

S.F. Bay Area Rapid Transit District Police Department

3700-23285-23

Fair and Impartial Policing

COURSE OUTLINE
(4 HOURS)

I. INTRODUCTION: UNDERSTANDING HUMAN BIAS (2 Hours)
Performance/Learning Objective:

At the completion of this module the student (officer) will be able to:

- 1. Understand biases are normal and that all people, even well-intentioned people have biases.*
- 2. Understand how unconscious or implicit bias works in the human mind*
- 3. Describe the impact of bias on officer's perceptions and behavior.*

A. *Understanding Racially Biased Policing in Well-Meaning Employees*

1. Student will understand the social-psychological research on implicit bias:
That all people, even well-intentioned people have biases.
 - A. Susan Boyle video
2. Students will understand that policing based on biases can be unsafe, ineffective and unjust.
 - A. Policing based on relevant facts and circumstances rather than human biases.
 - B. Recognition of one's own human/implicit biases.
 - C. Ambiguous Stimuli-filled in characteristics (pre-judge)
 - I. Exercise: role play- man/woman with a gun. The purpose of this scenario is to show that officer's biases about gender and weapons could impact their own safety. Officers do not react to the "woman with a gun" call the same way they react to the "man with a gun" call. The female has a concealed gun (red training gun) and is seated in a chair. The officer responds to a call that a store owner reports he's been robbed several times before by a woman dressed in black and that he thinks the woman standing at the intersection in front of his store has a gun. He describes the female role player target who is dressed in black. As the officer contacts her, a second female role player, dressed in black, runs over to her frantically and is screaming that she has to go with her because her husband was just in a serious car accident on the freeway with her

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kids. The point is to see if the officer will let the woman leave before he can pat her down due to a gender bias.

Observe and discuss results. If officers allowed her to leave show that they missed the gun and discuss bias and the dangers of lack of vigilance. If they did find the gun, discuss how these officers did not succumb to the stereotypical “blink response”.

D. Blink response – Money Train video example

E. Homelessness experiment – Princeton Univ Prof Susan Fiske

I. Exercise: Flashcard response. A video of a homeless person is shown to the trainees. On a flashcard they write down their thoughts that come to mind regarding these individuals or what would be the general public’s descriptors of these people. Common responses are dirty, lazy, drunk, mentally ill. The responses are read by the instructor anonymously. The discussion is about that these biases are not based one race/ethnicity but on social economic status. The exercise makes those biases real by demonstrating Susan Fiske’s experiment on the MRI of the brain when looking at a photo of a homeless person. The brain doesn’t register them as human but registers with activity consistent with disgust and avoidance.

3. Students will reflect and understand the destructive nature of racially biased policing and understanding how “rethinking” racially biased policing (that is, thinking about it in terms of the science of bias) can promote constructive police- citizen partnerships and change.

A. Ambiguous stimuli

B. Implicit bias and officer safety

I. Turban Effect – Australian research-Police were more likely to shoot Muslim looking people even if they were carrying an innocent item instead of weapons. They were also more likely to shoot a man than a woman even when the men were harmless.

4. Students will understand that they have a responsibility to attempt to identify biased policing amongst their subordinates and take appropriate actions.

5. Students will learn that officers can learn skills that will help them override their normal biases and practice safe unbiased and effective policing.

- B. Recognizing two “remedies”
 - I. Try to reduce our implicit biases and
 - II. Recognize our biases and thwart their impact on our behavior
- C. Contact Theory
 - I. Positive contact with other groups reduces both conscious and implicit biases.

B. *Biases are often unconscious or implicit*

- 1. Students will have an understanding of the meaning of unconscious or implicit biases
- 2. Students will be able to describe the impact of bias on officer’s perception and behavior.
 - A. Over vigilance and under vigilance. Over vigilance: May increase scrutiny of people of color, interpret ambiguous behavior on the part of people of color as more threatening, and may respond to people of color more aggressively. Under vigilance: Race-Crime implicit bias is dangerous causing officers to not react or be slow to react to a real threat.

