Fostering Positive Community Relations
GPSTC Police Legitimacy, Procedural Justice, and Community Relations Curricula

Online Training Course

Program of Instruction

Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Instructional Services Division
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Fostering Positive Community Relations

3 hours

Purpose

The purpose of this Program of Instruction is to provide other training entities a reference document related to the design of, and resources used in, the GPSTC Police Legitimacy, Procedural Justice, and Community Relations Curricula.

Instructional Goal

The instructional goal for this course is to provide students with knowledge and understanding of the importance of fostering positive community relations.

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Evaluation Plan

A written examination should consist of 20 multiple-choice questions designed by the agency instructor. The questions must follow the prescribed method of test development according to POST Uniform Academy Rules and Regulations.

The quality and effectiveness of this course should also be evaluated through feedback from course participants using course evaluation forms, observation by instructional supervisors, and feedback from graduate.

Terminal Performance Objective

Given the opportunity to interact with the public, officers will perform their law enforcement duties in a manner that establishes positive community relations, in accordance with the concepts included in the GPSTC Police Legitimacy, Procedural Justice, and Community Relations Curricula.
Enabling Objectives

1. Review the history of policing and its implication for today’s law enforcement officer.

2. Define police legitimacy and how it relates to officer-community relations.

3. Define procedural justice and its importance to officer safety and community relations.

4. Reinforce the importance of officer safety and how contemporary policing concepts can enhance officer safety.

5. Identify key practices of law enforcement officers and agencies that successfully build strong relationships with the community.

Topical Outline

I. History of Policing in America and its Implications for Today’s Law Enforcement Officers.
   A. Sir Robert Peel
      1. Traced back to Sir Robert Peel in England.
      2. English colonist developed watchmen and constables based on Sir Robert Peel’s, Bobbies.
         a. Watchmen mainly:
            i. Looked out for fires.
            ii. Maintained order.
            iii. Sometimes pursued criminals.
            iv. Made physical arrests.
         b. Constables
            i. Operated in the same manner.
            ii. Maintained health and sanitation.
            iii. Brought subjects and witnesses to court.
iv. Enforced laws such as:
   aa. working on the Sabbath.
   bb. Cursing in public.
   cc. Failing to pen animals properly.

3. 1800s colonists move from rural to cities.
   a. Sudden increase population, substantial increase in problems including unsanitary living conditions and poverty.
   b. 1830s riots result in:
      i. Poor living conditions.
      ii. Poverty.
      iii. Disagreements between ethnic groups.
   c. Resulted in need for more organized and larger police force, which again borrowed heavily from police organizations in England.
      i. The mission focused on:
         bb. Preventive patrols.
         cc. Locally controlled.
         dd. Paramilitary design.
   d. Limits place on police and government to protect individual liberties.

4. Differences between British and American police.
   a. American police carried guns.
   b. Served under a politically appointed captain.

5. Set the stage for problems to come.
B. Political Era

1. 19th Century
   a. First modern police departments were Boston Police Department, founded in 1838 and New York City Police Department, founded in 1845.
   b. Policing was heavily influenced by politics.
      i. Politician’s rewarded supporters with positions.
   c. Created unequal departments ethnic and religious.
   d. Officers were rarely trained.
   e. Agencies had few recruitment standards.
   f. Officers had little job security.
   g. Policing was not very effective.
      i. Unorganized and unsupervised.
      ii. Officers were not conducting regular patrols, but did assist with social issues such as feeding the hungry and housing the homeless.

C. The Reform Era of the 20th century changed dramatically.

1. Caused by three major forces:
   a. Modern technologies.
   b. Police Professionalism Movement.
   c. Civil Rights Movement.

2. Policing was completely restructured and police role redefined.

3. Reformers sought to:
   a. Eliminate political influence.
   b. Hire qualified leaders.
   c. Increase personnel standards.
d. Technology influenced police and citizens.

1. Telephone introduction allowed citizens call police directly.

2. Two way radio and police car introduced.
   a. Police presence easier in communities.
   b. Allow contact with police departments and individual officers.

3. Technological changes began to negatively impact relations.
   a. Patrol car isolated police from communities.
   b. Citizens began calling for response minor disputes and personal matters.
   c. More personal relationships developed.

