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POLICING FOR PEACE: TRAINING FOR A 21ST CENTURY POLICE FORCE

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ABSTRACT

We review the present state of research on police training in the United States, highlighting gaps in the literature and limitations of trainings in use by local policing agencies. We focus on training content relevant to the volatile situations that are at the center of controversy; we evaluate content areas that focus on successfully navigating real-time, unpredictable, and potentially dangerous interactions; and discuss training needs in these areas. We suggest that one common response to the issue of bias—implicit bias training—lacks evidence of efficacy. Accordingly, we recommend alternative training content to address bias and discrimination. Finally, we call attention to potential barriers, including the highly charged political environment and officer resistance, that could limit the effectiveness of new training programs.

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd was killed while in police custody. Videos of his death circulated throughout social media and news outlets, sparking national outrage over the depiction of a White officer kneeling on the neck of a Black man who was pleading for help and stating he could not breathe (Hill et al., 2020). Unfortunately, George Floyd's death was not an isolated incident. Recent events, such as the deaths of Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Eric Garner, and Breonna Taylor, have prompted widespread public scrutiny over the current state of policing in the United States (Nix & Pickett, 2017; Ruggs et al., 2016). These highly publicized incidents of racial bias and excessive force at the hands of the police have highlighted widespread disparities in the treatment of racial and ethnic minorities by law enforcement personnel (Fryer, 2019; Hyland et al., 2015), spurred social justice movements (e.g., Black Lives Matter, n.d.), and reignited longstanding debates surrounding the need for change within the policing profession (Nix & Wolfe, 2017; Nix et al., 2018).

With officers increasingly being criticized for their handling of interactions with community members, the public is calling for large-scale reform (Preston, 2020; Stockman & Eligon, 2020). Academics, politicians, and members of law enforcement and the general public, alike, are providing recommendations for how to address the crisis at hand (Engel et al., 2020b; President's Task Force, 2015). These proposals range from updating selection practices and transforming performance appraisal systems to placing greater emphasis on community policing and realistic trainings (President's Task Force, 2015; Ruggs et al., 2016), with some even suggesting that larger institu-tional reform (e.g., defunding the police) is necessary to see effective change (Heath, 2020). While we, as a society, continue to debate solutions for addressing the crisis that is police–community relations in the United States, we must ensure that recommendations for reform are guided by and grounded in empirical evidence, which has been largely deficient in best practices for police reform (Engel et al., 2020b; Lum et al., 2016).

Among the many proposed solutions, training stands out as a critical area in which industrial-organizational (I-O) psychologists are uniquely equipped to provide guidance. As a foundational area of our field, I-O psychologists have the expertise and resources to inform the development, delivery, and evaluation of evidence-based trainings to address issues of procedural justice, racial bias, and excessive force in police–civilian interactions (Jacobs et al., 2016; Ruggs et al., 2016). Despite multiple calls to action (Engel et al., 2020b; National Research Council, 2004; Ruggs et al., 2016), limited empirical work has investigated police training both within and outside the field of I-O psychology (Avery, 2016; Lum et al., 2016; National Research Council, 2004; Skogan et al., 2015). The continued prevalence of these incidents highlights the severity of these issues and necessitates our attention.

To stimulate both discussion and empirical research on this topic, the present article reviews the current state of research on police training in the United States, highlighting

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gaps in the literature, and limitations of trainings presently in use by local policing agencies. Devoting special attention to training content relevant to the volatile situations that are at the center of controversy, we evaluate content areas that focus on the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to successfully navigate real-time, unpredictable, and potentially dangerous interactions, and discuss how they could be effectively incorporated into police training. Further, we recommend alternative training content to address issues of bias and discrimination. In areas where research evidence is particularly sparse, we suggest specific directions for future research. Finally, we call attention to potential barriers, including the highly charged political environment and officer resistance, that could limit the effectiveness of new training programs.

Current State of Police Training

In 2004, the National Research Council's review of police policy and practice research determined that an inadequate amount of work has examined the impact of training on officer performance. Skogan and colleagues reiterated this sentiment over a decade later, stating: "we know virtually nothing about the short- or long-term effects associated with police training of any type" (Skogan et al., 2015, p. 320). Thus, despite repeated calls for empirical investigation of the content and efficacy of police training (National Research Council, 2004; Ruggs et al., 2016), our knowledge of this topic has remained limited. The remainder of this section is devoted to providing an overview of the scant literature on training utilized by local policing agencies. We begin with a general outline of the structure of police training. We then discuss the research on training models in use by academies and on the specific training content at the center of debate, calling attention to limitations that impact effectiveness and overall utility of the approach.

