EVIDENCE-BASED POLICING: THE BASICS
STUDY GUIDE
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http://cebcp.org/evidence-based-policing/the-matrix/matrix-demonstration-project/

This study guide is a summary and outline of the four video modules on evidence-based policing located at http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLA5F09BA4A10764D6 and includes the following modules:

1. Evidence-Based Policing: DEFINITIONS
2. Evidence-Based Policing: THE RESEARCH
3. Evidence-Based Policing: APPLICATION
4. Evidence-Based Policing: CHALLENGES

There are four learning objectives to this lesson:

1. To learn what "evidence-based policing" is and why it is important to policing.
2. To learn what we know, from rigorous research, are effective police tactics to control crime.
3. To learn what this research means "on the street" and where to get more ideas about implementing such strategies.
4. To anticipate challenges you will face in applying evidence-based policing strategies in everyday patrol.

MODULE 1: EVIDENCE-BASED POLICING - DEFINITIONS

What is evidence-based policing?

Evidence-based policing states that officers, supervisors and command staff should not only be armed with the right equipment, knowledge of the law, proper procedures, and defensive protection, but also have as much knowledge about what tactics and strategies work best to fight crime so that they can make good decisions while patrolling or carrying out investigations. In the past, police training has been focused mostly on procedures, the law, physical skills, and use of equipment. Rarely were police trained in the large body of knowledge about "what works" in crime control and prevention.

Evidence-based policing also centralizes the role of crime analysis in everyday policing. By understanding how crime geographically and temporally clusters, as well as which environmental and situational factors can attract opportunities for crime, police can become more effective in addressing the specific crime, disorder, and traffic problems they face. The bottom line: Police need to take advantage of the knowledge about what works to improve police efforts in crime control, community relations, and internal management, as well as generate knowledge and analysis within their agencies to improve their ability to prevent and reduce crime.[1]

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[1] To read more about evidence-based policing, see Sherman's (1998) Police Foundation lecture on this topic, located at http://www.policefoundation.org/pdf/Sherman.pdf. More resources can also be found at http://cebcp.org/evidence-based-policing/.

Why should law enforcement officers care about police research?

Evidence-based policing operates under the same principles as evidence-based medicine. The medical profession conducts extensive research to test medications and procedures to ensure that they are effective in treating the patient, *and* that the medications and procedures do little harm to patients (or at least that we know what harm will be done and weigh that harm against the benefits of that medication). The same is true in policing: officers should use tactics and strategies that have been shown to be effective in reducing, preventing, controlling, and detecting crime, doing as little harm to people as possible.

Many patrol tactics have already been evaluated through reliable, rigorous analysis. Some tactics and organizational practices work better than others in preventing crime, improving officer health, or improving community satisfaction with the police. There are a number of generalizations from research that officers can apply in many different settings to improve their overall effectiveness.

But wouldn't the police always want to use effective approaches to reduce and prevent crime?

The police, like many organizations in education, medicine, social services, and emergency response, may not always use information about the most effective tactics when making decisions. Sometimes knowledge from research fails to become translated or disseminated into everyday police practice. In some cases, information may not be available about whether a particular police tactic is effective, or whether a useful tactic might also have collateral consequences. For example, many traditional investigative strategies that police have used for years have not been tested for their effectiveness in reducing crime or improving clearance rates. There are also organizational cultures and systems that reinforce approaches and styles of policing that are less effective but are ingrained in police work. These define the police role as a focus on responding to 911 calls and making reactive arrests. Although we now know that these two activities alone may not reduce, prevent, or control crime, these systems are fixtures in policing and are difficult to change.

In these modules, we only cover research related to crime control and prevention, but officers should note that there is research on many different aspects of policing, including improvement of community and citizen relationships, internal management, disparities and discretion, police technology, shift length, and how officers can improve their physical and mental well-being.

Where can I learn more about "Evidence-Based Policing"?

Resources about evidence-based policing and translating research into practice can be obtained at the CEBCP website under our Evidence-Based Policing Resources page: *http://cebcp.org/evidence-based-policing/resources-tools/*. More videos on this subject are also at the CEBCP's video YouTube page: clsmason.

MODULE 2: EVIDENCE-BASED POLICING - THE RESEARCH

What tactics work to reduce and prevent crime?

