

Group B Collaboration Assignment #2

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Introduction

On July 7, 2016, A deadly gunfire erupted in Dallas after videos showing two African-American men shot by police in Louisiana and Minnesota spurred protests and debate over police use of force across the country. Five police officers killed and seven others wounded in the ambush. It was the deadliest single incident for U.S. law enforcement since September 11, 2001. Micah Xavier Johnson, a former U.S. Army veteran used sniper tactics to ambush police officers at the end of a peaceful protest against nationwide officer-involved shootings. Johnson told police negotiators that he was upset about recent police shootings, that he wanted to kill white people -- especially white officers -- and that he acted alone. Johnson also supported the New Black Panther Party (Karimi, 2016).

On July 17, 2016, an African-American man from Missouri dressed in black clothing and holding a rifle ambushed and killed three law officers and wounded three others in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. This gunman was a former U.S. Marine who turned against law officials and used social media to express his views of prejudice and hate. He claimed to affiliate with ISIS (Visser, 2016).

On July 28, 2016, two San Diego police officers shot after they stopped a man in the southeast part of the city. The first officer was Jonathan "JD" DeGuzman, 43, a 16-year department veteran and father of two. He was rushed to the hospital and later died. The second officer, Wade Irwin, a 9-year veteran, suffered severe wounds and is expected to recover. The shooting suspect was Jesse Michael Gomez, 52, who suffered a gun wound to the chest but is expected to recover. A second suspect, Marcus Antonio Cassani was later arrested after police officers conducted further investigation at the crime scene. (Hauser, 2016).

This essay seeks to present recommendations and a suggested model for beginning a collaborative solutions process that is designed to gather law enforcement and civilians in communities around the country in a comprehensive effort to neutralize the growing hatred and rebuild a sense of trust and mutual respect. As stated in *Limiting Violence and Intimidation - For Practitioners - Peacebuilding and Reconciliation Strategies* (Burgess, 2012) peacebuilding is structural, relational, and personal, and involves providing fundamental human needs that most often underlie violent conflict. Utilizing the overall concept of Interactive Problem Solving, the following pages outline suggested Training, Dialogue, Non-Violence Education and Joint Projects approaches (Burgess, 2012, p. 1) and a customizable model. This model can be implemented in any region as a means for all parties to stabilize and strengthen the cross cultural bonds of these sectors that have become fragmented and volatile in recent years.

Training

What is the best way to educate both civilians and the police force? As we look to put the onus on the police to be responsible for their actions, we must also look to educate civilians as well. It is when there is a disruption in communication that an accident may occur. Many initial reactions assume that fault lies with the police for not identifying the situation correctly. Could there have been a different alternative that the officer(s) could have done to make sure that they were not only protecting the civilian, but themselves as well? After any incident, it is easy to go back and dissect how the officer could have behaved differently, because as the saying goes, hindsight is twenty/twenty. It is important to understand that in the moment of confrontation, the officer has to think about his safety and the safety of the community at the same time.

Police are humans as well. As humans, at times, we run on emotions. During a Police Intercommunication Training program, officers were asked why they were in class and the responses were interesting, ranging from “I dunno”, “I have no idea”, “Beats the hell out of me”, “I found a memo in my mailbox”, and ...”I pissed off my sergeant” (Glennon, 2010). When you dig further, and ask about their relationship with the community, the same officers respond “I’m impatient”, “People don’t listen”, “I tend to be in a hurry”, “I don’t have time to listen to every little concern people have”, and “I don’t give a damn” (Glennon, 2010). With responses like these, it is easy to see why there is a rift between the community and the police officers. Responses like these underscore the need for communication training.

For officers, a focus on training is necessary. Officers often do two things, “they talk to people and they touch people” (McDermott and Hulse-Killacky, 2012, p 17). What type of training can they use so that they can keep both themselves and the public safe. There are six training steps that can help law enforcements:

- 1) The instructor presents, defines, and demonstrate a specific capability of the class
- 2) The students practice the skill, often in groups of three. One student takes the role of the counselor, another plays the client, and the third observes
- 3) Class members discuss their challenges with each task, and they continue to practice
- 4) Each student performs in front of class and instructor, who evaluates each class member on all the assigned skills.
- 5) Steps one to four is repeated until everyone has had a turn.

