California Community Colleges

The following is a summary of the **CCCCO and POST** Webinar, Forum 2 September 29, 2020

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Evidence-Based Policing: Fundamentals and Concepts

The nature of police work requires officers to perform a complex, multi-faceted job in diverse communities. Training and education can prepare officers by instilling professionally appropriate values and principles so that officers develop a service-oriented, empathetic mindset; by giving officers relevant knowledge and information; and by teaching officers the physical skills that they will use in the course of their duties.

What is evidence-based policing?

Evidence-based policing is an organizational philosophy that calls for strategic and tactical decision-making to be based on the best available evidence. Proponents of evidence-based policing believe both that the scientific method should be rigorously applied to evaluate police practices and that scientific evidence should be used to guide police practices.

The concept of "evidence" is a familiar one in policing; officers frequently rely on physical evidence and witness testimony to create and test hypotheses about who committed specific crimes. Evidence-based policing is similar in that it depends on the collection of evidence, but the relevant pieces of "evidence" are objective measures tested repeatedly over a large number of incidents and the focus is on improving outcomes or efficiency.

What are the benefits of evidence-based policing?

Police practices are more effective and safer when they are based upon scientific evidence about what works best in real world situations. Evidence-based policing improves safety and effectiveness by helping police leaders at all ranks determine what actually works and dispelling what can be long-standing misperceptions. This can include:

- Evaluating a practice to see if it has the intended benefits (e.g., does it reduce crime?); and
- Quantifying the extent to which a practice is cost- or harm-efficient (e.g., does it resolve more problems than it causes?).

Evidence-based policing can help—and has helped—police commanders, line supervisors, and rank-and-file officers make strategic and tactical decisions about allocating patrol officers, crime-prevention, training, tactics, and more.

How long has evidence-based policing been around?

The concept of evidence-based policing was articulated and popularized by Lawrence Sherman in the 1990s, but there are a number of earlier examples, including:

- Kansas City Preventative Patrol Experiment (1972-73) – tested the effectiveness of the traditional police strategy of routine preventive patrol and concluded that high police visibility through random patrol had no statistically significant impact on crime;
- Miami (1980s) – evaluated officer-involved shootings to assess whether firearm qualification courses aligned with real-world practice and led to the inclusion of short-distance shooting in firearms qualifications; and
- Miami (1980s) – field-tested riot response concept that used smaller squads of officers, finding they were generally effective at disrupting and dispersing unruly crowds.

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What are some recent examples of evidence-based policing?

☑	**Reduction in Homicide Clearance Rates** The Boston Police Department analyzed hundreds of homicides and developed a multipronged response that substantially improved clearance rates.
☑	**Reduction in Crime and Disorder with Hot Spot/Place-Based Policing** Experiments in Minneapolis, MN, Jersey City, NJ, and Lowell, MA, as well as other locations suggest that increasing police patrols in relatively small geographic areas—"hot spots"—is generally effective at reducing crime and disorder. The Minneapolis Hot Spots Patrol Experiment found that the best approach for "saturation patrol" was for officers to move from hot spot to hot spot, spending about 15 minutes in each.
☒	**No Reduction in Drug, Alcohol, or Tobacco Use with D.A.R.E. Programs** First introduced in Los Angeles in 1983, Drug Abuse Resistance Education quickly became a popular drug, alcohol, and tobacco prevention program for kids across the United States. A number of studies found the original program had little or no impact on drug, alcohol, or tobacco use. A revised curriculum, called "Take Charge of Your Life," was associated with a statistically significant *increase* in alcohol and cigarette use. The current curriculum, called "Keepin' it Real," has not be subjected to rigorous evaluation.

Where can I learn more about evidence-based policing?

Resources

1. **LEADS Scholars Program:** USDOJ's National Institute of Justice (**www.nij.gov**)
    A professional development program for mid-career police officers who use scientific methods to address issues in their agencies and communities

2. **National Criminal Justice Reference Service (www.ncjrs.gov)**
    A library of federally-funded criminal justice research

3. **CrimeSolutions: US Department of Justice** (**www.crimesolutions.gov**)
    Interactive database rating various crime prevention strategies based on evaluation evidence

4. **American Society of Evidence-Based Policing**: (**www.americansebp.org**)
    Professional organization—run by cops, for cops—dedicated to getting relevant research evidence into the hands of police practitioners

5. **The Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy at George Mason University (www.cebcp.org)**
    An academic center dedicated to generating and disseminating scientific research to inform police practices

6. **BetaHub: New York University** (**www.betahub.org**)
    Free research support

7. **National Law Enforcement Applied Data and Research Platform (https://www.nationallawenforcementplatform.org/)**
    Low cost surveys of officer perception, safety/health/wellness, community perceptions

8. **LEO Near Miss Reporting: Database and Lessons Learned (www.LEOnearmiss.org)**
    Free, anonymous data base of lessons learned from near misses/accidents in the field

9. **Compstat360: Crime, Organization, Community (https://www.compstat360.org)**
    Free technical assistance to improve measurement of agency performance through crime, organizational capacity, and community integration

10. **"How to Conduct an After-Action Review"**
    (forthcoming – **www.policefoundation.org**)
    Forthcoming guide to inform critical incident response

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office and California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training Virtual Forums

About POST

The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (Chancellor's Office) has partnered with the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) on a series of virtual forums to share best practices in Evidence-Based Policing and review the policies and practices that govern police academy instruction.

This initiative is a result of the Chancellor's **Call to Action** in June 2020, in response to the protest and social unrest stemming from George Floyd's death. In it, the Chancellor's Office called on community colleges to address structural racism and injustice to ensure that our communities and students have access to equal educational opportunities. The Call to Action highlights the focal point of diversity, equity and inclusion at the core of the Vision for Success.

The Chancellor's Office leadership reached out to POST to better understand Police Academy programs as 19 of the 41 certified basic police academy programs are operated by community colleges. Since then, POST has been collaborating with the Chancellor's Office to:

- Answer police academy certification questions
- Provide clarification about POST regulations and training requirements
- Share Evidence-Based Policing theory and practices

The focus of these forums is intended to contribute to a police culture reform agenda. As providers of nearly half of the state's police academies, the Community College system is in a unique position to influence and drive statewide instructional practices that will shape the standards by which officers conduct themselves while on duty.

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