D. Civil Rights Era of the 1960’s was a period of civil unrest.

1. Police-citizen crisis resulting in civil unrest.
   a. Citizens not satisfied political and social issues.

2. Presidential commissions formed to investigate.
   a. Kerner Commission, most famous, reported deep hostility and distrust between police and citizens.
   b. Kerner Commission recommended hiring minority police officers and significant changes police practices.

E. The Problem-Solving Era

1. Broken Windows Theory
   b. Building or car with broken window, susceptible crime because owner must not care.
   c. Stressed importance curbing minor crime to prevent more serious crime.
d. Influenced police departments to develop different strategies to improve police-community relations.

e. Some tactics developed that became known as Community Policing.

   i. Foot patrols.

   ii. Police substations.

   iii. Problem solving.

   iv. Collaboration with community groups.

F. Putting Public Perception into Perspective: The History of Excessive Force Helps.

1. The civil unrest of the 1960s was a direct result of segregation.

   a. There were many riots.

   b. African American clashes with police were often violent.

   c. Officers often used excessive force to gain control.

   d. African American men, women, and children were beaten into submission by police.

   e. Police used firefighters to “hose down” protestors.

   f. Events would have lasting effects police-community relations for decades.

2. Rodney King

   a. Mostly widely known excessive force incident of the 1990s.

   b. One of the first caught on video.

   c. King led LAPD on 8-mile high speed chase. Once stopped, King refused to comply and resisted arrest.

   d. Officers used Taser to get him on the ground.

   e. Once on the ground, officers kicked King repeatedly and hit him multiple times with a baton.
f. A citizen recorded incident on a video that was widely circulated.

g. One of the biggest police brutality incidents in history.

h. Four officers were charged with excessive force.
   i. Three out of four officers acquitted.
   ii. No verdict reached for the fourth officer.
   i. Led to 1992 Los Angeles riot

j. At federal trial two officers found guilty and other two acquitted.

3. Abner Louima
   a. August 9, 1997, was arrested after a fight at a New York nightclub.
   b. Was beaten during the arrest.
   c. Taken to 70th precinct where he was brutally attacked and tortured by NYPD officer, Justin Volpe.
      i. Volpe sodomized Louima with a broken broomstick and put it in his face, broke his teeth.
         aa. Louima was hospitalized for 2 months and required 3 major operations to repair injuries.
         bb. Severe injuries to Louima’s colon and bladder.
      ii. Volupe believed Louima punched him in the head, admitted he intended to humiliate Louima regardless.
   d. Several officers implicated
      i. Volupe sentenced 30 years without the possibility of parole.
      ii. Officer Charles Schwarz sentenced 15 years for assisting.
      iii. Three other officers were indicted for trying to cover up the assault.
4. Amadou Diallo
   a. On February 1999 Amadou Diallo, an immigrant from Guinea was on the stoop of his apartment.
   b. Four undercover NYPD officers approached and began to give commands.
      i. Officers claim Diallo looked suspicious.
      ii. Thought he was assisting robbery or other criminal activity.
   c. Diallo did not follow commands, reached in pocket.
   d. Officers fired 41 shots, striking Diallo 19 times.
   e. Diallo was reaching for wallet and was unarmed.
   f. Four officers acquitted second-degree murder and other charges.

5. More recent incidents have led public to scrutinize police use of force. Opinions are influenced by past incidents.

II. Police Legitimacy and How it Relates to Officer-Community Relations

A. Cynicism and Realism

1. Cynicism
   a. A distrust towards professed ethical and social values, especially when expectations are high and go unfulfilled.

2. Many root emotions
   a. Frustration.
   b. Disillusionment.
   c. Distrust.

3. Directed toward organization, authority, society.

4. Cynicism is the opposite of idealism, truth, and justice.
   a. The virtues officers are sworn to uphold are in direct contrast
with cynicism.

5. Cynicism vs. Realism are often viewed the same and used interchangeably.

6. Cynicism
   a. Pure negativity.
   b. Consistently perceive why things will not work, or why something is a “stupid” or bad idea.
   c. Distrust of others’ intentions and motives.
   d. Always thinking people are up to no good or only concerned with themselves.