What policing interventions and approaches work in reducing, preventing, and detecting crime? At the time this presentation was developed in 2012, there were approximately 120 medium to high-quality research studies evaluating police tactics with regard to their effectiveness in reducing crime. Some show tactics that can be effective, while others show tactics that don't work or even backfire on the police.

This body of research is collected in the *Evidence-Based Policing Matrix:* http://cebcp.org/evidence-based-policing/the-matrix/. These introductory lessons will not cover how the Matrix was created, or specifics about its use and content. However, for those who want more advanced learning modules on the Matrix, please see http://cebcp.org/evidence-based-policing/the-matrix/using-the-matrix/#video-training. Links to other police research websites and research collections are also provided.

The Matrix is a free online tool that allows officers to generalize certain crime prevention principles that law enforcement can follow to be more effective in their daily work. From the body of work that is within the Matrix, we know that officers, investigators and command staff can be more successful in reducing, preventing, and controlling crime when their tactics tend to be more:

- **PROACTIVE,** rather than reactive;
- **TAILORED AND FOCUSED,** rather than general in nature; and
- **PLACE-ORIENTED,** as opposed to focusing only on people and reactive arrests.

In other words, we now know that police can no longer only rely on responding to 911 calls or making reactive arrests in order to have an impact on crime in their beats or jurisdictions. These mainstays of policing are reactive, general, and offender-oriented, which appear less fruitful (generally) in creating a long-term crime reduction effect. Rather, in order to *reduce* calls for service and *prevent* crimes from happening (to avoid arrest in the first place), officers must be proactive, focused, and place-based.

What does "proactive" mean for patrol officers?

Being proactive means (a) taking certain actions while answering a call for service that will reduce similar problems with that victim, offender or situation in the future, and/or (b) conducting specific activities *in-between* calls for service that can reduce future calls for service and offending. What an officer does *during* and *in-between* calls for service can help reduce calls for service in a beat over the long run. Although it is often believed that officers do not have time in-between calls, multiple studies have shown that even in the most crime-ridden cities, officers may have from 40-80% "down" time or "non-committed" time. And, high call volume can be controlled and reduced by more proactive activities in-between calls for service.

Being more proactive means anticipating crime, disorder, and other problems before they happen and acting as a guardian to keep these problems from happening. To do this, officers must utilize a systematic and analytic approach in determining which places and people are the most problematic with regard to crime and disorder. Crime analysis is key here; without analysis, officers might only be able to guess where crime will occur tomorrow or which people or groups are likely responsible. Being proactive means determining what the underlying problem is that causes repeat calls for service, and which individuals continue to cause repetitive problems in a neighborhood.

For example, fights can break out on Friday nights around clubs and bars. A reactive approach would be to respond to a fight call and either take a report or arrest the fighters. A more proactive approach might be to anticipate that during bar closing times, and especially at certain bars, that officer presence may prevent fights from occurring in the first place. Many other policing approaches emphasize proactive strategies, including community policing, problem-oriented policing, predictive policing, and intelligence-led policing. In Module #3, we provide more specifics on proactive tactics that new patrol officers can employ when entering patrol.

What does it mean for an officer to be "tailored and focused"?

Officers are more focused when they tailor their response to the specific problem at hand, engaging other resources and tools (sometimes non-police or community help) to address underlying causes of problems. More focused approaches involve not only prioritizing which places and times have the most problems, but trying to understand what is creating the problem in the first place. Developing a tailored and focused strategy based on the specific problem at hand could reduce calls and arrests in the future.

Let's return to our bar fighting example. A more focused approach would not only prioritize which bars cause the most problems, but also attempt to understand what is causing the problem in the first place. For example, the real problem could be that the club has over-booked its patronage or has a lack of security. It could be that bars are not adhering to liquor serving regulations and are over-serving alcohol. When the bar closes, people may congregate in a parking lot behind the bar, which is not easily visible from the street where patrol cars are located. Or, it could be that parking is so tight in the parking lot that people become angry when small fender benders occur, leading to arguments and fights.

Developing a tailored strategy based on the specific problem at hand might reduce calls and arrests in the future. This is different from the more "general" or "procedures-based" approach police often take, which is not to tailor a solution to a particular problem, but respond to the 911 call using a set of standard operating procedures and a general "presence" approach.

How can officers be place-based?

