

Fall 2015 – Winter 2016

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**Community Safety Listening Circles:
 A Community and Police Partnership to Eliminate Racial Profiling**

Program Description:

The Frank Zeidler Center for Public Discussion believes that an important step in repairing relationships between law enforcement and communities of color in Milwaukee, is to come together in safe spaces that provide the opportunity for facilitated, face-to-face communication to co-create resident-based solutions. The Zeidler Center’s program, funded by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation’s Racial Equity and Inclusion, includes a series of listening circles in three pivotal communities, Harambee, Metcalfe Park, and Amani.

Circles are professionally facilitated by Zeidler Center facilitators, and co-designed by residents and police to fit the needs of each community. These listening circles create a platform for greater mutual trust and understanding, essential for establishing a constructive, collaborative environment for change. The Zeidler Center’s community partners play an essential role in encouraging continued resident, youth, and officer engagement. Our partners include Safe & Sound, Building Neighborhood Capacity Program, Milwaukee District Attorney’s Office, and the Milwaukee Police Department.

Project Timeline	
September-February 2015:	Formation of Listening Circle Planning Committees in 3 neighborhoods; design of listening lessons
March-May 2016:	First listening circle series
June-August 2016:	First listening circle series reporting and distribution, Police & resident recommendations
September-November 2016:	Second listening circle series
December 2016:	Second listening circle series reporting and distribution
January 2017:	Zeidler comprehensive report; recommendations 1

Participants & Group Composition

Listening Circles Planning Committees: Listening Circles Planning Committees have met in each neighborhood, composed of the following individuals: a youth and adult resident, an officer or officers working in the community, and two Zeidler Center lead facilitators.

Listening Circles: Listening circles are facilitated by Zeidler facilitators and composed of approximately 20-40 people who meet up to six times between September 2015 and December 2016. Participants include law enforcement working within Harambee, Metcalfe Park, and Amani, and residents, faith leaders, and youth ages 12-18 living in those communities.

Program Features

Resident/Police Co-design of Dialogues: Planning session participants stressed the need for both police and residents involvement in dialogue design, acting as the primary conveners in order to encourage greater participation from officers and residents. As members of the Listening Circle Planning Committees, with the support of strategic partners, resident leaders work together with police to design a distinctive series of listening circles based on the specific needs in each participating neighborhood.

Focus on Racism and Racial Profiling: Participants desired that race and racism be “on the table” in discussions between police and residents.

Facilitated and Structured: The Zeidler Center supplies trained facilitators who reflect the racial diversity of Milwaukee and who play an intermediary and supportive role in each listening circle. Trained facilitators capable of leading groups through challenging topics are essential. Reflective Structured Dialogue is an internationally proven method for bringing disparate groups together for increased trust, humanization, and relationships. The structured rounds allow every voice to be equally heard, and participants to listen deeply to each other.

Youth Involvement: Planning session participants stressed the importance of youth engagement and involvement in all work focused on improving police/resident relations.

Compensation: Youth and resident members of Listening Circle Planning Committees are compensated for their time in organizing and designing dialogues. Supportive incentives are offered to listening circle participants to encourage participation and to honor their time.

Outcomes, Reporting & Outputs

Outcomes: For the Zeidler Center, the primary goal and desired outcome of facilitating these listening circles is to increase trust, humanization, and relationships between residents & police. Trust and personal relationships form an essential foundation for the success of all other specific recommendations and solutions that continue to emerge organically by the participants.

Reporting: Each neighborhood listening session will generate summary reports produced mid-way through and at the conclusion of each the program. After the sessions, participants will review summary reports and make recommendations for continued initiatives in their neighborhoods, prioritizing a manageable number of those most likely to have the greatest impact. Recommendations will then be presented to the community through public testimony to the city council and in published comprehensive reports. Strategic partners who have participated in the process may then commit to continuing support of the implementation process.

Facilitation Method

The Zeidler Center uses **Reflective Structured Dialogue (RSD)**, a transformative method for conducting listening circles that has been used successfully to address conflict in both national and international settings. RSD takes as its starting point the power of storytelling to build trust and relationships where previously fear and hatred existed. Personal narrative -- the sharing of life experiences and perspectives -- breaks down stereotypes, and puts a human face on the "Other."

RSD stresses purpose; preparation; structure involving large and small group circling; Communication Agreements; and exploratory questions that open up fresh, new dialogues that may have been previously unimaginable to participants. During small group discussion, each participant is given the same amount of time to speak, without interruption. After each speaker, there is a short pause of silence so that all may reflect upon the speaker's response. In this method, facilitators are not participants in the dialogue, but work to create safe spaces for others to communicate. Through these structures, RSD provides a safe and facilitated space, and helps participants engage in constructive, often groundbreaking dialogue that can restore trust and lay the foundation for collaborative action.

Listening Circles Summaries

Total Participants of Spring Series to Date:

- 59 officers
- 324 residents
 - 108 youth residents
 - 216 adult residents
- 6 DA participants
- 72 Zeidler facilitators

Updates to Planning Committees

Planning committee changes for the fall include the addition of Metcalfe Park residents who attended all three Spring sessions: Jermaine Alexander (adult) and Demetria Williams and Zenia Alexander. Michelle and Johnathan Johnson will no longer serve on this committee. Harambee's planning committee will continue without Officer Bill Singleton who retired. The continuation of Amani's planning committee is yet to be determined. Ahmad Muhammad replaced Byron Johnson as one of the Amani planning committee's lead facilitators.

Evolution in Format

Participant and facilitator feedback during the spring series allowed us to make the following insights and alterations in order to improve the program:

- The use of two structured go-arounds (two questions) instead of three to provide more in-depth discussion of key issues.
- The use of non-compound questions, to assist in understanding.
- The use of 5 minutes per person, rather than three, to provide enough time for deep sharing.

Listening Circle Topics

Each neighborhood planning committee has chosen specific issues to focus on for each listening circle that correspond to current and relevant challenges for the community.

One point of learning throughout the Spring series has been **the importance of positive, restorative framing** for the small group questions. Participants seem more likely to discuss challenging issues (i.e. racism, profiling, perceptions of injustice) and report positive experiences after the dialogue when issues are discussed **indirectly and in ways that do not attack or demonize**. For example, the first two Metcalfe Park listening circles had greater participant engagement and more positive feedback than the final session that dealt more directly with "fear of authority."

Harambee (3 Spring meetings)

Harambee's planning committee decided to use the principles of Kwanza for its sessions.

March meeting: Umoja (Unity): To strive for and to maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and race & Kujichagulia (Self-Determination): To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves, and speak for ourselves.

April meeting: Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility): To build and maintain our community together and make our brothers' and sisters' problems our problem and to solve them together.

May meeting: Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics): To build and maintain our own stores, shops, and other businesses and to profit from them together.

Metcalfe Park (3 Spring meetings)

March meeting: Improving Police/Resident Relationships

April meeting: Improving Communication between Police & Residents

May meeting: Experiences with/Fear of Authority

Amani (2 Spring meetings)

April meeting: Respect

May meeting: Use of Restraint and Force

Executive Summary of Discussions

Trust: The importance of trust and building trust between police and residents was a major theme in all the circles. **Dialogue helped increase trust and see different perspectives and experiences:** "This experience helped build better relationships with members of the law enforcement," and "Talking like this changed my view on policemen." Participants desire continued police & resident facilitated dialogues.

