

RCMP



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A CALMING INFLUENCE DEFUSING TENSE SITUATIONS



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WHEN DEFUSING TENSIONS, QUALITY COUNTS

We've all likely witnessed an argument in which one party shouts "calm down!" Calm rarely ensues. Rather, tensions rise and the conflict takes longer to resolve, or it escalates.

Our first issue of 2014 is devoted to, arguably, a police officer's most powerful tool: his or her voice. And while communication isn't the only tool at an officer's disposal when faced with an upset or non-compliant person, it's often the first to be used. And using it well can make all the difference.

Mallory Proconier writes about the exceptional active listening skills used by RCMP crisis negotiators in three real-life situations that may not have ended well without such deft handling.

And once acquired, these skills need to be refreshed.

Sigrid Forberg describes a Canadian Police College course that helps negotiators stay at the top of their game and share what they've learned with others in the field.

But savvy communication isn't just for trained negotiators.

RCMP members in Klappan Valley, B.C., erected a makeshift detachment between a mining company doing exploratory work and environmentalists who opposed it. They listened with impartiality, mediated when necessary and kept the peace.

And in our Q&A, learn how RCMP cadets benefit from an integrated approach to critical thinking and de-escalation skills during their training. Later in their careers, seasoned officers can continue to challenge the full spectrum of decision-making and use-of-force skills by using simulators with numerous outcomes.

We also hear from agencies who've

tried unusual and sensible ways of reaching out to defuse tense situations.

The Toronto Police Service and a Toronto street nurse are leading a grassroots effort called Real-Time Crisis Intervention, which uses social media to reach out and respond to suicidal tweets and calls for help.

Sometimes, looking back on an event can provide critical clues to improve how we work. Two members of the Los Angeles Police Department spearheaded voluntary post-incident debriefs with people in crisis who had come into contact with police. The information gained from these interviews helps officers adjust their own responses to reach a non-violent resolution.

In Sweden, the Stockholm Police Department is taking communication a step further during large demonstrations with the creation of dialogue police officers. Their role — build trust and make it more advantageous for protestors to choose non-aggressive ways to achieve their goals.

And police agencies are bolstering their crisis intervention training to better understand mental illness.

Researchers at the University of Alberta have partnered with the Edmonton Police Service to help its officers improve interactions with people in crisis. The training uses actors to portray realistic interactions with police, who are later provided with feedback on their verbal and non-verbal responses.

While no one tool is the solution to interactions that turn violent, using each tool with skill and confidence can change outcomes. ■

— Katherine Aldred
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MARCOM AWARD WINNER

Gazette magazine has been named a Platinum winner of the 2013 MarCom Awards in the category of Magazine/Government for its issue on police and academia (Vol. 74, No. 4, 2012).

MarCom Awards is an international competition that recognizes exceptional achievement by communications professionals for excellence in quality, creativity and resourcefulness. As a Platinum Award recipient, *Gazette* magazine was judged to be among the most outstanding in the 2013 competition. ■



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ON THE COVER:

Any situation that could result in someone harming themselves or others requires a cool head, patience and understanding. Photo: RCMP



RCMP LATERAL ENTRY PROGRAM PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY

To some, the RCMP's lateral entry program is an opportunity to try something new. For Cst. Martin Pattinson, it was a ticket to a new life in Canada.

The former Metropolitan Police Service sergeant from London, England, was inspired by Canada's size and beauty after a few visits and yearned to relocate himself and his wife to British Columbia (B.C.).

In 2008, he was recruited by the Calgary Police Service. And after working there for three years, he was eligible for Canadian citizenship and his dream job — becoming an RCMP member.

"It was always in the back of my mind that, if I was going to move 4,600 miles across the pond, I couldn't just work in one part of Canada," Pattinson says.

He joined the RCMP through the lateral entry program — a five-week training program that provides police officers from other agencies with the knowledge and skills, such as use of force and different provincial legislation, to work for Canada's national police force.

It was there that he met Cst. Jesse Wilkins, a former member of Newfoundland's provincial police force, the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary. The two worked their way through the five-week training at the RCMP's training academy and both ended up in B.C. — Wilkins in Barriere and Pattinson in Golden.

Although there are many differences between policing in the United Kingdom (U.K.) and in Canada — one being that po-

lice officers don't often carry firearms in the U.K. — Pattinson found his work in Golden to be the most familiar.

"If I was going to take the oddball out of the equation, I'd say it was Calgary," Pattinson says. "It's very comfortable here in Golden because you're known by your face and your name. There are a lot more bodies in a municipality like Calgary."

Wilkins says it was tough learning new provincial acts and legislations at first. But in the end, he believes he made the right choice.

"This is a good move," Wilkins says. "I'm really pleased and it has opened up a lot of doors for me." ■

— Mallory Procnier

HAITI BIKE BRIGADE BRINGS POLICE TO PEOPLE

In Haiti, a country rebuilding after an earthquake shattered its already shaky economy, several communities are benefiting from a stronger police presence in the form of a bike brigade.

The Haitian National Police (HNP) officers on bikes — outfitted in shorts, helmet and a fluorescent vest for visibility — are improving street safety while building relationships with residents through the structured patrol of the community policing initiative.

"It's so important for the police and for the population to feel like the police are there for the community, to serve and protect the people," says Montreal Police Department Insp. Jean-Ernest Célestin, the co-ordinator of the project with the United Nations Police (UNPol). "The bikes make it possible."

The first bikes hit the pavement in the summer of 2013 in Croix-Des-Bouquets, a neighbourhood close to Port-au-Prince, followed by units in Pétienville, Delmas and, significantly, Cité Soleil, known for being one of the worst slums in the world.

And it will continue growing, says Célestin. He's preparing to launch the program in several cities across the country after securing another 80 bicycles from Montreal.

Each unit is made up of four to five officers who are carefully selected and receive



Officers from the Haitian National Police get closer to the population after the launch of the bike brigade program.

a two-day technical training course through UNPol. Célestin says by keeping the unit small, they can easily adjust it when they know what works and what doesn't.

Right now it's a Canadian-led UNPol initiative, but in a few years the HNP will take ownership of it.

"Through the whole process, from the required management skills, the selection of the candidates, training to patrol, the HNP are always involved so they will be able to take over when the time comes," says Célestin.

Pleased with the program's success to

date, the RCMP Deputy Commissioner for HNP Development, Serge Therriault, says the initiative provides a sense of pride to the National Police and projects a professional image.

"The brigade brought a proven concept of community policing to the HNP," says C/Supt. Therriault. "The bicycles are the vehicles to get into the communities and not just a means to go from call to call and move around the city." ■

— Deidre Seiden



APP TAKES AIM AT OSIs

The Royal Ottawa Operational Stress Injury Clinic and Veterans Affairs Canada have developed a new mobile app for RCMP members, veterans and Canadian Armed Forces members who are coping with symptoms of operational stress injuries (OSIs).

The app, called OSI Connect, is a self-management, mobile learning tool that provides insight into the nature of OSIs.

“We wanted something that would be broadly accessible anywhere in the world,” says Shelley Hale, the manager of the Royal Ottawa’s OSI clinic. “We want people to know that services are out there, and they don’t have to suffer in silence.”

Information about the OSI clinic network, self-assessments and videos are just a few of the tools that the app offers. In particular, Hale says clients seem to like the OSI process steps that are featured.

“It demystifies the big concept of walking into a centre for mental health treatment,”

says Hale. “It breaks down the process, and it shows that the client is at the centre of it all and gets to actively participate.”

OSI is an umbrella term used to describe any persistent psychological difficulty resulting from an operational- or service-related duty.

“We are all candidates for depression, anxiety or complicated grief,” says Roxane Marois, chief psychologist for the RCMP. “Members are as vulnerable to mental health disorders as any one of us. It has nothing to do with character strength. It just means they are human.”

Other OSIs include substance abuse disorders and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Marois says that members shouldn’t wait to get help if they are experiencing symptoms like difficulty sleeping, increased or decreased appetite, irritability or an extreme fluctuation in mood.

“Early intervention is directly linked

to early recovery,” says Marois. “And it’s important to remember that consultation with professionals is completely confidential.”

While the app doesn’t replace conventional treatment, it can be a safe place for people to find critical information.

“Knowledge is power,” says Hale. “OSI Connect gives people the ability to kind of remove themselves from having to verbally ask someone for help without knowing what they need or want or should be asking for.”

The app is available for free download on smartphone devices. ■

— Deidre Seiden

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
WWW.THEROYAL.CA/OSI

SYSTEM COMBATS FRAUDULENT TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

This past summer, INTERPOL launched a tool aimed at helping its member countries exchange information on fraudulent identity and travel documents.

Dial-Doc (Digital INTERPOL Alert Library Document) started out as an Italian-initiated project within the G8 Roma-Lyon Migrations Expert Sub-Group. INTERPOL wanted to help share this system so they partnered with the G8 group.

According to Fabrizio Di Carlo, the Dial-Doc project manager at the INTERPOL General Secretariat headquarters, fraudulent documents are a global issue.

“Identity and travel document forgery is one of the main factors in illegal immigration and human trafficking,” says Di Carlo. “It’s also well established that criminals and terrorists use fake and fraudulent documents to evade detection.”

Through Dial-Doc, countries can share alerts or tips on trends in document counterfeiting. The alerts provide detailed technical information and high-resolution images of both fraudulent and real documents so officials can compare suspicious documents on the spot.

On average, the Canada Border Services

Agency (CBSA) each year interdicts more than 5,000 fraudulent travel documents presented by people seeking to travel to Canada. That’s in addition to the 2,000 or so cases annually of travellers presenting themselves at a port of entry.

Lynn Lawless, the director of Enforcement and Intelligence Programs Management at CBSA, says before Dial-Doc, agencies from different countries couldn’t easily share information in those cases.

“As a result of this system, law enforcement, immigration and border authorities in all INTERPOL member countries now have access to a user-friendly, up-to-date searchable repository of information on travel document fraud,” says Lawless.

Now, police and border officials will be able to quickly confirm a suspected fraudulent document through a search of a variety of criteria including the country issuing the document, the type of document, the type of fraud, biometric documents, the country issuing the alert, date of the publication in the Dial-Doc platform and nationality of the document holder.

“Law enforcement officials often have only seconds to decide whether to let the per-

son standing before them into their country or not,” says Di Carlo. “Dial-Doc provides them with the information they need, when and where they need it.” ■

— Sigrid Forberg

The new system will help police and border officials quickly identify fraudulent travel documents.



INTERPOL



Cst. Jeremy Bowler speaks with a suicidal man over a headset in the middle of a blocked-off Alberta highway.

LET'S TALK

CRISIS NEGOTIATORS PEACEFULLY RESOLVE TENSE SITUATIONS

By Mallory Procnier

On a cold and sunny April day in Wabasca, Alta., Cst. Jeremy Bowler sat cross-legged in a lawn chair in the middle of a blocked-off highway. Through a pair of headphones equipped with a microphone, the Red Deer detachment member listened to a man speak about hockey, hunting and the nicknames he's had over the years. But, just a few hours earlier, that man held eight hostages in his home and fired his weapon several times.

Bowler is a trained crisis negotiator.

As part of Alberta's Emergency Response Team (ERT), he gets called to situations that require someone with exceptional active listening skills and training in talking people out of harming themselves or others.

During this particular incident on April 4, 2013, an intoxicated man arrived home, grabbed his rifle and barricaded all the occupants inside — three adults and five children under the age of five. After he

fired several rounds at a parked car, Bowler and his team were called in to help.

By the time they arrived, general duty and ERT members had safely removed the hostages from the house. Bowler began assembling a throw phone — a portable phone the team can build and deliver to a house — to start talking to the man who had locked himself inside.

"Once he got the phone, I was able to engage him in a conversation to see what



was going on and what was keeping him from coming out,” Bowler says.

Bowler sat himself in the middle of the highway on the lawn chair, away from the rest of the team that was dealing with the logistics of the operation, so he could focus on simply having a conversation with the distressed man.

“I explored the emotions he was putting out,” Bowler says. “Was he scared? Was he nervous? Was he embarrassed? We don’t necessarily work to resolve the situation right away, but we work to establish a rapport and get him to a point where he’s willing to agree to do what we’re asking him to do.”

It didn’t take long before Bowler convinced the man to hand over every bullet from his rifle, except one. That, combined with the suicidal comments he was making, gave Bowler clues about what to do next.

“At that point, my opinion was that he had a story and he wanted people to listen to it, which fits in with our model of asking people to tell us their stories,” Bowler says. “When we’re negotiating like that, it’s not so much about anything. We talk about hockey, sports, hunting and eating moose. He was kind of a passive kind of guy and I believe he just wanted somebody to listen to him.”

Bowler says that, as soon as a subject starts talking with a negotiator, it’s a good indicator that he or she wants to continue. So, for the two-and-a-half hours he sat in that chair, Bowler focused on being engaged in that conversation.

“You may not be expressing your actual opinions or anything but you have to actually be listening to what they’re saying and responding because they’ll key in on that,” Bowler says. “If you’re not listening or if you have inappropriate responses to things they’ve said, that could basically throw away any rapport you’ve developed and you really need that.”