7. Realism
   a. Practical use of things or ideas.
   b. Common sense.
   c. Objectively viewing a situation.
   d. Determining best course of action.

B. Jurisdiction vs. Real World

1. “Real World”
   a. Do you view your “jurisdiction” as the “real world”?
   b. Officers generally, view jurisdiction as real world.
   c. Leads to “us versus them” mentality.
   d. Essentially deal with the same people over and over.
   e. False assumption that “all” people behave the same way.
   f. Begin to label the whole jurisdiction, leads to cynicism.
2. Putting it in Perspective
   a. Police officers “real world” comprises approximately 3 – 6% of the population.
   b. 94% or more of the population are law-abiding citizens.

3. The Obligation of Police Officers
   a. No one is compelled to choose the profession of police officer, but having chosen it, everyone is obligated to perform its duties and live up to the high standards of its requirements.”

C. Lawfulness vs. Legitimacy
   1. Police legitimacy is perception.
      a. Police legitimacy is the concept that the public will “allow” itself to submit to authority when agencies are morally just, honest, and worthy of trust and confidence.
      b. Police legitimacy does not mean that officers must adopt or agree community’s point of view, or that police are acting unlawfully or being ineffective.
      c. Police legitimacy does mean that officers need an understanding of perception to respond to community concerns.
      d. There is more to police legitimacy than simply being lawful.
      e. Success depends on way community views and reacts.
   2. Lawfulness is based in law, policy, procedures. It is objective and exact.
   3. Legitimacy based in perception.
   4. Officers can act lawfully, BUT if they have not engaged public to garner support and trust:
      a. Will not be legitimacy.
      b. When officers need support, it is not there.
   5. Officers can act within the law and policy; public can still perceive no police legitimacy.
D. Judgment and Qualities of Legitimacy

1. Gaining public trust and confidence that police are honest.

2. Requires a public belief that police actions are morally justified and appropriate.

3. Witnessed in officer doing job well and attempting to protect community.

3. The result is that the public is more likely to become actively involved in police-community partnerships.
   a. Public willingness to defer to the law and police authority.
   b. Results in a correlation between those that obey the law and those who view police as legitimate.
   c. People who view police as legitimate show an increased willingness to cooperate, report crimes and provide valuable information.
   d. Legitimacy results in citizens more likely to cooperate and defer to police in moments of crisis.

4. Qualities of Police Legitimacy
   a. During police encounters legitimacy can be generated or enhanced, and at times undermined.
   b. The level of legitimacy is extremely fluid.
   c. Community relations could be undermined with a series or even one negative contact.

E. Expectation and Perception

1. Public Expectation remains fairly consistent.
   a. Traditional expectations are that officers will:
      i. Exercise power in unbiased manner without passion or prejudice and free of arbitrariness;
      ii. Remain loyal to the law alone;
      iii. Follow due process.
iv. Treat everyone fairly.

2. Test of Police Legitimacy
   a. When an agency has a highly publicized use of force incident, police legitimacy will be highly scrutinized against:
      i. The community’s expectation of reasonableness.
      ii. The way the incident is relayed to the public.
      iii. Widespread reporting has led to a rise in tensions between the public and law enforcement.

3. Perception Becomes Reality
   a. Public views use of force as discriminatory and prejudiced or that officers were engaged in misconduct.
   b. “Regardless of whether the officer was justified or unjustified in the amount of force used, as exposure to such reports increases, people – regardless of race or ethnicity – are more likely to believe that police officers are prejudiced, discriminate against minorities, and engage in misconduct.” Criminologist Ronald Weizer, 2014.

IV. Perceptions, Prejudices, and Biases
   A. Perceptions, Prejudices, and Biases
      1. Originate in many areas: culture; race; ethnicity; gender and personal experiences.
      2. In-groups are those with whom we find common ground and share with whom we share similar likes and dislikes.
         a. We see these people as more loyal, trustworthy and most comfortable.
         b. We prefer to be around them.
         c. We take time to get to know them.
3. Out-groups are those we do not understand or disagree with us.
   a. We View out-groups as different from us, untrustworthy, and difficult to get to know.
   b. When we are faced with a need to get to know someone in out-group there is potential to get to know them as individual, and to form a greater in-group.

