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From Trauma to Trust: The Case for Integrating Reconciliation Practices

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Abstract

Deep-seated historical traumas continue to ricochet through communities, mediating how contemporary policing is viewed and experienced. This article presents a case for embedding reconciliation practices into policing strategies to repair and rebuild frayed relations with the public. It examines the practical applications of reconciliation practices, some barriers to implementation and suggested strategies for overcoming resistance. Drawing from limited, yet insightful, empirical research and international best practice, the article proposes a model comprised of five elements to promote healing, foster trust and highlight the importance of sustainable community-police engagement.

Keywords: reconciliation, restorative justice, trauma, community

Introduction

WHEN POLICE VIOLENCE or discrimination affects multiple people, it can lead to collective trauma and long-lasting effects on individuals, families and groups. There are many examples of high-profile incidents across the UK that have harmed communities as well as undermined trust and confidence in the police. For example, the failures of the police investigation following the murder of Stephen Lawrence, the Hillsborough disaster, the policing of the miners' strike and how British police dealt with the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests in the summer of 2021, have all had impacts on police-community relations far beyond those immediately involved. Moreover, police actions, policies and practices can have long-lasting effects on communities, particularly those that are over-policed, marginalised or historically oppressed. This can lead to a lack of trust in government and policing that spreads throughout communities and can transcend generations.

The integration of concepts such as community trauma, reconciliation and restorative practices into policing has the potential to improve significantly the relationship between police and communities, particularly in addressing the effects of collective, community and intergenerational trauma. Our argument centres

around the necessity for police to engage with communities in a holistic and empathetic manner, acknowledging past traumas and working collaboratively towards healing, and preventing future harms.

The argument presented in this article unfolds in four sections and begins by defining and differentiating types of traumas (collective, community, intergenerational) and their relevance to policing. Understanding these different types of traumas is essential for police to grasp the wide-ranging impact that both historical events and current police actions can have on communities.

Second, it explores the concept of reconciliation, its use in various contexts and its potential benefits and challenges in the realm of policing, especially in addressing community trauma. The article posits that reconciliation is crucial in mending relationships between the police and the community after conflicts or harm. Through acknowledgment of past wrongs and co-developed strategies for addressing specific issues of conflict, mistrust or harm that have occurred in the past, a trauma-informed approach has the potential to mitigate ongoing tension, ultimately aiding in healing community-police relations.

Third, the article reviews empirical evidence on the intersection of policing, community trauma and reconciliation efforts and assesses

the outcomes of relevant interventions such as restorative justice. Finally, it explores how insights gleaned from different countries and social contexts can inform policing practices in the UK, before concluding with an overview of five elements for successful reconciliation approaches gleaned from the research base. These are outlined alongside a summary of issues to consider, such as the contention around labelling these efforts as ‘reconciliation’—a term that, depending on stakeholders’ perceptions of the problem, could either enhance the appeal of substantive policy changes, or elicit scepticism about the necessity and appropriateness of such an approach.

Trauma-informed policing: collective, community and intergenerational trauma

It is becoming common for police to recognise and take account of the trauma that can affect people on an individual level. The reaction of an individual who has been directly or indirectly affected by an adverse event or series of distressing experiences—such as a crime, serious accident, or abuse—is best described as personal trauma. Such experiences can prompt a range of emotional and psychological responses, immediately or many years after the event, including mental health issues such as anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). However, the impact that negative experiences can have upon entire communities is less well known and understood. There is a growing awareness that negative interactions with police—including police brutality, excessive use of force, racial profiling, harassment and other forms of discrimination—can result in community trauma. When these negative experiences are left unresolved or are repeated over time, they can lead to a pervasive sense of anxiety, fear, anger and mistrust within the affected community. Similarly, the trauma of police violence or discrimination experienced by one generation can lead to ongoing feelings of fear and mistrust among their children and grandchildren, even if the latter have not themselves directly experienced negative interactions with the police. This is known as intergenerational trauma. The notions of collective, community and intergenerational trauma have arisen as frameworks to comprehend the extensive

impact that traumatic experiences can exert beyond the immediate individuals affected.¹