“THE BIGGEST THING WHEN WE’RE NEGOTIATING IS TO FOLLOW TWO RULES: NEVER MAKE A PROMISE YOU CAN’T KEEP AND NEVER TELL A LIE.”

In the end, the team was successful. The subject left his rifle in the house and peacefully surrendered to the ERT. And, for Bowler, all it took was a bit of patience and an open ear.

“It’s the same concept that’s involved in source handling, which is a big part of my day-to-day job,” Bowler says. “That relies on the client realizing that you have

an interest in what’s going on. They want to do something for someone they like, and you need to be that person who gets along with them.”

A FAMILIAR VOICE

Sgt. Gary Hodges’ call started in a similar way on Nov. 27, 2011. As Hodges, a trained RCMP crisis negotiator in Regina, travelled two hours east with Saskatchewan’s critical incident response team to Cowessess First Nation, the suspect had already fired his weapon twice.

The man had been in a car accident and, when the local fire department responded to put out the fire that started in his vehicle, he shot at them. The man then took off to his house and locked himself inside.

When the team arrived, members set up a negotiation pod and immediately started talking to the suspect. Hodges opened with the fact that he and his team had come from far away to help — a tactic he often uses to build trust and rapport.

“I say, ‘I’m an RCMP member, but I travelled all the way from Regina because I’m concerned about you and I want to help you out. I’m not one of the local detachment members that you might have had a bad dealing with in the past,’” Hodges says.

DE-ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE
COVER

CRISIS INTERVENTION AND DE-ESCALATION TRAINING

After the Robert Dziekanski incident in 2007, it was recognized that police needed more education and training about mental illness and how to manage people in crisis.

Since January 2012, RCMP members in British Columbia (B.C.) have been taking the Pacific Region Training Centre’s (PRTC) mandatory crisis intervention and de-escalation (CID) training within the first six months of becoming operational.

The training includes five online modules and is followed by an in-class review and practice session at the PRTC in Chilliwack.

“A lot of the work is done by members on their own, going through the modules online and completing an online exam, and

once they’re done that, they come to the PRTC for one of the CID classes,” says Cst. Rodney Wagner, a former psychiatric nurse who teaches the course.

Wagner focuses on teaching his students about mental illness and how to effectively respond to someone in crisis. He recognizes that many police officers are already using good communication skills and encourages them to fine tune these skills and practise them where possible.

“Sometimes, police officers get very task-oriented and problem-oriented in these situations and try to fix the problem, so I try to get them to slow down,” Wagner says. “It’s hard to take the time to listen to someone when you think you know what

the answer’s going to be, so it’s a skill they have to learn.”

He teaches participants how to recognize someone who is suicidal and how to be an active and respectful listener.

All front-line police officers and supervisors in B.C. are required to take CID training because the province is focused on having all front-line members ready to respond to these types of calls.

“You never know when you’re going to be that person,” Wagner says. “You could be an inspector who shows up at an accident scene or a constable at any other scene and need to apply these techniques to calm things down.”

— Mallory Procnier



But the suspect didn't want to surrender. "In this case, I think he wanted to save face," Hodges says.

Earlier on in the conversation, the team found out that the suspect had a good relationship with his parents and sister, so they were brought in as third-party intermediaries.

"In some instances, those are family members or friends of the suspect and we give them a scripted conversation to help them talk to the person to convince them that we're being honest and truthful and nothing's going to happen if they come out," Hodges says.

The man's father was selected to go first. But the conversation quickly turned into a one-sided lecture, which is the type of conversation that Hodges wanted to avoid. The man's sister tried talking to him next, and Hodges says she worked wonders.

"She was able to convince him that she would be there, we would allow him to talk to her if he surrendered to the police, and he wouldn't get hurt," Hodges says.

Eventually, the suspect agreed to surrender to his father and an RCMP member. And part of the success stemmed from the fact that negotiators worked hard to develop a good rapport with the suspect by telling the truth.

"The biggest thing when we're negotiating is to follow two rules: never make a promise you can't keep and never tell a lie," Hodges says. "If you break one of those two rules, you'll never develop any kind of trust or rapport with them again."

FINDING THE SPARK

Cst. Jill Swann wasn't sure how the situation would unfold. She arrived at a boat launch in Cumberland, B.C., and saw a man sitting in his vehicle with a high-powered rifle.

His son was standing beside the driver's window. First responders told Swann and her primary negotiator, Cst. Tammy Douglas, that the 60-year-old suspect was highly motivated to

end his life.

As Swann and her team were being briefed on the situation, the man grabbed a blanket from his back seat and draped it over himself and his rifle in an attempt to shield his son from what he was about to do. At that point, a general duty member who had already established contact with the father, instructed the son to bang on the window to let his father know that he could still see him and hear him.

"There's a spark of life and self-preservation in the back of people's brains and, in my experience, if that spark is still there and if they're still alive by the time I get there, there's a chance we can help," Swann says.

It worked, and the man lowered the rifle. Douglas then used a cellphone to

"THERE'S A SPARK OF LIFE AND SELF-PRESERVATION IN THE BACK OF PEOPLE'S BRAINS AND, IN MY EXPERIENCE, IF THAT SPARK IS STILL THERE AND IF THEY'RE STILL ALIVE BY THE TIME I GET THERE, THERE'S A CHANCE WE CAN HELP"

call the son and asked if she could speak to his father. When the father took the phone, she explained to him that she could hear his words, his painful voice and his struggle.

"Tammy has such a beautiful nature about her and a genuine, caring personality that just transcends through her voice," Swann says.

The team had done some background research to know why the man had barricaded himself inside his vehicle: his marriage

was ending, his business was failing and his health was deteriorating.

"These are all bricks that pile up and they just want the pain to stop," Swann says. "They see suicide as the only option to stop that pain, so you have to ask them to give us a chance to show them there's help out there."

Eventually, the man surrendered his weapon to his son and stepped out of the vehicle unharmed.

OPEN EARS

Each negotiator agrees that the best tool in any situation is active listening.

"Active listening allows you to repeat things they're saying so they know you're listening to them," Hodges says. "They'll then start to realize that you do care and you're genuinely concerned, and then they'll start to communicate. Then you can work towards figuring out what the problem is and how to resolve it."

It's also about convincing the suspect that he or she needs the negotiator to get what they want.

"From an officer safety perspective, you can't let the person take control of the scene, but you can present an appearance that you are giving them a certain amount of control while not giving up that control," Hodges says.

Most negotiators take a crisis

negotiation course in their careers and learn some of these tactics in the field. But, in the end, they agree that basic training, compassion and human instinct is the basis of crisis negotiation.

"What we do as negotiators isn't magic," Hodges says. "All we're doing is talking to people, and police officers do that every day. They're not doing anything different, just using some special techniques, developing rapport and listening actively." ■





THE POWER OF COMMUNICATION

NEGOTIATORS REFRESH SKILLS AT CANADIAN POLICE COLLEGE

By Sigrid Forberg

Crisis negotiators know that changing someone's behaviour takes both time and an established rapport. Even in the best of situations, few people will yield to the will of complete strangers.

And when someone has barricaded themselves or taken others hostage, negotiators can't simply pick up the phone and tell them to come out. These things take both time and specific skills.

At the Canadian Police College (CPC), members of various police forces across Canada gather to both learn and refresh those crucial skills that help ensure a crisis comes to a peaceful conclusion.

"Sometimes people in crisis end up in situations they didn't plan and sometimes all they want is someone to listen to them," says Sgt. Suzanne Wannamaker, who coordinates the Crisis Negotiator Refresher course at the CPC. "At the end of the day, we all just want to go home. They have a right to that, too."

PEACEFUL RESOLUTIONS

According to Wannamaker, 95 to 98 per cent of crisis situations in Canada are resolved peacefully. And to ensure those statistics stay high, maintaining those skills isn't only

important, it's a requirement of the job.

Wannamaker, who has been with the college for five years and on a negotiation team for four, says most Canadian teams have it in their policies that members must refresh their skills every few years.

At the CPC, the course is five days long with three days of instruction and two of scenario-based training. For the scenarios, the college brings in professional actors who work off predetermined scripts, and are also instructed in real-time by the trainers to react realistically to cues.

"Very early on in my service, I realized the strongest asset a police officer has is their power of communication," says Sgt. Brigdit Leger, who attended a refresher course this past November.

Leger has been with the RCMP for 25 years and negotiating for 10. She found the scenarios particularly helpful, especially with the professional actors, because it gave her the chance to realistically practise those powers of communication.

STANDARD OF SKILLS

One of the other strengths of the crisis negotiator training is that it's consistent across the country — even amongst Canada's vari-

ous policing agencies. For Cst. David Caron, from the Guelph Police Service, it was from his peers that he learned the most.

"Interacting with police officers from different agencies across the country and talking about calls that they go on, what they do in their service, that was probably one of the best things about the course," says Caron. "Because then you bring a little bit back to your own service."

That consistency also helped the two days of hands-on training run smoothly. The CPC operates in a best-case scenario, assuming four negotiators are available to work on a team. Each person is assigned one of four tasks: primary negotiator, secondary negotiator, situational boards/intelligence and team leader, or liaison to the incident commander.

"It was amazing how we could have members we'd never worked with from different parts of the country and have a seamless transition," says Leger. "To me, it was very clear the value of having a training standard."

CONVERSATIONS AND COMPASSION

Leger and Caron were pleased to bring new techniques back to their teams, for example, having answers on hand before the questions are asked. Wannamaker explains that subjects often have the same questions, so having answers prepared in advance for the negotiator on the phone will help the conversation flow more naturally.

But in the end, Wannamaker says the most important skills for negotiators are ones that can't be taught — patience and compassion. The best negotiators are ones that know good people sometimes have bad days and that no matter who they are or what they've done, it's a negotiator's job to offer them a different way out.

"We can't just put someone in the category of bad guy: they're a person, they might not have planned for this to happen," says Wannamaker. "And even if they are one of the few people that you can't find one good thing about, then do it for the ones that care about them. Everyone has someone and sometimes we find compassion for their sake." ■

The Canadian Police College offers a crisis intervention refresher course that helps police officers refine their negotiation skills and learn new techniques.



Canadian Police College

DE-ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE
COVER



ARMED WITH AWARENESS

VIDEO HELPS POLICE IN DIFFICULT ENCOUNTERS

By Sigrid Forberg

In recent years, the Freeman on the Land movement has been growing in western Canada.

Followers of the movement believe that statute laws are contractual and only applicable so long as individuals consent to being governed by them. Based on that, they believe they can declare themselves “sovereign citizens” and exempt themselves from the law.

When front-line members in Alberta started encountering Freeman regularly, two members of the former Calgary Intelligence Unit were asked to help prepare police officers for dealing with Freeman followers.

FRACTURED FOLLOWSHIP

Corporals Ian Smith and Jerion Hildebrand, whose portfolios in the intelligence unit were often gang-related, were having a hard time pinpointing exactly what the Freeman believe because of the fractured nature of the movement.

“If you had 1,000 different Freeman out there, you’d have 1,000 different opinions on various things,” says Smith. “It’s not like an organized crime group, a lot of the information on them is opinion-based. It’s hard to draw consistencies and commonalities across the board.”

They also found that the Freeman doctrine spreads over the Internet and social media. To prepare members to deal with citizens who refuse to acknowledge their authority, they created a PowerPoint presentation that they then began delivering in detachments across Alberta.

“Education is the way to go,” says Hildebrand. “Once members know what they’re

dealing with, the remedies are all there and they can just carry on with their job.”

Over the years, they did numerous presentations at RCMP detachments, but even then, they weren’t able to reach all the members across the division. And that’s when making a video was suggested.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Working with Rene Huot, from the Alberta RCMP’s training section video unit, they turned the original PowerPoint into a video that was distributed throughout Alberta, Manitoba and even as far east as Nova Scotia.

“We get feedback on a regular basis from members who watch the video and now feel more empowered in their interactions,” says Huot. “There’s a lot of misinformation on this topic and once it becomes more frequent, you have to really tackle it before it gets out of control.”

Huot says a member in Rocky Mountain House, Alta., contacted the unit to let them know how helpful she’d found the video. On the same shift she had viewed it, she encountered a Freeman — and was prepared to deal with him.

Smith and Hildebrand say that was their ultimate goal — to increase members’ confidence in their authority, which ultimately leads to their safety.

“Right or wrong, I think we, as police officers, like to define or categorize it when we see something,” says Hildebrand. “I think that’s a trait of police work in general, but if you don’t know what you’re dealing with, it’s hard to do that.”

When an officer pulls someone over dur-

ing a traffic stop, their first concern is always going to be safety. Engaging in a debate at the side of the road or taking their attention off the driver at any point is incredibly dangerous. Just knowing that what they’re hearing is nonsense could be the difference that keeps everyone safe.

“You can’t legislate what people think and sometimes that concerns police officers when someone isn’t complying for reasons they’ve never heard of before,” says Smith. “Awareness just removes that doubt and that lack of confidence, and members can go about their duties safely.” ■

HOW TO TELL YOU’RE DEALING WITH A FREEMAN

Whether through a traffic stop, or out in the community, here are a few signs you may be dealing with a Freeman:

- no car registration
- fake licence plate
- bumper stickers (often with the words “free” on them, or with images of upside-down flags)
- refer to their “right to travel”
- refer to obscure legal documents (like the Magna Carta)
- refuse to acknowledge their legal name
- attempt to give you a fee schedule for their time
- a sign at their door indicating that police have no authority or jurisdiction on the property
- present authentic-looking peace officer badges, represent themselves as peace officers

Source: *Freeman on the Land*, NWR Video Unit

A still from the Alberta RCMP Freeman on the Land training video shows members footage of Freeman during traffic stops as well as in court.