Crime concentrates at very specific places (street blocks, intersections, alley ways, individual addresses, and parks). Even within high-crime neighborhoods, there may be areas that have little to no crime. Understanding how the environment attracts and creates opportunities for crime is an important skill officers must have.

Being "place-based" means that officers identify these problems places—either using crime analysis or running addresses in their CAD/RMS systems to see "hot spots" of crime and calls for service. When not answering calls for service, directed patrol at those places in intermittent 15-30 minute time intervals can reduce crime better than random patrol across an entire area of responsibility. Further, when being tailored, focused, and proactive, understanding what environmental and situational "cues" attract or allow for crime at a particular place may provide insight into how to address the problem.

Officers more attuned to policing places are more likely to have a positive effect on reducing crime and reducing their calls for service in the long run. More information on how patrol officers can be more place-based is now presented in Module 3.

MODULE 3: EVIDENCE-BASED POLICING - APPLICATION TO PATROL

What are some things officers can do <u>while</u> answering calls for service to be more evidence-based and effective?

Although what officers do *in-between* calls for service is the "gold" of policing, let's begin with what officers can do while answering calls that use these effective crime prevention principles. Officers should respond to calls for service with an eye on the future (proactively). For example: Does this crime give you any clues about whether a similar crime will occur here in the future? Can this event give you a clue about the deeper problems at this place? Can this victim or witness give you any further information about crime in the area, besides just information about the crime at hand?

Research has also shown that burglaries, for example, are more likely to be solved and the offender arrested, when certain "solvability factors" (identification of offender, physical evidence, possible witnesses) are collected in a case. Ensuring that these solvability factors are gathered depends on how well an officer or detective first responds to a call for service and follows through with evidence collection and case building. For example, obtaining statements and pictures in a domestic violence dispute call could assist domestic violence detectives with building their cases in the future.

Also, the manner in which officers and detectives respond and interact with offenders and victims may be important factors in whether an offender recidivates or a person is revictimized. For example, research tells us that when people feel like they have been treated poorly by the police, they may be less likely to comply with law enforcement in the future. Being respectful and professional, even when arresting an individual, can potentially improve the legitimacy of the police in the eyes of citizens, which is an important asset for the police to maintain.

What can officers do in-between calls for service to reduce crime in the long run?

Officers should find out where the hot spots are, and patrol them when not answering calls for service. The Koper Curve Patrol Principle states that officers only need to stay in hot spots for

short periods of time to have an effect. The idea is to visit hot places unexpectedly for short periods of time, about 15-20 minutes per stop. It is important to also engage with the public while patrolling a hot spot. Get out of your car, approach people in the street, talk to residents and business owners, and show good visibility. Officers can also increase visibility by parking in high crime neighborhoods to write reports.

Talk to crime analysis, use your computer-aided dispatch, look at crime maps, or examine other records management systems the police have to identify problem locations. Use *problem-solving exercises* or crime prevention through environmental design (*CPTED*--see http://www.popcenter.org/ for ideas) to address specific problems that might be present at those specific places. These might include engaging the city to put more lighting in a dark alley or to trim overgrown bushes and trees that may block visibility. Another idea is to "Open" an investigation on a place - something called "case of places" or problem-oriented policing (see http://cebcp.org/evidence-based-policing/the-matrix/matrix-demonstration-project/case-of-places/ for more ideas).

Find out what the police department did in the past to deal with a problem and determine whether or not the strategy was proactive, tailored, focused, or place-based. Use evidence-based policing resources provided in this study guide to learn how others have dealt with the same problem in different jurisdictions. Study environmental cues, which offer clues as to the facilitators of crime, which might be addressed through CPTED or situational crime prevention techniques.

Increase guardianship of repeat offenders: work with probation officers to identify and monitor individuals recently released from prison, and work with analysts to identify the top offenders living or frequently visiting your area. Work with informal guardians by getting to know other service providers and non-police partners who operate in your area, such as block watch captains, community leaders, probation officers, or residents and business owners.

Although seemingly minor, small disorders ("soft crimes") and other signs of neglect--such as unsupervised teens, public drinking or intoxication, graffiti, gathering crowds, unattended trash, abandoned cars and buildings, or broken facilities--can provide opportunities or a welcome mat for other types of disorders and crimes, and can reduce the quality of life in an area. Identifying these issues quickly, proactively taking reports, or acting upon them may be a tailored and place-based approach to crime prevention.

