POLICE RECEPTIVITY TO RESEARCH: LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR EVIDENCE-BASED POLICING

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Overview

- What is evidence-based policing and why is it useful?

- To what extent is evidence-based policing a reality?
  - Importance of examining police officer receptivity to research

- Lessons learned from multiple projects examining receptivity of officers at all ranks in the U.S.
  - Focus on data collected in Oregon

- What should be done to increasing receptivity to research moving forward?

What is evidence-based policing?

IDEAS IN AMERICAN POLICING

POLICE FOUNDATION

July 1998

Evidence-Based Policing

By Lawrence W. Sherman

Abstract

The new paradigm of "evidence-based medicine" holds important implications for policing. It suggests that just doing research is not enough and that proactive efforts are required to push accumulated research evidence into practice through national and community guidelines. These guidelines can then focus in-house evaluations of what works best across agencies, units, victims, and officers. Statistical adjustments for the risk factors shaping crime can provide fair comparisons across police units, including national rankings of police agencies by their crime prevention effectiveness. The example of domestic violence, for which accumulated National Institute of Justice research could lead to evidence-based guidelines, illustrates the way in which agency-based outcomes research could further reduce violence against victims. National pressure to adopt this paradigm could come from agency-ranking studies, but police agency capacity to adopt it will require new data systems creating "medical charts" for crime victims, annual audits of crime reporting systems, and in-house "evidence cops" who document the ongoing patterns and effects of police practices in light of published and in-house research. These analyses can then be integrated into the NYPD Compstat feedback model for management accountability and continuous quality improvement.

Most of us have thought of the statistician's work as that of measuring and predicting . . . but few of us have thought it the statistician's duty to try to bring about changes in the things that he [or she] measures.
—W. Edwards Deming

Ideas in American Policing presents commentary and insight from leading criminologists on issues of interest to scholars, practitioners, and policymakers. The papers published in this series are from the Police Foundation lecture series of the same name. Points of view in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Police Foundation.

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"Police practices should be based on scientific evidence about what works best."

Lawrence Sherman, 1998

Definitions of evidence-based policing

Author (Year)	Definition
Sherman (1998)	"the use of the best available research on the outcomes of police work to implement guidelines and evaluate agencies, units, and officers"
Welsh (2006)	"the police using the highest quality available research evidence on what works best to reduce a specific crime problem and tailoring the intervention to the local context and conditions"
Lum & Koper (2013)	"law-enforcement perspective and philosophy that implicates the use of research, evaluation, analysis, and scientific processes in law-enforcement decision making"

Benefits of evidence-based policing

☐ Reduces crime by focusing on effective tactics

☐ Maximizes efficiency by focusing on strategies most likely to work

☐ Avoids "cures that harm" (McCord, 2003)

   ☐ Sometimes well-intentioned programs, like Scared Straight, can have backfire effects

☐ Could improve departmental transparency and legitimacy

Why study receptivity?

- "The obstacle all professions have faced is a lack of systematic evidence about how professions or organizations become evidence based" (Sherman, 2015)

- Evidence-based policing requires not only generating and synthesizing the evidence, but getting police to utilize it

- Important to study receptivity to research to understand the current landscape and to consider ways to build receptivity

Task Force report

- "The Federal Government should encourage and support partnerships between law enforcement and academic institutions to support a culture that values ongoing education and the integration of current research into the development of training, policies, and practices."
  - President Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing (2015: 55)

- Receptivity work designed to assess extent to which research playing a role in policing

Lum & Telep receptivity survey

Lum et al. (2012); Telep & Lum (2014)

Survey sections (survey online at cebcp.org/matrix-demo):

I.   Research resources and knowledge base

II.   Perception/view of science

III.   Views on innovation and conducting research

IV.   Higher education and policing

V.   Personal information

Receptivity data collection to date

- Officer sample (4 agencies)
  - Majority front line officer sample from 4 municipal agencies of varying sizes
    - Sacramento, CA; Reno, NV; Richmond, VA; Roanoke County, VA