RCMP



DOES BODY WORN VIDEO HELP OR HINDER DE-ESCALATION?

THE PANELLISTS

- Dr. Mary Stratton, research analyst and co-ordinator, Body Worn Video Project, Edmonton Police Service
- Cst. Scott Messier, general policing investigator, RCMP, Northeast District, New Brunswick
- Lieut. Harold "Lee" Rankin, Body Worn Camera Program, Mesa Police Department, Arizona

RCMP



DE-ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE

COVER

DR. MARY STRATTON

Advances in technology have allowed the development of audio-video recorders small enough to be worn on police uniforms. Body-worn video (BWV) is thought to help front-line police, investigations and prosecutions. Claims are made that the presence of BWV will calm down a tense situation, de-escalate aggression and reduce use of force during police intervention.

There's high interest among Canadian police agencies in the potential benefits of employing BWV but there's little research about this new yet unproven technology.

Aimed at providing an evidence-based foundation on which to make future equipment decisions, the Edmonton Police Service (EPS) Body Worn Video Pilot Project began in the fall of 2011 and will run until the fall of 2014.

It's the first in Canada to receive federal funding for a professionally designed assessment and evaluation of this technology in field use. It will review technical performance, legal considerations and usefulness in practice to everyday policing and investigation processes. The findings will also contribute to policy and procedure for practices related to the use of BWV.

With operational testing still underway, hard conclusions can't be offered at this time. However, some preliminary observations suggest the effect of BWV on police-citizen interactions of all kinds is variable and complex.

In the United States, interest in using BWV appears to be mainly driven by the frequency of violent incidents and the high cost often involved. Performance management is a stated goal of employing BWV. Rialto Police in California claim significant decreases in use of force and complaints due to BWV.

In Canada, police agencies have emphasized interest in BWV as an investigative tool, not a disciplinary measure. Generally, Canadian police agencies have far fewer use-of-force incidents than those in the U.S. What, if any, effect the presence of BWV would have in the Canadian context should be carefully examined.

If the use of force is only employed when necessary, BWV should not impact the number of incidents but could potentially offer stronger evidence and a 'third eye' record of the interaction.

Counter to this is the possibility that an officer wearing BWV may hesitate

to act due to thinking about and manually activating the equipment. Currently all available BWV requires manual record activation.

It's been suggested that the presence of BWV will decrease aggression when police initially engage in an interaction with a citizen. This isn't possible to objectively measure. If both citizen and police officer are polite and non-aggressive from the start, there's no way to be certain if the presence of BWV was an influence.

Both police and researcher observations in the EPS pilot report that when a member of the public is intoxicated, high or in any other mentally altered state, and informed numerous times about BWV recording, there has been no noted de-escalating effect. Some of the participating members report that the BWV actually serves to further excite citizens.

The EPS pilot final report will examine EPS statistics to determine whether or not BWV has an objective effect on aggression. Interviews with the members testing the devices will also be analyzed and reported.

Preliminary findings, however, suggest that BWV is more likely to contribute to the understanding of incidents where ag-



gression has escalated, rather than reducing the occurrence.

CST. SCOTT MESSIER

Do people purposely behave differently when they know they are being video recorded? The fact is, reactions to a police officer's presence are unpredictable.

Any police officer will tell you how quickly a relatively calm situation can escalate into a precarious one, and usually without warning.

In my experience using body worn cameras during my general duty shifts at Codiac detachment in New Brunswick, I noticed that some people positively adapt their behaviour when they learn that a camera is fixed on them.

Body-worn cameras or body-worn videos (BWV) on police officers were not common in Moncton, N.B. People didn't know or expect to be filmed from the officer's perspective.

When I announced that they were being recorded on video with sound, most were surprised to learn they were on camera. Generally, their behaviour would become subdued almost immediately.

Examples of this change in behaviour included their tone of voice, which went from yelling and swearing to a normal, comprehensible level.

Sometimes calming a person down takes an incredible amount of patience and self-control on the part of police officers. The task of collecting and assessing witness testimony can be more easily done when the police officer doesn't have to filter out insults, threats and uncontrollable upset. This leads to quicker risk assessments and scene control.

In my experience, these changes in behaviour occurred more quickly by announcing the use of BWV devices than by increasing officer presence.

It's commonplace in public spaces to be monitored and recorded on Closed Circuit Televisions (CCTV). These fixed cameras can be seen everywhere. Warning signs that state video surveillance are in use are posted at building entrances yet people still commit crimes or behave badly. Perhaps this is because CCTVs blend into the background unnoticed.

Conversely, BWV equipment is obvious depending on the technology. If one of the goals of deploying BWV is to de-escalate

violence or tension, then an overt solution is appropriate. To illustrate this point, picture someone with stage fright. When that person doesn't believe they're being watched, they act a certain way. Put a camera directly in front of them, and they behave lost, nervous or anxious.

I'm not advocating that the presence of BWV systems will change people's behaviour every time for the better. But I do believe that people are less likely to be abusive or troublesome when they are aware a camera is recording the interaction.

There are exceptions. An example is when I was dispatched to a local hospital to assist the medical staff with a defiant adolescent causing a disturbance. Even after being told her actions were being recorded, this person continued to kick doors, swear at staff, resist physical control and even attempted to bite me.

During my review of my BWV footage, I took the time to analyze my dealings. As a result, I was more aware of how I interacted with the public, which subconsciously improved my professionalism. Since a police officer's demeanour can influence another person's conduct, increased self-awareness through BWV can help de-escalate tension.

LIEUT. HAROLD "LEE" RANKIN

On October 1, 2012, the Mesa Police Department initiated a year-long evaluation of the Axon Flex on-officer body camera system. The evaluation focused on the system's impact on reducing departmental complaints, reducing use-of-force incidents and improving organizational transparency.

Fifty on-officer body camera systems were deployed throughout the department, predominately to patrol officers, and divided among the department's four patrol divisions.

To enhance the overall evaluation, the Mesa Police Department entered into an agreement with the Arizona State University School of Criminology and Criminal Justice to plan, monitor and evaluate the deployment of the camera systems through the use of line-officer surveys and field-contact reports.

Fifty on-body camera officers and 50 non-camera officers (control group) were asked to complete monthly field contact cards. Both camera officers and control group officers were advised of a randomly selected day per month in which they were

required to complete a contact card for every citizen encounter.

The contact cards contain a series of 24 questions identifying the nature of the call, gender and demographics of the participants, suspect behaviour, type of force required, victim behaviour and officer perceptions.

Program officers produced more than 4,000 contact cards that are currently being evaluated. Although complete empirical data and the final analysis of the evaluation won't be available until January 2014, there's encouraging evidence to support that on-body cameras have an impact on the de-escalation of tension and ultimately contributed to a decrease in violence.

Throughout the evaluation period, the findings demonstrated that officers equipped with an on-body camera experienced a 40 per cent decrease in complaints and a 75 per cent decrease in use-of-force complaints throughout the evaluation period when compared to the previous year.

Although there has been resistance among some officers to adopt on-body cameras, nearly 77 per cent of officers who participated in the evaluation reported that the camera system caused them to act more professionally and 81 per cent indicated that it would make them more cautious when making decisions.

Anecdotal stories provided by camera officers offer insight into the value of on-body cameras during citizen encounters.

Officers reported that in many incidents, once an agitated citizen learned that their actions were being recorded, they quickly de-escalated.

Officer David Vogeler described a recent encounter with two gang members. From the onset of the contact, the two individuals were agitated and unhappy about the police contact. At one point, one of the individuals pulled out a cellphone and told Officer Vogeler that she was going to record the interaction and post it on YouTube.

Officer Vogeler pointed to his on-body camera and told them that he had been recording the entire interaction. Officer Vogeler stated, "As soon as they knew the camera was rolling, they started being polite." He said the citizen put the phone away and remained co-operative for the rest of the contact.

The presence of officer on-body cameras appears to modify officer interaction, as well as the behaviour of the person being contacted. ■



Officer Michael Baker



Det. Teresa Irvin and Officer Michael Baker interview "Robert" following a police standoff at his residence.

POST-INCIDENT DEBRIEF

GAINING THE PERSPECTIVE OF A PERSON IN CRISIS

By Officer Michael Baker, Crisis Negotiation Team, Los Angeles Police Department

Coming into contact with mentally ill and violent individuals is far from an unusual occurrence for most police officers.

As a 28-year veteran of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), with 20 years' experience as a SWAT tactical team operator, a senior Crisis Negotiation Team member and a volunteer crisis intervention counselor with the L.A. Suicide Prevention Center, I've witnessed and negotiated with many individuals who suffer from diagnosed and undiagnosed forms of mental illness, and many others who are in the midst of a potentially life-altering crisis.

In 2009, following just such an encounter, I was introduced to Detective Teresa Irvin, a 20-year veteran of the LAPD who supervises the Crisis Response Support Section of the LAPD's Mental Evaluation Unit.

While debriefing with Detective Irvin, we discovered a shared passion for understanding and competently responding to the ever-increasing population of mentally ill and violence-prone citizens on the streets, especially those confronted by law enforcement officers during daily patrol duties.

It made perfect sense to learn more

about the best ways to interact with those suffering mental illness or those experiencing crisis in their lives, and share that with the police department's first responders.

Recognizing that recidivist behaviour is common among criminals and those suffering a mental illness, we began discussing strategies that could not only minimize or totally eliminate the chances of future law enforcement encounters with these groups, but also lower or prevent the chances of those interactions escalating to the point of violence when they do occur.

These discussions eventually led to an organized interview process conducted with the players involved in critical incidents and their interaction with crisis negotiators and first responders.

There is great value in de-escalating a potentially violent encounter between first responders and the mentally ill by using successful crisis intervention and negotiations.

What hadn't been tried, and which made perfect sense, was using an introspective examination of the individual who eventually had become the subject of a law enforcement response and apprehension.

This was the genesis of the program that attempted to hone the reactions, responses and de-escalation skills of law enforcement and emergency personnel to citizens in crisis. The process involved conducting post-incident interviews with adjudicated criminals in custody and mentally ill individuals institutionalized or housed in controlled settings.

Through these post-incident debriefs, it became clear that while many of the individuals interviewed came from unique backgrounds and had personal stories that explained the situations they found themselves in, there were also common themes in many of these calls for service. These included responders who displayed a resounding lack of empathy and an absence of any sincere concern for the individual's problems.

In other words, the interests of the individuals were not being adequately explored and, as a result, negotiations never developed, and confrontations and altercations became more frequent.

Failing to recognize and address the core interests and issues that are overwhelming

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someone in crisis at that moment can exacerbate the crisis and result in a police officer becoming nothing more than an additional antagonist for the individual to resist and contend with rather than co-operate with.

THE INTERVIEWS

One interview conducted with an imprisoned person we'll call "Robert" for this article, revealed that he had overheard conversations between SWAT team members deployed in close-containment positions during a standoff at his residence.

The SWAT officers' dialogue consisted of derogatory topics and statements directed at Robert and the inconveniences this particular emergency response had placed on the responding officers' personal holiday plans.

The negotiators were unaware that Robert was overhearing conversations occurring around the perimeter of his house, and were obviously at a disadvantage from the onset in this particular negotiation process. Robert doubted the sincerity of the negotiators because in his eyes the negotiators and the SWAT officers all wore the same uniforms, and in the end were all cops who held the same negative opinions concerning his current circumstances.

Robert additionally believed that he had legitimate reasons for staying barricaded inside of his house with his wife and daughter. He felt he was the victim of an assault by his wife, who earlier in the day had stabbed him during a domestic dispute. His physical response to his wife's alleged assault was, in his opinion, self-defence and justifiable.

Robert had a message and wanted to be heard on this issue. Instead, all negotiations focused on the status and conditions of Robert's wife and daughter during the barricade incident. The only attention given to Robert was a concern for satisfying his possible needs for food, drink and rest, all of which were only introduced as part of a ploy to distract him and ultimately initiate a tactical intervention to resolve the situation.

Robert was a "bad guy," and there was no denying that fact, but if the goal is to negotiate a peaceful resolution with someone, negotiators must be able to acknowledge and show a concern for the issues in play for the person they are attempting to bargain with, and they must be able to successfully sell them on their sincerity in the process.

Productive negotiations, and ultimately

the successful de-escalation of a potentially violent interaction, are the consequences of communications that are "interest-based" and competently implemented into the crisis negotiation evolution.

Providing comfort or tending to the physical needs of a subject during a crisis can help to gain rapport, but doesn't address the true crux of the crisis, the flashpoint that caused that person to go over the edge and resort to criminal and violent behaviours.

First responders must begin to address the real reasons for stagnant and unproductive communications — those issues being the concerns and interests at the core of the current situation at hand.

The condition of hostages and victims in a SWAT standoff should be of primary importance to everyone involved. But, if responders show no concern for the issues and interests of the party they are negotiating with, they'll struggle during any attempt at intervention, and will be setting themselves up for failure in achieving a peaceful resolution through negotiation.

