A STRATEGIC RESEARCH PROPOSAL FOR DEVELOPING POLICY TO
NATIONALIZE DE-ESCALATION TRAINING
IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Prepared by:

DR. VINCENT JEMISON, D.M.

University of Phoenix
Email: drewjemi@email.phoenix.edu

Mr. BRETT KRIGER

Email: brett.kriger@gmail.com

1st January 2024

Abstract

There are substantial challenges in delivering effective de-escalation training with meaningful outcomes because there isn't a standardized definition for "De-Escalation" (Engel, McManus & Herold, 2020a). The main challenge is the relative lack of empirical insight into what the definition of de-escalation should be. In theoretical terms, policing is increasingly recognized as complex and dynamic, as an identity and a 'practice' played out in a range of interpersonal contexts, which is enabled and constrained by "often contradictory" social norms. Also, there is not much direct empirical evidence for moderating the relationship between education and training when it comes to measuring a police officer's performance (decision-making and behavior) in their duty. Overall, today, it is critically essential that a formal nationalized de-escalation training policy is developed on the foundation of a structured advanced academic approach to help confront the complex interpersonal problems facing the law enforcement profession in the United States.

Keywords: *De-escalation, Nationalized training, Perception, Lifelong Learning, Law Enforcement Profession*

Introduction

Today, the landscape of the United States law enforcement industry has evolved into one of the most socially complex organizations. This complexity arises from the inherent nature of the work and the uncertainty that demands unprecedented psychological adaptability from those in the field. The objective is to establish a new framework introducing a nationalized policy. This policy must be rooted in an unparalleled comparative advantage that emphasizes building partnerships and alliances. The aim is to strengthen diplomacy, reduce tensions, de-escalate conflicts, minimize the risks of new confrontations, and lay a solid foundation for long-term social and law enforcement stability. Currently, the Department of Justice finds itself at an inflection point, where the decisions and priorities it adopts can chart the course of its competitive standing far into the future. The main thrust of this proposal centers on supporting and enhancing partnerships. This involves collaborating with willing Federal, state, tribal, and local law enforcement organizations committed to adhering to a rules-based, nationalized de-escalation educational training policy (Schwartz, Pate, Tu & Aalsma, 2017).

According to OECD (1996), training and education have several distinct differences. For example, "Training" is learning something to perform a specific skill or behavior. On the other hand, "Education" is a systematic process of learning something to acquire knowledge. Employee training, in particular, is associated with on-the-job skills acquired for a particular role, while education is seen as relating to a more formal academic background (Bengtsson, 2013). In increasingly complex organizations, it may be argued that each aspect of "Training and Education" is necessary to ensure full employee potential. However, learning to do and learning to know can be challenging to implement as they are considered opposites by some researchers. It is here that a nationalized de-escalation policy will make sure all law enforcement organizations can defend themselves and confront the social and psychological complex challenges currently facing the law enforcement industry, especially when encountered with applying one's training ability or knowledge in the face of uncertainty (See below example).

Training	Education
Pursuit of Ability	Pursuit of Knowledge
Learning to Do	Learning to Know

Background

An educated and cognitively stable law enforcement presence has always been the cornerstone of the United States of America. However, in the present day, many American cities and communities are becoming more divided and unstable. Nationwide increases in law enforcement misconduct have made life more difficult for many. It can also be argued that the interpersonal relations between law enforcement officers and the people they are hired to protect and serve have been splintered and shaken. According to RCN (2018), The evidence indicates that training programs, such as de-escalation, do not reduce violent incidents but have evolved into training that produces perception-based decision-making, which research now reveals follows a harmful predictable path (Jemison, 2022; White, Mora & Orosco, 2021).

Purpose

This research proposal aims to demonstrate how and more importantly why a well-developed structured nationalized de-escalation training policy can be applied to all Federal, state, and local law enforcement organizations. What's crucial is understanding why this comprehensive policy should be firmly grounded in advanced academic principles, guided by theoretical frameworks articulated with precision. The theoretical frameworks must be deliberate and delivered through structured educational constraints to convey positive and negative feedback on performance (decision-making and behavior) based on a dedicated nationalized model (White & Pooley, 2018).

Problem Statement

No structured nationalized policy has been written that establishes the definition of "de-escalation" and because of this when any form of de-escalation training is currently being delivered, the instructors cannot be expected to deliver completely standardized and applicable training to participants. For first responders, applying de-escalation techniques is a first-line training response to potential violence and aggression in the face of uncertainty. With this in mind, the importance of developing a structured nationalized policy that is intended to deliver standardized training has long been requested by the law enforcement industry.

