—even by many, including police executives (e.g., Haberman, 2016), who likely know better. It is more than merely believing their own organizational hype; there seems to be a strange bifurcated sense of efficacy: police executives work hard to do and outwardly praise activity that has only marginal efficacy, and yet they seem to live with an inherent awareness, not only that these efforts are marginally impactful, but that they must believe in them as being the best chance of serving the stated organizational mission. Moreover, this internalized bifurcation of efficacy is undiscussable, and *its undiscussability* is undiscussable (e.g., Argyris, 1980). In a sea of uncertainty, police executives cling to what they have and insist on its relevance and efficacy despite evidence. One is reminded of William Golding's (1956) Christopher Martin, clinging to a rock in the tempest-tossed sea, clinging ever more tightly as fear mounted, clinging to what had already been lost.

### Authority and the Telos

Related to our need to mainline certainty is the belief in authority as meaningful. Power-over relations provide some sense of being ruddered towards something. Power-over is as fulfilling as heroin is nutritious, however; power-with relations are far more sustainable and nutriment-rich (e.g., DeValve, 2016).

There is a near-paradox that, to my knowledge, remains unacknowledged in institutional theory discourse (although DiMaggio & Powell (1983) come within a hair's breadth of the point in a footnote). If environmental forces are more potent for ensuring the long-term viability of an organization than are "rational" (or semi-rational, e.g., Copes & Vieraitis, 2009; March & Simon, 1958), efficiency-optimized structures and actions, is it not the case, then, that prioritizing environmental myths over efficiency is inherently reasoned and goal-directed? While legitimacy may not be an efficient concern regarding outcomes and impacts, it is an effective one, but, revealingly, only when it is authentically pursued as such. Goal-directed activity naturally presupposed the continued existence of the organization, therefore organizational viability is at least as important as efficiency. What is more, it is inherently goal-directed for a police agency which authentically serves the mission of community well-being to orient itself in an unqualified way to love as I have defined it: "the artlike, individualized, unconditional, aware and endless praxis whereby a human or organization mindfully, assertively and continuously labors for the actualization of another human being as an end in herself without thought of return, without reliance upon authority, without fear, or the possibility of cessation" (DeValve, 2015, p. 103).

Recently I wrote about how we respond collectively to mass violence, like Stephen Paddock's shooting in Las Vegas (DeValve, 2020). Two tendencies are at work here. First, there is a tendency to shake our fists at God after such an atrocity; we seek an accounting of why bad things happen if God is both good and mighty. This, of course, is the contemplation of theodicy (e.g., Metz, 1998; Tillich, 1963), which has a long and storied history. The second tendency for many contemporary humans is to understand the human world and its meaning in the form of a narrative: all of this suffering must make sense, and all will be revealed. That there *is* no why, no grander narrative (aside from the one we ourselves weave) is deeply unsettling for many; if there is no Grand Purpose, then there is no Grand Narrative, and logically there is no Grand Author. In actuality, though, the craving for authority, for a Grand Narrator, misses the vital point that we ourselves are coauthors in all things; we make meaning, we tell the story, we choose the ending.

### Wiley Coyote and Moenia Populi

And speaking of narratives, we all know that Wiley Coyote can't ever be allowed to succeed, his contraptions and his unquestioned super genius status notwithstanding. We want the police to legitimate themselves, and yet we want legitimacy (again, which are two often very different things). We cheer when evil Hans Gruber gets what's coming, and when John McLean gets the girl in the end. We want the police to kick ass, just not our own asses.

Elsewhere (DeValve, 2016), I talked about what I call the Wiley Coyote Problem: we insist that the Good Guys win, and place institutional pressure on the police to make sure that happens. How is it that we're surprised, then, when the police *do* win, but the "Bad Guy" was an unarmed and nonviolent father of three? We crave ramparts against the forces of evil, something we might call "the people's ramparts," or "*moenia populi*." The problem with this craving is that warlike myths simply don't serve, and *moenia populi* pivots almost imperceptibly, becoming *moenia contra populi* without warning.

### What Is to Be Done about the Police?

First, it should be manifestly evident at this point that the police, as institutional agents of justice, serve justice as it is understood by the community. When the community understands justice only dimly if at all, it stands to reason that the police will follow suit, regardless of other, even functional constraints. Institutional theory seems to make clear that even if the police did indeed have effective goal-directed strategies for crime interdiction, they would still be compelled to do the things demanded by the community. If we are outraged by police violence, the place for us to turn must be to ourselves. If it is the case that our organizations reflect our demands, as institutional theory posits, then it is a categorical imperative that we make demands of those organizations that prioritize love above all things.

Second, our concerns about certainty cannot override our willingness to understand deeply the nature of the suffering confronted by public service organizations. We must learn that squeezing tightly those things that we treasure only assures their demise. We must give up our search for certainty and learn to love the surf. The secret, though, is that when we relinquish our craving for certitude and learn to revel in

the confluence of the tide, we find within the very stillness and solidity we sought without.

Third, we must practice viewing all suffering with eyes of compassion and loving kindness. All suffering is caused by suffering, and that includes racism, greed, and the addictions to which I have pointed here. We must begin to dialogue about what hurts, and we must find the courage to listen and be fully present as individuals and as a community for that dialogue. Loving kindness is “*smriti*,” Sanskrit for “that which can be remembered.” There are multiple ways to remember, to rediscover nascent voices within ourselves, and many of them are rooted in some form of contemplative practice. There is a need, though, in this moment in American history, for a more formal and public remembering for the sake of the transformation of past harm into future healing. Truth and reconciliation efforts are needed in America; soon, hopefully, we will be sufficiently mature to take up the task.

Fourth, we should not see the choice of how to act as a zero-sum game; highest wisdom at an individual level will sort out the collective problems in time, but we do not have the luxury of waiting for the Buddha-nature of every human to come to full flower before we act. Rather, we should see the individual work and the collective work as collateral and cross-fertilizing avenues of progress towards a loving justice.

Finally, we must end the American Cult of the Self. The confrontation of ugliness (i.e., suffering) is endemic to human existence, and that ugliness, that suffering, is daily fare for police. That ugliness leads to an unresolved walking desperation, which resolves eventually into either compassion or hate. The inevitable choice to live in compassion or be consumed by hate often hinges on the understanding of the self. If the self is seen as sovereign, the tendency is to cling to it in unwholesome ways. This clinging results in what colleagues and I have referred to as either benign or antagonistic selfism (DeValve, Garland, & Wright, 2018). If, however, a nondual sense of self is operable, the confrontation with wretchedness results in compassion, and power-over control (e.g., DeValve, 2017) no longer makes practical sense. That movement towards enlightened self through the sovereign self and to a wiser nondual self is a path, and crucially it is a path that cannot be walked at the tip of a spear or for some incentive (Tagore, 1913/2017).

It all comes down to choice: we can choose the easy road and cling to rusted institutions that failed to deliver on promises long ago even though they continue to give credence to those promises, or we can do the hard work of love and connect in granular and intimate ways to assure real justice arises like flowers for every single member of the human family.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES

The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.

## AUTHOR AFFILIATIONS

\* Department of Criminal Justice, Bridgewater State University, Bridgewater, MA.