Post-incident debriefs afforded the interviewers the opportunity to explore issues of importance to individuals involved in police interventions — issues that were initially avoided or ignored during the incipient crisis but that warranted law enforcement response.

Robert's barricade, which was ultimately resolved through a tactical intervention, ended with no further injuries to anyone involved, but could just have easily culminated in a violent and potentially deadly interaction.

Many police responses that end with the "bad guys" going to jail and the "good guys" going home to their families are the result of a combination of excellent training, exemplary tactics and old-fashioned good luck.

But gaining insight into the mind of a person in crisis may reduce the percentage of luck involved in that equation, and eventually lead to a successful and peaceful apprehension.

And the knowledge procured through post-incident interviews will help preserve the lives and ensure the safety of first responders and police, making the work involved in them a worthwhile and proactive exercise in survival.

Peaceful resolutions sought through successful negotiations, unlike tactical interventions that may seek similar goals,

minimize the chance of future litigation proceedings and ultimately save money for local government.

It goes without saying that potentially violent situations, concluded through conversation, also virtually eliminate or at least lessen the possibility of exposing officers to the physical and emotional wounds that are almost guaranteed to surface with the deployment of physical intervention strategies and operations.

Recidivism runs rampant within the ranks of the incarcerated, and due to the overcrowding issues associated with the jailing of perpetrators, the revolving doors of the incarcerating institutions are swinging more regularly in the direction of the exit portals in jails and prisons for many of the previously convicted criminals in our society.

Detective Irvin and I believe that professionally conducted post-incident interviews can demonstrate to those interviewed that police officers are compassionate and sincere people who have a true desire to perform their jobs better.

The conduct of law enforcement, and the respect afforded to the individual during the interview process, will remain in the mind of the people interviewed. That image stays in prison with them while they serve their time, and goes out the door with them when they are paroled and released.

Future encounters with recidivist criminals can be positively influenced through properly handled post-incident interviews, and violent responses to future interventions can be avoided.

Criminals will talk amongst themselves while incarcerated and after they are released, and wouldn't it be nice to know that some of those conversations reflected positive feelings toward law enforcement.

EDUCATIONAL TOOL

Detective Irvin and I continue to work toward enhancing first responder and law enforcement education, focusing primarily on how to better de-escalate and safely handle encounters with the mentally ill and criminal element.

The information gathered through the post-incident debriefs is being carefully deciphered and documented in the hope that it may be used to enhance officer safety, lessen or eliminate liability concerns, and decrease injuries to officers and the individuals during interactions on duty. ■



LISTENING MORE AND TALKING LESS

REAL-TIME RESPONSE TO SUICIDAL TWEETS

By Cst. Scott Mills, social media officer, Toronto Police Service and Anne Marie Batten, Toronto street nurse

“Sitting on the tracks, waiting for the next train, ready to end it all. Goodbye World.”

If someone tweeted this to you or this came in on your Facebook feed in your personal life or on a professional social media twitter account, would you know what to do? A grassroots effort called Real Time Crisis Intervention is underway to provide social service and police solutions 24/7.

In the case of the suicidal tweet above, the vision is that the partners of Real Time Crisis would have the capability to obtain assistance from police and communicate with the transit safety officers to get any trains stopped that may be travelling into the affected area.

All of this communication occurs via social media in real-time. A crisis nurse or social worker will be dealing confidentially with the person in crisis while preventing a railway fatality.

Real Time Crisis Intervention is a not-for-profit corporation in the process of start up with the goal of saving and improving lives. Social media is a key tool used in the solution.

Founded and led by Toronto street nurse Anne Marie Batten, it's run in collaboration with Internet safety specialist Jesse Miller of Mediated Reality in Vancouver, B.C., USA health care, well-known international community builder Scott Abrams of Crime Stoppers USA and law enforcement social media strategist Lauri Stevens of Laws Communications.

The Toronto Police Service (TPS) works collaboratively with Batten. This team uses social media tools in a similar way to street level nurse/police collaborations often called Mobile Crisis Intervention Teams (MCIT).

Real Time Crisis Intervention has the expertise to assist persons in acute distress. While maintaining a focus on prevention, the nurse and police officer are currently intervening in real time through social media involving persons posting suicidal intent and during other real-time crisis situations.

AN ENGAGING APPROACH

There's a unique difference between this

program and similar support programs that are currently operating in social media. Real Time Crisis involves the use of trained professionals including those from the nursing profession and social services who work with police officers to engage directly with the person in crisis.

Sandra Dawson operates a Twitter account with close to 15,000 followers called @Unsuicide. She shares links to resources, coping tips, peer knowledge and e-health services.

“There are more than 500 Twitter users that I've collected in a list, and others who work on other sites such as Tumblr, Reddit and YouTube, who also have the initiative to reach out to peers in need and offer a compassionate tweet full of hope,” says Dawson.

However, those users are limited in bridging the gap between virtual support and offline help in a crisis, such as when someone posts a suicide attempt. Social media networks don't allow users access to another user's IP (Internet Protocol) and offline location information, if they even collect that information. Without personally knowing the other user and their street address, they can't phone police or an ambulance.

Real Time Crisis has proved useful in incidents where a follower has had an emergency and a crisis nurse has stepped in for counselling, and prevented escalation. With law enforcement ties to Twitter's support team, police will be able to locate users with IP data in life-and-death emergencies where imminent medical intervention is required.

GROWING DEMAND

Anne Marie Batten and Cst. Mills were introduced on Twitter by Los Angeles-based homeless advocate Mark Horvath. The Real Time Crisis concept started in November 2012 when they concluded that the volume of mental health-related issues in social media were increasing, and that a collaborative, real-time 24/7 response was needed.

The first joint effort was in assisting

a homeless man who was struggling with mental illness and falling through the gaps in the traditional health care system.

Having a police officer and nurse working together providing outreach with real-time communication made a difference. The man known as #HomelessJoe on Twitter is now housed, on medication, has income and is managing well with community support.

Following this positive outcome, the team discussed how to help people in distress who were reaching out for assistance through Twitter and Facebook.

TPS was seeing a high volume of requests for assistance from persons at risk of suicide and the information was being communicated through social media. Batten believed that having a mental health professional available to assist with these calls could result in a clinically based mental health and risk assessment being conducted and possibly diverting police intervention.

Jointly, they committed to creating a virtual structure by developing a program based on community collaboration. A focus group was formed that included leaders in policing, nursing, education, law, community mental health, probation, emergency management, youth engagement and transit safety officers.

A number of community members with lived experience, including advocate Andrew Stewart, added the essential perspective from those for whom this service is designed. It became apparent that listening more and talking less was the key.

Through direct real-time engagement and assessment, they've been successful in meeting the needs of people at risk and building trusted relationships.

EARLY DIVERSION

In the majority of cases, the people who were reaching out for assistance didn't require emergency care. Their needs were safely managed with support and community follow-up.

As the team continued to intervene online, they noticed that people who had



Toronto police Cst. Scott Mills and Toronto street nurse Anne Marie Batten work together using Twitter in an innovative suicide intervention strategy.

been previously assisted by them were now reaching out directly in times of distress. This prevented cries for help that would otherwise have gone to TPS's corporate social media accounts, thus avoiding public displays of very private issues.

Developing these online relationships is a proactive way to manage mental health crises. By reaching out in real time and conducting a comprehensive mental health and risk assessment, the needs of those who are in distress are being met.

Reducing 911 calls for people experiencing mental health crises and decreasing visits to the hospital emergency room is what every police service and hospital in the world strives for. This has been achieved by Real Time Crisis Intervention.

Statistics collected show that there were more than 100 interventions during a four-month period. Of those interventions, 12 were deemed to be of high risk. Police and emergency response were activated on only three of these occasions.

The vision for Real Time Crisis includes 24/7 operations with the ability to respond immediately when someone is in need of assistance. If the concern is tweeted

to police, for example, Real Time Crisis can be consulted.

HOW IT WORKS

While the initial contact for help may be communicated directly to Real Time Crisis, it's usually brought to the attention of police or social services by third parties who've identified a risk, and request assistance. A consultation then takes place and the crisis nurse or social worker engages directly with the person in distress. This may include a tweet as simple as "Can I help?"

The person is then switched to private messaging for confidentiality. During this discussion, the nurse will conduct a mental health and risk assessment and may take a health history including diagnosis, medications being taken and community supports.

A response will be arranged that's appropriate for the level of risk involved. Ongoing communication is maintained with police during situations of high acuity to ensure a safe intervention. During events of lesser risk, Real Time Crisis manages the assessment, response, safety planning and follow-up support.

If someone is transferred for emergency

care, the professional from Real Time Crisis is able to communicate directly with the receiving personnel so that essential information is reported. Safety for the person at risk and for all service providers involved is a priority.

Although not fully operational, Real Time Crisis has a presence on social media with established sites on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, Google+ and YouTube.

"I have been a crisis nurse for seventeen years and have watched as persons in distress fell through the gaps within our system," says Batten. "By incorporating direct engagement using social media tools into my practice, I've experienced an innovative way to provide seamless care."

Real Time Crisis Intervention doesn't aim to re-invent the wheel, just to add spokes in a wheel of crisis response that often has people falling through the cracks who are calling for help. Wouldn't it be great if the police weren't dispatched to assist someone in crisis because the crisis was averted due to professional help available 24/7 in social media? Better to invest in this type of prevention than testify at an inquest for a police shooting. ■



THE MIDDLE MEN

MEMBERS ERECT MAKESHIFT DETACHMENT TO QUELL TENSIONS

By Mallory Procnier

Klappan Valley, in northern British Columbia (B.C.), is an important area to a lot of people.

To many Tahltan people of that region, it's a traditional hunting and food-gathering spot and the source of three fish-bearing rivers.

To environmentalists, it's a flourishing ecosystem that must be protected.

And to Fortune Minerals, a mining company from London, Ont., it's a potentially profitable coal deposit.

While Fortune Minerals conducted an environmental assessment in the area in August 2013, angry Tahltan protesters presented an eviction notice to the mining camp. Tensions escalated when they began encroaching on the mining camp and, at times, moving past the fence and onto the premises. A decision was made to establish a police presence between the two groups to keep the peace.

"We had to have an impartial presence so that we could help facilitate, peacefully, the resolution of what the three entities were trying to achieve," says C/Supt. Rod Booth, who heads the RCMP in B.C.'s North District.

OPEN EARS

With four vehicles, a couple of ATVs,

tents, cots and enough food and water for a few weeks, S/Sgt. Jim Vardy accompanied three members on the four-hour drive to the remote Klappan Valley. Members were hand-selected based on their experience in conflict mediation, camping and outdoor survival.

"We slept in our vehicles on the first night, and the next day we started setting up stage one of the camp," Vardy says. "From there we established what we needed — like more members and equipment — and all the while, refereed the dispute."

Each day, protesters lined themselves along the electric bear fence outside the mining camp, armed with placards, songs and drums. They'd go back and forth between camps, and members kept an eye on their activity from their camp that was built directly between the others.

"They had to drive right by us when they went down to protest so we'd be able to see that," Vardy says.

Members of the newly established Klappan Valley detachment, as it came to be known, were responsible for keeping everyone happy — remaining impartial, keeping the peace and allowing the democratic right to protest unfold as long as it wasn't danger-

ous to people or property.

"Basically, we listened to their stories," Vardy says. "The mining company had been given permits from the government to go and do what it felt it had a legal justification to do, and on the other side, the Tahltan felt their aboriginal right entitled them to the land and the environmentalists were acting true to their convictions."

KEEPING THE PEACE

Once a detachment sign was posted on the wall of the tent, members officially established their presence in the area and worked hard to make both parties feel safe.

"The members were true leaders," says Supt. Lesley Bain of B.C.'s North District. "They used impartial messaging, kept things calm and maintained a peaceful presence. It was really impressive and made me very proud."

They also acted as informal mediators, often spending time at both camps to educate one party about what may upset the other and what to avoid doing.

At one point, the Tahltan camp heard rumours that Fortune Minerals was going to smash the protesters' signs that had been staked out around its property. Knowing that would not go over well with the Tahltan camp, members persuaded Fortune Minerals to keep the signs up.

"It would have been inflammatory and counterproductive," Booth says. "By leaving the signs up, it put good will towards us and the Tahltan folks and ultimately, towards Fortune Minerals, which was seen in a better light as a result."

Despite the real potential for violence, the fact that things remained peaceful in Klappan Valley proved how well the detachment members did their jobs to remain impartial, but also make their position clear that violence would not be tolerated.

"You really had to tread lightly and give and take as best you could, but also know that, if you had to do your job, you were going to do it," Vardy says. "It was peace-making in the purest sense. That's what it boils down to." ■

The Klappan Valley detachment allowed members to remain onsite during peaceful protests.



Courtesy Supt. Lesley Bain

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TO SHOOT OR NOT TO SHOOT?

SIMULATOR TRAINING GETS MEMBERS THINKING ON THEIR FEET

Last fall, the Gazette's editorial team was invited to try a use-of-force simulator at the RCMP's headquarters in Ottawa. Our group of non-police officers learned some of the challenges faced by police when arriving at an active scene and the many decision-making skills that come into play. Mallory Procutier writes about her experience, and looks at how seasoned police officers can benefit from using this tool.