Significance of Nationalizing De-Escalation Training

The significance of this research proposal is to establish the foundation for developing a structured nationalized de-escalation training policy. Today, there are many different de-escalation training techniques offered to the law enforcement industry with no standard definition being applied to define course outcomes for such training. This research proposal is intended to guide policymakers with clear guidance that will help pave the way for a training policy that is standardized and deliberately inspired by an advanced academic theoretical framework that is clearly stated. The goal is to conduct a thorough review of current industry practices, drawing upon seminal theories. This aims to achieve a high likelihood of establishing a nationalized de-escalation training policy.

Literature Review

Today, a review of current de-escalation training primarily revealed that most vetted trainers deliver training around the pursuit of ability and skill development without a standard definition of de-escalation. With this in mind, there has been limited progress made in classifying other various controls such as technological and advanced academic constraints that fully support the characteristics of a nationalized policy that is based on a structured definition of de-escalation. In terms of establishing a nationalized de-escalation policy designed to employ advanced academic constraints, this proposal was written to identify the most appropriate approach for policymakers to consider how such a policy would benefit those who work in the law enforcement industry.

According to a recent study published by Sharan Merriam in 2001 titled, *"The New Update on Adult Learning Theory"* a seminal research theoretical-based literature contributes to this proposal because her methods are relevant when it comes to exploring the benefits of advanced academic constraints in the workplace. Merriam's research also revealed that "Creating the conditions that foster lifelong learning for adult learners is very important…" (Horrigan, 2016). It is here that academic-based constraints are beneficial to establish a structured nationalized policy for future de-escalation training.

The interpersonal challenges law enforcement officers face every day are heightened by the increased psychological trauma most Americans began to experience during COVID-19 (Ashby, 2022). Today, law enforcement officers must not only manage routine activities such as providing performance feedback, managing conflicts, and coordinating with other agencies (i.e., fire, medical, coroner), but must also deal with extended duty hours, social judgment, work-related stress, and other pressures that increase the volatility of the day-to-day work environment.

These and other interpersonal challenges facing the law enforcement industry require advanced academic knowledge, which has only recently emerged as worthy of further research and development, especially on a national scale. With research mounting on the effects of social judgment impacts various kinds of law enforcement tasks (Du M, et al., 2017; Todak & James, 2018), today, more attention is now being paid to the effect current de-escalation training and work-related conditions have on an individual's performance. This has also led to an interest in

developing a nationalized de-escalation training policy that can be used to strengthen an organization's leadership capacities. The goal here is to provide an opportunity for vetted training organizations to deliver standardized de-escalation education that addresses work-related interpersonal challenges faced by law enforcement officers to effectively address individual accountability.

According to Martinez (2016), many larger law enforcement departments that have many separate locations are often focused on how to share know-how, often documenting knowledge or building arenas for communicating and sharing knowledge. A recent study conducted by Moraes and Borges-Andrade (2015) revealed that some attempts have been made to develop frameworks for characterizing various kinds of workplace de-escalation training and assessing how an officer's performance might affect his or her learning (Todak & White, 2019). The results of Moraes and Borges-Andrade's analysis showed that the training offered to law enforcement officers provides only a limited contribution to their general understanding of learning at work (Brous, 2018).

Another study conducted in 2012 by the Police Executive Research Forum provided a comprehensive theoretical perspective on the value and great need for the development of a formal nationalized de-escalation policy. Overall, combining different advanced academic constraints in the development of a nationalized de-escalation policy would allow those working in the law enforcement profession to become better equipped and would demonstrate how a well-educated police force can provide long-term value to employers, employees, and society as a whole.

Strategic Approach

According to Bengtsson (2013), advanced academic constraints could also help law enforcement officers increase self-awareness, more accurately read their own and others' emotions, regulate their emotional responses when engaged in situations of uncertainty, and help those around them to better manage their perceptions (Jemison, 2022). Academic constraints applied through a structured learning approach is the very first step towards developing a nationalized de-escalation training policy. Based on this understanding, a classification method must be developed to categorize constraint factors for academic constraint identification and modeling. In the second stage, existing academic constraint modeling methods must be identified

based on a comprehensive review of current industry practices and academic research. Finally, once the academic constraint classification and modeling techniques are identified, a theoretical framework for total academic constraint management must be outlined, leading the way for developing a nationalized de-escalation training policy.

Benefits and Anticipated Outcomes

The main and most deliberate individual benefit of nationalizing de-escalation training is to improve officers' knowledge and confidence especially when identifying and handling situations of uncertainty. The benefit is based on an accountability-instilled practice of individuals making informed structured-based decisions in the performance of their duty (Jemison, 2022). The United States Department of Justice has an opportunity to set forth a new nationalized de-escalation policy for the Federal, state, tribal, and local law industry. The benefits of a structured framework that is guided by accountability-based policies based on America's unparalleled comparative advantage in building partnerships, using diplomacy to de-escalate tensions, reducing risks of escalated conflicts, and setting a long-term foundation for social stability are invaluable.

