

The BJA Executive Session on

Police Leadership

2013

The BJA Executive Session on Police Leadership is a multi-year endeavor started in 2010 with the goal of developing innovative thinking that would help create police leaders uniquely qualified to meet the challenges of a changing public safety landscape.

In support of an integrated approach to creating safe and viable communities across America, the project directors recruited 20+ principals from a range of disciplines. The principals, in turn, led national field teams of practitioners focused on the work of policing and the organization of the future.

To gain new insights on leadership, the *BJA Executive Session on Police Leadership* engaged police chiefs in documenting their own paths and invited leaders to participate in various audio and video forums to tell their stories and discuss the future of policing and police leadership.

Please visit our website, <http://bjaleader.org>, to learn more about this project and to access a broad array of interactive, multimedia resources.

The principals are supported in their work by a team that includes project co-directors Darrel W. Stephens and Bill Geller, project strategist Nancy McKeon, and BJA Senior Policy Advisor Steve Edwards.

Five Police Departments Building Trust and Collaboration

Innovations in Policing Clinic
Yale Law School
High Point, North Carolina

What We Learned

by
Trevor Stutz



What We Learned

High Point is one of the most successful examples of “focused deterrence” in action. In this model, police collaborate with other justice system actors and community leaders to identify those most likely to commit violent crimes and deter those offenders and potential offenders. They use targeted communications, face-to-face meetings, and, essentially, a warning system.

When effective, as in High Point, North Carolina, focused deterrence strategies prevent crime. Focused deterrence programs also increase communication amongst police officers, community members, and offenders. The result is increased police transparency, credibility and legitimacy. In particular, when police collaborate with and express trust in communities, those communities then feel empowered to self-police and aid law enforcement.

Despite High Point’s success, the focused deterrence model remains fragile. It depends on having the “right” leaders in key positions. In addition, many line officers remain unconvinced by the focused deterrence model and it is unclear if the focused deterrence strategy is replacing or simply being layered on top of *unfocused* policing—the types of daily policing tactics that have led to fractious community-police relationships in the past.

Three Things the Field Can Learn from High Point

1. *Building Community Trust & Collaboration*

- Police leaders must meet regularly with community representatives.
- Decision-makers need to be in the room, not representatives who can’t make decisions.
- Building community relations means addressing historical rifts.
- The police cannot be the “moral voice” – the community must be the morality enforcer.
- When people feel supported by police, they’re more willing to assist police.

2. *Sustaining Community Trust & Collaboration*

- Hold police officers accountable and tell the truth in the wake of police misconduct.
- Focused deterrence isn’t just community relations: there has to be a carrot and stick.
- Probation is an important hook in getting offenders to participate and heed warnings.

3. *Maintaining Departmental Buy-in for Community Trust & Collaboration*

- Police leaders should drive the community collaboration message throughout recruiting, training, and managing officers.

- Officers should remain in a positions for longer stretches of time to incentivize relationship building.
- Giving officers opportunity to weigh in and to do the work they want builds police support.
- Personal conversion stories matter; statistical evidence will not convince everyone.
- Police don't have to view themselves as social workers for this to work – it's about building trust, legitimacy, and doing "what works."

The Yale Law School Innovations in Policing Clinic is made up of Rebecca Buckwalter-Poza, Kyle Delbyck, Jamil Jivani (lead author for Milwaukee case study), Jeremy Kaplan-Lyman (lead author for Seattle case study), Jessica So, Trevor Stutz (lead author for High Point case study), Carolyn Van Zile (lead author for Charlotte-Mecklenburg case study), and Alyssa Work (lead author for Philadelphia case study).

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The principals on our team include John Crombach, Gail Christopher, Darrel Stephens and James Form

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