My hands begin to sweat as soon as my fingers close around the grip of the pistol. It's a lot heavier than I imagined.

Suddenly, I'm standing in a school hallway and I hear screaming. One gunshot rings out through the halls, followed swiftly by another. I begin walking, and pass a young man face-down in a pool of blood. I don't see a gun, so I yell out to my imaginary fellow officers that the casualty isn't armed. We're moving too fast, I think to myself. I don't know what to do next.

The words "Don't shoot, don't shoot!" echo from the room at the end of the hall. I come face-to-face with a teenage girl who has her arm around a student she's taken hostage. She points her gun right at my face.

"Drop your weapon!" I say, probably too quietly. And then, as if I had said nothing at all, she shoots her hostage, and then me. The screen goes blank.

Sgt. Mirza Karimullah tells me to lower my firearm. He's been sitting behind a computer, controlling everything that just happened in this simulation. I turn around to face him at the back of the classroom in the basement of the RCMP's National Headquarters (NHQ) in Ottawa.

A senior policy analyst with NHQ's use-of-force section, Karimullah calmly explains there was a delay in my decision-making, but in my head, everything seemed to be moving at lightning speed.

This time, when the simulation begins, Cpl. Dave Falls, a former member of the Canadian Air Carrier Protective Program, stands at the front of the room between two wood pillars that are designed to simulate a shooting range.

He flows through the same scenario, shouting code words to his imaginary col-



Cpl. Dave Falls uses the simulator at National Headquarters to practise his perishable skills.

leagues as though he's done this a hundred times before. As soon as he reaches the active threat, he fires — a perfectly placed shot to neutralize the threat and rescue the hostages.

This simulator is meant to teach members about the proper use of force by putting them in a situation where they have to make critical decisions very quickly. It also helps maintain perishable skills, such as muscle memory, target acquisition and the articulation of a member's actions and decisions.

"Much like the RCMP's mandatory scenario-based training, this is far more dynamic than simply firing rounds at a piece of paper that doesn't move," Falls says. "The annual firearms qualification doesn't involve making decisions that relate to use-of-force interventions or their articulation, and anything I can do to stay switched on and remain in the game is important to me."

Karimullah walks me through a few more scenarios — an active shooter in the tunnels underneath Parliament Hill, an of-

fice building filled with gun-toting hostiles around every corner, and a jealous wife confronting her cheating husband in the Senate cafeteria.

Sometimes I have to use my firearm, and sometimes I can de-escalate the scenario by talking to the suspect and convincing him or her to put down the weapon.

Karimullah smiles because he can see how, in just three hours, my thought process has changed — I now understand how hard it is for members to make these decisions under pressure.

"We don't have any special training to know when a person will shoot a gun," he says. "You have to read the totality of the situation."

And for Falls, who's very proficient with a firearm, simulator training is just another part of the job.

"The simulator is a tremendous tool to demonstrate the challenges of making those split-second life-or-death decisions — especially for those who have not been exposed to that type of operational environment." ■

Mallory Procutier

COVER

DE-ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE



In 2011, the Edmonton Police Service collaborated with the University of Alberta to improve the interaction between police officers and those suffering from a mental illness.

PREVENTING VIOLENT ENCOUNTERS

DE-ESCALATION TRAINING FOR POLICE

By Yasmeen Krameddine and Peter Silverstone, University of Alberta, and David DeMarco and Robert Hassel, Edmonton Police Service

Police officers are now frequently the first-line responders for those suffering a mental health or addiction problem, but training in handling these cases isn't keeping up with the need.

To counter this, the Edmonton Police Service (EPS) teamed up with the University of Alberta to investigate a new way to improve outcomes. This research was led by Dr. Peter Silverstone and PhD candidate Yasmeen Krameddine, and the results to date are very positive.

The training focuses on improving interactions between police officers and individuals exhibiting various forms of mental illness. What makes it novel is that it uses actors to portray real-life scenarios, developed in close collaboration between police and the University of Alberta.

Police officers then interact with the actors in these scenarios. The goal is to increase skills in active verbal/non-verbal communication, de-escalation techniques, empathetic understanding and mental-

health knowledge.

This program is run as a one-day intensive training program with six scenarios: depression, addiction, schizophrenia, alcohol withdrawal, mania and a suicidal individual.

It allows officers to improve their interactions in real-life situations. One important part of the training is the use of professional actors, who give feedback to the officers after each scenario. This is in addition to feedback from more senior training officers.

The actors are trained to acknowledge both the positive and negative behaviours of each officer during the scenario, giving officers in-depth feedback on how the officer made the actor feel during the interaction. Feedback is crucial for officers to understand how their actions affect the emotions and behaviour of individuals they come in contact with. The actors were trained extensively on verbal and non-verbal communication techniques, and varied their

interactions depending on what the officer said or did.

For example, if the officer rolled his or her eyes, didn't listen to what was being said or tried to rush the actor, the actor would in turn behave more belligerently and less helpfully.

In contrast, if the officer looked engaged, gave the actor his or her attention and held eye contact, the actor would be more relaxed, helpful and supply all the information asked for.

Emphasis during the feedback for each scenario was on increasing the expression of empathic feelings and body language expressed to the actors in the scenarios.

After the scenario was complete, the feedback continued to highlight why the actor behaved in certain ways. This allowed police to have an outside perspective of their actions and body language, giving them a better view of how their actions or what they said impacted the way they are viewed.



An example of feedback from an actor would be “When you asked me my name, I felt like you actually cared about me, as a person, so I was comfortable in answering your questions” or “when you told me to calm down it made me angry because your tone suggested you didn’t care why I was so angry.”

To date, more than 650 police officers have completed this training. Results have been very positive.

Over a six-month period, EPS members demonstrated significant improvements in their communication, empathy and de-escalation skills, as observed by their supervising officers.

Additionally, there was an improvement in an officer’s ability to confidently recognize, respond and empathetically communicate with individuals in distress.

This supported a 41 per cent increase in the actual number and classification of mental health calls, with 19 per cent less time being spent on each call, thus an increase in efficiency. Over a six-month period, this led to cost savings of \$83,828.

Additionally, police reported feeling significantly more confident in their training and ability to interact with a mentally ill individual. There was also a large decrease (more than 40 per cent) in the use of any kind of force when interacting with mentally ill individuals, although there were other internal police initiatives that may have helped this latter figure.

These results show promise, and continue to emphasize the positive effects of this innovative mental health training initiative. What’s interesting about the research that was done, and the tips provided, is that little things can make a big difference.

Active listening and expressing empathy in both verbal and non-verbal communication improves outcomes for police officers, particularly when interacting with those who have mental illness and/or addiction problems.

This study also shows that these skills can be taught and improved, and that this leads to true-to-life training and real-life application. Feedback from officers taking part repeatedly said how realistic the scenarios were and that they were able to subsequently incorporate these skills into their daily tasks. ■

DOS AND DON'TS FOR TALKING TO PEOPLE WITH PSYCHIATRIC PROBLEMS

Try to **do** the following:

Ask individuals their name in a conversational manner, and offer yours. This small act of bonding can go a long way in developing an understanding and empathetic relationship.

Active listening. This is done by keeping attention and maintaining eye contact on the individual. You can also summarize what they say by repeating it back to them. Nod your head up and down to demonstrate strong non-verbal understanding. If you show you are actively listening, you will increase empathy with the subject, helping you gain any information and insights you need.

Use “open” body language. Body language is an unconscious form of communication that can escalate or de-escalate situations depending how it’s used. Keep a calm and relaxed posture, try not to cross your arms, smile and show you’re concerned. These behaviours allow the subject to feel safe and trusted.

Mirroring. Copy their body language if you can. It’s a powerful way of empathizing using non-verbal communication.

Label and confirm their feelings. Since feelings and emotions are frequently a major cause of problems, labelling their feelings shows you are listening, for example, “It sounds like you’re feeling very underappreciated.” Confirming also helps them see that their feelings are normal, such as “anyone would feel sad after losing their job.”

Focus on family. By asking the person about their family or friends, you can decrease their isolation and remind them that they have people in their life. Examples may be “do you have any children?” and “what would your children do if they no longer had you in their life?”

Tell them what you are doing and why. Research shows that if you explain to the individual what you have to do and why, there will be less chance of aggression and escalation. For example “I am going to have to arrest you because it looks like there are five warrants out for your arrest.”

Try **not** to do the following:

Telling them to “calm down” or “relax.” These words may make them angry because they feel they’re being talked down to and told what to do. This does the opposite of making someone feel calm.

Using dominating body language. Standing over an individual with your feet planted, hands on your waist or on your gun, can indicate control and power. This may make the person feel defensive, powerless and unimportant. They are less likely to be co-operative. If they’re sitting, try instead to crouch down to their level, so you’re able to talk to them as equals.

Improper mirroring. Copying isn’t always appropriate. If they’re shouting, don’t shout back, no matter the provocation. Try talking in a softer voice so they have to stop to listen to what you are saying. Also, if the person is scared or anxious, mirroring their body language can exaggerate anxiety and fear, which may escalate the situation. Keep a calm demeanor, even if they are not. Eventually and without realizing it, many subjects will copy your body language.

Telling them they shouldn’t feel a certain way. All feelings are real no matter how outrageous it sounds. Do not belittle what the subject is experiencing. For example, if a subject is hearing voices, don’t say “no, you don’t hear that.” Instead, ask more about the situation: “How long have you been hearing them?” or “How do they make you feel?”



Christine Ross



Simulator training is one of the best ways for cadets to get experience under their belts.

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COVER

PEACEFUL RESOLUTION

TEACHING CADETS TO BE CRITICAL THINKERS

When it comes to policing there is no such thing as black and white, and no two situations are the same. So how are cadets trained to de-escalate violent situations when there are so many shades of grey? Deidre Seiden spoke to Cpl. Allana Graham, Applied Police Science, Sgt. Jeff Comeau, Firearms Training Unit, Cpl. Mark Ward, Police Defensive Tactics and instructional designer Christine Hudy from Depot, the RCMP's training academy, to find out.

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS WHEN TRAINING CADETS IN THE DE-ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE?

AG: Our goal is for the cadets to use the techniques and communication skills that we give them as much as they can so they can use the least amount of intervention necessary when interacting with a person.

JC: We want them to be thinkers and think on their feet when making decisions and take the appropriate action to deal with the situation appropriately. In the end, one of the goals is that they can resolve a situation so that everybody, the police and the public, is safe. That would be ideal but it's not always the case.

CH: That's one of the reasons why we try and make sure that the cadets leave here as very solid critical thinkers because the chances of them encountering a situation in the field that's exactly the same as some-

thing we've put them through in training is very slim. In our world, de-escalation is a fairly critical principle. So critical in fact that it's one of the seven tactical principles that cadets learn across the curriculum and it's mostly focused in the police defensive tactics (PDT) world.

WHAT DOES DE-ESCALATION MEAN?

CH: The principle when we talk about de-escalation is to use whatever techniques are at a police officer's disposal to try and lessen or minimize the risk of harm to anyone involved in that situation.

MW: The goal is for everyone to be safe. We always have to look at the likelihood of harm in a given situation. Is there a chance that someone is going to be hurt? Is the police officer going to be hurt? Or will there be any type of damage to property? If there's no likelihood of harm, if there's no rush to move in to use force, then we're going to use that time to our benefit to de-escalate the situation by using our communication techniques with the parties involved to get some sort of peaceful resolution.

WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO TRAIN CADETS IN DE-ESCALATION?

JC: I think probably our scenario-based training model and format that we use here. We do simulator training and scenario-based training with actors. Role playing

gives the cadets the opportunity to have an actual person in front of them and have that back-and-forth communication.

CH: De-escalation is taught in the same way that a lot of our other core concepts are in that we always give cadets some basic introductory material to start with. Then we build on that knowledge throughout the rest of training. Plus we give them the opportunity to apply the techniques that are relevant to that concept in increasingly complex scenarios.

AG: It's fascinating how well the cadets learn the techniques. I think the reasons they learn it so well is because of how integrated all the different units are and how integrated the teachings are. We start that very early on with the readings and the classroom material. Then we go into the scenario training, starting with some of the more simple scenarios where it is a lot of the de-escalation and communication to resolve the scenario. Then they proceed to more difficult situations where actual intervention options are required.

MW: I agree with Jeff that the scenario-based training is probably the best way to get that experience under their belt. In PDT, we have certain scenarios set up where they have to tactically reposition, which is moving to a different position if it's going to make the situation safer or lessen the chance of violence.

WHY ISN'T THERE ONE COURSE TAUGHT ON THIS TOPIC?

CH: It's because we use an integrated, problem-based learning methodology in the design of the curriculum. With that particular educational approach, we don't divide the curriculum into subject-based material, which is your traditional way of teaching. We find that it's not a tremendously effective way to teach police officers. Using this methodology, the focus in the curriculum is on solving problems and that is more closely related to what real life is like. So everything they learn is within the context of the way they are actually going to be expected to apply when they are in the field.

JC: We also work together in the different units. Like in the firearms unit, when we're doing the judgement training in the simulators, PDT will join. I might be running a session and Mark comes and sits in on it. Then we both debrief and provide feedback to the cadets based on our background and experience with the different units.

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF THE TECHNIQUES THAT YOU TEACH?