- 6) At the end of the training, students need to demonstrate all competencies that they learned in the course.

Making sure that they master communication skills is very important. If not, they will go straight to tactical strategies. Making sure that they have a solid communication foundation “will remove some barriers between the police and the public”. (McDermott and Hulse-Killacky, 2012, p 20).

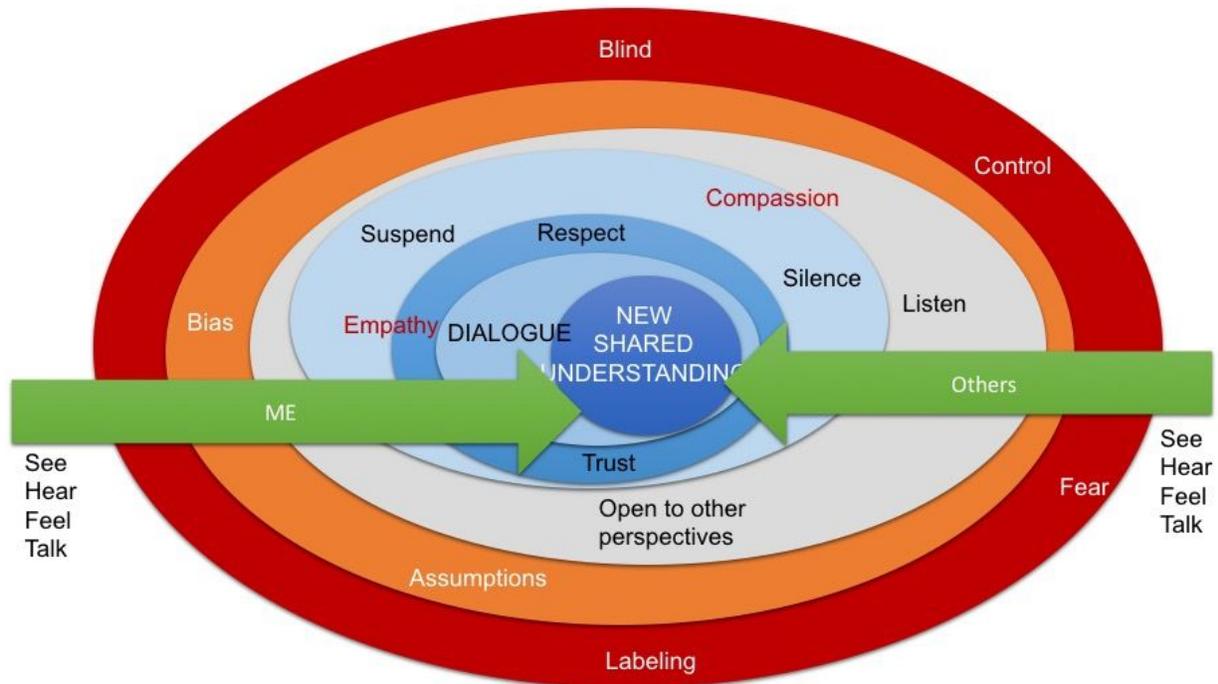
Dialogue

Dialogue is a necessary step in conflict resolution. It requires parties to exercise respect, be aware of bias and prejudice, and to learn, understand and appreciate the values, needs, and interests of all the sides involved. Dialogue creates a more supportive and empathetic platform for communication than normally occurs. This may, depending on the effectiveness of the process, and the willingness of the participants to engage, pave the way for later problem-solving. Dialogue emphasizes listening, suspending assumptions, respecting other perspectives, building trust and the development of new, shared understandings.