Collective trauma refers to the shared distress felt by a group due to a common adverse event, like a disaster or shooting, even when the affected individuals have diverse backgrounds and may not live close to each other. Community trauma is a subset of collective trauma, arising from shared events like violence or discrimination within a specific group, leading to shared grief, psychological distress and social upheaval. Unresolved trauma in one generation can lead to trauma in subsequent generations, passing down the effects of events like war, abuse and discrimination. This intergenerational trauma involves genetic and social factors, perpetuating historical trauma’s impact, potentially causing similar distress and vulnerability to new traumas among descendants.

These three concepts have been used to understand how events can impact on individuals and groups beyond those immediately involved and are beginning to be recognised in police policy and practice. For example, experiences of racial discrimination at the hands of police can cause collective and intergenerational trauma within communities, leading to the distrust of police and a lack of faith in the justice system. Acknowledging the impact of racial discrimination on communities can help inform more inclusive and culturally sensitive approaches to policing that aim to address and prevent trauma. The Police Race Action Plan (PRAP) was released by the National Police Chief’s Council and the College of Policing as a response to the chronic problem of racial inequality in policing in the UK.² Given the low levels of trust and confidence in policing and the disproportionate negative treatment and outcomes for black communities in the criminal justice system,

¹H. Pinderhughes, R. Davis and M. Williams, *Adverse Community Experiences and Resilience: A Framework for Addressing and Preventing Community Trauma*, Oakland, Prevention Institute, 2015; <https://www.preventioninstitute.org/sites/default/files/publications/Adverse%20Community%20Experiences%20and%20Resilience.pdf>

²NPCC, *Police Race Action Plan: Improving Policing for Black People*, College of Policing, 2022; <https://assets.college.police.uk/s3fs-public/Police-Race-Action-Plan.pdf>

the PRAP calls for innovative approaches to police engagement with these communities, including a reconciliation approach.

Individual serious high-profile cases— such as the murder of Sarah Everard by a serving police officer—can also have far-reaching consequences for police-community relations and trust. The case brought into focus the failure of the police to take adequate steps to protect women, respond appropriately to offences committed against women by members of the community, as well as highlighting the large number of violent and sexual offences committed by serving police officers. The impact has been far reaching, and addressing the trauma generated requires a recognition of the effect of gender-based violence on communities as well as individuals, adopting trauma-informed approaches to policing that prioritise safety and support for survivors and actively working to prevent and address the root causes of gender-based violence in all its manifestations.

The Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) programme argues that by addressing the trauma of individuals and communities affected by gender-based violence, the police can work towards creating a safer and more equitable society for all.³ While the VAWG programme suggests that addressing the trauma of individuals and communities affected by gender-based violence can potentially lead to a safer and more equitable society, it is important to approach this assertion with a degree of caution. The complexities and deep-rooted nature of gender-based violence mean that, although police intervention aimed at trauma-informed care is a positive step, it might not be sufficient on its own to bring about widespread societal change. Factors such as societal attitudes, systemic inequalities and the need for comprehensive education and support systems play a significant role. Therefore, while the police's involvement in addressing trauma is a crucial component, it should be viewed as part of a broader, multi-faceted approach rather than a standalone solution.

Recognising the ways in which events and distressing experiences can affect groups and generations beyond the immediate sufferers can help inform more reconciliatory trauma-

informed approaches to policing that can break the cycle of antagonism and tension. It is important for police to recognise and address the effects of trauma on communities, and to work collaboratively with affected communities to promote healing and resilience. Communities can heal from trauma through outlets for collective expression, reframing narratives, peer support and investment in well-being. The Trauma-Informed Community Building and Engagement model targets each layer of the community, acknowledging systemic issues and implementing resident-driven programmes.⁴ The goal is a community with positive health outcomes, meaningful leadership and vibrant institutions, achieved through principles, strategies and practices that address trauma and promote sustainability.