AG: We teach them to use their listening skills as opposed to speaking all the time, active listening, not interrupting, letting the other person vent until they've gotten what they need to get out of their system.

JC: Body language can be very important as well. If one of our cadets jumped out of the police car with the baton, waving it around, that would set a very different tone than someone who took the time to consider the risk and act accordingly based on the situational factors.

AG: Something else that we speak to is managing our own stress when dealing with situations. It's about taking a moment, taking some deep breaths, thinking about what the situation is and that people aren't necessarily attacking you personally.

JC: We challenge them and teach them to ask themselves these questions when they get into situations. We want our cadets to hit the ground as Mounties as critical thinkers.

HOW ARE CADETS TRAINED TO DEFUSE A POTENTIALLY TENSE SITUATION, SUCH AS A TRAFFIC STOP?

AG: We go through scenarios based on officer-violator contacts. A lot of defusing a potentially tense situation happens during the introduction. It's based on tone, where you're standing and body language when you're speaking to that person. You're in control of the situation and you're not letting the person you've stopped run the interaction. That's the first thing we do. And to keep it concise and professional.

JC: Exactly. Very early on the cadets are introduced to our core values and we want to see those modelled for the rest of their careers. Professionalism, compassion and respect are part of those core values and that's what we want to see from cadets when they are interacting, whether it's in a simulated scenario where they're talking to an image on a screen or an actor or role-player or the cadets' role playing for each other, we want that behaviour demonstrated.

MW: When cadets are introduced to those situations, we want them to be in control of themselves, to try and manage their own

stress and their own anger. Allana hit on that earlier. Sometimes the goal of some people is to have an argument or an all-out fist fight with the police officer, so the police officer has to check themselves and make sure they're in control of their own faculties.

ARE CADETS TRAINED TO RESPOND TO CALLS INVOLVING PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS?

AG: There are some readings, videos, classroom exercises and specific scenarios on dealing with people with mental illness. It doesn't matter who or what is involved, we always do a risk assessment. We take into account the situational factors and our observations when dealing with anybody, it doesn't matter who it is. If we have more information on the subject, the better it helps us in our dealings with them.

CH: Regardless of who that person you're dealing with is and what circumstances have led them to that point, if you have to control a situation, the situation has to be controlled to make sure that public and police safety are maintained.

HOW CAN THIS KNOWLEDGE HELP DE-ESCALATE A POTENTIALLY VIOLENT SITUATION?

MW: If you think about it, it's just another tool in the toolbox for the police officer. There are different approaches to handling situations. If I'm dealing with a person and it's not working, I have a plan B or plan C or plan D to fall back on. And I'll go through that cycle of whatever I have in my toolbox to help the situation. The more skill sets you have, the better prepared you're going to be. ■

Cadets are given the opportunity to apply de-escalation techniques in increasingly complex scenario-based training exercises.



Chrystal Kruszelnicki



CRISIS INTERVENTION TRAINING

HOW TO RECOGNIZE AND RESPOND TO A PERSON IN CRISIS

By Cst. Mark Kowalchuk, York Regional Police

It's 3 a.m. and you've been dispatched to a weapons call involving a man with a knife acting strangely in the lobby of a local area hotel. You're the first officer on scene and are trying to assess the situation.

As you approach the lobby, you see the man pacing back and forth talking to someone yet there's no one around. You wonder why he's acting this way. What's his intent? Is he in crisis? How do you get him into custody? These are all very important questions going through the mind of any first responder in a similar situation.

Front-line officers must have the knowledge, skills and abilities to deal with these kinds of situations.

In 2010, the Training and Education Bureau of York Regional Police (YRP) in Ontario recognized a need to offer more training to its front-line officers who respond to emotionally disturbed persons who are in crisis. As a result, YRP introduced a Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) course.

According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, mental illness will indirectly affect all Canadians at some point in their lives either through a family member,

friend or colleague. The centre also suggests that one in five Canadians will personally experience a clinical mental illness while many others struggle with stress and grief on an ongoing basis.

Most often, when someone is in crisis, it's a police officer, paramedic or firefighter who will respond to the call.

CRISIS OR CRIMINAL?

Traditional police training teaches officers to respond to behaviours and perceived actions. But a person in crisis can often exhibit the same types of behaviours and actions as someone intent on committing a criminal act.

One example of this kind of behaviour is damaging property. Someone may intend to damage or destroy another person's belongings or their actions may be the direct result of an illness that prevents them from communicating with others.

Another example is a man armed with a knife who may have the intent to hurt others or he may be protecting himself as the result of a paranoid delusional thought he's experiencing.

Knowing how to differentiate between the two is critical. Education and understanding can teach police officers how to recognize the signs and symptoms of a person in crisis and set them apart from the behaviour of a person whose actions are deliberate and calculated, and not caused by an overwhelming emotional state.

For the man described in the introduction who was pacing and talking to himself, training can help identify whether he might be experiencing paranoid delusional thoughts, which are often associated with schizophrenia.

Understanding behavioural cues associated with schizophrenia and other mental illnesses can have a profound effect on how a police officer analyzes, perceives and reacts to that person.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

CIT helps create a better understanding of the symptoms of a person in crisis and allows officers to formulate better decisions when determining a plan of action.

Based on the Memphis Model, which is a pre-arrest jail diversion program developed

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SIX TIPS FOR RESPONDING TO CRISIS CALLS

- Consider eliminating the use of emergency lighting and sound equipment, and keep the volume of portable radio transmissions low. The added sensory stimulus can elevate a person's already agitated state and make communication and establishing rapport with them more difficult.
- Speak calmly and slowly, and keep instructions simple and direct. Elevated voices and rapid speech cadence can elevate tensions in your interactions with the person in crisis. Complicated instructions lead to confusion and elevated anxiety.
- Give them space. Respecting the personal space of the person in crisis is essential to reducing their tension.
- Let them talk. This can be a hard concept for first responders to encourage while attempting to control a situation. However, it can reduce anxiety and tension, and have a positive impact on the overall outcome of the incident.
- Share in the control. Whenever possible, allow the person in crisis to feel that they have some control in decisions that are being made. Create understanding about your reason for being there to allow them the opportunity to offer their input about the solution.
- Create a positive experience. The way that you handle this incident will have an impact on future incidents. A good outcome will have a positive effect on future interactions between the emotionally disturbed person and first responders.



in the United States at the University of Memphis, CIT is more than just mental health awareness training. It not only educates officers about mental illnesses, but teaches them communication and de-escalation strategies when responding to crisis calls involving the mentally ill.

The key to preventing a use-of-force encounter is to calm down the situation, and this can often be achieved through effective communication with the individual in crisis. Stress, anxiety, fear, tension and anger must be reduced to make this possible.

Effective communication can be better accomplished when the officer relates and responds to the underlying emotions rather than the associated behaviours.

The 40-hour training involves community partners in delivering the program. Officers receive first-hand information from mental health professionals as well as the patients themselves.

Education on major psychiatric illnesses, autism spectrum disorder, psychotropic medications and their side effects, the stages of crisis development, de-escalation and communication strategies, suicide prevention and post-traumatic stress disorder are all covered during the week.

Course participants have an opportunity to visit local area hospitals and mental health facilities to observe and interact with professionals and patients in a controlled clinical setting.

These visits are a unique opportunity for officers to interact with patients when they're well and participate in open forum discussion groups where they receive valuable feedback from the patients. Past interactions with police during crisis events are discussed, including which strategies worked and which did not.

Learning assessments are made at the end of the week when officers take part in controlled simulated scenarios.

To date, all sworn members of York Regional Police have received a four-hour condensed version of the 40-hour curriculum with the goal of providing the full 40-hour curriculum to all front-line uniformed members. Currently, 200 frontline officers — 13 per cent of the York Regional Police — have received the complete training.

PUTTING TRAINING INTO ACTION

Those who have received the training have provided positive feedback about how it has



York Regional Police recognized a need to offer more training to its front-line officers who respond to emotionally disturbed persons in crisis.

helped them perform calls for service involving the mentally ill. A recent hire of YRP who just completed the training wrote the following:

“The training has had a positive effect on the way I’ve been able to deal with EDPs (emotionally disturbed persons).

My first EDP call was at 3 a.m. on my first night shift.

The man had left his house and wanted to catch the bus to the Markville mall because he had left his truck there. His family advised the truck wasn’t there and that this behaviour was unusual.

My coach and I found the man at the bus stop and I used my training to talk him into going home. We kept back to ensure he felt safe.

I spoke calmly and kept him talking, and we were able to build a rapport with him so that we could walk him back home. Without the training, I would have made mistakes that would have frightened him into not trusting me.”

A member of YRP’s communication staff who attended the training had this to say:

“Tonight, on my first night shift since the course, I was able to actually use some of the knowledge that the guest speakers taught. At about 11:30 p.m., I received a 911 call from a schizophrenic man, who had told me he was in a bus shelter behind Hillcrest Mall, stopped taking his meds, was hearing voices and wanted the police to do something to help him.

I spent 20 minutes speaking to this man on the phone before the first unit arrived,

and the information I received in the course was very helpful.

Firstly, what I learned about the horrible side effects of some medications helped me to understand what this individual was experiencing.

Secondly, I learned that sometimes we should listen rather than talk all the time. I did this for a good part of the call, paraphrasing what the caller was saying or saying nothing at all.

Despite his anxiety, he continued to talk to me. I believe that we established a good rapport during the 20-minute call and I credit what I learned in crisis intervention training with being able to do this.”

EDP calls are common in today’s world of policing. As many organizations try to erase the stigma associated with mental illness, police agencies must follow their lead.

Training and education creates understanding, leads to higher-quality service for the community and helps reduce the stigma in our own professional culture. CIT is the start of that education. ■

York Regional Police (YRP) serves more than 1.1 million residents within the Region of York in Ontario, Canada. The service has more than 1,500 sworn members and 500 civilian staff.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
WWW.YRP.CA



Having dialogue police officers in a crowd can provide them with the opportunity to see police behaviour from the demonstrators' point of view.

OPEN DIALOGUE SWEDEN'S APPROACH TO POLICING PROTESTS

By Stefan Holgersson, PhD, police sergeant, Stockholm Police Department, Sweden

In 2001, the EU Summit in Gothenburg developed into something of a national trauma for Sweden.

A large number of police officers and demonstrators were injured and violent confrontations caused extensive damage. Police opened fire on demonstrators.

The government ordered a special committee to review what went wrong, and their report shed light on the importance of facilitating dialogue between the police and political organizations and other opinion groups.

This led to the creation of the dialogue police in Stockholm. Police negotiators were asked to do the dialogue work. They concluded that as long as it's more advantageous for demonstrators to choose aggressive techniques to reach their goals, they will always choose an aggressive approach.

They felt it was important to build a dialogue so that protest groups would see the benefits of following the rules of democracy rather than doing the opposite. Police can ensure that such a condition exists.

Fulfilling this goal turned out to be challenging, as it was met with resistance both inside and outside the police organization.

CREATING A DIALOGUE

Dialogue involves communication between two parties rather than one party telling the other one what to do. The dialogue police officers tried to mediate between the commanders' interests and the goals of the demonstrators in order to control the demonstration. But within the police organization, the dialogue concept challenged some basic assumptions.

One opinion is that threats to law and order should be met with force and any attempts at dialogue showed weakness. Furthermore, when the dialogue police officers tried explaining the demonstrators' viewpoint to commanders and advocating for their interests, they were seen as betraying police.

On the other hand, activists perceived the dialogue police as intelligence officers who were gathering information to report back to police. Some also felt the dialogue officers were there to trick them.

Building trust, openness and transparency was critical. The dialogue police were gradually accepted both internally and externally but only once it became clear to commanders and demonstrators that the chance of each reaching their respective goals was higher with the presence of dia-

logue officers.

The resistance against dialogue police also came from another group: politicians. By using force, those in power can avoid engaging in the social and economic issues that often cause protests. Even if dialogue work can be negative for politicians who do not want to get engaged in a matter and want the police to sort it out, the dialogue work can still prevent an escalation of violence.

Trying to resolve protests with violence can lead to catastrophic results. In the long run, those who advocate for a democratic solution have much to gain if police have a solid dialogue police function in place.

A COMPLEX PROCESS

It's possible to see dialogue police work as a process divided into tasks that should occur before, during and after an event. These tasks are not only significant for a specific event but can also affect subsequent events.

Minimal communication between police and demonstrators can easily give rise to misunderstandings that can lead to confrontation.

Dialogue before an event can contribute to order since it can open the doors to different kinds of agreements. Contact can



also help reduce the risk of stereotyping on both sides.

Before an event, the police and demonstrators can discuss a number of issues, such as transportation to and from the event, first aid, meeting places and various set times. Agreements can even be made ahead of time about arrests for civil disobedience actions to minimize violence but at the same time get media attention, if that's the goal for demonstrators.

During a demonstration, dialogue police have a lot to accomplish.

The position taken up by dialogue police officers in a crowd can provide them with a good opportunity to see police behaviour from the demonstrators' point of view. For example, a large number of orders are issued to protestors during an operation. These orders can easily be misunderstood or misinterpreted.

In a chaotic situation, police actions that are caused by thoughtlessness or misapprehension can easily provoke a counter action.