Other ways officers can be proactive include walking into malls or shops along roadways that have high incidents of retail theft (as opposed to only driving by them). Using available technologies such as information technology systems or crime analysis to assist with proactive problem solving may be beneficial. Further, using field interviews and traffic stops lawfully, ethically, and respectfully, can help reduce crime.

Some more advanced ideas include: working with state's attorneys and specialized units to build cases for civil remedies and nuisance abatement that can evict criminogenic residents and owners from problem locations; conducting crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED)

analysis; and engaging in a "pulling levers" approach that uses multiple agencies and focused deterrence to address gang or drug-related violence.

Where can I get more ideas on what to do when on patrol?

- Evidence-Based Policing Matrix: http://cebcp.org/evidence-based-policing/the-matrix/
- Evidence-Based Policing Demonstrations: http://cebcp.org/evidence-based-policing/the-matrix/matrix-demonstration-project/
- POP Center Problem-Oriented Policing Guides: http://www.popcenter.org/
- Situational Crime Prevention and CPTED ideas: https://www.ncjrs.gov/works/chapter7.htm
- National Police Research Platform: http://www.nationalpoliceresearch.org/

MODULE 4: EVIDENCE-BASED POLICING - THE CHALLENGES

While proactive, place-based, and tailored/focused strategies can be very effective in reducing, preventing and controlling crime, these approaches are new to policing and also "go against the grain" of traditional policing. Traditional policing still focuses on random patrol within a beat or area, rapid response to 911, measuring performance by reactive arrest, and responding on a case-by-case basis to crime. Ironically, this type of traditional, reactive policing can lead to boredom, stress, lack of motivation, cynicism, and lack of professional challenge among officers. Further, only conducting traditional policing approaches may cause officers to be ineffective in preventing, reducing, and detecting crime in their area beat.

Several aspects of policing, therefore, challenge an evidence-based, proactive, and problem-solving approach and can work against evidence-based policing. They are:

- The 911 system ingrains a reactive, response-only approach to policing, overemphasizing responding to calls for service rather than preventive approaches that can reduce calls for service.

- Training in the academy focuses on reinforcing a procedures-based, reactive approach to policing, which also can overemphasize this function of law enforcement.

- Patrol cars, radios, and in-car computers can inhibit officers from getting out of their cars. However, getting out of one's car helps with conducting proactive foot patrol, field interviews, and community interactions. It can also improve visibility in hard-to-reach places and improve relationships with informal guardians.

- Supervision can be hierarchical, and peer pressure can discourage rank and file to "stick their necks out" by doing something different or innovative in-between calls. Police supervision also rewards and reinforces proper adherence to procedures (which is very important), but often at the cost of not rewarding proactive and problem-solving policing. Officers may encounter supervisors who discourage proactivity or rank and file innovation.

- Rewards in policing may not be given for how well officers reduce crime opportunities. Instead, rewards may be given for how many arrests are made or citations written, the number of years served on the force, or how well someone knows standard operating procedures. Cultural and organizational factors and pressures may not value or reward analytic, problem-solving and proactive approaches to policing, but instead, may value experiential knowledge, hunches, anecdotes, or emotions-based policing.

- Crime analysis may not be readily available to give officers a more accurate understanding of hot spots of crime, repeat offenders, location of high-risk addresses, or trends in the beat.

- There are also arguments that officers are too busy to be proactive. Yet we know that anywhere between 40-80% of an officer's time is not spent answering calls for service and is uncommitted. The time in-between calls for service is the "gold" in policing - what an officer does during this time is what matters in terms of his or her impact on crime, the volume of calls for service, and the quality of life in that patrol area.

- Furthermore, there exists the argument that experience is more important than what researchers or crime analysts have to say. However, in progressive police agencies experience involves evidence-based, problem-solving, and proactive approaches and incorporates research and analysis. An officer's hunch or experience may sometimes be wrong. Moreover, experience and research knowledge are not mutually exclusive: both need to be leveraged to increase the effectiveness of police work.

These challenges are not insurmountable and can be overcome - many agencies have done so and are progressively moving towards more problem-oriented, evidence-based, proactive approaches. In the face of challenges, remember that your effectiveness as an officer depends not only on how you respond to calls for service, but also on what you do proactively, in-between calls.