The role of reconciliation

Reconciliation is a process of recognising and repairing relationships that have been damaged by conflict or harm. Community healing and reconciliation have been a focus of many nations in response to civil war, genocide and other conflicts. Reconciliation between groups following historical wrongs, violent conflict or other harmful incidents can help people and communities to heal and, importantly, make renewed violence less likely. In the context of the police and community trauma, reconciliation involves acknowledging the harms that have been caused by past negative interactions between police and communities and taking steps to address and repair them.

Mishandling incidents can deepen crises, necessitating acknowledgment of police failings to prevent ongoing mistrust. For example, the response of some police forces and government agencies following high-profile incidents has resulted in public outcry, civil unrest and violent responses that further extend the crisis and harm caused. Cover-ups, the unjustified use of force and the mishandling of investigations, whether perceived or actual, has resulted in further harm to citizens and their communities. It is therefore important that

⁴E. Weinstein, J. Wolin and S. Rose, *Trauma Informed Community Building: A Model for Strengthening Community in Trauma Affected Neighborhoods*, San Francisco, Bridge Housing, 2014; <https://bridgehousing.com/PDFs/TICB.Paper5.14.pdf>

³What Works, 'What works to prevent violence', 2019; <https://www.whatworks.co.za/>

police, policy makers and politicians recognise that past failings can continue to resonate in the present, causing further harm and creating an ongoing climate of mistrust and antagonism. Moreover, unaddressed trauma can perpetuate tensions, hindering collaboration. The previous section outlined how unresolved communal trauma can be passed from one generation to the next, impacting on present day police-community relations. Failing to acknowledge past harms, or not apologising for the trauma they caused, can result in tensions becoming embedded and reproduced. Damaging narratives can develop and become entrenched on both sides that prevent police and communities working together. Yet, by taking a trauma-informed approach and adopting principles and strategies applied in other contexts, it is possible to co-develop reconciliation and healing strategies between the police and communities.⁵

A common response to widespread human rights violations, particularly following internal armed conflict, has been the establishment of a governmental or independent commission to investigate and record the violations. Truth and Reconciliations Commissions (TRCs) have typically focussed on understanding what happened, establishing accountability and reaching agreement on how to best repair the harm, which can sometimes include criminal prosecution. There have been a range of commission types with different foci, but the common thread is an emphasis on truth, atonement, reparation and reconciliation. One of the most prominent TRCs took place in South Africa following apartheid. Its aim was to pursue forgiveness over prosecution and reparation over retaliation. The commission invited witnesses who were identified as victims of gross human rights violations to give statements about their experiences and selected some for public hearings. Perpetrators of violence could also give testimony and request amnesty from both civil and criminal prosecution. Although there is currently limited understanding about whether and how TRCs can produce reconciliatory outcomes in

the context of police-community reparation efforts, they provide a framework for understanding how the social fabric damaged by conflict and violence may be repaired by investigating past abuses, listening to the experiences of victims and perpetrators, and committing to change.

Restorative justice facilitates communication and resolution between those harmed and those responsible for harm, fostering repair and positive progress. It falls under the broader scope of restorative practice, useful in various settings, such as schools, children's services, workplaces, hospitals, communities and the criminal justice system, to prevent conflict, build relationships and repair harm. Restorative justice principles encompass encounter, repair and transform, where facilitated meetings address harm, responsibility and healing.⁶ The intention of the restorative justice programmes is to emphasise safe, voluntary dialogue involving victims, offenders and the community. The aim here is healing, making amends and transforming systemic issues for more just and safer communities. Some practice focussed guides have been produced to assist policing with implementing restorative approaches, such as in youth conferencing and dialogue processes, promoting reconciliation and forgiveness in contexts like Northern Ireland's conflict.⁷