Youth: Participants believed youth criminal behavior is primarily due to **a lack of communication between youth, parents and community, and a lack of activities to keep youth engaged.** Youth participants felt they were victims of the actions of a "few bad apples." Youth residents reported that much of the trouble (in form of lack of respect for others and property, and violence) was caused by the youth. Positive aspects reported about youth included: Increased youth involvement in community events, their desire for change, and how some of the youth try to be role models.

Communication: Participants reported the existence of a **no-snitch culture** hurts the community and police efforts. There is a desire to **combat the culture of retaliation:** "I don't feel safe talking to the police because my name could get out there as a snitch"; "no snitch policy is ruining our neighborhoods." There is misunderstanding about how to report crime anonymously. Captains report that any resident can call 911 and make a report anonymously, yet residents who participated in the listening circles asked for a phone number to make anonymous calls.

Police Policy & Procedure: Participants, especially youth, desired **deeper understanding police policy and procedure**. There seems to be a knowledge gap that greatly contributes to misperceptions and negative interpretations of police behavior. The Zeidler Center suggests police offer short informationals with Q/A about different facets of police procedure before or after Fall listening circles.

Trauma: Residents reported having a **conditioned negative emotional response** to the presence of police, and struggle to balance negative experiences residents have experienced or heard about with officers with positive experiences, and residents' desire for a safe community.

Cultural Competency: Participants discussed **culturally-based respect and education**. "A lot of officers are assigned to areas that they are not familiar with, they don't know how to deal with someone out of their area or culture, but this (dialogue) is a start."

Participant Feedback Forms

Overall, the series has received positive feedback, with participants noting on feedback forms that the circles "helped me view police differently," and "This experience helps build a relationship with officers and residents." The majority of participants have reported that this experience "absolutely" "strengthens community bonds" and that they would "recommend the experience to others." Some expressed positive yet mixed feelings about the dialogues: "I wish I didn't have to be here and that these dialogues were necessary. But they really are necessary, and I'm glad I'm here."

Notes from District Officers:

District 5:

Capt. Heier has received positive feedback from the officers after each session during roll call. He has "never received a negative experience by any officer attending."

For April 11 circle in Harambee, officers came directly from a homicide of a 15 year old boy at 7th and W. Capital Drive. One officer reported to Capt. Heier that the listening circle was such a positive experience coming from a chaotic scene to a location where people legitimately.

An officer was legitimately concerned for the good people who are trapped economically and own their houses and cannot afford to move. An example was of a \$20K to 30K house located in a challenged neighborhood and they will never afford to leave and upgrade out of the neighborhood. It created a discussion at roll call of really good people living in a crime riddled neighborhood.

Other feedback from district officers was seeing the high school kids so respectful, educated and concerned about the same problems that the officers are concerned about.

District 3:

Capt. Boston-Smith has not received any negative reports from the officers regarding the Metcalfe Park listening circles.

Block Parties

- Download a permit application via milwaukee.gov or call 286-3329
- Permits are only issued with approval of the alderperson
- During summer hours of June, July and August, applications are not accepted any later than two weeks before scheduled event
- Permit will be mailed, unless you specify that you will pick up your permit
- There are no fees for a residential block party
- Signatures of consent should be obtained from residents within the barricaded area to establish support for the event.
- Informational fliers should be distributed one week prior to event in order to remind neighbors
- Notification to be made to District personnel that they would like officers to stop by the block party and officers will attend.

Bike Repair Clinics

- There are two bike clinics in Milwaukee that provide bikes for kids
 - Boys and Girls club
 - Milwaukee Bicycle Collective
 - We cannot establish nor run a bike clinic however, we can collaborate with these organizations

Baseball Cards

- Baseball cards come from Community service department at the academy.
- Unsure why we no longer are provided them from the Brewers.
- We could look into contacting the Bucks to see if they would provide cards but that would also go through Office of Community Outreach and Education, under Captain Banks.

Deeper understanding police policy and procedure

- The Office of Community Outreach and Education facilitate programs to help citizens with greater knowledge of police policy and procedures, such as the Citizen Academy.
- The Milwaukee Police Department Code of Conduct and Procedures can be viewed through the city website <http://city.milwaukee.gov/police#.V2B7krsrKUk>
- Police policy and procedure information can also be obtained during each District's monthly Crime and Safety Meetings.
- The Office of Community Outreach and Education officers go into schools to facilitate collaborative partnerships with the faculty, students, and officers.

Safe & Sound Partner Notes

Adrian Spencer and Elizabeth Banks have followed up with residents who participate in the circles and have been surprised by the positive responses from the circles.

Next Steps:

In August, each neighborhood will host a community gathering to discuss the report from the Spring Series, and launch the Fall Series. Reports will include recommendations and actionable items. We have submitted a summary report to Chief Flynn who stated he was "impressed and supportive" of the program and desired to expand to other neighborhoods. The Captains of District 3 and 5 will receive neighborhood specific reports at the beginning of the summer to allow them to study and consider what is actionable. Residents have suggested that alderpeople receive a copy of the reports and receive invitations to the Fall Series and the August community gatherings.

Many participants discussed the desire for **opportunities to positively interact with police in non-crisis settings**. Residents repeatedly cited the following ideas that would allow police and residents to "get to know each other": **block parties, bike repair clinics, and bringing back the baseball cards**.

Block Parties: The Zeidler Center recommends that the Spring Series reports be released at resident-led block parties with police collaboration. Capt. Boston-Smith supplied information and permit forms for residents requesting block parties. There appears to be misunderstanding about who should be the primary planners (residents or police).

Bike Repair Clinic: Metcalfe Park resident, Richard Clarke, was largely responsible for hosting a bike repair clinic that the police assisted with in the past. Capt. Banks has a number of officers he can assign to community projects and will be asked about the feasibility of re-launching this project. See

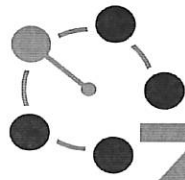
Baseball Cards: Many residents mentioned how much they enjoyed the program where police handed out baseball cards to youth. This program had received foundational support in the past that was cut.

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Questions about this update should be directed to:

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This program generously funded by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Racial Equality and Inclusion Grant.





Zeidler Center

Frank Zeidler Center for Public Discussion

Bridging communities through conversation

Amani Police & Resident Listening Circles Report

Spring Series

Planning Committee:

Officer Jasmine Moody, Pr. Mary Martha Kannass (Hephatha Lutheran), Barbara Smith (resident), James Lindsay (resident), Alexander Pernal (youth), Ahmad Muhammad (Zeidler facilitator), Oliver Johnson (Zeidler facilitator), Adrian Spencer (Safe and Sound partner)

Thank you to Hephatha Lutheran for hosting these listening circles. We would also like to thank our partners: Safe and Sound, Milwaukee Police Department, Milwaukee DA's Office.