Observations made in connection with dialogue police work show that it's difficult for a protest "ringleader" to influence a large crowd without "help" from the police. Militant activists are well aware of the need to get "aid" from the police and their tactics include provoking the police to attack the crowd.

Because dialogue police have considerable knowledge of both the demonstrators' and police agency's plans, along with considerable awareness of the current situation, this enables them to analyze the likely consequences of police actions or non-actions.

The spatial location of the dialogue police officers can give them a leg up in terms of their awareness of critical circumstances in a specific situation. In this context, the dialogue police have the important role of ensuring that information channels to the police command are short. This designated function makes it easier for participants to know where to turn to ensure that information will immediately reach the commander.

After an event, the dialogue police can provide feedback both to police and demonstrators and can also influence the police to make statements in media that can be positive for coming events.

The dialogue police gain extremely good insight into different groups and the prevailing values in those groups. This means that they're in a good position to understand what effect police actions can have on these groups in the short term and the long term, and provide advice accordingly.

BEWARE THE PITFALLS

A fruitful dialogue takes time to build

but even when it works well, violence can still occur. Both internally and externally, those who are against the aim of dialogue will try to discredit dialogue work and may even try to get the dialogue to fail.

There's another problem when something is successful: it risks being over-used without reflection. In Stockholm, the dialogue concept was tried in preventing hooliganism in sports. Unfortunately, hooligans have a completely different driving force compared to those who want to create opinion for an idea.

Making provocative media statements is another pitfall. This very problem resulted in damaging the relationship between police and the football clubs in Stockholm. It's important to be humble and to realize that there's no universal solution.

For external credibility, it's unfortunate if dialogue police officers are perceived as intelligence gatherers, as this isn't their role. Dialogue police work can provide valuable information through an open and transparent dialogue if we remember why the concept was introduced.

Dialogue police work is fraught with potential problems and these must be addressed if the dialogue concept is to reach its full potential. ■

POLICING DEMONSTRATIONS

When a group of 50 youths left the Capital Pride Parade in Ottawa and headed towards the Russian Embassy for an impromptu demonstration, Cst. Laurette Jones and other members of the RCMP's Demonstration and Special Events Unit (DSEU) arrived on scene just minutes beforehand.

Established to respond to the high number of demonstrations and special events in the nation's capital, the DSEU's job is to ensure public safety and protect the sites designated under its federal mandate during protests and special events. This includes Parliament Hill, the Supreme Court and embassies.

The protesters intended to tie rainbow ribbons to the embassy's fence in a political

art protest. The DSEU had to act fast as their mandate includes the protection of the embassy under the Vienna Convention.

While the general public sees the uniformed member in action only on the day of an event, Jones says that between doing the background research, reaching out to organizers and liaising with partners, most of the unit's work is done in the weeks leading up to it to ensure a peaceful protest.

"If we work really hard ahead of time, we see the payoff the day of the event," says Jones.

At the Russian Embassy, Jones asked to speak with the organizer.

"I was able to meet with him right there to discuss his plans, and, along with

our partners in the Ottawa Police Service, we came up with an alternative," says Jones.

She says it's their job to respect people's fundamental rights and freedom to their opinions, to their expression and to peaceful assembly, no matter what their own beliefs are.

Rather than fixing anything to the fence, it was determined that they were able to put the ribbons on the trees in the park adjacent to the embassy.

"Their rights are still respected, they get to express themselves and they feel supported in that role, but they are still respecting the law," she says.

To Jones, it was all in a day's work.

— Deidre Seiden

just THE FACTS

CYBERBULLYING



Bullying is no longer restricted to the playgrounds and school hallways—social media sites and cellphones have allowed taunts to enter the cyber world and the victims' home.

Cyberbullying is the use of the Internet or other information technology to harm or harass an individual through the deliberate and/or repetitive posting of information about that individual.

Instances of cyberbullying include someone posting an embarrassing photo of someone else, breaking into someone else's social media account and pretending to be them, and using

information found online to harass an individual at home, school or work.

It can also take the forms of gossip, exclusion, impersonation, harassment, stalking, threatening and trickery (tricking someone into revealing secrets online that are then shared).

The most common form of cyberbullying is when someone takes a private communication, such as an email, an instant message or a text message, and forwards it to others or posts it publicly.

In 2011, Kids Help Phone identified that

cyberbullying occurs most frequently on social networking sites. Text messaging has replaced email as the second most common platform.

Youth aged 13 to 17 send more than 2,000 text messages each per month.

The nature of cyberbullying has evolved. In 2007, the most frequent online bullying experiences were youth getting called bad names and being threatened. In 2011, young people experienced the sharing of unwanted photos, videos and altered images.

The majority of youth (65 per cent) say that they would tell a friend over a parent if they were being cyberbullied. They don't feel that reporting cyberbullying to authorities is effective.

Cyberbullying can have a range of psychological effects on a victim, including anxiety, poor concentration and feelings of hopelessness. Perpetrators can also experience the impact of their actions and may be at risk of relationship problems, substance abuse or delinquency.

Both cyberbullying victims and perpetrators are twice as likely as their peers to attempt suicide.

Approximately 15 to 35 per cent of youth confront their cyberbullies and ask them to stop.

Only around 40 per cent of victims of cyberbullying know their perpetrator.

Around 85 per cent of those cyberbullied at home are also bullied at school.

More than 66 per cent of ninth graders in Canada have access to the Internet from their own bedrooms.

Less than one in five cyberbullying incidents are reported to police.



MAKING WAVES

CANADIAN POLICE BRING TECHNOLOGY TO HAITI

By Sigrid Forberg

When he first arrived for his United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in August 2012, RCMP member Cst. Carl-Eric Lippke was assigned a difficult task.

With extensive maritime experience — more than 500 days at sea — it wasn't the actual work of helping train the Haitian Coast Guard (GCH) that he found challenging. It was the fact that they had no funds to conduct sufficient training exercises for the GCH recruits.

Hands-on experience, Lippke explains, is crucial when learning how to operate a boat.

And with the two pillars of the mission — maritime development and operational capacity-building — working in silos, Lippke and his peers knew they had their work cut out for them.

SETTING A STANDARD

Working with Sgt. François Dubeau from the Sûreté du Québec (SQ) on the development side, the two set out to find a way to better integrate the different functions and roles within the mission as a whole.

They found that because there was very little communication between the teams, that there was a lack of consistency in what trainees were being taught. Contributing to this problem was that, every time new members were deployed, the training slate was wiped clean.

"When your mission ends, someone else comes and takes over," says Lippke. "We wanted to be sure there was a certain standard and that everyone could operate the same way so that when they have to respond to a call, they're going to get there and get the job done safely."

With the help of their colleagues from the various areas, they developed a standard training manual for the GCH. The two officers devoted countless hours to completing it. But once it was finished, they knew they still had to figure out how to get the recruits hands-on practice with boats.

A SHOT OF GENIUS

With no budget for fuel, Lippke and Dubeau knew they had to get creative.



Cst. Carl-Eric Lippke (left) and Sgt. François Dubeau built a boat simulator while on a training mission in Haiti.

"We had very few options," says Dubeau. "We thought about designing an automated navigation simulator, crazy as the idea seemed, but from the very start we knew it could cost thousands of dollars and that it would be impossible to get one in Haiti."

So after 200-plus hours of research, they decided to fund and build it themselves. Three other Canadian members pooled their money and they were able to purchase a simulator that struck the fine balance between affordable and realistic.

Building the simulator took four months from start to finish. They even went out and found the console from a decommissioned boat to make it as realistic as possible. At the end, when they presented it to the head of the GCH, his first words according to Dubeau were, "It's incredible."

"The best part is that it didn't cost them anything," says Lippke. "We took a chance buying it out of our own pockets, but we said, 'Why not? Let's just do it and, well, if it works, it's a shot of genius.'"

CONTINUED CO-OPERATION

Once they had the simulator set up, they

realized that even though it imitates changes in tide, weather and waves, it was still just an imitation. So they set out to find a way to bring the GCH trainees out on the water for hands-on training.

Lippke and Dubeau reached out to Leonardo Luz from the Uruguayan Navy and the chief of Maritime Operations of the military component in MINUSTAH. Luz was able to co-ordinate a new training standard that involves five weeks of training and mentoring recruits on everything from the rules of the sea to navigation.

"We work in our country with the coast guard, so it's very easy for us to help because the main tasks of the coast guards around the world are the same," says Luz.

Leaving in August 2013, Lippke was satisfied with the new system they'd left the GCH, and although he'd spent his year passing along his experience, he felt like he took away a lot as well.

"The beauty of it all is that it's not just that you're there to help the Haitians, you're also there to learn from the other police forces, see how they do things and how they interact to learn from them." ■

Courtesy Cst. Carl-Eric Lippke



FAKE USERS REAP REAL GAINS

FRAUDULENT ACCOUNTS ABOUND ON SOCIAL NETWORKS

By Kurt Thomas and Dr. Chris Grier, University of California, Berkeley, and the International Computer Science Institute

Online social networks such as Twitter, Facebook and Google+ dominate the daily activities of many Internet users, and cyber criminals have adapted their strategies to engage users within these “walled gardens.”

Just like regular users, criminals need accounts for these web services to carry out their monetization strategy effectively. This has led to a proliferation of fraudulent accounts — automatically generated credentials used to disseminate scams, phishing and malware.

Twitter’s Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) filings estimate that fewer than five per cent of their users are fake. Similarly, Facebook estimates its own fraudulent account population at 1.5 per cent of its active user base, and the problem extends to nearly all web services beyond just social networks.

This article describes an investigation by a team of researchers from the University of California, Berkeley, the International Computer Science Institute, and George Mason University into the underground market that specializes in creating bulk Twitter credentials, studying how it operates, the impact the market has on Twitter spam levels, and exactly how merchants circumvent automated registration barriers.

The researchers infiltrated the account marketplace and monitored 27 merchants selling bulk Twitter credentials through web storefronts, blackhat forums and freelance labour sites — typically for a price of \$40 per 1,000 accounts.

With the express permission of Twitter, the team conducted a longitudinal study of these merchants and purchased a total of 121,027 fraudulent Twitter accounts on a bi-weekly basis over 10 months from June 2012 to April 2013.

The team showed that underground merchants thoroughly understand Twitter’s existing defences against automated registration and, as a result, can generate millions of accounts with little disruption in availability or instability in pricing.

The 27 merchants tracked rely on CAPTCHA-solving services; fraudulent

email credentials from Hotmail, Yahoo, and mail.ru; and tens of thousands of hosts located around the globe to provide a diverse pool of IP addresses to evade blacklisting and throttling.

Overall, the merchants were responsible for automatically generating 10 to 20 per cent of all accounts later flagged by Twitter as spam, with merchants pulling in a yearly revenue of between \$127,000 and \$459,000 from the sale of accounts.

With Twitter’s co-operation, the researchers helped disable 95 per cent of all the accounts controlled by the tracked merchants, depleting their stockpiles before the credentials could fall into the hands of spammers.

HOW DEFENCES FAIL

At the center of the for-profit spam and malware ecosystem is an underground market that connects Internet miscreants with parties selling a range of specialized products and services including CAPTCHA solving, Internet Protocol (IP) proxies and bulk email accounts. The researchers found that many of these underground services were employed by criminals to subvert Twitter’s existing defences against bulk account generation.

CAPTCHA solving: Twitter attempts to throttle registrations originating from a single IP address by requiring a CAPTCHA solution. The research team examined the CAPTCHA solution attempts for the merchants and found only eight per cent of CAPTCHAs were successfully solved.

Such accuracy rates are indicative of automated CAPTCHA-solving services that can be purchased from the underground. Even though CAPTCHAs successfully blocked 92 per cent of fake registrations on Twitter, account merchants were still able to register millions of accounts over the course of time, simply playing a game of odds.

Email confirmation: Twitter requires that new accounts go through an email challenge-response, or email confirmation step, immediately upon registration. During this process, Twitter sends a URL to the

provided email address with a secret token. If the URL is successfully clicked, the account is considered confirmed. Accounts that don’t go through the confirmation step exist, but have a reduced set of capabilities for interacting with other Twitter users.

The researchers found that 77 per cent of all the accounts they purchased were confirmed with a unique email address. Merchants relied on bulk access to Hotmail, Yahoo, and mail.ru accounts to seed Twitter registrations, all of which are currently available for about \$4 to \$6 per 1,000 from the underground economy.

While the ability of merchants to verify email addresses may raise questions of the process’s validity, the researchers found that email confirmation positively impacts the price of accounts. Merchants charged 20 per cent more for confirmed Twitter accounts compared to their non-confirmed counterparts, effectively bundling the cost of an email account into the cost of a new Twitter credential.

IP addresses: Unique IP addresses are a fundamental resource for registering accounts in bulk. Without a diverse IP pool, fraudulent accounts would fall easy prey to network-based blacklisting and throttling.

The researchers found that the largest fake account storefronts had tens of thousands of unique daily IPs at their disposal, which belonged to compromised hosts located around the globe. Even the smallest merchants had thousands of IPs on hand to avoid network-based detection. The most popular sources of abused IP addresses included India, Ukraine, Turkey, Thailand and Mexico. IP addresses from these regions are amongst the least expensive from the underground, with prices ranging from \$6 to \$10 per 1,000 hosts.