## REFERENCES

- Argyris, C. (1980). Making the undiscussable and its undiscussability discussable. *Public Administration Review*, 40(3), 205–213.
- Copes, H., & Vieraitis, L. (2009). Bounded rationality of identity thieves: Using offender-based research to inform policy. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 8(2), 237–262.
- Crank, J. (2015). *Understanding police culture*, 2nd ed. Routledge.
- DeValve, M. (2015). *A different justice: Love and the future of criminal justice practice in America*. Carolina Academic Press.
- DeValve, M. (2016). O for a muse of fire: Rebellion as sacrament. *Critical Criminology*, 25, 87–102.
- DeValve, M. (2017). Love/power. *Critical Criminology*, 25, 375–391.
- DeValve, M. (2020). Reconsidering the response to mass violence: Choice, meaning and human truth. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Criminology*, 12, 80–97.
- DeValve, M., Garland, T., & Wright, B. (2018). *A unified theory of justice and crime: Justice that love gives*. Lexington/Rowman & Littlefield.
- DeValve, M., & Quinn, E. (2010). Practical poetry: Thich Nhat Hanh and the cultivation of a problem-oriented officer. *Contemporary Justice Review*, 13(2), 191–205.
- DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (1983). The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields. *American Sociological Review*, 48(2), 147–160.
- Golding, W. (1956). *Pincher Martin*. Capricorn.
- Haberman, C. (2016). A view inside the “black box” of hotspot policing from a sample of police commanders. *Police Quarterly*, 19(4), 488–517.
- Jones, D. (2011). *The art of uncertainty: How to live in the mystery of life and love it*. Tarcher/Penguin.
- Kraska, P. (2001). *Militarizing the American criminal justice system: The changing roles of armed forces and police*. Northeastern University Press.
- March, J., & Simon, H. (1958). *Organizations*. New York: Wiley.
- Metz, J. (1998). *A passion for God: The mystical-political dimension of Christianity*. (Ashley, M., Trans.). Mahwah, NJ: Paulist.
- Tagore, R. (1913/2017). *Sadhana*. In Tagore, R., *The complete works of Rabindranath Tagore: All short stories, poetry, novels, plays & essays*. (Kindle Edition). New Delhi: General Press.
- Tillich, P. (1963). *Systematic theology*. University of Chicago Press.
- Vitale, A. (2017). *The end of policing*. Verso.





# “Chief, I think we can make this work.” Perceptions of successes and failures in technology implementation from Canadian police leaders

James Brown\* and Michael Doucet†

## ABSTRACT

This article looks at the pressures, issues, and organizational elements that were perceived to have the greatest impact on the success or failure of technology projects, based on discussions with police leaders who have recently retired from police organizations across Canada. These discussions were technology-agnostic and focused on the human dimension of technology projects to understand what worked, what didn't, and why, with the intent to help inform the discussion on technology acquisition for today's police leaders.

**Key Words** Policing and technology; police leadership and technology; technology projects.

## INTRODUCTION

In today's technology-rich environment, police leaders are constantly confronted with technology issues, from replacement technology for existing tasks to new technology that may address emerging issues. Regardless of the technology involved, its impact, scope, or cost, police leaders and their teams must evaluate, manage, and integrate the technology assessment, acquisition, and implementation experience, ultimately leading their organizations through it and addressing the question, “Will this work for us?” The police leaders who were consulted during this study unanimously agreed on the need for strategic alignment and effective organizational leadership for technology projects and programs to be successfully implemented. Irrespective of the size of the organization or the scope of the technology involved, they agreed that successful leaders created a clear vision of what success looked like and how the technology supported their policing philosophy and aligned with their organizational strategy. These leaders were clear in the expression of their expectations and they managed and monitored their resources to ensure time and cost control. Most importantly, police leaders articulated their need to ensure that new technology projects were ethical in their design and scope while impacting positively on the communities they served.

During the discussion, a number of key issues arose that were consistently identified as critical elements. We have

condensed these elements into six pillars of focus that police leaders should consider when implementing new technology or initiating a technology project (Table I).

## BACKGROUND

In June of 2020, the authors were working with private-sector corporations seeking to support police services across Canada. As both authors had a wide range of experience in technology projects and their implementation in policing environments in Canada, questions arose about how police leaders have historically addressed technology and technology projects. Academic and government-funded research reports and journal articles had identified some of the challenges associated with police and technology. The authors were mindful that “with a greater reliance on technology in society comes a greater technology presence in police work” (Rogers & Scally, 2017, p. 101). In order to learn more about the thought processes, pressures, and expectations involved in technology decisions, as well as the perceptions of success and failure, the authors undertook an online (remote) dual-moderator group discussion with a series of recently retired police leaders from across Canada. All of the participants had served as either chief or command-level staff within policing services in Canada (see Table II). Each of the participants was still engaged in supporting community safety and well-being, and each would

**Correspondence to:** James Brown, Ontario Tech University, 2000 Simcoe St. N., Oshawa, ON L1G 0C5.  
**E-mail:** james.brown@uoit.ca

**To cite:** Brown, J., Doucet, M. (2020). “Chief, I think we can make this work.” Perceptions of successes and failures in technology implementation from Canadian police leaders. *Journal of Community Safety and Well-Being*, 5(4), 171-177. <https://doi.org/10.35502/jcswb.157>

© Author(s) 2020. Open Access. This work is distributed under the Creative Commons BY-NC-ND license. For commercial re-use, please contact sales@sgpublishing.ca.

**SG PUBLISHING** Published by SG Publishing Inc. **CSKA** Official publication of the Community Safety Knowledge Alliance.

self-identify as a reform-minded police leader. The consultation process started with a series of questions provided to participants, followed by an online discussion forum with all participants, who were then invited to comment on this paper as it evolved.

## QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

The research authors designed a series of questions for the forum participants that were designed to start the discussion. Questions were provided two days prior to the forum, and

**TABLE I** Six pillars of focus and related questions based on emerging issues cited by research participants

<b>Strategic alignment</b>
Do we have a technology strategy?
Does the technology support our policing philosophy?
Is the technology aligned with our strategic vision?
How does the technology support our mission and/or vision?
Is this technology consistent with what the public would expect of us?
Are there any ethical considerations in the implementation of this technology, including information security and privacy issues?
Is this technology initiative being driven by our strategic vision, or is our strategy being modified to align with the technology?
<b>Ensuring adequate technology resources</b>
Does the organization have access to sufficient technology resources and does it have the skills required for the project or initiative?
Does the organization have staff who are fulfilling the role of Chief Information Officer (CIO), Chief Technology Officer (CTO) and/or Chief Information Security Officer (CISO)?
Do those responsible for information technology know what is expected of them?
Do those responsible for information technology have the knowledge, skills and abilities to perform to the expectations?
How are skills enhanced over time?
<b>Managing expectations</b>
What does the executive team expect from this technology initiative?
What do the impacted stakeholders (anticipated users) expect from this initiative?
What does the Board or Council expect from this initiative?
What does or should the public expect from this initiative?
What does the project implementation team expect from this initiative?
Are all of the expectations aligned?
How do you ensure and measure alignment?
<b>Defining success</b>
What problem or opportunity is the technology project intended to solve?
What should the organization (operating environment) look like after successful implementation?
How should success be measured and reported on?
How should the technology project positively impact the community served?
Once implemented, has the organization committed to operational funding to support the capability?
<b>Giving consideration to technology debt</b>
Does this technology acquisition add to a legacy system? If so, should the organization continue to add (invest) in the sunken technology costs?
Is this technology initiative/application one that is continuing to evolve, or should the organization be looking for alternatives?
Is the organization selecting this technology because current training and skill sets for IT and/or field personnel are not adversely impacted, or should the organization be looking at alternatives?
If the organization selects an alternative technology or methodology, what are the impacts?
Can the technology acquisition retire existing capabilities?
<b>Customization versus configuration</b>
Does the technology fulfill our need?
Should or could the organization partner with other agencies (police or municipal) which would benefit from the technology while sharing costs (and/or resources)?
Does the organization need customized software, or does existing software need to be configured to meet the organization's needs?