This program generously funded by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Racial Equality and Inclusion Grant



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Executive Summary

The Frank Zeidler Center for Public Discussion believes that an important step in repairing relationships between law enforcement and communities of color in Milwaukee is to come together in safe spaces that provide the opportunity for facilitated, face-to-face communication to co-create resident-based solutions. The Zeidler Center's program, funded by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Racial Equity and Inclusion Grant, involves circles that are professionally facilitated by Zeidler Center facilitators, and co-designed by residents and police to fit the needs of the Amani community.

Participants experience both structured and unstructured portions of dialogue. Through timed facilitation, this method allows participants to respectfully share their personal perspectives and learn the perspectives of others. These listening circles create a platform for greater mutual trust and understanding, essential for establishing a constructive, collaborative environment for change. The Zeidler Center's community partners play an essential role in encouraging continued resident, youth, and officer engagement. Our partners include Safe & Sound, Milwaukee District Attorney's Office, and the Milwaukee Police Department.

The Zeidler Center hosted dialogues on Saturday, April 23, 2016 and Saturday, May 28, 2016 at Hephatha Lutheran Church.

Fall dates for Amani Police/Resident Listening Circles have been set:

Monday September 26 (5:30p-8:30p)

Monday October 17 (5:30p-8:30p)

Monday November 28 (5:30p-8:30p)

Pre-registration is required. Amani residents interested in attending one or more listening circles should call (414) 239-8555 or register at www.zeidlercenter.org.

Listening Circle 1

During the first listening circle session which focused on "Respect", Zeidler Center facilitators asked all session participants the following questions:

1. "Two words keep coming up in conversations about the relationship between residents and the Milwaukee Police Department: Respect and Disrespect. Tell a personal story EITHER of a time you were respected OR disrespected. How did the interaction impact you?"
2. "Based on your experiences, paint a picture of what a respectful relationship between residents and police would look like?"
3. "What needs to happen to improve the degree of respect in the relationship between residents & officers, and what threatens to hold us back?"

If time permitted, Zeidler Center facilitators also asked participants the following connected conversation question: "What can we do as individuals and small groups to help build a sense of positive community?"

In response to the first question, participants highlighted **the importance of a case-to-case understanding of relations between police and residents in order to avoid stereotypes**: *"Cops are not all bad. I met some that were nice. I even have an interest in police work"*. When it comes to **experiences of respect**, participants' stories underlined that the **feeling of having been heard and or helped** consisted in a defining trait of respectful relations. **Public and social events** were closely linked to respectful experiences. In addition, both officers and residents linked **being recognized by others as having helped the community** to respect, possibly because through the recognition of one's effort to improve the life of the community, **both police officers and participant felt, consciously or not, they belonged to the same side** and were **all working towards the same goals**, only using different methods. Participants reported **experiences of disrespect**, either in general or specifically related **to rough and inconsiderate police officers' attitudes**, sharing **feelings of disrespect and humiliation** – *"I was made to feel inadequate and humiliated"*. Other participants mentioned the **use of stereotypes and a certain lack of explanation from some police officers during interventions** as defining factors in disrespectful encounters. A **lack of appropriate communication leading to misunderstanding from the part of some police officers** was underlined as yet another aspect of disrespectful exchanges.

In response to the second question, participants appeared to associate **respectful relationships** to a **clear change in the approach of residents by the police**; from perceived borderline *"harassment"* of some to *"treat[ing] and speak[ing] to the residents of this neighborhood in a manner that is more respectful and see that we are people just like*

them". **The need for police officers to be more approachable** was clearly stated, namely by involving a more **relaxed body language**, bringing back the **baseball cards** and clearly **explaining what their duties and expectations of the community are**. Numerous participants called for **deep relationship building** to create a **shared vision and understanding of "who" and "what" the community is**: *"When we talk about community, are we talking about the same community? It seems that the police officers have one concept for what community is and the residents have another concept. We are missing each other in our understanding of community"*. Such a relationship would be based on **trust** and would call for **a greater involvement of police officers in the life of the community** as well as **a greater level of cooperation from residents** (specifically the **youth**). A few participants mentioned the place that mental issues and mental illnesses can have in the communities, and how the perceived **lack of trainings of officers regarding mental issues** has negatively impacted police - resident relations.

In response to the third question, a great number of participants mentioned that people had to **overcome both fear and mistrust** linked to the **use of stereotypes** in order to improve the degree of respect between residents and officers: *"Police are scared of residents and residents are scared of police. Fear causes anxiety and mistrust. Why is everyone so scared?"* Participants called for **the deconstruction of 'the Other'** (sometimes sourced in the **media** according to some participants) in order to **re-create bases for a common understanding of reality and the definition of community goals**. Such a process would suggest the existence of some type of **guidance** in order for both police and residents to better their behaviors, reactions and understanding of situations involving "the Other". In order to deepen and strengthen the relationship, having **officers living in the neighborhood** they served for residents to *"see familiar faces"* appeared to be an important element of the idea of the ideal community imagined by participants. In addition, **more casual and regular meetings and encounters of police officers with the youth** seem to represent an interesting way to get police and residents closer. Yet, both residents and police officers specifically mentioned the difficulties linked to social, cultural and sometimes physical consequences faced by residents when collaboratively communicating with the police, calling for the **end of the "no-snitch culture"** and the **beginning of more combined actions** to protect the neighborhood. Some participants also called for an **improvement of police results** to achieve safety in the neighborhood.

In response to the question asked during the connected conversation, participants suggested the **grassroots creation of a long-lasting type of community open to all**; willing and able to support people in need. To achieve such communities, participants called for the **organization of events to create sense of community** and the creation of **gardens and open places**, possibly **involving religious organizations** in the process.

Regarding participants' feedback, they called for the **organization of dialogues on a regular basis**: *"We should come together on a regular basis"* as it was understood that *"this allowed us to hear what are neighbors are thinking and feeling, and at the same time allow was to hear our police officers"*. A young participant highlighted how the structure of the dialogue enables for people to open up: *"I am usually reserved during school discussions. This was more open"*.

Listening Circle 2

Participant and facilitator feedback during the spring series allowed us to make the following insights and alterations in order to improve the program:

- The use of two structured go-arounds (two questions) instead of three to provide more in-depth discussion of key issues.
- The use of non-compound questions, to assist in understanding.
- The use of 5 minutes per person, rather than three, to provide enough time for deep sharing.