By promoting a nationalized policy, the DOJ will also have the opportunity to integrate non-partisan political, economic, and security connections between and among all its law enforcement partners while respecting each organization's independent choices. With this in

mind, the United States Department of Justice will be seen as a catalyst organization focused on promoting human rights and the values enshrined in our Constitution. The consideration of establishing a new framework for developing a nationalized de-escalation training policy could very well bridge the seemingly enduring interpersonal divide in this country.

Conclusion

The overall goal of this research proposal is clear— Briefly outline a strategic approach for the development of a structured framework for nationalizing de-escalation training policy standards for the United States of America's law enforcement industry. In the present day, there is a need for a well-defined nationalized policy for de-escalation training programs to provide a firmer evidence base of its efficacy, which includes robust comparisons and factual examples. Any efforts to deliver future de-escalation training without a structured definition and nationalized policy to inform the program's development will continue to limit the potential benefits and robust intent that de-escalation training was designed.

The anticipated outcome is to provide measures that demand accountability for violations of human rights, recognizing that while true policy reform can only come from within, each law enforcement organization still has a significant role to play. By enhancing our law enforcement academic capacity, we can strengthen the foundation of our economy, and enhance our law enforcement credibility on the world stage. Developing a nationalized de-escalation policy can be prosperous because it can empower all law enforcement organizations to raise their standards and uphold the rights of all Americans. Finally, the DOJ should seize the opportunity to proactively reshape the current law enforcement training to ensure that it undeniably aligns with the interests and values of our Constitution.

References

Ashby, J. S., Rice, K. G., Kira, I. A., & Davari, J. (2022). The relationship of COVID-19 traumatic stress, cumulative trauma, and race to posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 50(6), 2597–2610. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.22762.

Bengtsson, J. (2013). 'National strategies for implementing lifelong learning (LLL) - The gap between policy and reality: An international perspective'. *International Review of Education,* 59. 343 352.

Brous E. (2018). Workplace Violence. The American journal of nursing, 118(10), 51–55.

Du M, et al. (2017). "De-escalation techniques for psychosis-induced aggression or agitation (Review)." Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2017, Issue 4. Art No.: CD009922.

Engel, R. S., McManus, H. D., & Herold, T. D. (2020a). Does de-escalation training work? A systematic review and call for evidence in police use of force reform. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 19(3), 721–759.

Horrigan, J. (2016, March 22). Lifelong learning and technology. Pew Research Center.

Jemison, V. (2022). "HOW PERCEPTION-BASED DECISIONS CAN NEGATIVELY SHAPE YOUR LEADERSHIP PERFORMANCE (decision-making and behavior)," Southern University College of Business E-Journal: Vol. 15: Iss. 3, Article 3. Available at: https://digitalcommons.subr.edu/cbej/vol15/iss3/3

Martinez, A. J. S. (2016). 'Managing Workplace Violence with Evidence-based Interventions: A Literature Review.' Journal of Psychosocial Nursing and Mental Health Services 54 (9): 31–36.

Merriam, S. B. (2017). Adult learning theory: Evolution and future directions. PAACE. *Journal of Lifelong Learning,* 26, 2017, 21-37. iup.edu.

Moraes, V. V., & Borges-Andrade, J. (2015). Individual and contextual variables in municipal officers' workplace learning. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 27, 2.

OECD. (1996). Lifelong learning for all: meeting of the Education Committee at Ministerial level, 16-17 January 1996. Paris.

Police Executive Research Forum. 2012. An Integrated Approach to De-escalation and Minimizing Use of Force. Washington, DC: Police Executive Research Forum. Available

from https://www.policeforum.org/free-online-documents.

RCN (2018). Violence and Aggression in the NHS: Estimating the Size and the Impact of the Problem, Royal College of Nursing.

Schwartz, K., Pate, M. R., Tu, W., &Aalsma, M. C., (2017). Improving police officer knowledge of de-escalation skills: A pilot study of policing the teen brain. *Journal of Adolescent Health,* 60(2): S15-S16. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2016.10.051.

Todak, N. and James, L. (2018). A systematic social observation study of police de-escalation tactics. *Police Quarterly*, 21(4), 509-543.

Todak, N., & White, M. D. (2019). Expert officer perceptions of de-escalation in policing. Policing: *An International Journal*, 42(5), 832–846.

White, M. D., Mora, V., & Orosco, C. (2021). Exploring variation in police perceptions of de-escalation: Do officer characteristics matter? Policing: *A Journal of Policy and Practice.* 15(2), 727-740.

White, Michael D., and Michael Pooley. 2018. Testing the impact of de-escalation training of officer behavior: The Tempe, Arizona SPI. Department. October 22, 2018. Presentation to Tempe, AZ Police