- Managers/supervisors sample
  - Sample of mid-level supervisors administered prior to a police leadership course in Oregon

- Chiefs sample
  - Sample of chiefs/sheriffs and high-level police leaders in Oregon

Research in Oregon

- Relationship with Steve Winegar began in 2014
  - Interest in utilizing the Lum & Telep receptivity survey in his leadership classes at the Public Safety Academy

- Data collection on receptivity in Oregon has led to multiple research projects
  1. Chief executive views of what works and openness to conducting research (Telep & Winegar, 2016)
  2. Manager and chief definitions of evidence-based policing (Telep & Somers, in press)
  3. Police vs. correctional manager levels of receptivity (Telep, 2018)
  4. Police views on higher education (Telep, in progress)

What have we learned?

- Officer exposure to the evidence base
  - Are officers reading the effectiveness literature?

- Officer views on what works
  - Do officer views align with research evidence on what works?

- Officer views on conducting and using research
  - Are officers open to conducting research?
  - How do manager views on research compare to corrections?

- Officer definitions of evidence-based policing
  - Do officer definitions align with academic conceptions?

Sample

- Officers: 1,107 total respondents collected 2011-2014
    - Ranged from 94 in Roanoke County to 523 in Sacramento

- Managers in Oregon: 533 respondents since March 2016
    - 278 working in policing
    - 208 working in corrections (jail/prison or probation/parole)

- Chiefs: 45 chiefs and sheriffs in Oregon took the receptivity survey in March 2015
    - 104 total respondents (includes assistant chefs/top leaders)

Officer exposure to the evidence base

(Telep & Winegar, 2016; Telep & Lum, 2014)

Source	% Reading Anything from Source about Effectiveness (Past 6 months)		
	Officers	**Managers**	**Chiefs**
Own agency	45.1	26.9	26.7
None of the above	42.3	13.2	11.1
Intl. Association of Chiefs of Police	8.5	16.1	80.0
National Institute of Justice	5.3	5.1	26.7
Bureau of Justice Assistance	4.0	3.2	33.3
University	3.4	3.4	26.7
Library database	0.9	1.4	4.4

Do officer views on what works for reducing crime align with research?

Strategy	Very Effective or Effective %			Somewhat Effective or Not Effective %		
	Officers	**Managers**	**Chiefs**	**Officers**	**Managers**	**Chiefs**
Hot spots policing	43.7	72.4	83.5	43.6	20.5	15.6
Problem-oriented policing	56.8	78.8	91.1	17.6	17.4	6.7
Random preventive patrol	38.0	33.3	22.3	46.3	58.5	75.5
Rapid response to 911 calls	58.4	54.6	55.6	34.0	40.8	44.5

Percentages may not sum to 100 because respondents could also answer "I have not heard of this tactic"

Are officers open to conducting research?

Action	Very or Quite Willing %			Somewhat or Not Willing %		
	Officers	**Managers**	**Chiefs**	**Officers**	**Managers**	**Chiefs**
Conduct a small randomized trial	30.3	25.6	20.0	63.9	74.4	80.0
Use before/after data to evaluate	63.5	79.6	77.9	31.0	20.4	22.0
Approach a researcher	27.1	44.4	57.8	66.7	55.6	40.0
Seek assistance in the agency	54.7	78.3	82.2	39.0	21.7	17.8

Do police and corrections mangers view researchers as useful?

	Collaboration with researchers necessary to reduce crime/recidivism		Research presented in ways that are hard to comprehend		I consider research evidence before adopting strategy	
	Policing % n =275	**Corrections %, n =179**	**Policing %** n =275	**Corrections %, n =175**	**Policing %** n =271	**Corrections %, n =177**
Strongly agree	18.2	27.9	5.5	5.1	9.2	9.0
Agree	67.3	65.9	41.1	57.1	61.6	67.2
Disagree	14.2	6.1	49.8	36.6	27.3	20.9
Strongly disagree	0.4	0	3.6	1.1	1.8	2.8

Do police and corrections managers view research as useful?