The second listening circles session that revolved around the *"Use of Restraint and Force"* was thus designed following this new format. During this session, Zeidler Center facilitators asked all session participants the following questions:

1. *"In your personal experience, what have you seen or experienced with regard to police restraint or the use of force?"*
2. *"How can police and residents work together to reduce the use of force AND keep the community safe?"*

In response to the first question, participants offered a **wide range of opinions** over their experiences regarding use of force/restraint, from very positive ones to traumatizing ones, a **diversity that can be linked to the personal story of each participant**. Several officers participating highlighted that the **use of force** (and thus restraint) is an **important part of their training** in the academy and that it **should only be used as last resort**: *"As officers, we are encouraged to use our mouths, not our fists rather than use of force. We only use force when necessary"*. While **some participants mentioned having witnessed fair use of force**, the **majority of participants shared experiences where the use of force was understood as "not needed" or "too much"**, especially mentioning the **hand cuffs**: *"I felt the cuffing process was not needed"*. Participants identified **clear communication** as essential **for individuals dealing with police officers** (and relatives involved) in order to understand what is happening as well as why it is happening: *"I was stopped by police. They had me get out of the car, cuffed me but never told me why. They released me to have a good day, again, with no explanation. It feels like a sign of disrespect"*. Other participants reported the **need for police officers to assess the situation in**

order to understand who is in need of help and who is a potential threat, possibly calling for **trainings on recognizing emotional distress and general cultural understanding**: *"My mother phoned the police, when they arrived she was still upset and the officers assumed her anger and frustration was directed toward them. They started to speak to my mother in a way that really upset me and my sister. My way of looking at the officers was that they misinterpreted my mother's emotional reaction"*. Some participants mentioned having been **traumatized** after witnessing the use of force on an individual, highlighting the **need for better application of rules on use of force by officers** and **greater knowledge on the rules by residents**.

In response to the second question, participants stressed the **importance of improving communications and the general approachability of police officers**, suggesting the use of **workshops** to support the process: *"We need to come up with a better way to communicate. If officers seem as if they are approachable I will feel more comfortable coming to you and holding a conversation. It doesn't have to necessarily be to report that something is wrong, but to ask how I can help as a resident"*. **Active communication amongst police officers** themselves was encouraged: *"I wish night shift guys could see the good people [residents] of day shift and how they speak, wave, and help police. Night shift deals with residents of a completely different element than the day shift, and unfortunately the attitude that gets transferred into the way that residents are treated, and that residents treat officers"*. **Foot patrols and beat officers** appear to be greatly missed as they had a better knowledge of community members and thus greater insight on illegal activities: *"when you run call-to-call it's hard to know neighbors and problems on certain blocks. We do what we can. Back when we started there were a lot more beat officers. We'd get to know neighbors on a daily and name basis. We'd know where to find them [residents with whom we needed to speak. It is vital to realize that, although officers might follow rules and, in theory, 'do their jobs', the image of their intervention will stain their results, and the one that will determine residents' reactions to police interventions. From the testimony of participants, it appears guaranteeing the safety of the community while reducing the use of force is reachable, yet it involves both police officers caring about the community, and residents having faith in the work of police officers: "People will show they care if they see that police officers care. Don't brush me off if I come to you for help. We need to take it back to like it was"; "If the community had a little more faith in police things will get better. That will help us"*. One police officer participating shared great **concerns regarding "the level of disrespect directed to officers on duty** getting worse and the children who demonstrate this disrespect getting younger and younger. In my opinion, they cannot see past the BLUE / BLACK uniform and see our humanity". Such a situation could potentially evolve into a **critical situation of "Us and Them"**. **Concrete steps to humanize both groups** and the **establishment of an action plan** appear vital to counterbalance the current dividing tendencies observed by both residents and police officers.

Regarding their experience of the listening circles, the feedback of participants was **extremely positive**, with parting words such as "hopeful", "Wonderful", "reassuring", "informative" and "love". Participants called for a **greater dissemination of the information** regarding both the organization of future dialogues and the results of the current dialogues under the form of report AND **actions taken**. Our Safe & Sound neighborhood coordinators, Adrian Spencer and Elizabeth Banks followed up with residents who participated in the circles and reported positive responses from the sessions.

Regarding the general feedback in District 5, Capt. Heier has received positive feedback from the officers after each session during roll call. He has "never received a negative experience by any officer attending." An officer was legitimately concerned for the good people who are trapped economically and own their houses and cannot afford to move. An example was of a \$20K to 30K house located in a challenged neighborhood and they will never afford to leave and upgrade out of the neighborhood. It created a discussion at roll call of really good people living in a crime riddled neighborhood. Other feedback from district officers was seeing the high school kids so respectful, educated and concerned about the same problems that the officers are concerned about.

Next Steps

This report will be sent to all partners, including Chief Flynn, the Captain Heier of District 5, and alderpeople. Many participants discussed the desire for **opportunities to positively interact with police in non-crisis settings** and **understand police policy and procedure in more depth**. Residents repeatedly cited the following ideas that would allow police and residents to "get to know each other": **block parties, bike repair clinics, and bringing back the baseball cards**.

Block Parties: The Zeidler Center recommends that the Spring Series reports be released at resident-led block parties with police collaboration. There appears to be misunderstanding about who should be the primary planners (residents or police). Here are the steps:

- Download a permit application via milwaukee.gov or call 286-3329
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- There are two bike clinics in Milwaukee that provide bikes for kids: Boys and Girls club and Milwaukee Bicycle Collective
- We cannot establish nor run a bike clinic but we can collaborate with these organizations

Baseball Cards: Many residents mentioned how much they enjoyed the program where police handed out baseball cards to youth. This program had received foundational support in the past that was cut.

- Baseball cards come from Community service department at the academy.
- Unsure why we no longer are provided them from the Brewers.
- We could look into contacting the Bucks to see if they would provide cards but that would also go through Office of Community Outreach and Education, under Capt. Banks.

As requested by a great number of participants in both sessions, here is some information about police rules and procedure:

Police Policy and Procedure:

- It was suggested that the Fall Listening Circles begin with short explanatory presentations by the officers on aspects of policy and procedure.
- The Office of Community Outreach and Education facilitate programs to help citizens with greater knowledge of police policy and procedures, such as the Citizen Academy.
- The Milwaukee Police Department Code of Conduct and Procedures can be viewed through the city website <http://city.milwaukee.gov/police#.V2B7krsrKUk>
- Police policy and procedure information can also be obtained during each District's monthly Crime and Safety Meetings.
- The Office of Community Outreach and Education officers go into schools to facilitate collaborative partnerships with the faculty, students, and officers.

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Listening Circle 1 - Analysis

Topic: Respect

1. Question Round 1: "Two words keep coming up in conversations about the relationship between residents and the Milwaukee Police Department: Respect and Disrespect. Tell a personal story EITHER of a time you were respected OR disrespected. How did the interaction impact you?"

"Police officers should give the same respect that they want to receive when they are talking."

1.1 Importance of Individuality of Experiences

It is important to highlight that participants were asked to share either an experience of respect or disrespect. Although experiences related to disrespect are more numerous than the ones of respect, rather than concluding that disrespect seems to be more present than respect in police and residents relations, it would be more accurate to understand that more participants decided to share experiences of disrespect than of respect. A possible explanation for such phenomena could be the need for participant to first share negative experiences as they stand out in the life of a participant and often shape their memories. It appears that police officers participating in the dialogue decided (consciously or not) to mostly share experiences of respect, possibly as a mean to highlight the general positive views they had regarding community members.

A few participants decided to highlight the importance of a case to case understanding on relationships between police and residents in order to avoid stereotypes: *"Cops are not all bad. I met some that were nice. I even have an interest in police work"; "I feel like it is a 50/50 situation"*. An officer participating shared a need to not focus on experiences of disrespect, to *"brush it off"* as *"we still have to treat people respectfully... Each individual has unique experiences"*.