While international approaches to reconciliation can offer insights for interventions, the specific context of the local environment must be attended to. There is no 'one size fits all' approach to community healing and reconciliation, but rather, each approach must be carefully co-created with the community to address the specific context and circumstances. It is important to recognise that some reconciliatory attempts in policing have not been well received by the community. For example, an apology given by the Toronto Police Department in 2022 was not accepted by representatives of the black community, because they saw no evidence of accountability and were

⁵M. Feilzer, *Towards justice: Law enforcement and reconciliation*, Windsor, Cumberland Lodge, 2022; https://www.cumberlandlodge.ac.uk/sites/default/files/towards_justice_law_enforcement_reconciliation_-_cumberland_lodge_report_2022_screen_0.pdf

⁶Restorative Justice, 'Three core elements of restorative justice', 2023; <https://restorativejustice.org/what-is-restorative-justice/three-core-elements-of-restorative-justice/>

⁷M. Johnson and J. Weisberg, *The Little Book of Police Youth Dialogue*, New York, Skyhorse Publishing, 2021.

not confident that the force had taken actions to prevent further victimisation. The apology on its own was largely viewed as a hollow gesture. A key lesson from this, and other reconciliatory attempts that have not been well received, is that a broad swathe of community representatives must be involved from the outset in defining the problem, designing and delivering the process by which reconciliation might be achieved. It is important to involve the community from the beginning, if the approach is going to be received as a genuine commitment to long-term meaningful change to policing cultures, attitudes and practice.

Reconciliation is an intricate, ongoing process requiring active commitment from police and communities, involving trust-building, empathy and shared goals. This effort fosters positive relationships, healing and prevention of harm.

The research evidence

Reconciliation represents a paradigm shift in addressing harm within communities, focusing on healing through dialogue and mutual responsibility. Its application in policing seeks to not only repair the damage of past wrongdoings, but to prevent future harm by fostering a sense of communal trust and accountability. There is a small body of empirical work that has sought to understand community trauma and evaluate the implementation and/or impact of reconciliation. Research on reconciliation practice in policing is scarce, but there are a handful of significant studies in other contexts, such as social housing, that offer rigorous evaluations of the impact of reconciliation on important outcomes related to community trauma. Moreover, the available empirical evidence on community trauma and reconciliation is predominantly derived from studies conducted in the USA, and its applicability to the UK context may be uncertain.

Research has shown that the way police interact with communities affects how much people trust them. One way to build trust might be through reconciliation, where police acknowledge past injustices and seek to remedy antagonistic relations. Studies underscore the positive impact of reconciliation-focused communication.⁸ They reveal that trust-building messaging that prioritises community engagement over mere crime reduction

resonates more effectively with the public. Furthermore, the acknowledgment of past injustices by police, and the adoption of a reconciliatory tone during public communications, have been found to be pivotal in promoting trust.⁹

The central aim of previous initiatives in this field has been to foster reconciliation with communities. This has involved addressing the harms and traumas resulting from police practices or racial injustices, as well as promoting greater trust and improved relationships between police and communities. Some interventions have gone beyond seeking to build trust, to repairing and sustaining an ongoing relationship between police and particular communities. These efforts have aimed to develop a more transformative approach to the character of police-community relations and engagement. There are six interventions that are particularly relevant to community trauma and reconciliation efforts led by police, summarised below.

The Reducing Community Conflict Initiative is a notable example, where police-youth round tables leveraged the Ubuntu philosophy to repair ties between police and BAME youth in seven inner-city London boroughs.¹⁰ Despite challenges in measuring its direct impact, the initiative demonstrated success in

⁸T. C. O'Brien and T. R. Tyler, 'Rebuilding trust between police and communities through procedural justice and reconciliation', *Behavioral Science and Policy*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2019, pp. 34–50; T. C. O'Brien and T. R. Tyler, 'Authorities and communities: can authorities shape cooperation with communities on a group level?', *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2019, pp. 69–87.