Our conflict is between the police and civilians, in light of the specific, current events described in the introduction. Part of our conflict resolution strategy is entering into effective dialogue to communicate about the issues and come to a new understanding, appreciated by both parties. Dialogue is not just a discussion, conversation or a debate. It involves initially, suspending assumptions and appreciating other social worlds and contexts. The conflict between our police force and our civilians is generally due to assumptions and a lack of understanding of each others' realities. The two worlds tend to clash versus mesh and dialogue is a positive tool to examine the different perspectives, concerns and needs in a healthy way. There are different

stages to dialogue and once the listening aspect is mastered by both parties (active listening requires some effort as does suspending assumptions) trust and respect starts to emerge and a relationship is forged. Once this relationship is established, differences are more easily presented and may even be embraced in a situation where no understanding once existed. The rationale for dialogue in our conflict resolution strategy is to bring two separate worlds together, momentarily suspend hostility and bias, ego, power/position/privilege, and give the parties the opportunity to find common ground and develop a respect for each other, not just as individuals, but as travellers on the same road. With this end in mind, the intent is to create a new world for both parties, where this conflict can be used in a positive manner rather than as a negative. Different perspectives can be used as a meaningful tool to explore above and beyond in which one might normally be limited (Heffernan, 2012). These two entities can take these terrible incidents and choose to learn from them (by engaging in the dialogue process) and choose to make a change in the negative pattern of hate and prejudice.

If both parties can grasp and appreciate the premise for each other's actions, based on their different social worlds, position, pressures and expectations, than a respect for each may be the result. Going forward, a new appreciation for actions based on specific circumstances can be a model of empathy and compassion versus judgement and distrust. To better understand the dialogue process and how it can lead to a new understanding, the visual taxonomy (created in last term's dialogue course) below may be helpful:



Corpuz, S. (2016).

As two parties enter into dialogue, it is recommended to have some ground rules or guidelines to follow, just to keep the dialogue on track until a safe environment can be established. These are the same rules that apply to negotiation (Goudreau, J., 2013, p. 2): 1) Keep The Discussion Results-Oriented; 2) Be Wise, Not Smart; 3) Put Your Concerns On The Table; 4) Avoid “I” Statements; and 5) Engage With Your Body Language. These points help cultivate collaboration in the following ways:

1. By keeping the emphasis of the dialogue on the facts versus the people, the "personal" aspect is removed and both parties are more comfortable and not as easily offended. This sets a solid foundation for moving forward. Also, focusing on the "best for both parties" is a win/win focus, versus a win/lose focus... where one party will feel negatively.

2. Use your wisdom to show respect and understanding for the other party. You want to create a safe environment that will cultivate mutual respect and cooperation; not negative feelings. "Frame around common interests" to establish common ground and begin to build the relationship. This can only help the negotiation.
3. Be honest and voice your issues, if the other party wants to work with you, he/she will help you address those issues. If you are honest, chances are, the other party will be honest as well.
4. Avoid "I" statements as this is one-sided. Use "we" statements to create a feeling of connection and commonality.
5. Engage fully with your body language to show that you are interested and enthusiastic to participate in the dialogue process. If you are not engaged, the energy of the process will be affected negatively and the other party may not feel you are serious.

If the parties can navigate the dialogue effectively enough to begin to build a relationship, there is hope of the process being successful. If they can get past the bias and assumptions, which include power, position and privilege, and truly being to listen, this will lead to empathy and new "openness" to other perspectives. Once trust and respect is established, a new understanding is possible. Our strategy allows for the police and the civilians to come together and dialogue effectively, in hopes of creating a new shared understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities and a new appreciation for certain rules of engagement under particular circumstances. Although dialogue can be an effective tool in the collaboration process for

conflict resolution, it is only part of the puzzle. Next, we will look at interactive problem solving and how it relates to the current issue.

Interactive Problem Solving

That conditions for dialogue are present is a significant assumption for our approach to addressing the issue of law enforcement relations with the civilian constituencies they police. With the potential to leverage the foundational aspects of dialogue, an approach to the issue can address not only the resolution of short term conflict but the longer term improvement of relationships, or what Burgess (2012) refers to as “structural peacebuilding” (Peacebuilding and Reconciliation Strategies section, para. 2). A principal method adopted by our approach, which facilitates dialogue and peacebuilding, is the process of interactive problem solving.