C. *Social Psychological Research and Studies*

- 1. The narrow and broad view of racially biased policing. (Racial Profiling)
 - B. Studies focusing on professions
 - C. Shove Study
- 2. The Race-Crime Association - How we humans connect race and demographics.
 - A. Primed- study by Jennifer Eberhardt of Stanford black-crime association. Her study showed that exposure to black male faces facilitated the identification of crime-relevant objects. Her study also revealed that white faces hindered the recognition of crime objects-threats.
 - I. Levels of degradation, crime relevant, crime neutral objects graph
 - II. Exercise: Threat/no threat slide show by Dr. Josh Correll. Trainees view quick slide show of people holding a gun or harmless object. About 1 second is allowed per frame. Trainees will shout “shoot” if they see someone holding a gun. If the object is harmless, say nothing. People in the slide show vary by race and whether they are holding a gun. The exercise may identify

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unconscious biases. This exercise may reveal speed and errors in the identification just as the Correll study did.

3. Other bases on which people are judged and stereotypes are based at least in part on facts.
 - A. Economic status, race and crime
 - I. Policing on stereotype does not justify making policing decisions based on those stereotypes.
 - a. Scene from the movie Crash example
4. Understanding and addressing our own Implicit Bias
 - A. Manifests in people who consciously hold non-prejudiced ideals and attitudes

II. INTRODUCTION: THE IMPACT OF BIASED POLICING ON COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND THE DEPARTMENT (30 MINUTES)

At the completion of this module the student (officer) will be able to:

1. *Reflect upon and articulate the impact biased policing has on community members.*
2. *Reflect upon and articulate the impact of biased policing on their law enforcement organizations.*
3. *Reflect upon and articulate the impact that biased policing may have on the willingness of community members to cooperate with law enforcement officers.*
4. *Understand how fair and impartial policing is fundamental to the legitimacy of police in society.*

A. Video testimonials from the community (POST DVD Racial Profiling Issues and Impact and/or Fair and Impartial Sample videos.

B. Off duty testimonial examples of impact biased based policing has.

C. Good policing can promote community trust in, respect for and collaboration between the community and police agencies.

D. Round Robin on how does our agency benefit when the community trusts and respects you?

- I. Research demonstrated that police cannot be effective without support/cooperation of the community.
- II. Community members who perceive the police as being fair see them as a legitimate authority.

III. SKILLS FOR PRODUCING FAIR, IMPARTIAL AND EFFECTIVE POLICING (1.5 HOURS)

A. *Students will Understand the Benefits and Components of Community Respect and Cooperation*

- 1. Shots fired in a park scenario or DV Scenario Example: Shots fired in a park, heard by officer patrolling nearby hears shots. Only a nice dressed couple talking while sitting at a picnic table. No one else around.
 - A. What is the “assumption?”
 - B. Did the officer contact them?
 - C. Risks and consequences associated with assuming that they aren’t involved
 - D. What skills does the officer need to investigate?
 - I. Challenge what we see and recognize first impressions.
- 2. Recognize implicit biases and implement controlled (unbiased) responses.
 - A. Officer Taylor Scenario biased traffic stops. Meehan and Ponder study: Found that police were more likely to run warrants checks on African Americans than Whites in white neighborhoods....but less likely to find warrants on the African Americans compared to the whites.
 - I. Critical Thinking-challenge what you think and see. Recognize implicit bias. Proceed in bias-free manner.
 - B. Test yourself question: Would I be proceeding this way, but not for the fact that this person is Male? Asian? Black? Poor?
 - C. Gut Reaction-Recognize the biases.
 - I. Don’t be “Susun Boyaled”, taken in or led astray by biases.
- 3. Critical Thinking: Avoid “Profiling by Proxy”
 - A. Be aware of others biases (20/20 video police called for gay people). Consider bias free options.

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- B. Caller to 911 for “race out of place” in a neighborhood. Round robin options of how to deal with the call. Consider the viewpoint of the people with whom you are dealing. Minimize a negative impact on people.
- 4. Reduce Ambiguity
 - A. We prejudge people who are “ambiguous stimuli”. We attribute group stereotype, biases to them. We do not always show we are doing this.
 - I. Slow it down, when feasible
 - II. Engage with community members
 - a. Man on the Porch scenario-Dialo NYPD Case
- 5. Connect with the community.
 - A. Round table list 3 specific things you could do in a week’s time to engage with members of a community.