1.2 Experiences of Disrespect

1.2.1 Disrespect outside of Police Interactions

A few participants shared stories related to experiences of disrespected in social context such as in a restaurant (by a waiter) or at school (by bullies). Another participant mentioned tensions within the neighborhood as *"there is a clique from one block over that keeps coming on our block disrespecting us"*. This specific testimony highlights the importance of social interactions and the need for preventive methods to solve conflict at the community level in order for such situation not to become violent and possibly involve police forces.

1.2.2 Rough, Inconsiderate and Humiliating Behaviors

Several participants mentioned having witnessed or personally experienced situations during which police officers had been unfairly rough and inconsiderate when taking into account the particular circumstances of the situation. For instance, a young participant shared being outside *"playing football with my friends in the street and two officers spoke to us harshly and in a threatening manner. We felt that it was not necessary to speak to us like that"*. Another participant's story seem to highlight a certain lack of sensitivity of the police officers he interacted with while *"homeless and separated from my children"*: *"there was a lot of trauma that I was going through and the mental mindset of MPD made it hard for me. They looked down upon me because of my homelessness. I was standing at a bus stop waiting for a bus when the police officer saw me and told me to move along. This was out there by the mental health division and the hospital. Where was I supposed to go?"*

Humiliation appears to be an important element of these interactions, as another participant highlighted, *"I was made to feel inadequate and humiliated"*. Considering such situations, a police officer participant declared feeling that *"some officers don't take their job serious enough at certain times. I have personally experienced co-workers disrespecting residents on the job and in conversation and I don't like it but it's hard to fight against because of peer pressure"*. This specific experience seems to underline a need for possible improvements of the currently established system that enables the reporting of an officer's misconduct by others.

1.2.3 Use of Stereotypes, Lack of Communication and Absence of Understanding

Participants seem to relate these experiences to the use of stereotypes by some police officers: *"I feel like everyone in the 53206 zip code is put into the same category by MPD"*. Yet, as one participant explained, *"sometimes we, as people, need to stop and think to ourselves, 'things are not always what they seem'"*.

Other participants linked disrespectful interactions with a lack of appropriate communication leading to an absence of understanding from the part of some police officers: *"I have seen many times when there was miscommunication between the residents and the police officers and this disrespect took place"*. Another participants portrayed a situation during which - *"they [police officers] never allowed me speak without interruption and so they never understood what I was trying to say"*, which appears to underline a need for a certain transformation of interactions between residents and police in order for both parties to have the opportunities to clearly state what they understand is happening at that moment.

Apparent lack of explanation from some police officers during interventions seems to create disrespectful situations: *"Invasion of privacy! Police officers came to my house without any explanation and pull the child out of the house. They pulled their guns and pointed it at them, and gave no reason why he was doing this"*. A police officer participant shared an

experience that highlights the benefits of clear explanation behind a police intervention after having been called by a resident to check the driver of a parked car in front of the resident's house: *"when we were on the scene the driver of the car thought he was being disrespected. I showed him the call on the computer. He actually thanked us for taking the time to explain to him the reason why my partner and I approached and questioned him. So, an incident that began with an emotional reaction ended with the driver of the car shaking our hands and thanking us for being vigilant"*.

1.3 Experiences of Respect: Being Heard, Being Helped and Sharing Common Goals

A fair amount of participants highlighted that, to them, respect was closely linked to the feeling of having been heard and or helped when interacting with police officers: *"Police officer helped me across the street. The police did a good job helping me out. It affected me in a good way because I am visually impaired. They are doing a great job"*; *"I have attended neighborhood meeting at my local station and felt like my concerns were heard. I felt respected"*. It appears that *"neighborhood meetings"* and *"Ice Cream Social(s)"* have had a good impact on residents - police relations as they represent ways to establish connections that encourage mutual respect.

Several of the respectful experiences shared by both police officers and residents mentioned the fact of being recognized by others as having helped the community in a certain way: *"I felt respected because I got recognized for helping a resident"*; *"There was one time when I felt respected by my Alderman and some MPD officers about drug sellers living next door to me. I told my Alderman and Police and they commended me for standing up and telling the truth"*. It could be understood that through the recognition of one's effort to improve the life of the community, both police officers and participant felt, consciously or not, they belonged to the same side and were all working towards the same goals, only using different methods. Collaborative situations in which all participants understood the existence of a common cause were highlighted by both officers and residents as positive experiences: *"As an officer, I saw examples of respect. There were some teenagers stealing. Next there were some other youngsters and they helped us out with descriptions"*; *"One day I flagged down a squad car and reported some criminal activity in my neighborhood. I felt respected because the officers paid attention to what I had to say and followed up on my information"*.

2. Question Round 2: "Based on your experiences, paint a picture of what a respectful relationship between residents and police would look like?"

"I see people walking up to each other in a calm, friendly, and respectful manner."

2.1 Changed Approach and Communication Style

A considerable number of participants appeared to associate a respectful relationship between resident and police to a clear change in the approach of residents by the police; from perceived borderline "harassment" of some - "Police are always after young adults and treat them as suspects even when they haven't done anything" - to "treat[ing] and speak[ing] to the residents of this neighborhood in a manner that is more respectful and see that we are people just like them".

Being approachable despite the "badge" seems to be in the minds of a number of participants, using a "relaxed body language" being mentioned as one of the ways to achieve it. Another participant mentioned the use of baseball cards as a great way for police officers to be approachable: "at school with the police present they would take photos with us and pass out baseball cards". More explanation regarding police officers' duties in the neighborhood was suggested as well as a way to improve communication and mutual understanding: "When police officers walk the block, they don't hide. They explain why they are there" and eventually increase police and residents collaboration: "citizens should come together and help the police keep things safe". Moreover, feedback from the police was mentioned as a way to establish a true communication that enables for mutual growth through different challenges: "MPD to give residents feedback. Feedback is not what we want to hear but it allows for reflection and change to take place".

2.2 Relationship Building

"Relationships building between residents and officers". This participant's statement appears to have echoed amongst participants as a whole for a great amount of them mentioned the need for relationship building that could lead to the creation of a shared vision and understanding of "who" and "what" the community is: "When we talk about community, are we talking about the same community? It seems that the police officers have one concept for what community is and the residents have another concept. We are missing each other in our understanding of community". As three separate participants explained, "Step[ping] up their [the police's] Goodie Game" via personal interactions, and "caring and approaching residents outside of problems simply to talk" were identified as simple ways to demonstrate to residents that "there is nothing to be afraid of". "Block parties, ice cream socials, and informational booths" were mentioned as events that should be more encouraged as they could potentially work toward that direction.

Some participants highlighted that a sustainable change and consequent improvement in police - resident relationship could only take place if efforts were to be equally undertaken on the "other side": *"the youth and young adults in turn should stop shouting obscenities at police and be more cooperative when police need information about a crime that has just happened close to them"*. Personal interactions and active signs of "friendship" were encouraged by some as a mean to achieve a greater level of trust and sustainable cooperation: *"If you see an officer, wave. [...] I advise kids to follow the PBIS Way. Be respectful, be responsible, and be safe"*.