**TABLE II** Forum participants (retired from position indicated)

Name	Title	Police service
Paul Beesley	Chief Superintendent	Ontario Provincial Police (ON)
Jean-Michel Blais	Chief	Halifax Regional Police Service (NS)
	Chief Superintendent	RCMP
Devon Clunis	Chief	Winnipeg Police Service (MB)
Kim Derry	Deputy Chief	Toronto Police Service (ON)
Geoffrey Nelson	Chief	Brantford Police Service (ON)
Murray Rodd	Chief	Peterborough Police Service (ON)
Matthew Torigian	Chief	Waterloo Regional Police Service (ON)
	Deputy Solicitor General	Ontario

the participants were told that the questions were intended to elicit input rather than being rigid or prescriptive.

### Setting the Stage

At the beginning of the discussion, we identified a series of issues that we believe have been challenging to police executives for many years and which we relayed to participants verbally. This included comments about frequent resource shortages; compounding technical debt in technical product acquisition; changes in organizations' digital transformation and their use of cloud computing; new and emerging issues surrounding work from home and business continuity; the continuing growth in complexity of technology and, finally, the issues surrounding any technology program and board communication.

Historically, "technology [has] often [been] placed into categories in order to better understand its function. In the policing sphere, Manning used five different areas to explain police technology: communicative, mobility, transformative, training and analytical" (Rogers & Scally, 2017, p. 101). We did not separate technology acquisition during this discussion, nor did we seek input in different categories of technology; instead, we focused on technology acquisition as a singular element within the spectrum of leadership responsibilities.

### Questions

The following questions were posed to the discussion group participants. This resulted in a free-flowing conversation in which a number of topics were addressed. As a result, the comments presented in this paper are a synthesis of the discussions on all of these topics rather than answers to each question.

- What are the top three technology challenges that you faced while serving in your senior leadership role?
- What were your greatest challenges in technology during your tenure in leading a police service?
- What do you perceive as your greatest successes in technology?
- What do you perceive your greatest disappointments were in technology?
- What technology undertaking or project surpassed your expectations (and why)?
- In the field of technology, what would you say your "hot buttons" were?

- What changes would you want in the technology project process?
- What are the top three areas in technology that you feel need to be the focus for greater understanding by police leaders?
- What do you feel should be the future of technology discussion points for police leaders?
- If you had three pieces of advice for today's police leaders related to technology, what would they be?

### FINDINGS

The findings of this research represent the consensus of the participants based on their years of experience in leading diverse policing organizations in a number of provinces. Having such a diverse group collaboratively identify the following key elements and reach agreement as to their priority underscores their universal importance, certainly in the Canadian policing context. It was the hope of the research team that the identification of these key elements could serve as a template or framework for today's police leaders as they endeavour to implement new technologies in their policing organizations.

Throughout this process, moderated by the authors, the conversation was dynamic and flexible. Participants did not hesitate to introduce new issues arising from previous speakers' topics, nor did they exhibit any inhibition in discussing issues. They did not appear reluctant to address any topic, success, or failure.

While this process was focused on Canadian policing issues with Canadian police leaders, the issue of technology and policing is an international one. In 2017, the U.S. National Institute of Justice sponsored a report that was co-authored by the Police Executive Research Forum. That report concluded that

as a whole, our findings demonstrate that law enforcement technology adoption is often ad hoc and not based on longer-term planning. The tendency to purchase technology without a clear, strategic plan can result in limited integration within the agency and a failure to recognize the primary or secondary benefits of the technology. These factors can lead to disillusionment and a lack of continuation funding for maintaining or updating particular types of technology. (Strom et al., 2017, pp. 2–3)

Those findings were reflected in the opinions, comments and insights of this discussion group.

### Strategic Alignment

The issue of technology alignment with the organizational strategy and goals came up early and frequently in the discussion, and, according to the participant group, this was the single most important issue determining success in technology acquisition and implementation. At the same time, the participants acknowledged that this was also the most challenging element of technology, with a prevalent perception among the participants that it was frequently the technology “tail” that was wagging the operational “dog”; in other words, organizational strategies were driven by available technology.

While participants acknowledged that their Information Technology (IT) operations had developed an IT strategy that was reflective of the IT needs of the organization, they felt that there was a need for a technology strategy at the command level to address the operational technology needs of the organization, and that the acquisition of technology needed to be aligned with the organizational goals, mission, and strategy.

This issue is neither new nor peculiar to Canadian police services. The 2017 National Institute of Justice report found that

in general, across U.S. [law enforcement agencies], a strong association between policing strategy and technology uses was not found. In other words, at a national level, agencies are not making decisions to acquire technology based on dominant policing philosophies or the activities they prioritize. Instead, agencies appear to adopt technology ad hoc in response to a constellation of factors that includes executive staff decisions, perceived needs, community demands, and available funding. (Strom et al., 2017, p. 1)

The report concluded that “as the rate of technology adoption accelerates, it becomes increasingly important for police agencies to consider how they select and implement technology and what strategic objectives these technologies will help them achieve” (Strom et al., 2017, pp. 2–3).

The discussion group also identified the misalignment of applications with expectations at this stage of technology acquisition, with one of the participants acknowledging that the organization had used data that had been collected for a different purpose than the application intended, and, as a result, the analysis results were inconsistent with the reality that the service was experiencing.

This challenge was reinforced by previous research undertaken by Rogers and Scally in which they echoed Strom, stating that

a further problem for the introduction of technologies into the police organisation is a tendency to attempt to fit new systems into existing structures instead of developing technology structures to support new and innovative methods of police work. This means that the police use the new technology in ‘traditional ways’ rather than using it for its intended or any enlightened purpose. (Rogers & Scally, 2017)

### Managing Expectations

Discussion group participants also recognized that, while there are many stakeholders in a technology project, there is a need to both understand and “level set” or manage the expectations of the various stakeholders, which may be drastically misaligned. The role of the organizational leadership is to ensure that there is alignment among the various stakeholders to avoid projects where “agencies may implement and use technology without having sound evidence about its efficacy” (Strom et al., 2017, pp. 4–14).

### Defining Success

Prior to the decision to acquire a technology or a service or to commence a technology project, as the discussion group participants noted, there is a need to both understand related organizational challenges and articulate the specific problem the technical solution was intended to solve or the opportunity the technology expected to address. They also acknowledged that police leaders should be able to articulate a compelling vision of what the operating environment would be like following the successful implementation of the technology. Participants also identified the need to establish success measures and how technology projects will be reported on prior to the start of a technology project. Perhaps most important to the group was the question of how the technology will positively impact the community that is being served to avoid the U.S. experience in which “results from site data suggest that technology is often implemented without a clear plan to measure the technology’s success or impact” (Strom et al., 2017, pp. 3–4).