Research usefulness	Policing % (n = 276)	Corrections % (n = 175)
Very useful	7.5	12.0
Somewhat useful	43.4	47.4
Marginally useful	33.2	33.1
Not at all useful	15.8	7.4

Balance of research & scientific knowledge in day-to-day-work	Policing % (n = 272)	Corrections % (n = 176)
Experience 90% Science10%	15.1	7.4
Experience 75% Science 25%	62.1	48.9
Experience 50% Science 50%	19.1	34.7
Science 75% Experience 75%	2.9	8.5
Science 90% Experience 10%	0.7	0.6

Are police familiar with "evidence-based policing?"
Telep & Somers (in press)

- Have you ever heard of the term "evidence-based policing"?

Sample	Heard of EBP %	Provided a Definition %
Officers (n = 1094)	27.8	22.9
Managers/supervisors (n = 163)	65.0	65.0
Chiefs/leaders (n=104)	87.8	83.7
Total (n=1355)	36.6	31.6

Key words in police officer definitions

Key Word	Percentage Of Definitions That Included…			
	Officers	**Managers**	**Chiefs**	**Total**
Statistics/data*	27.2	38.7	52.8	34.3
Effective/what works*	18.4	34.9	29.2	24.3
Research/empirical	19.6	31.1	25.0	23.4
Evaluation/analysis	12.4	9.4	15.3	19.2
Specific places/people	21.2	17.0	15.3	12.1
Science/scientific*	5.2	8.5	13.9	7.5
Prevention/proactive	7.2	5.7	6.9	6.8
Forensics/case evidence*	12.4	7.5	1.4	9.3

* χ^2 p < .05

Number of key words in definitions

Total Key Words	Percentage of Definitions that Included…			
	Officers	Managers	Chiefs	Total
0	30.4	13.2	8.3	22.4
1	39.2	42.5	40.3	40.2
2	20.8	31.1	37.5	26.2
3	8.0	12.3	12.5	9.8
4	1.6	0.9	1.4	1.4

$\chi^2 = 27.2$ (p < .05)

How "correct" are police definitions?

Sample	No answer %	No match %	Partial match %	Total match %
Officers	5.2	32.0	59.6	3.2
Managers	0.9	20.8	73.6	4.7
Chiefs	2.8	15.3	73.6	8.3
Total	3.7	26.4	65.4	4.4

$\chi^2 = 16.6$ (p < .05) Note: no answer and no match were combined for the χ^2 test

How do we build receptivity? Some ideas

- Training officers
  - Oregon is a model for this

- Embedding evidence-based practice into agency routines
  - Matrix Demonstration Project (Lum & Koper, 2017)
  - Benefit of crime analysts for this

- Sustaining mutually beneficial police-academic partnerships

- Developing translation tools to make research more accessible
  - Benefits of officers reading more publications/research

- Enhancing police education

Training

- 28.4% of manager respondents had received formal training on effective strategies

- Evaluations in UK and Australia suggest evidence-based policing training can positively change attitudes, but changing behavior can be more complicated

- Need for more evaluations in U.S.

Crime analysts

- 52.4% of manager respondents have zero analysts in their agency

- About 2/3 of respondents think they need more analysts in their agency

- Of those respondents with at least one analyst, only 16.4% report using products from analysts often and 53.1% use them rarely or not at all

Partnerships in Oregon

Do you currently have a partnership with a researcher? (n = 280 managers)	%
Yes	5.7
No	63.9
Not sure	30.4

I am interested in learning more about partnering with researchers (n = 274)	%
Strongly agree	10.9
Agree	62.8
Disagree	23.4
Strongly disagree	2.9

Translational criminology

- Research, especially when published exclusively in academic journals, will not automatically influence practice
  - Less than 5% of chiefs and managers and less than 3% of officers had read an academic publication

- Need to present research in succinct ways that are accessible and easily digestible

- Freely available translation tools can assist in these efforts
  - Oregon Knowledge Bank
  - Evidence-Based Policing Matrix
  - What Works in Policing Site
  - Plus others (Campbell Collaboration systematic reviews, CrimeSolutions.gov, What Works Centre in the College of Policing)