Current Structure of Police Training

Law enforcement in the United States comprises approximately 18,000 local policing agencies (U.S. Department of Justice, n.d.), which employ more than 800,000 officers across the country (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). With limited federal standards for police departments in the United States, these local agencies are subject to varying laws and codes depending on the state, county, and city in which they are located, meaning that training policies and practices can vary significantly nationwide (Blumberg et al., 2019). Minimum training standards are typically established by each state's Peace Officer's Standards and Training (POST) commission or equivalent agency, although individual departments can choose to require additional training (U.S. Department of Justice, n.d.). Despite these varying standards, police training tends to follow a relatively consistent format in terms of overall structure.

Police recruits are required to have completed an academy program and field training before becoming certified officers (U.S. Department of Justice, n.d.). The average police academy training lasts a total of 21 weeks (i.e., 840 hours) and covers topics including operations (e.g., patrol procedures, emergency vehicle operations, investigations), tactical (e.g., firearms, self-defense, use of force), self-improvement (e.g., ethics, fitness, stress management), and legal training (e.g., criminal law, traffic law, juvenile justice procedures; Reaves, 2016). Following the completion of their academy basic training, officers participate in an average of 500 hours of field training (Reaves, 2016), which pairs the officer-in-training with a senior officer to provide hands-on experiences and information about the specific practices of the department (Stickle, 2016). Once fully certified, officers can continue to receive training throughout their careers, called in-service training, which can include reviews of topics previously covered during their time in the academy, as well as instruction on new tactics and strategies being implemented by their agency (U.S. Department of Justice, n.d.). Few states currently mandate their officers to partake in annual in-service training to maintain their certifications (Stickle, 2016).

Stress-Based Training Model

One of the most enduring criticisms of police training has centered around the stress-based training model utilized by many police academies (Bickel, 2013; Blumberg et al., 2019). Stress-based training is grounded in the traditional military model and is characterized by rigorous physical requirements and psychological demands (Reaves, 2016). Similar to military boot camps, stress-based training requires "that recruits are held to a high standard of discipline, deportment, and regimentation while learning how to become a police officer" (Blumberg et al., 2019, p. 3). Some argue, however, that this style of training is inadequately preparing recruits for the work they will be doing as police officers (White & Escobar, 2008).

With many departments moving toward a community-focused style of policing, the militaristic environment and "warrior-like orientation" produced in stress-based academies seems incongruous with the goals of most agencies (Bickel, 2013). In fact, it has been suggested that this stress-based model trains recruits to view all interactions with those outside law enforcement as a threat, which undoubtedly affects how they perceive and engage with civilians when on the job (Stoughton, 2015). Concerns regarding the effectiveness of this model have led to research comparing it to the less frequently used non-stress-based model of training (Bickel, 2013), which involves a more laid-back and collegial environment (Reaves, 2016). The preliminary work on this topic has found that recruits trained using the non-stress-based model performed significantly better in

the field than those trained in stress-based environments (Earle, 1973). Furthermore, stress-based academies have been found to produce officers who are both defensive and depersonalized, whereas non-stress-based academies produced no such effect (Conti, 2009). Nevertheless, most police academies continue to utilize the stress-based model of training that may be hindering development and subsequent performance of officers (Bickel, 2013; Blumberg et al., 2019; Reaves, 2016).

Use of Force Training

Consistent with the concerns surrounding the militaristic manner in which officers are trained is the increasing scrutiny of officers' decisions to engage in force when interacting with members of the public (Engel et al., 2020b). Academy training covers a number of topics related to use of force, including firearms, nonlethal weapons (e.g., pepper spray, baton), and defensive tactics (Police Executive Research Forum, 2015; Reaves, 2016). Although data are limited on the specific training practices implemented by academies (Engel et al., 2020b), it appears that most of the use of force training centers on range shooting and classroom-based learning rather than engaging recruits in realistic training scenarios (Andersen et at., 2016). As such, it is suggested that a majority of use of force training inadequately emulates the conditions that officers will face on the job (Hope, 2016).