Before addressing how interactive problem-solving is advocated within this paper, it is important to draw a distinction between this approach and some of the other problem solving approaches described in the course literature. There are several examples of problem-solving and conflict resolution from the corporate environment. While there are conceptual similarities, many of the corporate problem-solving approaches would prove insufficient in the law enforcement perspective. For instance, Weiss (2011) provides an example of halting a production line to resolve problems and address conflict as they occur (Main Body, para. 6). This may be an effective approach in the corporate climate, but the ability to suspend events simply does not exist in the context of a policing environment. Another example is from the Viscomi (2013) article, which properly suggests that conflict is a natural and expected condition in collaborative environments. However, there is an underlying assumption embedded in

Viscomi's recommendations that individuals are working towards creating a "high performing team" (Main Body, para. 8) and it is inappropriate to expect the law enforcement – civilian dynamic to behave in the same way as a structured corporate team.

To address the need for problem solving, the approach of this paper is to adopt the Interactive Problem Solving described by Michelle Maiese in the article "Problem Solving Workshops." By using the form of problem-solving workshops our approach builds on the agreement and assumption of dialogue. It also contributes to an important step in the "structural peacebuilding" model described by Burgess.

A significant problem related to addressing the law enforcement - civilian issue is the rapid nature in which policing decision are made and events occur. Because of this, any approach must be focused on building understanding and trust between the constituencies prior to potentially divisive events occurring. Community policing concepts represent a potential example of attempts towards this end in the past and retains applicability. Our approach recognizes that there must be a prior relationship between the stakeholders, a context for decision making by all parties, and a framework for understanding how to respond when issues occur. The problem solving workshop model provides such a process.

The problem-solving workshop is an effective tool in the law enforcement – civilian issue because it provides context and structure to a fractured set of constituencies. Maiese (2003) notes that these are "informal, low-risk, noncommittal forums" consisting of "unofficial representatives" (What are Problem Solving Workshops section, para. 2). She also notes that

“the process does not involve negotiation nor does it require disputants to give up their struggle” (What are Problem Solving Workshops section, para. 3).

These are important concepts for this issue. While the law enforcement groups are highly organized, the civilian constituency is not, which is a challenge for both dialogue and collaboration. The inclusion of unofficial representatives within a problem solving workshop provides some participatory structure to that constituency and removes the element of political negotiation. Note that one potential problem with workshop participants is that regardless of duty status, because of their status of civil servants law enforcement participants are at risk of always being viewed as “official representatives” by the civilian constituency.

The workshop process itself also lends itself to efficacy in this issues. According to Maiese (2003) the first phase is a non-confrontational exchange between the participants and the mediating panel, providing a forum for understanding the root causes of conflict. A second analysis phase focuses on the “structure of the dispute” and works to “generate new ideas” (Phases of the WOrkshop section, para. 3). The final, third phase of the workshop invites participants to collaborate on potential solutions. The approach is realistic in that it assumes “all relevant parties” may not be present and that some parties may be intransigent. But the workshop improves communication between the groups that provides the opportunity to build trust and contribute to what Maiese calls the “transformation and resolution of conflict.”

Non-Violence Education

The current national conflict between law enforcement and civilians can be decreased through nonviolence education. Law enforcement officers are trained professionals in crisis

intervention and conflict resolution. After graduation from the academy, police officers are mandated by the state to continue their education on community policing. Continued education helps law enforcement officers adapt to social change, current policy, and procedures, and serves as a refresher to be consciously aware of officer's behavior towards civilians (Guffey, 2009).

Police Commissioners inform Law enforcement officers. The Police Commissioner's concerns are reflective of the community at large, and their priorities are to implement recommended reforms, improve service to the public by the Departments, reduce crime and the fear of crime, and support community policing programs. Most importantly Police Commissioners serve as the citizens' voice in police affairs. The board of commissioners holds weekly and monthly meetings. The meetings are an opportunity for both parties to collaborate. Civilians can express their issues and concerns, and officers can gather information to help resolve the issues (Guerra, 2016).