Evidence-Based Policing Matrix

(Lum, Koper, & Telep, 2011)

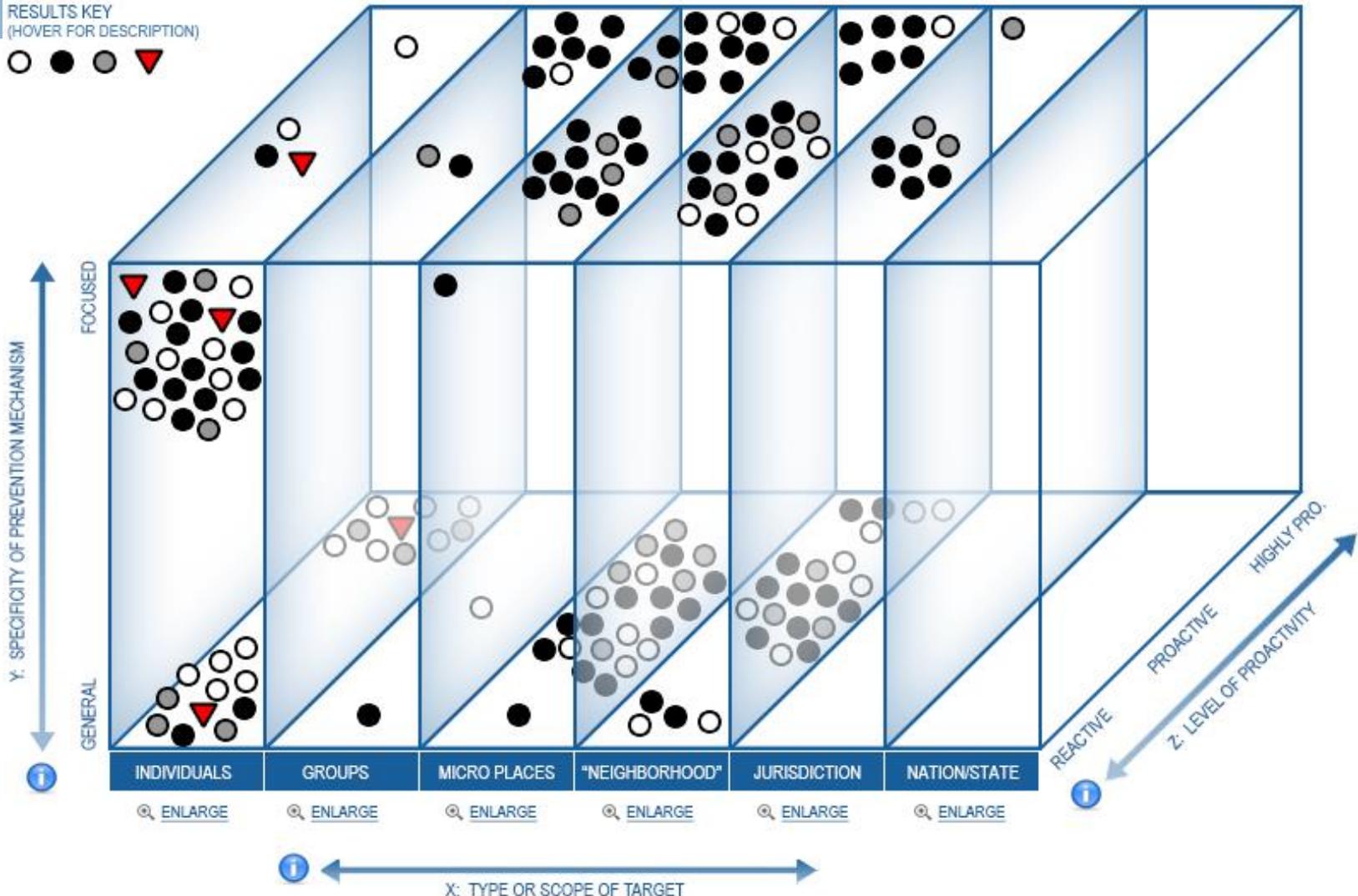- Visual representation of rigorous crime control evaluation evidence (about 160 studies)