Although use of force is an undeniable aspect of police work (Bittner, 1970; Herndon, 2016), and officers are trained to be decisive in their decision to engage in force (Engel et al., 2020a), the recent incidents of deadly force by police against unarmed, Black civilians have raised questions about use of force protocols and practices (Ruggs et al., 2016). An increasingly common recommendation to address concerns of excessive force is to incorporate de-escalation training (President's Task Force, 2015), which encourages officers to pause and consider a number of alternatives to force prior to taking action (Engel et al., 2020a). Recent examination of academy training content has highlighted a large imbalance in the number of hours devoted to use of force versus de-escalation topics. Specifically, for every hour of de-escalation training, recruits receive approximately 8 hours of training on use of force tactics (Police Executive Research Forum, 2015). This emphasis on use of force training may lead some to believe that officers engage in a large number of interactions that require force; however, a 2018 report from the U.S. Department of Justice found that only 2% of 61.5 million police–civilian interactions involved verbal threats or physical force by police (Harrell & Davis, 2020). Given these statistics, the attention focused on using force versus avoiding force seems, at the very least, to be out of balance. Furthermore, this concentration on use of force training may partly explain incidents

of excessive force. When considered through the lens of the recognition-primed decision model, which proposes that individuals rely on prior experiences when making quick decisions (Klein, 2008), the overemphasis on use of force in training may result in officers being primed to engage in force even when unnecessary (Dayley, 2016).

Implicit Bias Training

Related to concerns of excessive force are concerns surrounding the differential treatment of minority and White civilians by law enforcement. High-profile incidents of excessive force against unarmed, Black citizens have called attention to disparities in police use of force, with minorities disproportionately likely to have force used against them and to die as a result of that force (Edwards et al., 2019). Facing accusations of discrimination and bias in police–civilian interactions, police departments are increasingly turning to implicit bias training to address concerns of disparate treatment (Worden et al., 2020). Proposed as a solution to bias in policing, implicit bias training aims to make people more aware of unconscious, discriminatory stereotypes or attitudes (i.e., implicit biases) that can affect their perceptions, behaviors, and decision making (Dovidio et al., 2002; Greenwald & Krieger, 2006). However, despite widespread endorsement of this training (President's Task Force, 2015), empirical evidence of its ability to effect behavioral change is severely lacking.

Recent meta-analytic findings showed that although implicit bias trainings can, in fact, lead to changes in implicit bias, that does not automatically translate to changes in explicit bias or behavior (Forscher et al., 2019). Similarly, a study conducted with the New York Police Department found that although a mandatory implicit bias training heightened officers' awareness of such biases and their willingness to try to manage them on the job, the training had no effect on officers' enforcement behaviors (e.g., frisks, arrests, use of force; Worden et al., 2020). Although it can be argued that awareness is a first step in addressing bias (Devine et al., 2012; Smith, 2015), research suggests that implicit bias training has failed to provide the behavioral outcomes needed to mitigate behaviors at the center of controversy. There are also serious concerns that framing discriminatory actions in terms of implicit bias might reduce perceptions of the seriousness of biased behavior (Onyeador, 2017). By presenting discrimination as a result, in part, of neurological processes, we may be undermining one's personal responsibility for addressing that behavior (Kempf, 2020; Noon, 2018). In fact, research has shown that framing incidents of discrimination as the result of implicit biases can lead observers to perceive less discriminatory intent behind the action and reduce perceptions of the severity of the incident. Similarly, such framing can lead observers to hold perpetrators less accountable for their actions, as well

as believing these perpetrators to be less deserving of punishment (Daumeyer et al., 2019; Onyeador, 2017). Thus, it can be argued that not only has implicit bias training shown little evidence of its ability to effect behavioral change, but such framing can result in outcomes that directly conflict with the goals of the training.

Recommendations for Training a 21st Century Police Force

As previously stated, the literature on police training is severely lacking (National Research Council, 2004; Skogan et al., 2015). Consequently, many of the best practices and reform recommendations being presented to address issues of excessive force and discrimination in law enforcement are based on nothing more than anecdotal accounts and well-intentioned propositions rather than empirical evidence (Engel et al., 2020b; Robinson, 2020). Nevertheless, police executives are increasingly being pressured to implement evidence-based policies and practices to address issues of police misconduct (Lum et al., 2016). Thus, there is a critical need to call attention to existing training practices and content that have demonstrated effectiveness but still have not been widely implemented, as well as to explore potentially fruitful alternatives. Therefore, the remainder of this section will be dedicated to recommending a number of changes to current local police training practices. Starting with general training recommendations, we present several structural modifications from the training literature that could prove effective and have received substantial empirical support. Next, we propose adjustments to and alternatives for the problematic training practices mentioned in the previous section.