### Acknowledging Technology Debt (Legacy Systems and Infrastructure)

Discussion participants acknowledged that they found they were frequently constrained in their technology acquisition by either their legacy infrastructure or the technology cooperative in which they participated. While they recognized that it was frequently necessary to continue to invest in legacy infrastructure, they also advocated for chief executives to be mindful of the rationale for continued investment.

### Customization and Configuration

The discussion group participants agreed that technology customization for their respective environments was an ongoing challenge. They found that long delays in customization resulted in serious lag time for project completion, or that proposed technology solutions did not fit with their environments. Equally, for those services in technology cooperatives, they found that limitations to configuration left them searching for alternative technological solutions when a solution existed that they were unable to implement due to constraints within the cooperative.

### Appropriate Technology Resources

While having technically competent resources to undertake a technology project was considered essential, the discussion participants identified the need to ensure that a senior position in the organization was responsible for the security of the organization’s information. The cyber environment has evolved so drastically that specialized resources are not always available within each service. The creation of a chief information security officer (CISO) position working at the command level of the



police service was identified as a best practice endeavour worthy of replication. It was identified as being much more than a job title and required a knowledgeable and skilled practitioner who could advise the command team on decisions around technology. Equally, the position is needed to advise the executive management on other aspects of information and data security and privacy, including but not limited to risks surrounding physical-plant security, external access to data, data sharing, and legal issues connected with the data and systems. This was a skill set that participants acknowledged to be rare across Canadian police services, while also insisting on the growing need for these skills. Additionally, given the interconnection of police services, an individual service must not be seen as a “weak link.”

## Protecting Information

The group discussion on the emerging role of the CISO within police services gave rise to the growing awareness that community and officer safety is dependent on the timely sharing of information. “Information is the lifeblood of policing [and] therefore we must make the most of the masses of data made available to us enabling intelligence-led preventative policing and investigation, while continuing to meet citizen expectations regarding how we handle their data” (National Police Technology Council, 2020, p. 2).

To be successful and maintain the trust of partners and the community they serve, police services must protect their information against ever-increasing cyber threats. The growing attack surface, mobile environment, and maturing attacker capabilities greatly increase the threats facing a police service. In the same way that police services prepare for a broad spectrum of threats that they face in their policing duties, they must prepare for the potential of cyber incidents. At a minimum, a police service should:

- understand the cyber threats they are facing;
- use a risk-based approach to assess the effectiveness of their cyber program;
- communicate the cyber program to command staff and board; and
- integrate cyber in all new Information Management (IM)/IT initiatives.

This also requires the police service executive leadership to have a basic level of knowledge of the challenges facing their IT unit, and the threats/risks to the service from cyber attacks. This level of understanding has a direct impact on the service’s ability to align technology initiatives to policing outcomes by ensuring that the cyber risks are also evaluated. To effectively do this, the service must embrace an approach that continuously manages risk to their information assets. It is recommended that they embrace a methodology to “plan-build-run” for their cyber program (Fig. 1).

The complexity of the environment in which we operate is increasing daily. The police service must be resilient and open to new methods of operation. As the reliance on third-party providers (cloud-based solutions, software as a service [SaaS], solution providers) increases and resources are constrained, organizations are looking for innovative ways to close the seemingly inevitable skills gap.

Only by measuring program effectiveness, understanding the threats and implementing a programmatic way forward can a police service responsibly manage and protect its information assets.

## Innovation and Technology

The discussion among these former police leaders inevitably led to a discussion of innovation and technology, and the rationale for both. It is important to define the distinction between these two areas, as in today’s environment there is frequently confusion and overlap between them, where innovation is perceived to involve technology and technology is perceived to be innovative.

Several authors helped guide the discussions on innovation, and we shall draw upon two prominent authors in this arena who provide that “innovation [is] a process which brings some new method into an organization” (Green & King, 2000, p. 305) or innovation is “an idea, practice or object that is perceived as new by the individual or other unit of adoption” (Rogers, 2003, p. 12).

Green and King (2000) group innovation into four principal categories:

- Radical innovations require massive restructuring or changes in the organization.
- Administrative innovations change the management of the organization.
- Technical innovations change the hardware used to produce a service or product.
- Program innovations require new units or operations to meet an organizational goal.

While other authors have identified the need for innovation to be “best in the field,” neither Rogers nor Green and King required a concept, practice, or idea to necessarily improve an existing practice or process; rather it simply needed to be new to meet the criteria of being innovative. This underscores the view of the discussion group, which emphasized the need to understand the problem that technology was supposed to solve, and the test that new technology needed to help the community being served. For today’s police leaders, it is important to evaluate new technology opportunities against these criteria, mindful that technology innovations may be new to the organization, but they may not necessarily be an improvement over existing practices.



**FIGURE 1** “Plan-build-run.” This approach ensures continuous management of risk to information assets, allowing technology initiatives to align with policing outcomes.

### Issues that Were Raised in U.S.-Centric Discussions

It is also worth examining issues that have been identified in other literature, research, and reviews of this topic, that were absent from this discussion.

The most significant of those pertained to technology adoption. In studies focused on the United States, the question of organizational adoption was addressed. This included not only the likelihood of personnel using the new technology, but also the issue of how to incentivize personnel to use it. "Overall, a novel finding from this work is that reducing barriers that prevent effective and efficient adoption seems to be one of the strongest mechanisms for improving police buy-in" (Egnoto et al., 2017, p. 314). Further, Egnoto found in his study, which examined the use of personal radiation detectors, that:

[a]dditional findings from this work are how effective incentives need to focus on streamlining devices into the officers' lives. Unlike numerous other diffusion pieces which emphasize visibility or other forms of compensation, this investigation emphasizes ease of use not only to accomplish the designated task but a desire among officers for ease of use for new technologies to go beyond their primary purpose and make other existing tasks more manageable. This may imply a saturation point of technology adoption among police officers, who are already encumbered with a multitude of technologies. Adding a new one because it is better at performing an existing task is no longer sufficient motivation, and devices need to now fit into a broader context of lifestyle contributions within officers' lives. (Egnoto et al., 2017, pp. 314–315)

Both the authors of the current study have found that technology adoption is a significant challenge within the policing environment. None of the participants identified this as a significant point when technology is being considered for implementation, nor as a noteworthy success or failure during their tenure within their respective policing services. It is the authors' opinion that the issue of technology adoption becomes significantly less imposing when the six pillars of focus are effectively addressed, especially managing key stakeholder expectations.

## DISCUSSION

How do we harness the power of digital, data and technology to better protect the communities we serve?

Based on our discussion with police leaders, there are some foundational requirements to effectively implement secure, timely, and relevant technology solutions in support of policing. Police leaders must be engaged in supporting underlying needs at the command level, which evolve into technology-driven initiatives. Police services are at a crucial point given the number of external factors they must manage today. Our discussions raised the following key points.