- www.policingmatrix.org
    - Interactive version of the Matrix
    - Pages for every study included in the Matrix
    - Matrix Demonstration Project
    - Videos and training resources on evidence-based policing

Evidence-Based Policing Matrix

Significant Backfire   ○ Non-Significant Finding   ● Mixed Results   ● Significant /Effective

What Works in Policing? (CEBCP)

- Summary of the evaluation literature by program type
  - What is it? What is the evidence? What should the police be doing?

- http://cebcp.org/what-works-in-policing/

What Works?	What's Promising	What Doesn't Work?	What Do We Need to Know More About?
Hot spots policing	Community policing	Standard model policing tactics	Broken windows policing
Problem-oriented policing	CCTV	Second responder programs	Increasing department size
Focused deterrence strategies		D.A.R.E	Police technology
Directed patrol for gun violence			

Even more resources

- **Campbell Collaboration**: www.campbellcollaboration.org
  - Library of systematic reviews on 15+ policing topics

- **CrimeSolutions.gov** (National Institute of Justice)
  - Evidence ratings of programs and practices

- **What Works Toolkit** (UK): whatworks.college.police.uk

- **Evidence-Based Policing App**: www.policefoundation.org

Role of higher education

- Does higher education play a role in understanding and predicting officer receptivity?

- What do officers think about higher education in policing and minimum education standards?

What predicts having heard of evidence-based policing? (Telep, 2017)

- Officers who had a Master's degree were...
  - 2.7 times more likely to have heard of evidence-based policing
  - 4.4 times more likely to have had at least 1 keyword in their definition
  - 3.2 times more likely to have a definition that was coded as at least a partial match

- Officers who read 2 or more academic/practitioner publications were
  - 4 times more likely to have heard of evidence-based policing
  - 2.3 times more likely to have a definition that was coded as at least a partial match

Chiefs and managers views on importance of higher education

Importance of pursuing higher ed.	For officers %		For chief executives %	
	Chiefs	Managers	Chiefs	Managers
Not important	2.2	6.9	0	2.5
Somewhat important	8.9	30.8	0	19.9
Important	13.3	30.4	6.7	30.7
Very important	40.0	24.3	15.6	22.7
Essential	35.6	7.6	77.8	24.2

Chiefs n = 45; Managers n = 276

Officer views on importance of higher education

	Sacramento % n=518	Richmond % n =271	Roanoke Co % n=71	Reno % n=122	Total % n=982
Not important	3.5	14.0	5.6	14.8	7.9
Somewhat important	13.7	27.7	26.8	23.0	19.7
Important	24.3	25.8	31.0	29.5	25.9
Very important	36.1	23.2	23.9	25.4	30.3
Essential	22.4	9.2	12.7	7.4	16.2

Chiefs and managers views on education standards

Minimum education standard	What is it? %		What SHOULD it be? %	
	Chiefs	**Managers**	**Chiefs**	**Managers**
No educ. standard	0	0.7	0	0
High school diploma	77.8	84.7	28.9	51.3
Some college	11.1	6.9	22.2	20.9
Associate's degree	11.1	5.5	37.8	22.7
Bachelor's degree	0	2.2	11.1	5.1

