Proposal to the International Criminology Conference

Community Policing: Behavioral Communication is the Key to Relationships

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High-Profile incidents over the last several years in the United States, involving fatal interactions between police and citizens, require innovative approaches to restore the trust and confidence in those who are the first line of the Criminal Justice System. The incidents raised National attention and concern to the point where in 2014, President Barack Obama issued an Executive Order directing a task force on 21st Century Policing. The mission of the Executive Order was that “The Task Force shall, consistent with applicable law, identify best practices and otherwise make recommendations to the President on how policing practices can promote effective crime reduction while building public trust.” ¹

The Task Force framed their outcomes into Six Pillars required to respond to these incidents.

- Pillar One: Building Trust and Legitimacy
- Pillar Two: Policy and Oversight
- Pillar Three: Technology & Social Media
- Pillar Four: Community Policing & Crime Reduction
- Pillar Five: Training & Education
- Pillar Six: Officer Wellness & Safety

This proposal discusses a critical step to achieving Pillar One, Building Trust and Legitimacy through the utilization of Pillar Five, Training and Education by focusing on Behavioral Communication designed to improve relationships during Community Policing. Current relationships between the law enforcement officers and the community rely heavily on the ability to engage in positive and productive community engagement. Community Policing practices must do more to understand the science of how to communicate, what we communicate, and understanding the uses of effective communication tools designed to establish mutual trust, respect, and understanding.

“Communication is the foundation of all behavior.” ² P.S. Perkins in her book the Art and Science of Communication identifies seven areas of communication model in her exclusive staircase model.

1. Intrapersonal
2. Nonverbal
3. Interpersonal
4. Small Group / Organizational
5. Public / Presentation
6. Mass/Persuasion
7. Intercultural

Recognizing that communication is a two-way process, improving this function will be proposed for both law enforcement and the community. Exploring the first step
“Intrapersonal” of Perkins’ Communication Staircase Model™ we will demonstrate that we all can regulate and must regulate our internal communication habits where we all store our thoughts, perceptions, and stereotypes. Our discussion will be the start of much-needed education in the Art and Science of Communication to establish first steps in restoring trust between law enforcement and the community that depends on them.

BIO

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