4. Additional destroyers of police legitimacy.
   a. Racism
   b. Discrimination
   c. Stereotyping
      i. Generalization about the perceived or “typical” characteristics of a social category.
      ii. Categorize people on a regular basis based on:
         aa. Race
         bb. Gender
         cc. Age
         dd. Roles
      iii. Problems arise when we attach characteristics to individuals based on category.
   d. Prejudice
      i. Unreasonable feelings, opinions, or attitudes towards another.
      ii. Occur when we attach negative feelings towards:
         aa. “Typical characteristics”.
         bb. We assign those groups.
4. Explicit and Implicit Bias
   a. Explicit Bias
      i. Conscious preference for or against a social category.
      ii. Based on stereotypes and prejudices.
   b. Implicit Bias
      i. Unconscious preference.
      ii. Based on stereotypes and prejudices
      iii. Outside of our awareness.
      iv. More difficult to understand.
      v. May not line up with explicit biases.
      vi. Largely hidden to us.
      vii. Effects are pervasive and powerful.
      viii. Important we acknowledge they exist.
      ix. May impact our ability to use procedural justice tactics to gain police legitimacy.
      x. Key for law enforcement to have an awareness of their own implicit biases and take steps to mitigate their harmful effects.
      xi. Why we train the way we do:
          aa. To quickly assess threats.
          bb. Make appropriate judgment based on facts and circumstances.
          cc. Respond appropriately.
      xii. Implicit Bias can be altered. First it must be recognized and acknowledged.
xiii. Everyone has biases.

aa. Learn to doubt your own objectiveness, this allows us to think critically about ourselves and our motivations.

bb. Seek greater awareness and more education to increase motivation to be fair.

c. Recognize the need to know when you are most susceptible. This could occur on potentially, every call.

(1) Where you may have incomplete information.

(2) Be under tight time constraints.

(3) Have compromised cognitive control.

(4) Referred to as times when you let your training and experience take over.

(5) Still need to do that, BUT need to incorporate mitigating bias into that training to make this situation less severe, serious, or painful.

c. Overcoming Bias

i. Do NOT rely on stereotypes.

ii. Seek out members of out-groups.

iii. Engage them in a meaningful way.

iv. Be empathetic to those you meet.

v. Overcoming biases takes effort.

aa. Will not happen overnight.

bb. MUST actively work on changing biases.

cc. Actively look for ways to replace negative associations.
5. Video Presentation
   a. “Immaculate perception” by Jerry Kang at TEDx San Diego
      Accessed: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9VGbwNt6Ssk

6. Assignment
   a. Project Implicit Accessed:
      https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html

III. Procedural Justice and its Importance to Officer Safety and Community Relations

A. Procedural Justice
   1. Procedures and tactics used by police.
   2. Citizens are treated fairly and with proper respect.
   3. Two-pronged approach:
      a. Way officers interact with citizens in face-to-face encounters.
      b. Way law enforcement is perceived by the community.

4. Video Presentation
   a. “Using Procedural Justice to Improve Community Relations”

B. Community Bank Account
   1. Every encounter with the public is either a deposit or a withdrawal.
   2. Balance represents amount of legitimacy a law enforcement agency has.
   3. Balance must be increased to account for withdrawals.
   4. Done through courtesy, high level of integrity, and treating all citizens respectfully.
   5. Withdrawals occur when there is a real or perceived:
      a. Lack of courtesy.
      b. Disrespectful treatment.
c. Betrayal of the public trust.

6. If trust not maintained the community-police relationship will deteriorate.

C. Approval, Respect, Control, and Influence

1. Procedural Justice
   a. Processes are explained.
   b. Respectful treatment shown.
   c. Once disrespected by law enforcement there is a sustained exposure to positive interactions.
   d. Goals of law enforcement are voluntary compliance and non-violent encounters
   e. Use of procedural justice tactics can begin to accomplish law enforcement goals.

2. Procedural Justice Begins with Respect
   a. When officers treat people with respect, encounters are less likely to escalate into violence.

3. Two ways to gain compliance:
   a. Power of control.
      i. Using force.
      ii. Threat of force.
      iii. Public views officer as powerful, gives in and complies with that power.
   i. Effectively working with the public.
   ii. Earning their respect.
   iii. Making a positive difference.
   iv. Opportunity for voluntary compliance.
   v. More cooperation results in:
      aa. Voluntary reporting of incidents.
      bb. Voluntary reporting of crashes.
      cc. See something, say something initiatives.
      dd. More forthcoming with information.