General Training Recommendations

A few best practices from the training and development literature stand out as particularly important to the complex problem of training related to police–civilian interactions. First, foundational to any training program is a training needs analysis (e.g., Cannon-Bowers et al., 1995; Goldstein & Ford, 2002). Particularly in the case of in-service training, organizations need to identify the most pressing training needs, which may differ across agencies and even across officers. Given the time and expense of training, and its potential value to the organization, training should be prioritized based on careful analysis of gaps between officer skills and the skills required to successfully manage police–civilian interactions. This involves identifying skills required to successfully navigate police–civilian interaction, to assess those skills in officers, and to prioritize trainings in areas where there are the largest gaps.

Once training needs are identified, training design should be tailored based on both the content to be trained and the larger organizational context. Police–civilian interactions are high stakes, dynamic, ill-structured, ambiguous situations, which do not have one single trajectory or one correct response. Such situations give officers the freedom to perform (i.e., performance is not precisely prescribed) and require more adaptable behavior. Skills needed for this type of performance are referred to as *open skills* (Yelon & Ford, 2008). These open skills are more difficult to train than *closed skills*, (which involve precisely replicating a set of steps; Yelon & Ford, 2008), and are more cognitively complex (Salas, et al., 2003). Active learning approaches (e.g., simulations, role playing) are better suited to training open skills than are passive approaches that involve one-way communication (e.g., lecture, demonstration), because active approaches involve practice and feedback. Active approaches to training have also been shown to be superior to passive approaches in terms of adaptive transfer (i.e., applying training to novel work situations), even for trainees with low levels of motivation and cognitive ability (Keith et al., 2010).

Given the high stakes nature of police–civilian interactions that escalate to violence, skills training in this area is critically important. For this training to be a part of the solution, though, trainees must use what they have learned to inform their on-the-job behavior in future relevant situations. This transfer of training has proven to be a stubborn issue. In their 2018 review of transfer of training, Ford and colleagues (2018) noted that although transfer scholars have made substantive advances in this area in recent years, "the transfer problem remains acute and there is so much more of value that remains unknown" (p, 220). One thing we do know is that the post-training environment impacts training transfer. Kraiger (2014) discussed three conditions that appear to maximize the likelihood of transfer: (a) Trainees can apply and use new skills; (b) there is organizational support, in terms of positive reinforcement, for applying new skills successfully; and (c) trainees are accountable for their own training transfer. These conditions are all reliant to some extent on opportunities to use these skills. Police officers likely have few opportunities to practice on-the-job skills related to police–civilian violent interactions, because these events have a relatively low base rate. And, there is evidence that we lose proficiency when skills are not deployed on the job; Arthur and colleagues found that trained skills decay with nonuse, with cognitive skills decaying faster than physical skills (Arthur et al., 1998). Taken together, this research suggests the need for training maintenance. Training "boosters" (i.e., follow-up sessions that involve practice) are important for maintaining competency and may also provide opportunities for expression of peer and supervisor support, and for increased internalization and accountability for trained behaviors by the trainee.

Finally, given the dearth of literature specific to the efficacy of police training, training evaluation is a critical step both to ensure the efficacy of training and to provide

data that can help inform future training efforts. Plans for training evaluation should be built into training programs in an a priori manner; important criteria should be linked to learning outcomes, specified in advance, and measured at multiple time intervals following training to determine not only immediate effectiveness but also longevity and knowledge or skill decay (e.g., Arthur et al., 1998; Ford, et al., 2018; Ford, et al., 2010). Other important training evaluation concerns include using multiple criteria in evaluation, examining whether a particular training method is effective across different content areas, and testing multiple training methods to train the same content (e.g., Arthur, et al., 2003; Ford, et al., 2010; Kraiger, et al., 1993). Rigorous training evaluation has benefits of improving training locally and adding to the knowledge base regarding police training more generally.

Non-Stress-Based Model of Training and Adult Learning Theory

As previously stated, a longstanding criticism of police training has revolved around training academies' frequent utilization of a stress-based model. Entailing a militaristic style of training, the stress-based model is often perceived as being in direct conflict with the community-focused policing goals of most departments (Bickel, 2013). In fact, the "warrior" mentality often produced in stress-based academies can prove dangerous for both officers and civilians, leading to issues of distrust and conflict during police–civilian interactions (Li et al., 2021; McLean et al., 2020). As police recruits begin to identify and form standards for behavior during their academy training (Van Maanen, 1974), it is imperative that the academy environment instills and reinforces behaviors that are in line with the desired goals of their future department.