⁹T. L. Meares, T. C. O'Brien and T. R. Tyler, 'Reconciling police and communities with apologies, acknowledgements, or both: a randomised experiment', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 687, no. 1, 2020, pp. 202–215; C. B. Wilson, *Police in Crisis, Communities in Conflict: A Computer-Aided Model for Analyzing Reconciliatory Tone*, PhD Thesis, West Lafayette, Purdue University, 2018; <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/dissertations/AAI10808881/>

¹⁰B. Cole and N. Habashi, *Reducing Community Conflict: An UBUNTU approach*, Oxford, Tutu Foundation UK, 2019; https://tutufoundationuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/19-09-01_-_UBUNTU_POLICE-YOUTH_RT_FINAL_REPORT_-_BS_no_markup.pdf

opening dialogue, reshaping perceptions and addressing critical issues like knife crime. Similarly, the National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice pursued a multi-faceted strategy to enhance police-community relations in six US cities. The initiative focussed on crucial areas such as procedural justice, implicit bias recognition and reconciliation. Its impact evaluation, while yielding mixed results, showed a noteworthy improvement in perceptions of police, especially among black residents.¹¹

The Supporting Collective Healing in the Wake of Harm Program, was a venture supporting five US police departments, aimed at fostering community healing after traumatic events.¹² Despite facing logistical and administrative hurdles, the programme succeeded in increasing awareness about trauma and enhancing community engagement. Another intervention, Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation (TRHT), sought to address the historical and contemporary effects of racism in fourteen locations in the US.¹³ Although formal evaluation results are pending, anecdotal evidence from the initial years indicates progress in narrative change and relationship building.

The Police Youth Challenge (PYC) programme utilised experiential peacebuilding exercises to bridge the gap between youth

and police in the US, reporting a reduction in anxiety and an increase in mutual understanding. Lastly, the Inside-Out Police Training (IOPT) programme in one US prison, informed by the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program, used restorative justice principles within the police force and showed potential for enhanced community relations.¹⁴

Despite its promise, reconciliation in the policing context is still an emerging field, particularly within the UK. The scarcity of rigorous empirical studies hinders the ability to draw definitive conclusions about its efficacy. However, the existing evidence does suggest that principles of reconciliation can be integrated into policing through transparent acknowledgment of historical and current injustices, facilitating open dialogues with affected communities, and pursuing tangible steps towards remedy and prevention of further harm. The adoption of reconciliation strategies and restorative justice is not without challenges. It requires a fundamental transformation in police culture and practices, a shift towards vulnerability and openness that may not be readily embraced within traditional policing frameworks. Nonetheless, the potential benefits of such a shift—a more harmonious relationship between police and community members, and the creation of a more equitable justice system—make it a compelling avenue for policy and practice. The key to success lies in genuine, sustained efforts, and a commitment to learning from both the positive and negative outcomes of past initiatives.

Learning from non-policing contexts

The pursuit of effective policing and reconciliation efforts can greatly benefit from cross-contextual learning. Studies from sectors such as social housing and insights from post-

¹¹N. La Vigne, J. Jannetta, J. Fontaine, D. S. Lawrence and S. Esthappan, *The National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice: Key Process and Outcome Evaluation Findings*, Washington DC, Urban Institute, 2019; https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/100704/national_initiative_for_building_community_trust_and_justice_6.pdf

¹²K. Barrick, E. Tibaduiza, C. Dean, A. Young and M. Gremminger, *Evaluability Assessment and Baseline Study of the Supporting Collective Healing in the Wake of Harm Program*, Washington DC, National Institute of Justice, 2019; <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/254632.pdf>; International Association of Chiefs of Police, *Pathways Toward Collective Healing, Law Enforcement and the Communities they Serve: Collective Healing in the Wake of Harm*, Alexandria, IACP, 2021; theiacp.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/Pathways_Toward_Collective_Healing.pdf