MEASURING THE IMPACT

In order to estimate the overall impact the underground marketplace for fake accounts had on Twitter spam, the researchers leveraged their domain knowledge gained through infiltration to develop a fingerprint of the software merchants use to automati-



cally register accounts.

Through a combination of machine learning and automated heuristics, the team engineered a system capable of detecting 95 per cent of all fake accounts registered by the underground market with a precision of 99.9942 per cent.

With Twitter's co-operation, the team applied their detection framework to every account registered on Twitter between April 2012 and April 2013. In total, the system flagged several million accounts as fraudulent (the exact number being sensitive and as such, private). Of the accounts that researchers detected, 73 per cent had been sold and later used to disseminate spam, while the remaining 37 per cent remained dormant and were yet to be purchased.

The researchers co-ordinated with Twitter to gauge how substantial an impact the merchants had on Twitter spam levels over time. They found that, at its peak, the underground marketplace was responsible for registering 60 per cent of all accounts that would go on to be suspended by Twitter for abusive behaviour.

During more typical periods of activity, the merchants were responsible for registering 10 to 20 per cent of all spam accounts caught by Twitter. For their efforts,

the researchers estimate the 27 merchants generated combined revenues of between \$127,000 and \$459,000 from the sale of accounts over a one-year period.

As many of the merchants also actively sold Google, Facebook, Hotmail and other accounts, this represents only a fraction of their overall revenue.

TAKING ACTION

In order to disrupt the underground marketplace for accounts, the research team worked with Twitter's Anti-spam, SpamOps and Trust and Safety teams to disable all of the several million accounts the researchers flagged as spam.

Throughout this process, the team monitored the underground market to track any potential fallout and recovery, including an inability to purchase working credentials or a rise in prices.

Immediately after Twitter took action, buyaccs.com — one of the largest purveyors of Twitter accounts — put up a notice in Russian on their website stating, "Временно не продаем аккаунты Twitter.com," roughly translating to "Temporarily not selling Twitter.com accounts."

Another merchant responded to a request by the team to purchase new accounts

with "All of the stock got suspended ... Not just mine ... It happened with all of the sellers ... Don't know what Twitter has done ..." While Twitter's initial intervention was a success, the market has begun to recover. Immediately after Twitter suspended all of the merchant's stockpiles, the researchers attempted to purchase 14,067 new accounts and found 90 per cent of them were now invalid due to Twitter's actions.

Repeating the process two weeks later, the researchers found only 54 per cent of 6,879 newly purchased accounts were invalid, indicating that merchants had begun to register new accounts to replenish their depleted stockpiles.

As the mass-suspension conducted by the researchers and Twitter was performed only once, merchants could simply resume their operations, abusing the same weaknesses in Twitter's automated account detection to register new fake accounts.

As such, any long-term disruption of the account marketplace requires both increasing the cost of registration through improved automation barriers and integrating the detection framework that was developed into Twitter's registration process to enable real-time detection of fake accounts. ■



LATEST RESEARCH IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

The following are excerpts from recent research related to justice and law enforcement and reflect the views and opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of the organizations for which they work. To access the full reports, please visit the website links at the bottom of each summary.

MALE SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ABUSE AND ASSAULT: THEIR EXPERIENCES

By Susan McDonald and Adamira Tijerino

This study examines the experiences of male survivors of both child sexual abuse (CSA) and adult sexual assault (ASA).

Researchers worked closely with staff at two men’s support centres. Staff provided input on the survey tool, helped recruit participants and provided follow-up counselling to participants if they requested it.

Letters of information and consent were provided to participants. Interviewers conducted a total of 59 semi-structured interviews, each interview lasting on average 45 minutes.

FINDINGS

Of the 59 participants, two-thirds were between 36 and 54 years of age and three-quarters of the sample were Caucasian. There was a range of different levels of education from having completed elementary school to having a graduate degree. One third of the sample reported having a physical disability. And almost half had an annual income of less than \$25,000.

Almost all of the participants reported having been sexually abused as a child and almost all of those said that the perpetrator had been someone they trusted, including family members. A smaller proportion reported having been sexually assaulted as an adult, with the majority having been victimized multiple times and the majority having also been sexually abused as a child.

Participants spoke of how few supports they had as children and how the men’s centres were their main source of support today. Almost all participants spoke of having suffered depression and some suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder.

Just over a quarter of those who had ex-

perienced CSA reported the abuse to police or told another individual who reported it. Two out of the 10 men who had experienced ASA reported it to police or told another individual who reported it.

Many reported the abuse/assault because they felt they needed to take action or it was recommended by a counsellor or family member or friend, or they needed to release feelings. The main reasons for not reporting to police included thinking that no one would believe them, feelings of shame, they didn’t know they could report to police and there was no family support behind them.

Participants recommended that government and/or advocates raise awareness about the issue as they believe that there are still a lot of myths about sexual abuse/assault of males, as children and as adults.

Along these lines, participants also recommended training for all criminal justice professionals on the dynamics of sexual abuse/assault as well as interviewing and investigative techniques.

TO ACCESS THE FULL REPORT, PLEASE VISIT: WWW.JUSTICE.GC.CA

DEVELOPING AN EVIDENCE-BASE FOR LOCAL POLICING IN SCOTLAND

By Dr. Elizabeth Aston and Professor Kenneth Scott

Some aspects of local policing have received considerable attention in recent policing literature. Community policing, in particular, has been the focus of much academic research both nationally and internationally.

Local policing covers a multitude of activities in which the police in Scotland are expected to engage. These include response policing, policing the “nighttime” economy, roads policing, volume crime investigation, maintaining order at major public events, executing warrants and other criminal justice-related duties, dealing with local disorder and anti-social behaviour, and some aspects of public protection.

The knowledge exchange project that this report is based on was funded through

the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR)’s IMPAKT (Improving Police Action through Knowledge Transfer) program as an extension of the research undertaken by the SIPR post-doctoral research study on local policing in Scotland.

The new project was designed to build on this material by providing research support to the reform process in Scottish policing, in particular the work carried out by local police.

The scoping activities generated by the initial research overview identified some longer-term possibilities for using research evidence in ways that could both contribute to the emerging themes within local policing, and provide a basis for the development of new models and practices in local policing.

A database was created and populated with information from a wide range of key sources. It contains a series of short headline messages arising from these sources, which are linked to summaries of the original material and linked back to the original sources in full.

The main task now for the Scottish Local Policing Evidence Database is to test its value to Police Scotland, the Scottish Police Authority and community partners as Scotland’s policing landscape moves from one structural merger to one of ongoing police reform and continuous improvement.

TO ACCESS THE FULL REPORT, PLEASE VISIT: WWW.SIPR.AC.UK

YOUTH GANGS IN A REMOTE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY: IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL AUTHORITY AND FAMILY SUPPORT

By Teresa Cunningham, Bill Ivory, Richard Chenhall, Rachael McMahon and Kate Senior

The Indigenous community of Wadeye in the Northern Territory, Australia, has been described as a community under siege from continual gang violence.

The gangs appear to have emerged in the early 1980s and are generally defined



Researchers spoke with male survivors of sexual abuse about their experiences and levels of support from community agencies and law enforcement.

through youth aligning themselves along cultural, clan and family affiliations into groups with contemporary Americanized gang characteristics, symbolic links with heavy metal music and clearly defined turf boundaries.

Although they do engage in some relatively minor drug (predominantly cannabis) distribution for profit, the rationale for these groups appears to be either as a provocative and offensive structure, or at other times as a defence mechanism.

This paper presents data from a survey of young people who were involved in gangs in Wadeye and interviews with gang members who were incarcerated in Darwin Correctional Centre.

THE EMERGENCE OF YOUTH GANGS IN WADEYE

Between 2002 and 2004, there were 14 distinct gangs operating in the Wadeye region. Ages of members in the younger gangs generally range from about seven to 14 years old. However, with the older and more powerful groups, the ages range from about 15 to 25 years.

In terms of the impact of gang membership on family and community networks, the causal model of gang development suggests that gang membership usually results in the dislocation of gang members from their family and community.

The weakening of conventional bonds elevates risk for antisocial behaviour and the internalization of antisocial values. The

youth gangs in Wadeye have evolved in an environment that is characterized by substantial social and economic disadvantage.

The community is very much at a crossroads in addressing this disadvantage in the sense that, although identified as a community that will be provided with increased infrastructure and program funding, these initiatives will only benefit the community if adult dependency on welfare is addressed and the working-age population are provided with opportunities to become providers rather than just consumers of resources.

The formation of gangs, which may have benefits of social capital for their members, may be considered to be as much a response to this community environment as the cause of it.

Gangs are generally linked with criminal behaviour, even though they may consist of members who only spend time together hanging out rather than those gangs who engage in violent, serious crime.

This Wadeye case study provides an additional perspective to the generally held perceptions of gang-type activity, such as illegal drug use and violent behaviour, in that it examines what support gangs may provide in terms of social networks for young people as they grapple with progression to adulthood in a turbulent multicultural environment.

DISCUSSION

The criminal aspects of gang membership may be less important than such factors as

identity construction, experiments with leadership and perseverance of knowledge about culture and history.

Differences were also found between the values of the older established gangs and those of the emergent gangs. Members of the older gangs based their gang structure on traditional culture and values; they saw their membership as part of a tribe rather than a gang. Younger gangs were more focused on western attitudes and values.

The continuing importance of the family for gang members and the fact that members said family and friends were the most important thing about the gang points to the need to treat aboriginal youth within their family context, given that the gang can be so central to young people's lives.

Interventions therefore need to encompass the perspective of gang as family and therefore to promote it, not as a problem entirely, but as a family network.

The implications for youth justice policies and programs are clear — supporting local elders and younger adult mentors to guide young people into positive activities for gangs to undertake will be more fruitful than directing energies at costly incarceration and management of recidivism. ■

TO ACCESS THE FULL
REPORT, PLEASE VISIT:
WWW.AIC.GOV.AU



OPEN LINES OF COMMUNICATION

MOBILE APPLICATIONS BRING POLICE, COMMUNITY TOGETHER

By Sigrid Forberg

A few years ago, the Apple Inc. slogan, “There’s an app for that” went viral.

Whether marketing serious smartphone applications or parodying popular culture, even back then, it was clear that mobile applications were the way of the future.

And in the seven years since, all kinds of industries, services and individuals have developed their own apps. But until recently, police departments have been tentative about entering the world of mobile applications.

MORE THAN A TREND

In October 2013, the Victoria Police Department (VicPD) in British Columbia became the first Canadian police agency to unveil an interactive mobile application, which Victoria’s public can use to report or track crimes online from their hand-held devices.

“We’re really excited to be working so directly with the public,” says Cst. Mike Russell, of the VicPD. “This product is for the public and to see people using this every day is great.”

Their application has 14 different features, including push notifications about missing children or Amber Alerts, crime reporting and the ability to geolocate or track crimes happening in the radius of places like homes, schools or businesses.

Jamieson Johnson, the vice president

of business development for MobilePD, the company that developed the application for the VicPD, says that with brand-new notification features and the updated operating system for iPhones, it’s the best app they’ve ever worked on.

Johnson adds that apps are almost a necessity now.

“I think that communication between the police department and the community is something that’s universal,” says Johnson. “No matter what city you go to, everybody’s going to want that kind of level of communication and real-time information. People are just expecting that.”

STAYING RELEVANT

The first public safety-related application MobilePD ever developed was for the Santa Cruz Police Department (SCPD) two years ago. Santa Cruz was the first North American police agency to develop an interactive mobile app.

For SCPD Deputy Chief Steve Clark, it was a “no-brainer” decision.

“We realized that this was the way our community consumes information,” says Clark. “And we wanted to find ways to increase transparency and to continue to make ourselves relevant and important in the lives of the people that depend on us.”

The most popular feature on the SCPD’s app is the police scanner. With a 90-second delay, users can listen to the various calls for service that are happening across their city. Clark says it was important for the department to show the people they serve how hard they work.

For Johnson, that’s the whole purpose of public safety applications — and that’s what he would want to tell agencies that are unsure of this kind of technology.

“I think the ultimate goal is for this to result in a safer community,” says Johnson. “A lot of hesitant departments have come around when they actually see the return on their investments just based on the increase in safety in their communities.”

MAKING THE EFFORT

One of the VicPD’s other social media ventures has also generated a lot of attention from the community. Last year, they got their own account on Pinterest, a site where you can post photos and links to various things from across the Internet to your own page, to track down the owners of stolen property.

They called their page “Is this yours?” and after exhausting all the available databases and resources to find the property owners, they put up images of property from bikes and iPads to wedding photos and coin collections.

“The feedback on that has been really positive, even just from people that just think that it’s neat that we’d be doing something like this to make that extra effort to try and get the stuff back for them,” says Russell.

Although it can be a risky move to open up your organization to the public, Clark says the days of a closed-off police culture are no longer realistic. People want information, and they now have the means to seek it out. It’s time police consider what they gain from withholding information.

“I would encourage those departments that are hesitant to really have an honest discussion about why they’re afraid to expose themselves in this way,” says Clark. “Not getting involved is almost counterculture now because it’s through tools like this that you’re able to build relationships.” ■

The Victoria Police Department is the first Canadian police agency to create a smartphone app for their city.



Victoria Police Department