D. Fostering Procedural Justice

1. Control Emotions
   a. Ability to remove job stress in personal lives.
   b. More rest.
   c. Healthier lifestyle.
   d. Better mental health.

2. Treatment of Others
   a. Treating others the way you want to be treated.
   b. Give others a voice by listening to them.
   c. Remain neutral.
   d. Be respectful.
   e. Be worthy.
3. Listen
   a. Remember people want to explain and tell their story before the officer makes a decision.
   b. To be successful, officers must listen and make them feel they had input.

4. Act Neutrally
   a. Public wants evidence police are:
      i. Neutral.
      ii. Consistent.
      iii. Transparent.
      iv. Non-prejudiced.
   b. Explain decision by:
      i. Being truthful.
      ii. Using simple language.
      iii. Providing complete explanation.
      iv. Checking decision for bias.

5. Be Respectful
   a. Respect is an active process of nonjudgmentally engaging people from all backgrounds.
   b. Respect is NOT the same as tolerance.
      i. Tolerance is neither positive nor negative.
      ii. Requires no effort.
   c. Respect demonstrated through Value placed on ourselves and with those we interact.
   d. People are sensitive to whether they are being treated with respect and dignity and react very negatively to being dismissed or demeaned. The opposite is true when treated with respect.
i. Officers leave a lasting impression on others by their actions.

ii. People will remember how you made them feel. How do you want to be remembered?

e. Respect involves several elements:

i. Make direct eye contact.

ii. Address by the appropriate title. Use sir or ma’am when addressing the subject.

iii. Give the person your undivided attention.

iv. Remain sensitive to cultural differences.

v. Avoid inflammatory words or phrases.

vi. Thank them for their cooperation.

vii. Show them you are sensitive to their issues and concerned for their well-being.

viii. Remain empathetic.

ix. Remember the Golden Rule

aa When You are Disrespected

(1) Don’t take it personally.

(2) Remain objective.

(3) Allow them to say what they want provided they are doing what you say.

(4) Make it a win/win if possible.

(5) Their words don’t actually hurt you so control your emotional response.

(6) Model respectful behavior.

(7) Use a breathing technique to help yourself stay calm.
6. Be Trustworthy
   a. People react favorably when officers sincerely act in their best interest.
   b. Be sincere.
      i. People know when you are going through the motions or simply pretending to care.

E. Three Principles of Procedural Justice
   1. Actively listen to them and consider their side of the argument.
   2. Take their needs and concerns into account.
   3. Explain yourself and treat them the way you want to be treated.

F. Building Relationships of Trust
   1. Strive to understand communities you work.
      a. Understand cultures and citizen’s concerns; learn key words and phrases in another language.
   2. Be professional BUT approachable.
   4. Meet the owners/employees in local establishments.
   5. Do NOT stay constantly engaged with fellow workers, get to know others in the community.
IV. Officer Safety and Contemporary Policing Concepts

A. Officer Safety

1. Officer safety must come first.

2. Action is required when:
   a. There is a security threat to the officer, others, or property.
   b. There is an attempt at unlawful flight.
   c. The officer has exhausted verbal options and there is no compliance forthcoming.
   d. Something unexpected or of greater concern or severity occurs, causing the officer to revise priorities.

3. Once the scene is secured, procedural justice tactics with a focus on respect should be utilized.

B. Basic interpersonal communication.

1. “Sizing up”

2. All people want to be treated with respect and dignity.

3. Utilizing contemporary policing concepts can enhance officer safety.

C. Problem solving defined the process of engaging in the proactive and systematic examination of identified problems to develop and evaluate effective responses.

D. SARA Model

1. Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment

2. Used to facilitate proactive problem solving in a systematic and routine manner.

3. Using the SARA Model
   a. Scanning
      i. Actively identify and prioritize problems.
      ii. Determine nature, seriousness, and baseline measures
of the basic problem.

aa. Problem defined: Two or more incidents similar in one or more ways that is of concern to the police and community.

bb. Consists of behaviors, places, person(s), special events or time, or any combination.

b. Analysis

i. Research what is known about the problem.

ii. Four objectives of analysis:

   aa. Develop understanding of dynamics of problem.

   bb. Develop understanding of the limits of current response.

   cc. Establish relationship.

   dd. Develop understanding of cause and effect.