As one participant explained, *"there needs to be more honesty and trust. We try to trust. We give the facts and they [police] fly right over it like we didn't say anything"*. Trust and collaboration through reliable information appeared indeed as some of the goals to be achieved once a respectful relationship can be established: *"Be willing to share information"* and *"that information they received from the dispatcher should be accurate"* to guarantee appropriate response.

2.3 Mental Illnesses and Issues in the Community

A few participants mentioned the place that mental issues and mental illnesses can have in the communities, and how the perceived lack of trainings of officers regarding mental issues has negatively impacted police - resident relations: *"How are officers trained to enter into a community take notice of those mentally ill individuals? Is there a difference for a white vs a black community?"* Participants suggested for police officers to *"be conscious of those with mental health issues, and deescalate those situations"*. In addition, the advantages of regular personal interactions between police officers and residents were one more time underlined in situations involving residents affected by psychological issues as it was understood that *"it would be helpful if the officers knew the residents mental issues and how to respond"*.

3. Question Round 3: “What needs to happen to improve the degree of respect in the relationship between residents & officers, and what threatens to hold us back?”

“Growing up in 53206 was fun because police look at residents as people and not criminals. Over the years that mutual respect for each other has faded.”

“Fear is the one thing that stops residents and Police from coming together. ”

“A barrier would be that there is no MPD 53206 communication, interaction or respect.”

“The barrier would be fear, cultural differences and respect. These three things must be addressed by residents and MPD.”

3.1 Challenging Fear, Mistrust and Stereotypes

A great number of participants mentioned that people had to overcome both fear and mistrust in order to improve the degree of respect between residents and officers: *“Police are scared of residents and residents are scared of police. Fear causes anxiety and mistrust. Why is everyone so scared?”*

This existing fear appears to be linked to the numerous stereotypes on both police and residents, as one participant mentioned: *“Take a better look at our belief systems and how they are set and how to overcome some of faulty beliefs, concepts that we have about the police and the police have about the community”*. Numerous participants called for the deconstruction of the understanding of ‘the Other’ in order to re-create bases for a common understanding of reality and the definition of community goals: *“What are the expectations from each side? What are the duties of each in respect to building a safer relationship and a safer community for both residents and Officers to live and work in?”*

Some participants have mentioned the media as having contributed to the creation of a negative image of African American communities and activities, thus calling for them *“to show more positive situations about Black events”*. Similarly, a participant underlined that *“cops [had] a negative image”* in general, while others called for people *“[not to] judge a book by its cover. Don’t assume all police are mean. I always try to be nice and talk respectfully”*.

3.2 Learning How to Communicate with ‘the Other’

Both police and residents participants appeared to be calling for some type of guidance in order for them to better their behaviors, reactions and understanding of situations involving “the Other”.

Some participants suggested giving access to residents on tools and ways to behave when dealing with the police as a way to increase the level of civism and respect during interactions: *“Police have a website that has many answers to how residents should respond to*

police when they are stopped or questioned. Residents are not told about these resources and they are not printed out as a resource to give to residents who do not have internet access". Such calls appeared to be reflecting the views of some police officers participants who mentioned that "some residents don't know how to respond to police when they are stopped because of incidents seen on T.V.". "Learning one's rights" or "how to advocate for one's self with MPD" seem to be topics that call for a much great attention as well.

In a situation where two human beings are interacting, some participants considered that police officers, due to their profession and consequent trainings, "must be the bigger person when encountering unruly residents". Thus, several participants mentioned the need for "MPD [...] to go through sensitivity training [for] this should be a part of officer training".

3.3 Relationship Building: MPD Residence in Area and Relationship with Youth

As analyzed in Point 2., relationship building appears to be pillar of the steps to follow in order to establish mutual respect between police and residents. In order to do so, participants mentioned two specific points to be taken into consideration in order for such relationships to become reality: residence of MPD in area and relationship building with youth.

An important number of participants mentioned the issues that is the fact that "many of the officers do not live in the community so how do they know what's going on? Since the officers do not live in the community that mindset shows in their interaction with the people". "Seeing familiar faces" in the neighborhood and having officers living in the neighborhood they served thus appear to be important elements of the idea of the ideal community imagined by participants: "Culture of the police department must change to represent that police are residents as well and Police, which would help police communicate better to residents they come to your door step"; "One suggestion is that where the officer serves, he or she should live in that neighborhood". Participants mentioned the benefits that such an organization would have on the community, namely deeper level of interactions, easier exchange of information and greater collaboration and more enjoyable: "If police were friendlier and got to know the residents on a personal level it would not be so hard to get information from residents when crime happens in the neighborhood".

A great advantage underlined by some consisted in the approximation of the police to the neighborhood youth in other ways than mere checks and controls: "[having police officers in churches] was also a way for MPD to connect to young people before they got involved in drugs and crime". In addition, interventions of police officers in schools to talk about civics and governments were suggested as a way for the youth to get familiar with police work at a young age: "Once a month kids should learn about Civics/Government before getting into trouble. Kids should learn about the standard procedures, not when they are older". Considering the several comments on the difficulties between youth and police officers, such suggestions seem to be of great importance for the future of the city.

3.4 Ending of No-Snitch Culture for Combined Action

The lack of effective and respectful communication combined with limited interactions previously mentioned in Point 2. was identified as an important barrier that could 'hold us back': *"a barrier would be that there is no MPD 53206 communication, interaction or respect"*. Yet, it is interesting to note that both residents and police officers specifically mentioned the difficulties linked to for the social, cultural and sometimes physical consequences faced by residents when collaboratively communicating with the police: *"People must feel safe if they witness a crime"*; *"There should be no judging of others if they decide to do the right thing"*. A participant shared an experience about the consequences of trying to support police work: *"I felt an [moral] obligation to rid my neighborhood of this menace and I got a lot of threats and neighbors called me a snitch but I don't care because I and some of my neighbors do not share the same values. I will continue to tell on criminal activity on his block"*. Giving the opportunity to call 911 anonymously as well as benefitting from protection when testifying have both been mentioned as important measures to help residents *"choose between right and wrong and stand up for their community by reporting crime in their neighborhood and face whatever challenges that come with that"*.

Changing the culture has appeared vital in order for combined action to take place and sustainable results to be witnessed: *"I think that respect would look like the community helping police, police the neighborhood"*; *"I believe that the District attorney's office, MPD and residents must work together to stop crime and keep witnesses safe from retaliation when they testify against perpetrators crime and violence in their neighborhoods"*.

3.5 Improvement of Police Results to Achieve Safety

Several participants mentioned the need for the results of police action (supported by community members) to improve in order for a respectful relationship to be established: *"Police response times are not up to standard. This is an area that MPD must improve in if they intend to get the respect of residents"*. The ultimate goal appears to be the establishment of a certain level of safety in the neighborhood: *"Safety for residence as well as MPD"*; *"I'd want people to be able to sit on their porch and relax"*.