### Strategic Alignment

Strategic alignment was the most significant topic among this discussion group, and it is a continuous theme in

literature on this topic. The overarching concern from all participants was the need to ensure that technology acquisition was aligned with an organization's vision. The Strom research in this area from 2017 found that this was consistently lacking in police agencies across the United States. Police services must deal with their existing or legacy environment, the migration to new environments (such as moving from on-premises information storage to cloud storage) as well as the move to new capabilities. It was a foundational point to the discussion that any technology initiative must be aligned with the needs of the service and their partners, and that technology should not be deployed without demonstrated value to policing. Finally, a technology plan (strategic) must be aligned with the service and have full visibility and the support of the command staff, and the technology plan must include an assessment of information assets and outline the protection of information.

### Public Expectations—Ethical Considerations

A major concern for the discussion participants was the ethical application of technology, and the need to not only "test" new technology against community expectations, but to determine whether the technology being acquired poses any ethical dilemmas for the police service or its members. The technology acquisition process needs to include an examination of community expectations and determine whether the technology's capability would be considered appropriate by the community. The inclusion of this process is a significant shift from the Strom research, which did not include an evaluation of ethical considerations related to the acquisition or implementation of technology. The public has expectations on how a police service safeguards information and on the ethical use of information holdings. The service must be willing to discuss its ability to risk-manage the integrity of its information holdings and how it is using advanced analytics/artificial intelligence to carry out its mission in an ethical way.

### Command Staff Engagement

The participants also emphasized the role of the chief and the command team in ensuring that new technology will perform a needed function. They identified that it was the role of the command team to ask questions about the validity of the technology and its requirement.

Do new weapons make policing safer or more effective? Will DNA testing be cost-effective for the average police agency? Can automobile vehicle locator systems be used to increase the value of police patrol? These questions, which seem so obviously central to the question of adoption of new technologies, are seldom examined in policing. (Weisburd & Neyroud, 2011, p. 7)

Command staff must commit to investing in themselves and their staff to equip members of their services with the right knowledge, skills, and tools to deal with the increasingly complex environment in which they operate. This includes ensuring not only that adequate technology resources are available, but that those resources align with the technology needs and technology projects of the Service.

## CONCLUSION

The authors endeavoured to engage Canadian police leaders in a discussion on technology to provide thoughts, insight, and guidance to the police leaders of tomorrow. We are hopeful that this analysis will provide some areas of focus for police executives, and even a checklist for organizations to undertake when new technology projects are being considered. We are hopeful that this work assists police services and the communities they serve in the effective acquisition and use of new technology.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

## AUTHOR AFFILIATIONS

\* Department of criminology, Ontario Tech University, Oshawa, ON, Canada; † Optiv Security, Denver, CO, USA.

## REFERENCES

- Egnoto, M., Ackerman, G., Iles, I., Liu, B. F., & Behlendorf, B. (2017). What motivates the blue line for technology adoption? Insights from a police expert panel and survey. *Policing: An International Journal*, 40(2), 306–320. doi:10.1108/PIJPSM-03-2016-0031
- Green, B., & King, W. R. (2000). Measuring police innovation: issues and measurement innovation. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management* 23(3), 303–317. doi:10.1108/13639510010342994
- National Police Technology Council. (2020). *National Digital Policing Strategy 2020-2030*. National Police Chiefs Council, Association of Police and Crime Commissioners. London.
- Rogers, C., & Scally, E. J. (2017). Police use of technology: insights from the literature. *International Journal of Emergency Services*, 7(2). doi:10.1108/IJES-03-2017-0012
- Rogers, E. (2003). *Diffusion of innovation* (5th ed.). Free Press.
- Strom, K., RTI International, & Police Executive Research Forum. (2017). *Research on the Impact of Technology on Policing Strategy in the 21st Century*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice.
- Weisburd, D., & Neyroud, P. (2011). *New Perspectives in Policing Police Science : Toward a new paradigm*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice.



# *Our Shared Future: Windows into Canada's Reconciliation Journey* — A Review

Peter Shipley\*

## ABSTRACT

The challenges and complexity of the reconciliation process are still not well understood by a large number of non-Indigenous people in Canada. As a nation, we are attempting to grasp the intricacy of how to unravel and atone for the damage that has been done in establishing and managing the more than 130 residential schools in Canada. This not only impacted more than 150,000 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children but destroyed generations of families that are still and will continue to be impacted for years to come. The official apology from Prime Minister Stephen Harper on June 11, 2008, to all Indigenous people in Canada for the atrocities of the Indian Residential Schools was the start of a very long and painful continuous journey. The 94 calls to action released in 2015 by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission provide a road map to a complex recovery process for Indigenous people across the country. In January 2018, Health Canada held a national panel discussion with Indigenous leaders and experts on the question "Reconciliation—What Does it Mean?" One of the main themes of reconciliation revolves around education, and, in order to stay focused, we must continue to educate Canadians, including police leaders and new recruits, as we move through the meandering path of reconciliation. The book *Our Shared Future* provides an outstanding in-depth look through the windows into a number of individual perspectives on the reconciliation journey.

**Key Words** Calls to action; trauma-informed education; leadership.

It was an incredible honour to be asked by the *Journal of Community Safety and Well-Being's* Editor in Chief, Norm Taylor, to review a newly published book edited by Laura Reimer and Robert Christmas entitled *Our Shared Future: Windows into Canada's Reconciliation Journey*. The enclosed comments are mine alone and do not necessarily represent those of the Ontario Provincial Police. The contributors to this work include academic leaders, practitioners, community advocates, and leaders of change. All of the learned colleagues and contributors have added significantly to my understanding of the complexity and challenge of reconciliation: David Barnard, Peter Bisson, Ronald Evans, Joseph Garcea, Dale McFee, Mikayla Leanne Plett, Brian Rice, Annette Trimbee, Paul Vogt, and Christa Yeates. This book takes the reader quite literally through a journey of exploration from the Two-Row wampum on the cover (courtesy of the artistry of Plett) and historical reference points into a number of personal and professional viewpoints on reconciliation. As Norm noted, the patience and tolerance, among the most aggrieved, for both the settler/colonial and the "whiteness" orientations of

our institutional frameworks in Canada is at a critical all-time low. We need to continue to inform, educate, and act. This book does just that—informs, educates, and demonstrates some of the actions that have been taken and many steps that still need to occur.

The leadership of Dr. Bob Christmas and Dr. Laura Reimer is to be commended, as they have not only put together a list of outstanding and knowledgeable expert contributors, but weaved a path for the reader to explore difficult and incredibly complex subjects and pivot points when reconciliation is discussed. In addition to insights in their individual core subject area specialties, they put together great concluding summaries for each of the contributors' chapters. In truth, if I attempted to compile a review of each of the authors' contributions, it would not be within my capabilities to duplicate the comprehensive, yet succinct summaries crafted (so you will have to purchase the book). There were a number of areas which resonated with me, and I would like to share some experiences directly related to select chapters in the book.

**Correspondence to:** Peter D. Shipley, Chief Instructor of the Strategic Research and Planning Unit and the Leadership and Design Unit, Ontario Provincial Police Academy, Orillia, ON L3V 7V3. **E-mail:** peter.shipley@opp.ca

**To cite:** Shipley, P. (2020). *Our Shared Future: Windows into Canada's Reconciliation Journey* — A Review. *Journal of Community Safety and Well-Being*, 5(4), 178-182. <https://doi.org/10.35502/jcswb.165>

© Author(s) 2020. Open Access. This work is distributed under the Creative Commons BY-NC-ND license. For commercial re-use, please contact sales@sgpublishing.ca.

