DE-ESCALATION: STRATEGIES, IMPACTS, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE

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THE TEMPE DE-ESCALATION PROJECT

DESIGN

DELIVER

EVALUATE
DESIGN: CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT
SEND OFFICERS TO DE-ESCALATION TRAINING

Total number of trainings attended: 22

- Online: 5
- Local: 4
- National: 13
  - Includes visits to other agencies
THE TEMPE TOP DE-ESCALATORS

ASU and the 14 Top De-escalators

- 44 ride-alongs
- 166 interactions observed
- 107 variables recorded per citizen interaction

One-on-one interviews

Focus groups
OFFICER SURVEY

Fall 2018 (n=96)

Summer 2019 (n=113)

Patrol Briefings

- Perceptions of de-escalation training
- What tactics do you use?
- How often do you use them?
DELIVER: THE TRAINING
THE TEMPE DEFINITION OF DE-ESCALATION

**Officer Safety as a Centerpiece**

De-escalation: Techniques used to gain compliance with the goal of reducing violence or aggression. This can be accomplished through application of the PATROL model, communication, the use of appropriate force, and/or other reasonable techniques.

**Note:** Officers should not compromise their safety or increase the risk of physical harm to the public when applying de-escalation techniques.
THE TRAINING FRAMEWORK

- Personal lives affect work lives
- Separation of work and home life
- Understanding states of depression and stress
- Expanding your world view in order to better interact with people
- Counseling and resources to assist with home and personal issues
- Adequate sleep
- Supervisor involvement and encouragement
- Proactive rather than reactive care
- Pre-established coping mechanisms

- Identify when you are having a bad day
- Identify your limits
- Being exposed to good/bad reactions of officers and citizens
- Education on mental health of citizens
- Defensive tactics
- Confidence in the training you’ve received
- Using briefing time for review of training material
- Seeking additional skills/training
- Coping mechanisms

- Post-incident debrief
- Take time for yourself after an incident
- Culture change within the organization
- Positive reinforcement
- Mandatory rotations out of high-stress workgroups
- Peer check-in/peer support

- Relieve a colleague as needed
- Sgt. setting the tone, energy, and direction of a call
- Be aware of available resources, and how they may help to mitigate risk/tension
- Communication and tactics
FINAL TRAINING FRAMEWORK

• Defining de-escalation
• Pre-care and self-management
• Sources of stress and trauma
• Effective coping mechanisms and critical incident stress management
• Active listening
• Emotional intelligence
• Planning (including pre-planning), creativity, improvisation, and adaptability affect police work
• The PATROL model – application to scenarios
• PATROL debriefing
THE TRAINING (APRIL 2021)

• A test run, January 2020

• Series of one-day sessions, February-March 2020

• Instructors – TPD training unit, Top Ds, outside experts (ASU)

• Refresher (virtual) roll call trainings
EVALUATE: THE RESEARCH
THE EVALUATION

Squad-based randomization (100+ per group)
Comparing outcomes among officer groups
  ◦ Self-reported attitudes/behavior (survey)
  ◦ Administrative data (use of force, complaints, injuries)
  ◦ Citizen surveys
  ◦ Body-worn camera footage
    ◦ Random review
    ◦ All use of force
OFFICER PERCEPTION SURVEY

6 months before and after training (June/July 2019, 2020)

Rate importance and use of 18 different de-escalation tactics.

Post-training Differences for Trained Group

Importance - compromise

Use – compromise, maintaining officer safety, knowing when to walk away
CITIZEN PERCEPTIONS

Phone interviews of citizens who had recent encounters with a Tempe officer
• Compared perceptions – Trained v. Not Trained officer

Of 28 variables, 16 are statistically significant favoring positive training impact:
• the officer treated them fairly (2.65 vs 2.46);
• the officer was honest with them (2.65 vs 2.48);
• the officer listened carefully (2.61 vs 2.41);
• they were satisfied with how they were treated (2.56 vs 2.33);
• the officer remained neutral throughout the encounter (2.61 vs 2.43);
• the officer was patient with them (2.63 vs 2.46);
• the officer actively listened (2.57 vs 2.40);
• the officer compromised with them (2.38 vs 2.14);
• the officer showed empathy (2.47 vs 2.23);
• officer did or said things to calm them down (2.40 vs 2.10).
Randomly select 10 officers per week
  ◦ Pre-training (n=230); Post-training (n=246)

Trained officers were significantly:
  ◦ less likely to use a condescending/patronizing tone.
  ◦ more likely to attempt to build rapport with the citizen.
  ◦ less likely to fail to transfer control to another officer, if necessary.
  ◦ less likely to use charged/imposing body language.
  ◦ more likely to resolve the encounter informally.
BWC IN USE OF FORCE INCIDENTS

All- 6 months pre- and post-training (8/1/2019 - 8/30/2020)
- Pre-training (n=658); Post-training (n=320)

Citizen Injuries Post-Training (n=320)
- Not Trained - 26.2%
- Trained - 11.2%
IMPLICATIONS FOR OTHER AREAS OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

DISPATCH
- Continuity
- Citizens and Officers
- Front End Resolution

DETENTION
- Compliance
- Injury Mitigation
- Lawsuit Liability
LESSONS LEARNED

- First challenge – what does de-escalation mean to us? How is it defined?
- Teaching the material effectively
- Follow-up – policy, force review, citizen review, city-level policy
- Should be embedded throughout
  - Promotional processes
  - Across entire department – surround sound effect
- Benefits of visiting other agencies
  - What works for them? How does it translate?
Thank you!

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