Chiefs n = 45; Managers n = 274

Officer views on minimum education standard

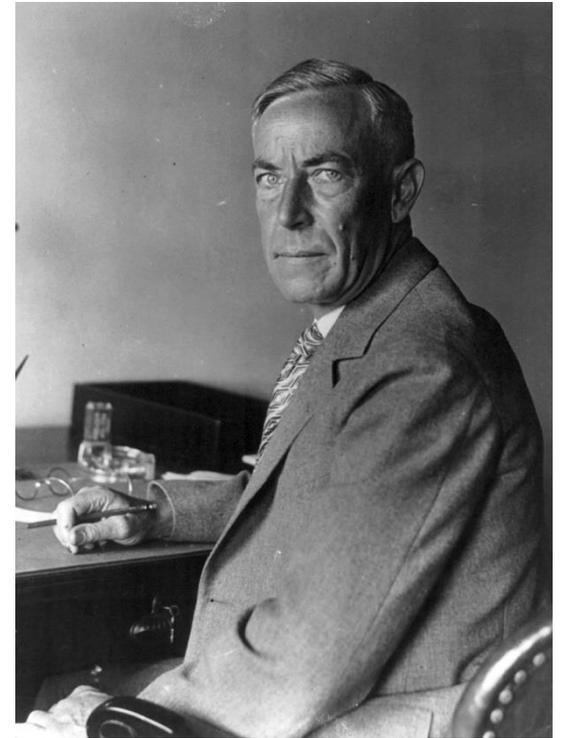| Standard	Sacramento % n=514	Richmond % n =268	Roanoke Co% n=71	Reno % n=122	Total n=975
No standard	0.2	1.5	0	1.6	0.7
High school diploma	3.7	40.7	38.0	40.2	20.9
Some college	37.5	26.5	26.8	22.1	31.8
Associate's degree	26.5	22.4	26.8	32.8	26.2
Bachelor's degree	32.1	9.0	8.5	3.3	20.4

Why should higher education matter?

- Research on impact of higher education in policing has been mixed (Paoline et al., 2015), with limited assessment of impacts on behavior
  - Some evidence of less complaints, less use of force (Rydberg & Terrill, 2010)

- Belief that college could help police in a number of areas, including moral reasoning, critical thinking, problem solving, and working with diverse groups

- Also benefits for making policing more in line with other professions

Higher education and policing in the U.S. historically

□ August Vollmer, police chief in Berkeley, CA 1909-1923 advocated for all officers to have a bachelor's degree

□ Created the first American School of Criminology at the University of California

Higher education and policing in the U.S. today

Min. Education Standard	% of Departments
High School Diploma	84
Some College (but no degree)	4
Associate's Degree	10
Bachelor's Degree	1

2013 Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics Survey; national survey of U.S. agencies

- Multiple major city police departments have recently removed their requirement of some college or a two year degree for entry, claiming recruitment challenges
  - Memphis
  - New Orleans
  - Philadelphia

But things are more complex

- Many officers have a bachelor's degree, even though it is not required
  - 58.8% in our four agency municipal sample

- Many departments require higher education (and even a Master's degree) to rise up to senior ranks
  - Anecdotal, no known research on this

- American Society of Evidence-Based Policing founded in 2015
  - Led by many "pracademic" officers who have Master's or doctoral degrees and are leading research projects in their agencies

Moving forward with police education

- Further study of the impacts of raising (or lowering) minimum educational standards

- Further study of the impact of university-type/higher education quality
  - For-profit models vs. more traditional universities

- University partnerships to promote police graduate-level education
  - University of Cincinnati and Cincinnati Police Department model (Engel & Whalen, 2010)

- American College of Policing? President's Task Force Report:
  - "The U.S. Department of Justice should develop, in partnership with institutions of higher education, a national postgraduate institute of policing for senior executives with a standardized curriculum preparing them to lead agencies in the 21st century"

Summary of receptivity findings

Lots of positive findings	Things to consider moving forward
General understanding of strategies that work	More knowledge of research on less effective strategies
Openness to conducting research	More exposure to the value of rigorous methodologies
Most police leaders have heard of evidence-based policing	Better understanding of the term "evidence-based policing"
Higher education is viewed as very useful	Raising minimum educational standards

Conclusions

□ Research should be part of the conversation in developing policies and practices

   ◻ Need to balance research evidence and officer experience (Willis & Mastrofski, 2014, 2016)

□ Receptivity research important for assessing current landscape, change over time, and developing approaches to better integrate research into practice

□ A number of possible approaches for building receptivity moving forward

   ◻ Center for Policing Excellence can help facilitate a number of these activities

Thank you

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