¹³W. K. Kellog Foundation, *Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation: Implementation Guidebook*, Springfield, W. K. Kellog Foundation, 2023; <https://wkkf.issuelab.org/resource/truth-racial-healing-transformation-implementation-guidebook.html>

¹⁴N. Phillips and A. Cromwell, 'Building bridges in police-youth relations through experiential peacebuilding: how reduced threat and increased humanization impact racialised structural and direct violence in Baltimore', *Journal of Peace Education*, vol. 17, no. 3, 2020, pp. 324–345; N. Conti, A. Burston, J. Wozniak and E. Frantz, 'Criminal justice policy inside-out: an initial case study in education among police and incarcerated men', *The Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles*, vol. 93, no. 9, 2020, pp. 248–264.

conflict societies offer empirical evidence that can inform police strategies. For example, in the context of social housing, initiatives like the HOPE SF trauma-informed community engagement programme, based in San Francisco in the US, demonstrates the value of acknowledging historical harms and fostering resident-centric approaches. This programme partnered with local institutions to address community health issues, culminating in on-site services that reflected the community's specific needs and history. Similarly, the Promoting Adolescent Sexual Health and Safety (PASS) project, based in Washington DC, illustrated how community-led programmes could empower youth and their caretakers, emphasising the importance of co-created and sustainable resident-driven programmes.

These community-based approaches stress the necessity of trauma-informed practices, which prioritise acknowledging past injustices, honouring community history and removing participation barriers, thereby fostering reconciliation and healing. They also showcase the efficacy of consistent, transparent engagement strategies and the importance of compensating community members for their contributions, which can enhance trust and buy-in.

Insights can also be taken from post-conflict societies. Initiatives in Sri Lanka, Colombia and Rwanda offer frameworks based on fostering national unity, rebuilding communities and healing individual trauma.¹⁵ These programmes highlight the significance of inclusive leadership, narrative change and the restoration of community interdependence. They underscore the importance of a holistic reconciliation process that addresses the root causes of conflict and trauma, with a collective commitment to acknowledging the past and aiding victims' healing.

¹⁵D. A. Crocker, 'Forgiveness, accountability and reconciliation', *Perspectives on Ethics and International Affairs*, vol. 2, no. 7, 2000, pp. 13–40; P. Clark and Z. D. Kaufman, *After Genocide: Transitional Justice, Post-conflict Reconstruction and Reconciliation in Rwanda and Beyond*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2009, pp. 70–100; G. Gahima, *Transitional Justice in Rwanda: Accountability for Atrocity*, London, Routledge, 2013.

Five elements for successful reconciliation approaches

Across the spectrum of existing interventions, five elements consistently emerge as important. While they offer a foundational framework, owing to the limited number of studies and evaluative evidence, they are only indicative at this stage and thus require deeper analysis and critical examination. What might appear to be a simple step or easy approach in theory might, of course, be fraught with implementation difficulties in practice, not least in accessing resources. The synthesis of available evidence allows us to identify five foundational principles critical for the successful implementation of reconciliation initiatives in policing. Alongside each, the article briefly outlines potential obstacles and insights into how to overcome some of the inherent difficulties of implementing reconciliation practices in policing.