In contrary, Civilians don't have professional training in community policing. However, they have a choice to act upon nonviolent behavior. Civilians have their stereotypes and bias based on cultural traditions, backgrounds, and experience with law enforcement officers. Often civilians' adverse reactions with police officers are influenced by social media. The media has a significant impact on the selective material it publicizes that send out a negative message. For example, News reporting agencies compete for the most viewers and select headlines that will grab the most audience. Viewers who are disturbed and at a crossroads of reacting with violence behavior will use misreported information as ammunition to act upon premeditated acts of violence. For example, the three mentioned cases were a domino effect from officers involved in previous shootings. These recurring events are sending a negative message to society that

shooting officers is okay, and that is time to rebel against the police. News reporters do not cover the specific details of a story, however and, therefore, nonviolence education can also be introduced to news organizations.

The following recommendations are helpful steps that will help build trusting relationships between officers, civilians, and news reporting agencies.

1. Step back and slow down -- most of us repeat unhelpful behaviors in conflicts because we are unaware of what we are doing; we can only change habits through awareness; and, plan what you want to say to avoid saying something that will escalate a conflict
2. Explore what is most important the other person by Listening and asking questions out of curiosity
3. Listen first to understand—ask questions to explore the other person’s story
 - a. If others feel listened to they are more likely to try to understand you
 - b. Leverage for change comes from understanding, not from convincing them you are right
 - c. It is rare for people to feel truly listened to and still experience the conflict as negative
 - d. Be aware of your internal barriers to really listening, such as thinking you are right and strong feelings about the subject matter
4. The editors and producers of news agencies can redirect attention to softer stories and rewrite scripts that are more compassionate, caring and kind. Social media can publicize positive interaction between officers and civilians.

5. Civilians can get involved with community programs and interacting with their local police officers. Building a rapport will gain trust and reduce fear towards one another.
6. Let go of the myths about conflict -- conflict is not a contest, so don't make it one.
7. Be open to learning new information by applying the 3 models of stereotype.
 - a. *Bookkeeping model*: As we learn new contradictory information, we incrementally adjust the stereotype to adapt to the new information. We usually need quite a lot of repeated information for each incremental change. Individual evidence is taken as the exception that proves the rule.
 - b. *Conversion model*: We throw away the old stereotype and start again. This is often used when there is significant disconfirming evidence.
 - c. *Subtyping model*: We create a new stereotype that is a sub-classification of the existing stereotype, particularly when we can draw a boundary around the subclass (Bloom, 2014).

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said, "Nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon, which cuts without wounding and enables the man who wields it. It is a sword that heals. It is not about fighting it's peace building. With adequate training and education mankind can look at the world with new perspective. The greatest weapon towards violence would be a sword that heals with love, compassion, peace, respect, and understanding to cultural differences, bias and judgement.

Joint Projects

Sample Project #1

Earlier this year, PBS televised a forum, held in Florida, that brought together a panel of various professionals to discuss the issue of gun violence in our society, and what role

faith-based leadership plays to resolve the issue and heal our communities. Entitled *Armed in America: Faith & Guns*, (PBS, 2016) the town hall style meeting moderated by NPR host Michel Martin was not only informative in the various opinions, experiences and perspectives of the panelists, but was a great example of a Joint Project model for attempting to resolve conflict on one of the top issues within our group's selected conflict scenario.

Among the topics covered were several thought-provoking concepts, such as: Is White gun violence a race issue? Can a Christian be both Pro-Life and Pro-Gun? A poll showed Hispanic and Black Christians find guns more harmful than White Christians. (PBS, 2016) The faith leaders opined on current guns laws and shared views on how they could be better.

Sample Project #2

As much as we have learned about mental health and behavioral health conditions in our society, to the point that strong medications are prescribed and doled out in such a nonchalant manner, our communities are still not informed enough. In particular, our law enforcement and first responders, as a main interface with violent offenders, are often lacking in appropriate training to recognize afflictions and a whole variety of conditions that may be anything but.