**SG PUBLISHING** Published by SG Publishing Inc. **CSKA** Official publication of the Community Safety Knowledge Alliance.



## The Reviewer's Perspective as a Police Educator

As a non-Indigenous person, my perspective has been influenced not only by my personal history but also by my position as a senior civilian police educator within the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) for over 30 years. I recently had the honour to contribute some personal stories in the soon-to-be-published *The Seven Grandfather Teachings*, by George Couhie, as well as facilitating learning on the "Walking the Path" Instructor development program. I have served in a number of roles, including physical training and defensive tactics instructor, instructional designer, Chief Instructor, and police education leader. I bring a unique perspective, as I have been provided with great opportunities in the field of policing over the years within the institutional framework that has deprived many of similar opportunities. Norm asked me the question that must be the operative question surrounding any book on reconciliation in Canada, "will Canadian policing be able to absorb, comprehend, and act upon the book's observations and directions?" (N. Taylor, personal communication, August 11, 2020). With this short discussion, I will attempt to provide an answer to address that challenge.

The foreword, by Dr. David Barnard (Spirit name Standing White Bear), opens the journey by providing the context of the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in areas such as health, economic opportunities, housing outcomes, etc., which especially today is totally unacceptable. He discusses the areas that are still out of balance. The first four chapters set the context, origins, and history of the reconciliation journey. Loretta Ross (LLB), in chapter seven, helps the reader to understand the main principles of treaties between Indigenous peoples and the Crown. The treaty of Niagara in 1764 and the creation of the wampum belt was intended to record a means to solidify a mutual understanding of the "shared responsibility" for recognizing the importance of the relationship between nations. Unfortunately, we have drifted far from that initial mutual understanding. In the beginning chapter, "Our Long Road," Dr. Reimer describes the history of Indigenous relations in Canada and the Acts and Treaties that were initially engaged in by the government with Indigenous peoples. Although there were previous treaties and proclamations, the Indian Act of 1867 entrenched the stripping of Indigenous rights, culture, and identity more formally. This brief but very informative chapter ends with the delivery of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015; TRC) as well as the 94 calls to action.

In chapter two, Dr. Vogt does a great job of transitioning the discussion to Leadership, Reconciliation, and Friendship. Of the 94 calls to action, 28 involve education reform. He also notes Murray Sinclair's (Chair of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission Report) comment that "it is precisely because education was the primary tool of oppression of Aboriginal people, and miseducation of all Canadians, that we have concluded that education holds the key to reconciliation" (Sinclair, 2014, p. 7). As a career-long police educator, I of course would agree with that keen observation, but I also recognize the importance of the other themes of historical consciousness and identity. As education is a key theme particularly for police, new recruits receive Indigenous training both at the Ontario Police College and the Provincial Police Academy, which is delivered by our Indigenous Policing Bureau. As an employee of the OPP, I have completed the five-day

Indigenous Awareness Training course (originally named First Nations Awareness course), a required course for every instructor and all OPP officers. Completing this course was transformational for me (and others as well): I learned about the treaties, some of the traditions and ceremonies of Canada's first peoples, but also of the horror of children being ripped from their parents' arms to be placed in Residential Schools. That this was part of the government's policy is something that is unfathomable to any parent.

## An Uneven Journey to Reconciliation

Dr. Rice leads us on a walk in the footsteps of a peacemaker. This very personal odyssey of reconciliation highlights that we all experience our journey differently. Indeed, Reimer and Christmas (2020) point out that not everyone is on this journey: some deny it, some are just awakening, others struggle in silence, and still others are unsure of their role. Although I am a non-Indigenous person, one of my first exposures to the institutional injustice and inequity experienced by Indigenous peoples goes back more than thirty years. In 1990, in my first few months of working for the OPP, I was honoured with a Commissioner's Commendation for life saving when I provided first aid to a First Nations police recruit who was attending OPP training and suffered a medical emergency. The OPP had a longstanding positive relationship with Indigenous communities. Indigenous band councils identified recruits to be trained at the Ontario Police College (OPC) and sent their recruits to the OPP Academy to help them prepare by attending our pre-OPC training. During this time, it was customary for OPP recruits to have a full background check, including medical screening, which occurred over a period of several months (and even years in some cases) before their training started. This particular First Nations recruit had only recently been hired, days prior to the start of the class, and had been directed to report to the Academy for training with very little screening, including no medical or physical fitness requirements that any staff were made aware of. This put this recruit at risk, staff being unaware of any potential health risks.

I can say that the majority of instructors recognized that there were a number of inequities between OPP recruits and First Nations recruits and attempted to address some of these issues and provide support to the best of their ability. I have seen the changes and improvements first-hand. Our Indigenous Policing Bureau provides a number of supports and works collaboratively with our First Nations policing partners in OPP-administered areas as well as with "stand-alone" Indigenous Police partners. The selection standards and training have improved significantly over the years, and all recruits in Ontario have to meet the same provincial standard. Although I have not been involved in recruit training for some time I recall consistently outstanding Indigenous recruit officers from Six Nations, Rama, Treaty Three, NAPS, and Akwesasne Mohawk agencies to name a few.

The divide in access to medical and social support resources between some Indigenous and non-Indigenous recruits prior to attending the Academy was quite evident. As a result of continued efforts, current Indigenous police screening and preparation of candidates is vastly different from those earlier conditions. However, we know that gaps in access to medical and social supports, particularly in the

northern parts of Ontario, are still a major issue today. Leaders such as United Chiefs and Councils of Mnidoo Mnisging (UCCM) Police Chief Faron Whiteye recently indicated that it's about getting control over their own budgets: "It's not just about equal treatment, but equitable treatment as well" (White, 2020, para. 13). Self-governance with traditional colonial constraints, without consultation and collaborative efforts, is doomed to failure. Chief Roland Morrison of the Nishnawbe Aski Police Service (which is the largest First Nations Police Service in Canada and the second largest in North America), however, has witnessed the progress over the years: "We are seeing a lot of progress in the last 5 to 7 years, and our communities are seeing that. It's coming, it's just not as fast as we would like it" (para. 23). It is encouraging that change is occurring, but the multisectoral involvement required in the reconciliation process means that this will be a long, slow journey.

As a lifelong educator I have the privilege of educating both Indigenous and non-Indigenous law enforcement officers and civilians. In chapter five, Yeates and Reimer (2020) address "Reconciliation and Indigenous Adult Learners: Reshaping a Trauma Informed Lens." This chapter resonated significantly with me. Most police educators are not well versed in trauma-informed education, much less trauma-informed strategies to deal with issues, including vicarious trauma. We address this in our criminal investigation courses, such as Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Investigator courses, but all instructional staff need to have this training as well. Many universities and colleges, including the one where I work as a part-time professor, provide similar supports and strategies to assist educators.