Connected Conversation - *"What can we do as individuals and small groups to help build a sense of positive community?"*

Grassroots creation of a long-lasting type of community open to all; willing and able to support people in need:

- My hope is that those many people returning from correctional services may be welcomed, find a job and be supported by their families. The same goes for those with mental health issues, too. There are lots of problems stemming from drug use. I'd like to see us support each other. I walk in the neighborhood and claim it, but not at night. People approach me and say hello. I'd like for the neighborhood to be a place where there is employment and the services that people need. Give people a second chance. Everybody needs a second chance.
- We need to have more circles like this to talk and come up with ideas.
- We need a neighborhood watch. Bring in the alderperson and district captains to these circles. They need to hear what is being discussed in these circles.
- Our chiefs [Captains] keep getting moved around, and they all have different approaches. We'll no longer get the crime statistics and abandoned home statistics with this new chief [Captain] so that we can address vacant homes and board them up. It makes it hard when leadership changes. We can't build relationships. [Finally,] We all need to try to live non-violently.
- Simply just knowing your neighbors, knock on doors and find out who is there, and how they feel about the community. Try to build relationships. You build by trying and knowing the community. It used to be that you knew the kids [on the block] and could speak to them.
- Neighborhoods are strong when several people work together.
- We haven't had anyone die on our block, but it has to be stricter with shootings. Be more strict.

Events to create sense of community:

- Community clean ups and block parties – things that bring neighbors together.
- The thing that brings people to churches is to block off the street and have a picnic. We need to create a sense of community and bringing people together.
- Get neighbors together to do things with teens. We can have groups like this together to talk amongst teens. Have block parties.

Involvement of religious organizations:

- Involve churches.
- We need to find out resources of the church and community, and present them to people in the neighborhood so that they know that the church is a place of hope, help and resources.

- A positive thing is that this church does a lot for the neighborhood. There's a lot of support at this church. A negative is that there are a lot of boarded up homes and a lot of loiterers.
- A positive is that the church is really involved. They try to connect with this block and get them involved. A negative is that we need to try to work with the youth and get them involved. We need to work with the youth to find jobs and not feel they have to take or steal from each other.
- I love this church and it's a positive thing in this community. We need more things the youth can get involved in.

Create gardens and open places:

- Make community gardens in the open spaces.
- Plant trees to make this a neighborhood of orchards in the open lots. I am told that this neighborhood was once one of orchards everywhere. Let's bring that back.
- The food from the community gardens and orchards can provide a way for people to come together to learn of the old ways from each other how to can foods, make preserves and jellies. Those are all lost skills and knowledge. We need to learn to eat off the land again.
- People can plant flowers to make the neighborhood more beautiful.

Feedback

Some participants actively mentioned the need they identified for more listening circles as, as one participant explained, *"this allowed us to hear what are neighbors are thinking and feeling, and at the same time allow was to hear our police officers"*.

Listening Circle 2 - Analysis

Topic: Use of Restraint and Force

1. Question Round 1: *"In your personal experience, what have you seen or experienced with regard to police restraint or the use of force?"*

1.1 General Explanations and Observations on Use of Restraint and Force by Police Officers

Several officers participating highlighted that both the use of force (and thus restraint) are an important part of their training in the academy and that it should only be used as last resort: *"Use of force is a part of our training in the academy. We receive continual in-services on such"; "As officers, we are encouraged to use our mouths, not our fists rather than use of force. We only use force when necessary"*. Thus, the officers participating all explained that throughout their careers, *"I have used my police training and life experience to 'talk folks down' from situations so that no amount of restraint or force has to be used"*.

Two officers shared experiences they had with the use of forces, both involving individuals with weapons threatening people around them, a situation that legitimates the use of force: *"The door opened when I arrived on scene, and the perpetrator was standing there with a rifle. He pushed his son out the door first. I grabbed his son and pulled him backward [to safety]. I also pulled the perpetrator out simultaneously. The situation justified use of force because of the perpetrator's weapon"*.

Yet, despite the existences of *"rules and regulations and the law itself"* that bound officers, one participant mentioned that the seeming lack of knowledge of residents about these rules can create complicated situations in which residents might not understand why restraints are used: *"In a lot of cases residents do not understand [no frame of reference for why restraints are being utilized] because of them not being exposed to our training and what we have discretion for and what we do not have discretion to do"*. Indeed, another resident mentioned that police practice can be hard to understand and follow, highlighting the importance of the proper interpretation of the situation by the witnesses: *"I recall that there was a teen being detained by law enforcement in the street. The teen [suspect/alleged perpetrator] was in what is referred to as the "Felony Prone Position". Now another teen witnessing this action, I am certain, would come away with a not so favorable view of law enforcement and their "standard or best practices"*. As a third participant declared, getting educated on the *"art of restraint"* can be considerably useful for residents, especially the youth: *"When I grew up here in Milwaukee, as a youth I experienced the 1967 riots/uprising. There were 2 MPD that resided on our block they educated us in the art of "restraint" as it related to the current situation [curfew from 6 am until 6 pm]"*. Thus, a greater understanding by residents of the legalities behind restraint, use of restraints and/or force by officers could be extremely beneficial to police – residents relations.

1.2 Use of Restraint and/or Force: Legitimacy and Necessity or Lack Thereof

All but one participant had witnessed and/or experienced situations with regard to police's use of force, restraints and lack of restraint in behavior. It appears that opinions are wide spread on the use of both restraint and force, from the most accepting to the most shocked and traumatized. It has transpired from the experiences shared that participants' opinions were greatly influenced by the specific situations they lived or witnessed involving use of restraint and/or force.

1.2.1 Use of Restraint and/or Force seen as Fair

A few participants mentioned several situations they witnessed during which it appeared to them that force and/or restraint had been used fairly and efficiently: *"There was an incident where I witnessed 2 MPD utilize restraint, by talking a shoplifting suspect down after the in store security had a difficult time in one subduing the suspect. The two officers, in my opinion practiced a very high level of professionalism"*. It seems that an important element of the understanding of the use of restraint and/or force as fair is considerably influenced by how "professional" of a technician it is, that is, whether or not the witness felt that it was the most appropriate thing to do given specific circumstances: *"A young man was talking crazy to police. To get control of the man, they told him, "We're gonna cuff you." He refused [resisted arrest]. The officer pulled out pepper spray, and the young man allowed himself to be cuffed"*.

1.2.2 Use of Force/restraints seen as Unjustified and/or Unneeded

A great number of participants mentioned having experienced or witnessed police officers using either restraints or force in a manner that has been identified as "not needed" or "too much": *"I have witnessed use of force on others. I've seen him [police officer] take down people and put their knee on their back or neck or whatever. [...] As a school official I thought this use of force was too much"*. Hand cuffing as a process has been specifically mentioned as being very overwhelming, sometimes even purposefully so, in the situations witnessed and experienced: *"I felt the cuffing process was not needed"; "[...] so there was no need for her to be cuffed"; "They had me get out of the car, cuffed me – in the process they deliberately over-tightened the cuffs"*.

Several participants shared stories that shone a light on the importance of the understanding of a situation by both residents as well as officers. Clear communication from the part of law enforcement appears essential for the individual dealing with police officers (and relatives involved) in order to understand what is happening as well as why it is happening: *"Police stopped and snatched up my son for no reason because he was running through the neighborhood. They said he matched a description. Eventually they let him go"; "I was stopped by police. They had me get out of the car, cuffed me but never told me why. They*

released me to have a good day, again, with no explanation". The lack of clear explanation seems to be taken by some participants as a lack of respect – "It feels like a sign of disrespect" – which in turn will make it much harder to guarantee collaboration and the de-escalation of conflictive situations.