- (1) **Local context and community needs:** Any reconciliation approach must be based on the precise identification of the affected population coupled with a thorough understanding of the local context. Effective interventions begin with a deep understanding of the community's needs, experiences and perspectives, as seen in The National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice. Engaging local site coordinators or pairing officers with community representatives, like in The Police Youth Challenge, ensures interventions are relevant and impactful. The suggestion to involve 'local site coordinators' and 'community representatives' is conceptually appealing, yet in reality, identifying and engaging these stakeholders effectively poses significant challenges. A detailed exploration of the complexities involved in such engagements, including the selection process, the establishment of trust and the management of diverse community interests, is crucial.
- (2) **Reconciliatory actions:** The second element is the implementation of reconciliation and restorative justice (RJ) practices. Interventions must acknowledge past harms and work towards healing. The National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice's reconciliation

framework showcases how genuine dialogue and acknowledgment can lead to changes in police practices and improve relationships with the community. A potential obstacle in this context is resistance within police departments to acknowledging fully past harms, either owing to concerns over legal liabilities, damage to the department's reputation or fear of admitting wrongdoing. This resistance can hinder the initiation of genuine dialogue and the process of healing, making it challenging to effect meaningful change in police practices and improve relationships with the community. Creating a safe and neutral environment for open dialogue between police and community members is key to addressing this challenge. This could involve the use of skilled mediators and the adoption of institutional restorative practices, such as empathy training and community involvement in policy making. Incremental trust-building through consistent, positive actions, along with leadership support and sharing success stories from other jurisdictions, can mitigate resistance and foster a commitment to genuine healing and change.

- (3) **Collaboration and partnership:** The third element is the establishment of genuine collaborative partnerships. Trust-building requires collaboration with diverse community representation. Programmes like the Supporting Collective Healing in the Wake of Harm and The Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation initiatives highlight the need for early community involvement in decision making to ensure interventions are community-led and trusted. One significant obstacle in community engagement for trust-building is ensuring truly inclusive representation. This challenge involves effectively reaching and involving all segments of a community, particularly marginalised or underrepresented groups who may be sceptical of, or less likely to engage in, such initiatives. There is a risk that voices from dominant groups overshadow those from minority communities, leading to interventions that fail to address fully or resonate with all community members' needs and experiences. To address the challenge of inclusive representation in community engagement, it is crucial to employ

targeted outreach and inclusive design strategies. This involves leveraging trusted channels and community networks for outreach, and ensuring facilitated dialogues for equitable participation, thereby guaranteeing that interventions genuinely reflect and address the diverse needs of the entire community.

- (4) **Informed leadership:** Effective interventions require not only community engagement, but also decisive leadership buy-in. Strong leadership serves as an anchor, ensuring the process's integrity and conveying its significance to all stakeholders, thereby harmonising community input with authoritative guidance. This can stem from progressive training and education. Ongoing training in diversity, equity, inclusion and non-violent conflict resolution is vital. The National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice exemplifies the importance of structured community events and credible messengers in training, fostering empathy and understanding between police and communities. The challenge with community events and identifying credible messengers lies in ensuring these individuals are universally respected across diverse community segments, amidst varying degrees of trust and acceptance. Addressing this requires thorough community consultation to select messengers, coupled with specialised training and continuous evaluation to maintain their effectiveness and neutrality in communication.
- (5) **Organisational commitment to implementation change:** Lasting change is a result of enduring organisational dedication, demonstrated through the support of frontline officers, comprehensive training programmes and a noticeable shift in police attitudes and behaviours. Sustained funding and integrated evaluations from the outset, focusing on implementation and outcomes across various timelines, are indispensable for securing enduring improvements in police-community dynamics. Sustainable change needs policies that promote accountability and transparency, developed through community collaboration. The National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice stresses the importance of co-created policies and the necessity of measuring

outcomes to assess the efficacy of interventions and inform policy changes. Encountering resistance within police to new policies promoting accountability and transparency, alongside challenges in establishing effective outcome measurement metrics, presents a significant barrier to sustainable change. Overcoming this requires leadership engagement, inclusive policy development and a robust evaluation framework co-created with community input and expert collaboration to ensure meaningful and accepted measures of success.

Collectively, these elements suggest that interventions are most effective when they are community-specific, embody restorative principles, and involve collaborative partnerships that include rigorous training and policy change driven by measurable outcomes.

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