Yeates and Reimer (2020) also note that "It is not uncommon for the adult students to be absent for weeks at a time... Often they do not telephone to explain or say they are going to miss a few days or several months" (p. 99). In the police training context, attention to detail, commitment to public service, studying, showing up on time, documentation, and accountability are all important ingredients for achieving success. During an early morning physical training session in the early 1990s, one of our First Nations recruits did not show up to class. Staff members checked his room, but he wasn't there. Some of his clothes appeared to be missing, but he still had personal items in his room. We called the detachment area (which was several hours away) and band council to inform them about his disappearance. Since he had no phone at his residence, officers and band members went to his home, which was accessible only by snowmobile (or by ATV in the summer). During the wellness check, there he was. When confronted about disappearing without notifying anyone, he was relaxed and quite frank about it: "Well, I had to chop wood for my family cuz they ran out. I needed to come home and chop some more wood so they don't freeze during the winter while I'm away doing police training" (Personal Communication, Dave Woodhouse, n.d.). Firstly, we were all relieved that he was fine, but then the reality sank in... how privileged we are and the fact that most of us don't have a clue about the hardships experienced by many in marginalized communities like our Indigenous peoples. It is stories like these that need to be continually told until changes occur. I was pleased that our Academy leadership and Instructors continually discussed ways in which our

Indigenous recruits could be supported to ease their transition into the role of peacemaker. Being empathetic and having an understanding of Maslow's hierarchy of needs really put things in perspective and I was very proud of the fact that our Academy leadership recognized this and supported Indigenous recruits.

### Reconciliation through Shared Learning

In chapter six, "Reconciliation through Education," Dr. Trimbee sparked one of my most poignant moments as a facilitator. Trimbee (2020) explains that "a central distinction between *reconciliation* *indigenization* and *decolonization* *indigenization* relates to where power is situated in decision-making processes" (p. 124). Although the focus is on higher education and student access, I would like to share a police education and training example at the grassroots level. In a previous role as an Instructor at the OPP Academy I was supervising, assessing, and debriefing simulations. The simulation scenario was a traffic stop for speeding where, once the officer (recruit) stops the vehicle and engages the driver, the driver accuses the officer (recruit) of racially profiling them. Part of the information the officer has is that the driver has been stopped for speeding on two previous occasions over the last couple of weeks. One of the expectations is that the officer remains professional and courteous throughout the traffic stop despite the accusations and the attempt by the driver to escalate the situation. Recruits have to demonstrate their ability to de-escalate a volatile situation, and this is one of many that they are engaged in during their training. The primary OPP officer (recruit) for this scenario was Indigenous. The officer (recruit) did a fine job of de-escalating the situation with the driver, took his driver's license, ownership, and insurance back to the police cruiser to run the vehicle and the driver checks.

As the debriefer, I asked him what was he going to do, and he said, "he's getting a speeding ticket" and wrote up the ticket. On the way back to the offender's vehicle, the officer (recruit) stopped directly halfway between the two vehicles (yes, we debriefed officer safety issues), turned to me, and said "I've changed my mind. I am giving him a break and letting him off with a warning only, because I know what it's like being discriminated against" (personal communication, recruit, n.d.). He continued on to the driver and communicated to him that he understood the idea of being profiled and discriminated against. It was a poignant moment, because during the debriefing with all the recruits, we had an incredibly open, honest dialogue regarding racism, profiling, using discretion (use, misuse, and abuse), implicit bias, and critical decision making. If we ask students to trust us with their opinions and perceptions, we have to be able to deal with the outcomes of those requests as well. In chapter three, Rice (2020) points out that "we all bring our biases into our conversations; however, it is only through dialogue with one another that we can truly find reconciliation" (p. 47).

Dr. Garcea discusses the issues related to reconciliation and satellite urban reserves in Canada, while Dr. Evans outlines the critical aspects related to Call to Action #92 in "Business and Reconciliation" in chapters eight and nine, respectively. While some organizations may establish Indigenous programs or positions for political capital or to restore positive relationships, some corporations recognize that it's

more than just doing the right thing. As Evans (2020) points out, “having the private sector engage in the reconciliation efforts identified by the TRC is simply good for business” (p. 190). It is encouraging to see some of these changes occurring in large corporations in the banking industry, which is also part of the calls to action (TD Bank Group, 2015). In fact recently, Krystal Abotossaway, who is Anishinaabekwe (personal communication, October 3, 2020) announced she will move into the exciting position of Senior Manager, Diversity and Inclusion— Indigenous markets, for TD Bank effective October 4, 2020. TD Bank Group (2015) is an example of organizations taking a proactive leadership role to address call to action #92.

### Systemic Reform: Better Ways are Possible

In chapter ten, Chief McFee and Dr. Christmas discuss the importance of building authentic trust in the reconciliation and the evolution of Canadian policing. The challenge, as noted by McFee and Christmas, is that police are infused in some of Canada’s most inflamed conflicts. In fact, it is well accepted that turning to local and provincial police has become the default when facing a number of social and judicial issues. McFee and Christmas (2020) discuss the four pillars of the Scotland model used to assist police agencies in that jurisdiction in dealing with complex community safety issues. These four pillars focus on (1) local solutions, (2) data-driven indicators, (3) partnerships, and (4) collective outcomes (p. 206). These are not new to policing in Canada, but the section provides a renewed look at how they can impact police service delivery by putting the focus on individuals and connecting them with the services they may need. These are particularly important, compelling arguments where Indigenous policing issues are discussed.

Police officers have to deal with a society that has a lack of mental health and social supports for vulnerable populations, such as Indigenous people, who are significantly over represented in our judicial system. The lessons learned from Prince Albert and Edmonton and many agencies across the country point to the need for a multisectoral, collaborative approach to dealing with social determinants of crime and the need for judicial reform. Any agency trying to deal with major community and social issues related to crime on its own, I would say, is not just ludicrous but verging on negligent. Police leaders need to recognize when it’s time to consolidate and engage external resources and expertise because they don’t have the ability to independently deal with complex social issues.

### Embracing Our Shared Future

The challenge of change and reconciliation is complex. The title of this book quite frankly outlines the path ahead simply: “Our Shared Future.” The path of reconciliation continues to be incredibly intricate, and only a committed, collective, collaborative approach across multi-sectored systems will move our nation forward. While great strides have been made by police, we need leaders who understand the urgency of continuing to support changes through the calls to action and beyond. Although implementation of changes can occur and is occurring in both the police training and education areas at provincial and national levels, the major roadblock continues to be institutional legal structures such as the Indian Act, which must be dismantled.

Further to this, Bisson (2020) noted that the process of reconciliation is non-linear. The path to true reconciliation will include processes that will “stall, regress, progress slowly, stumble forward accidentally, or move forward with some intent” (p. 76). Each police agency will move forward towards reconciliation impacted by a number of those factors, and our agency is no different. The OPP has a longstanding history of collaboratively nurturing positive relationships with Indigenous communities, but it hasn’t been all positive and it would be naïve and wrong to suggest it has. Historically, we have progressed and we have improved programs and initiatives, but in some instances, we have also stalled and regressed. However, I am proud that we are continually moving forward, being accountable, and improving our service to Indigenous communities. In 2007, the Ipperwash Inquiry Report was made public; that same year, the OPP established our First Nations Policing Bureau (now Indigenous Policing Bureau) to improve our capacity to work with our community partners to mitigate, manage, and resolve conflict. I am extremely proud of the strides and contributions our Indigenous Policing Bureau continues to make provincially and nationally. The fact that my wife works in that Bureau is just a bonus (no bias!). In fact, a previous Director of that Bureau became the current Director of our Academy, Superintendent Sue Decock, when, in 2014, she became the first female Academy Director in OPP history who is also a proud Ojibway and a band member of the Alderville First Nation.