Recognizing this crucial lack of understanding, leading mental/behavioral health organizations have been focusing significant resources toward informing, training and engaging their communities so as to increase trust, factual understanding and build coalition between officials and civilians.

By way of example, in 2014, Magellan Health in Arizona launched a community outreach initiative in answer to what it saw as a growing concern in the community at large. Magellan observed the lack of understanding of mental and behavioral health issues, generally

speaking, by first responders (police, fire/rescue, paramedic and their associated emergency dispatch teams) and the various segments of the communities they served. This was leading to what appeared to be more violent altercations and an overly-automatic reaction to simply place people in custody rather than attend to the real medical, psychological or social needs of the individuals/families. Magellan recognized their opportunity to help by providing training and information to all sides of the issue, utilizing their own industry, human and financial resources to lead the way to a stronger, healthier community. In particular, Magellan focused on the nuances related to many ethnic or religious cultures, that can affect the trust and confidence between families and the “authorities”, be they in law enforcement, educational systems or the medical fields (A. Zavala, personal communication, March 15, 2013).

Pulling from this term’s course materials the above Joint Project models could be effective as collaborative tools toward resolving the overall conflict situation in communities between police and civilians. We have learned from Ronny Ross of Panorama Software (Goodreau, J. 2012 p.1) that negotiation is a tool to be used toward resolving a disagreement (aka conflict) and when employed as a collaborative tactic can help lead to mutually beneficial solution. As presented earlier in this essay, Ross presents five “tips” to bear in mind to help cultivate collaboration. The most applicable to the two Join Project models presented above are the first three -- remaining results-oriented; being wise, not smart; and voicing all concerns. First, in remaining results-oriented, the negotiations emphasis is on the facts, thus removing “personal” aspects to keep parties more comfortable instead of offended, and helping to set a solid foundation for moving forward to a win/win versus a win/lose. Second, using wisdom to show respect and understanding helps create a safe environment to cultivate mutual respect and

cooperation and frames around common interests, which helps build a relationship and help the negotiation process. Third, each party should honestly voice their issues and concerns so that they can be known (rather than presumed) and the other parties can help address them, and to establish transparency and confidence for the other parties to share their concerns as well.

Further, these two examples of joint project models do what Burgess (2012) and other have recommended, that is, bring people from all sides together with a common, mutually-beneficial task. While the two sample joint projects above offer efforts that accomplish the “bringing together” part, they each can also be augmented to focus on the “building/creating something mutually beneficial part, such as establishing the townhall event as an ongoing series so it is not a one-hit wonder. Designating an auditorium or amphitheater or other comfortable, neutral meeting place as a location that is focused on healing or reconnecting interactions could also happen. One such example is found in Phoenix, Arizona where the Arizona Cactus-Pine Council of Girl Scouts is renovating and rebuilding its urban camp, Camp Sombrero to include not only facilities for the girls, but also a special Leadership Center for Girls and Women. This center has been created and offered to the community at large to encourage more events and conversations that are positive, productive, inclusive and purposeful toward supporting current and developing future generations of leaders. This project inspires working together on a shared goal, to allow people to “come to better understand each other, appreciate their similarities as well as their differences, and begin to break down the barriers that led to the conflict and exacerbated it before” (Burgess, 2012 p. 1).

Conclusion

The current national conflict between police officers and civilians is real and is growing as negative feelings build upon incident after incident. As members of both groups, civilians and police officers, we, a group of Claremont University students, propose a method of unity and education for both groups in efforts to quell the unrest and come to a new understanding of perspectives. The plan proposes a model consisting of training, dialogue, interactive problem solving, non violence education, and joint projects, and the model is such that it can be used in many regions, and customized to meet specific needs of each community. The goal is to address the division and engage in the process of reconciliation in efforts of realizing that we are all part of a whole and we are all in this together. We feel that by creating an environment of unity, we can work to reveal the common core of humanity that has been hidden under many layers of distrust. We seek to re-center the focus of the two groups on the common good and strive for a renewed relationship, for the sake of our country. We hope that those who read this piece agree with the effort and are inspired to reflect upon certain behaviors, the results of those behaviors and seek to make a change.

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