      (1) Ask: • Who, what, when, where, how, and why or why not.

 c. Response

i. Develop solutions to bring lasting reductions in number and extent of the problems.

ii. Address an identified problem with developed and implemented strategic responses.

iii. Response should be logically based on information.

iv. Goals range from:

   aa. Total elimination of the problem.

   bb. Reducing problem substantially.

   cc. Reducing the amount of harm.

   dd. Improving the quality of community unity.
d. Assessment

i. Evaluate success of chosen response.

ii. Determines if strategies were successful.

iii. Determine if there was actual decline in problem.

iv. Determine if decline was direct result of the response.

v. If responses ineffective:

   aa. Must evaluate and review the information gathered.

   bb. May need to gather new information.

E. Crime Triangle

1. Originally developed by Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson.

2. Main theory of environmental criminology.

3. Three sides or legs: an offender, a victim, and a location

4. Theory is that if one or more of these sides or legs are missing, a crime will not occur.

5. Removing one leg of the triangle does eliminate the crime, but chances are greater for success if more than one leg of the triangle is impacted.

   a. Removing the offender leaves opportunity for new offenders to replace the old offenders because there was no change to the victim’s behavior or the environment.

   b. For the plan to be most effective, two legs of the triangle must be eliminated.

6. Important to consider the members in the community who can exercise control over specific sides of the triangle.

   a. Community members are referred to as guardians.

   b. Include social workers, family members, church organizations, property owners, etc.

   c. Example: Drug dealing location
i. Offenders include the buyers and the dealers.

ii. Guardians include:
   aa. The landlord.
   bb. Health department.
   cc. Parents of the offender.
   dd. Citizen patrols.
   ee. Parole and probation.
   ff. City codes.

d. Guardians provide law enforcement with more options for response strategies.

V. Key Practices in Building Strong Community Relationships

A. Community Policing
   1. Building Rapport and Trust
   2. Police Community Program Establishment
   3. Six Best Practices
      a. Minority recruitment.
         i. Agencies should recruit from the community they are policing.
      b. Peacemakers alliance
         i. A community outreach group dispatched to provide crisis prevention and calm situations.
c. Changing policing philosophy
   i. Train officers to rethink actions to determine whether enforcement or implementation of a new law is necessary.
   ii. Have officers consider that thinking twice before writing a parking ticket can help improve community relationships.

d. Have officers live in the city they protect.
   i. The more officers that live in the neighborhoods that they protect, the better the community relationships.
   ii. Improved relationships serve to prevent and solve crimes.
   iii. One organization the Atlanta Police Foundation raises money to give officers the incentive to live in Atlanta. Funds are used to allow the officers to live in refurbished homes, at no cost, for up to two years.

e. Create programs to improve police-community communication.
   i. In Seattle, citizens work with the police media relations center to ensure improved communication between law enforcement and the public.

f. Fear training.
   i. Increased stress and fear leads to reaction errors.
   ii. An increase in stress and fear training leads to a reduction in those reaction errors.
   iii. This type of training also creates a culture of self-examination that leads to de-escalated situations.

4. None of the best practices involve weapons training, which is already well-covered by most agencies. Instead, the community-based initiatives focus on relationships between people.
B. Video Presentations

1. 12 Acts of Kindness From Police Officers
   Accessed: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i2PT8xBAx8g

2. “I Love Being a Police Officer, But We Need Reform” by Marvin Russell at TEDx MidAtlantic.
   Accessed: https://www.ted.com/talks/melvin_russell_i_love_being_a_police_officer_but_we_need_reform

**Instructional Guide**

This block of instruction could be enhanced by the use of a practical exercise, role-playing, or demonstration.

**Instructor References**

The instructor should identify current references for this block of instruction, including, but not limited to, the Peace Officer Reference Text, the Georgia Criminal and Traffic Law Manual, and the Georgia Criminal Procedure Manual for Peace Officers, as amended.

The following references were used in the original development of this course.