The path to reconciliation is challenged when our political leaders, such as Quebec Premier Francois Legault, acknowledge that there is racism against Indigenous people but repeatedly maintain that systemic racism doesn’t exist in the province. When we discuss our shared future, I see tremendous opportunity for continued growth and change in the actions of our youth. The recognition of the need to change is part of the education process that is discussed throughout *Our Shared Future*. I am encouraged to see that in a small Cape Breton high school, the 900 Riverview Rural High School students voted to change their sports teams’ names because they were disrespectful to Indigenous peoples. After almost 50 years, the school is now rebranding itself. School officials said the name “Redmen” was initially chosen because red was one of the school’s colours, but the student body forced the issue and changed the name to “Ravens.” Allison Bernard, of Eskasoni First Nation, who works with the Mi’kmaq Rights Initiative, attended Riverview and played hockey for the school in the 1980s. Bernard noted, “Students are more compassionate these days, the younger generation...they know, through social media and education that Aboriginal Canadians have gone through a lot. And they understand our plight” (Martin, 2020, para 11).

As Vogt (2020) pointed out, reconciliation will not occur with one Act of Parliament or one Treaty Agreement being fully fulfilled; it will only occur over an extended period of time. Recognizing that “reconciliation can take many forms [and] comes down to individual acts and personal relationships, regardless of how big or small our sphere of influence is” (Reimer & Christmas, 2020, p. 232), is an important final consideration. This is a valuable resource: its contents should be part of police Indigenous Awareness Training programs, and I would encourage all police leaders and educators to read *Our Shared Future*, as education is a critical pathway to

reconciliation. Reconciliation is not a simple, linear process. I have only touched on a couple of the areas of this book, and this discussion does not do justice to all the wonderful information I have not been able to address. The contributors to this incredibly valuable resource include evidence of forward momentum on the reconciliation path, but clearly there still is a lot of heavy lifting that needs to be collectively shared.

To conclude where we began, Norm posed the question, “Will Canadian policing be able to absorb, comprehend, and act upon the book’s observations and directions?” With a continued emphasis on fulfilling the Calls to Action, the answer is “yes.” Miigwetch.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge all of those individuals, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, who are committed to working together collaboratively in a respectful manner to right the wrongs of our past despite the continued challenge of doing so.

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES

The author’s wife works in the Ontario Provincial Police Indigenous Policing Bureau. There are no other known conflict of interest.

#### AUTHOR AFFILIATIONS

\* Chief Instructor of both the Strategic Research & Planning and the Leadership & Design Units at the Ontario Provincial Police Academy, Orillia, ON; Past Chair of the State and Provincial Police Academy Directors section of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, Alexandria, VA; Part-time Professor at Georgian College, Barrie, ON; Past President of the Canadian Association of Police Educators.

#### REFERENCES

- Bisson, P. (2020). Beyond apology: Decolonizing the Jesuits. In L. E. Reimer & R. Christmas (Eds.), *Our shared future: Windows into Canada’s reconciliation journey* (pp. 67–91). Rowan and Littlefield.
- Evans, R. G. (2020). Business and reconciliation. Call to action 92. In L. E. Reimer & R. Christmas (Eds.), *Our Shared Future: Windows into Canada’s Reconciliation Journey* (pp. 189–204). Rowan and Littlefield.
- Martin, W. (2020, Sept. 24). Cape Breton high school changes team name to be more culturally respectful. *CBC News*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/cape-breton-high-school-rebrands-team-name-1.5735781>
- McFee, D., & Christmas, R. (2020). Reconciliation and the evolution of Canadian policing. In L. E. Reimer & R. Christmas (Eds.), *Our Shared Future: Windows into Canada’s reconciliation journey* (pp. 205–228). Rowan and Littlefield.
- Reimer, L. E., & Christmas, R. (Eds.) (2020). *Our Shared Future: Windows into Canada’s reconciliation journey*. Rowan and Littlefield.
- Rice, B. (2020). Walking in the footsteps of the peacemaker. A Kenienke: Haka personal odyssey of reconciliation. In L. E. Reimer & R. Christmas (Eds.), *Our Shared Future: Windows into Canada’s reconciliation journey* (pp. 47–66). Rowan and Littlefield.
- Sinclair, M. (2014, December). Education: Cause and solution. *The Manitoba Teacher: News Magazine of the Manitoba Teachers’ Society*, 93(6), 6–10.
- TD Bank Group. (2015). TD and Indigenous Communities in Canada Report. Retrieved from [https://www.td.com/document/PDF/corporateresponsibility/td\\_cr\\_aboriginal\\_report\\_en.pdf](https://www.td.com/document/PDF/corporateresponsibility/td_cr_aboriginal_report_en.pdf)
- Trimbee, A. (2020). Reconciliation through education. In L. E. Reimer & R. Christmas (Eds.), *Our Shared Future: Windows into Canada’s reconciliation journey* (pp. 121–139). Rowan and Littlefield.
- Vogt, P. E. (2020). Leadership, reconciliation and friendship. In L. E. Reimer & R. Christmas (Eds.), *Our Shared Future: Windows into Canada’s reconciliation journey* (pp. 35–46). Rowan and Littlefield.
- White, E. (2020, September 30). Treat us the same way you would treat others—First Nations police in the North seek fair funding. *CBC News Sudbury*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/first-nations-policing-funding-northern-ontario-1.5743149>
- Yeates, C., & Reimer, L. E. (2020). Reconciliation and indigenous adult learners: Reshaping education through a trauma informed lens. In L. E. Reimer & R. Christmas (Eds.), *Our Shared Future: Windows into Canada’s reconciliation journey* (pp. 93–119). Rowan and Littlefield.





## Thank you to our reviewers

The Editors of the *Journal of Community Safety and Well-Being* (CSWB) would like to publicly acknowledge and thank the peer reviewers listed below who have reviewed manuscripts for the Journal from December 1, 2019 to November 30, 2020. These experts volunteer their valuable time and expertise to provide thoughtful comments, recommendations and insightful guidance to our authors. Without their efforts, the quality of the Journal could not be sustained. We express our appreciation and gratitude to all reviewers for their important contribution to the articles published in the *Journal of CSWB*.

### C

Carrington, Peter  
Christmas, Robert  
Cotton, Walter Bradley

### D

Demers, Simon

### F

Field, Cameron D

### J

Jardine, Melissa  
Jones, Daniel J

### K

Kutnowski, Moish

### P

Pegg, Matthew  
Pendlebury, Debbie

### S

Sapers, Howard  
Slater, Guy  
Swarney, Matthew

To cite: Journal of CSWB Editorial Office. (2020). Thank you to our reviewers. *Journal of Community Safety and Well-Being*, 5(4), 183.  
<https://doi.org/10.35502/jcswb.175>

© Author(s) 2020. Open Access. This work is distributed under the Creative Commons BY-NC-ND license. For commercial re-use, please contact [sales@sgpublishing.ca](mailto:sales@sgpublishing.ca).

SG PUBLISHING Published by SG Publishing Inc. **CSKA** Official publication of the Community Safety Knowledge Alliance.