Participants' stories underlined that, when intervening, police officers would need to assess the situation in order to understand who is in need of help and who is a potential threat: *"My sister phoned the police to her home for a 'domestic violence' call. The officers were so disrespectful not only to me but my spouse. [...] in my opinion it was a situation where a level of respect and professionalism was sorely lacking on their part".* Another participant shared an incident during which the misunderstanding of the situation by officers had serious consequences on the emotional state of the person concerned: *"My mother and I were in the park with my baby sister and her purse was stolen. My mother phoned the police, when they arrived she was still upset and the officers assumed her anger and frustration was directed toward them. They started to speak to my mother in a way that really upset me and my sister. My way of looking at the officers was that they misinterpreted my mother's emotional reaction".* It appears that besides a better understanding of emotional reactions, police officers could benefit from a greater cultural understanding when it comes to interacting with residents.

The existence of very defined and clear rules regarding the use of restraint and/or force widely and repeatedly explain to the public appears to be vital for, besides having a negative effect on residents involved with police forces, it can have long-term psychological effects on witnesses: *"More than 30 years ago, a woman in my neighborhood was detained and arrested. What transpired was that she was removed from her vehicle violently and thrown onto the hood of her automobile. That incident really "traumatized" me I am certain, because now when I see officers stopping any citizen for a minor traffic stop, suspect in a crime, etc. I always observe to ascertain if I can help or if I need to be witness to the events as they unfold".*

2. Question Round 2: "How can police and residents work together to reduce the use of force AND keep the community safe?"

2.1 Communication, Collaboration and Beat Officers

2.1.1 Better Communication, Approachability and Collaboration

A participant shared a powerful personal assessment of the situation the community is facing at the moment: *"When officers come through neighborhoods if they would just acknowledge people... Good residents are made to feel like we are criminals. People go away for college, come back, no one wants to say or do anything to help bring change. The bad has become the new normal. [...] But everyone is due respect because they are a human being".* Improving communications and the general approachability of police officers appears to be a recurrent theme in police – resident dialogues, featuring as answer in every single dialogue: *"We need to come up with a better way to communicate. If officers seem as if they are approachable I will feel more comfortable coming to you and holding a conversation [about problems, or simply to talk]. The conversation doesn't have to necessarily be to report that something is wrong, but to ask how I can help [with a problem they are facing or crime they are trying to solve], as a resident".* Workshops on effective communication could be beneficial for both police officers and residents.

A police officer participant underlined the great need for active communication amongst police officers themselves when declaring *"I wish night shift guys could see the good people [residents] of day shift and how they speak, wave, and help police. Night shift deals with residents of a completely different element than the day shift, and unfortunately the attitude from that gets transferred into the way that residents are treated, and that residents treat officers".*

2.1.2 Beat Officers and Foot Patrol

A very important number of participants mentioned that, in order for officers to gain a better knowledge of community members and eventually acquire a greater knowledge of where to find criminals and who to ask for help, *"foot patrol, although not efficient, would go a long way to establishing trust and foster better communications with residents and officers".* Another participant declared that *"police officers should walk the beat, get to know the neighbors, knock on doors and get to know the residents. Get to know the kids like in the olden days".*

A police officer participant shared the experiences of over 40 years of services, explaining that *"when you run call-to-call it's hard to know neighbors and problems on certain blocks. We do what we can. Back when we started there were a lot more beat officers. We'd get to know neighbors on a daily and name basis. We'd know where to find them [residents with whom we needed to speak]".* Becoming (again) the *"neighborhood protectors"* appears

to be needed, yet doable only if police officers become more personally engaged in the life of the community. A resident shared a story to argue for the re-institution of the “system of walking the old beat” that portrays without ambiguity a situation that could have been avoided had there been a greater knowledge of community members by the officers involved:

“Here’s an example of why it matters: in my neighborhood, police were looking for a suspect. They knocked on the door of a well-known [to neighbors] upstanding lady in the neighborhood and demanded that she open her door. She told them that she was unclothed, and needed a couple of moments to put on clothes. The officers yelled at her from the other side of the door that if she didn’t open it that instant they’d bust it down and arrest her. She opened the door and stood there unclothed [thereby creating an issue in which her dignity has been compromised]. If community policing had still been in effect, beat officers would’ve known this woman, and known that she would never, under any circumstances, harbor a suspect.”

As portrayed in this example, not only does the lack of real relationships between residents and officers make collaboration hard, it can create situations in which police officers, trying to solve a crime, end up leaving behind an image of them far from the one of the “protectors”. It is vital to realize that, although the officers might have been following the rules and, in theory, ‘done their jobs’, the image of the intervention that was spread and not the intervention itself is the one that will stick to them, and the one that will determine residents’ reactions to police interventions. In this case, that image was one of police disrespect and lack of humanity in front of a well-known “upstanding lady” of the community.

2.2 ‘Police should care’ – ‘Residents should have more faith in us’

From the testimony of participants, it appears that there are two sides to the same medal. Guaranteeing the safety of the community while reducing the use of forces seems to be reachable, yet it involves both police officers caring about the community, and residents having faith in the work of police officers.

A participant underlined the need for actual demonstration of care by police officers when it comes to the safety of the community: *“Police should show that they care. I once told the police who stole a bike. They did nothing. Another time I flagged police and told him about my neighbor who had a gun and was being argumentative and threatening. The officer told me to call for a squad, and drove away without helping”. This specific situation was then condemned by a police officer participant as “unacceptable” during the connected conversation: “That never should have happened. Even if he had an arrested citizen in the back seat of his squad he should’ve radioed in for immediate help to the scene”. Yet condemnations after the facts cannot be enough and real changes would need to be seen by residents in order to reduce the use of force while maintaining the community safe: “People will show they care if*

they see that police officers care. Don't brush me off if I come to you for help. We need to take it back to like it was".

Police officers participants shared their concerns about the lack of faith in their work hey feel is coming from the community: *"If the community had a little more faith in police things will get better. That will help us"*. A suggestion from another police officer regarding increasing the level of understanding of police work among residents consisted in explaining the processes involved in the preservation of a crime or death scene: *"At a crime or death scene we have a process. We must preserve evidence. We can't allow people to say their last goodbyes. People get upset because we can't let them hug on the [dead] bodies, and then we have to use force because they want to lash out against us"*.

Another participant underlined the difficult situation faced by some police officers when dealing with increasing levels of disrespect coming from some youth: *"The level of disrespect directed to officers on duty is getting worse and the children who demonstrate this disrespect are getting younger and younger. In my opinion, they cannot see past the BLUE / BLACK uniform and see our humanity"*. Such a situation could potentially evolve into a critical situation of *"Us and Them"*, which seems to become more and more of a reality. Concrete steps to humanize both groups and the establishment of an action plan appear vital to counterbalance the current dividing tendencies observed by both residents and police officers.

Feedback

Participants called for a greater dissemination of the information regarding both the organization of future dialogues and the results of the currents dialogues under the form of report AND actions taken.

Questions about this report should be directed to:

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