The non-stress-based model of training is a promising solution to the concerns regarding the stress-based model. This non-stress-based model involves a more relaxed and collegial environment (Reaves, 2016), and emphasizes community-focused policing values (e.g., service, communication, cooperation, and legitimacy) over more aggressive policing values (e.g., crime-fighting, commanding, compliance, and authority; Li et al., 2021). Preliminary work suggests that this model of training may lead to favorable outcomes, such that departments with more officers trained in a non-stress-based academy have lower rates of officer-involved homicide than departments with a majority of officers trained in a stress-based academy (Li et al., 2021). Additionally, non-stress-based training academies have been shown to have higher completion rates among female recruits. In predominately non-stress-based academies, female recruits have a graduation rate comparable to men (89%); however, in predominately stress-based academies, women graduate at a rate of 68% compared to 81% of men (Reaves, 2009). Thus, beyond the aforementioned benefits,

non-stress-based academies may also address calls to diversify law enforcement personnel (President's Task Force, 2015). This increased departmental gender representation may aid in addressing issues of police-community relations, such that female officers have been found to be more supportive of procedurally just policing than their male counterparts (Trinkner et al., 2019), and recent work has shown that more representative departments are perceived more positively by the general public (Riccucci et al., 2014).

In addition to the utilization of a non-stress-based training model, police academies would likely benefit from incorporating the principles of adult learning and andragogy into their trainings (Birzer, 2003; Birzer & Tannehill, 2001; Blumberg et al., 2019; White & Escobar, 2008). Theories of adult learning have traditionally proposed that adults learn best when engaged as active members of the learning process (e.g., role playing; Knowles, 1984). As such, a student-centered approach (i.e., andragogy) is promoted in adult learning environments, where instructors act as facilitators to the learners (White & Escobar, 2008). Rather than employing a lecture-based approach, police academies should design trainings in a manner that allows recruits to utilize past experiences, be actively engaged, and makes readily apparent the utility of training material to their work on the job (Lum et al., 2016). Proponents suggest that an adult learning approach will allow police recruits to cultivate important skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, and problem solving (Birzer & Tannehill, 2001). Although limited research has examined the efficacy of academy trainings based in adult learning theory, a recent study comparing the traditional, lecture-based training approach of academies to a more problem-based learning approach (grounded in principles of adult learning) found that the latter approach may be particularly valuable in developing recruits' critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Kooi & Palmer, 2014).

Currently, only 7.6% of police academies utilize a fully non-stress-based model of training (Reaves, 2016). Given the aforementioned concerns surrounding academies' utilization of a stress-based training model, the non-stress-based model stands out as a worthwhile alternative that deserves greater consideration. However, a dearth of empirical work examining the efficacy of this model prevents us from making immediate calls to transition academies to this model of training. Thus, more research is needed to ensure that non-stress-based training can lead to desired departmental outcomes. Finally, with support from both the literatures on training and adult learning, researchers and practitioners should prioritize active approaches to learning (e.g., role playing, simulations) in the design of their training interventions (Keith et al., 2010; Knowles, 1984).

De-Escalation and Crisis Intervention Team Training

In response to concerns surrounding the prevalence of

excessive force in police–civilian interactions, departments are increasingly being called to place greater emphasis on de-escalation tactics in both academy and in-service training (President's Task Force, 2015). Despite widespread support, limited work has examined the efficacy of de-escalation training in reducing occurrences of excessive force (Lum et al., 2016; National Research Council, 2004). Furthermore, attempts to investigate de-escalation are hindered by definitional ambiguity. Encompassing a vast assortment of approaches, de-escalation can be broadly defined as "a process or tactics used to prevent, reduce, or manage behaviors associated with conflict, including verbal or physical agitation, aggression, violence, or similar behaviors—during an interaction between two or more individuals" (Engel et al., 2020b, p. 154). Although calls to increase de-escalation training are well-intentioned, and research from other disciplines has reported promising effects regarding the use of such trainings (Engel et al., 2020a), we must take steps to ensure we are calling for and implementing empirically grounded trainings.

With considerable emphasis on de-escalation, crisis intervention team (CIT) training may prove to be incredibly valuable in enhancing interactions between officers and community members, as well as in directing efforts to clarify and design additional effective de-escalation trainings. Developed in 1988 by Dr. Randolph Dupont and Major Sam Cochran, in collaboration with the Memphis Police Department, CIT training aims to improve interactions between officers and people with mental illnesses and to ensure the safety of all parties involved (Compton et al., 2008). Typical CIT training consists of 40 hours of both classroom-based learning and situational role play led by mental health professionals. Spanning a number of topics, such as signs and symptoms of substance use disorders and mental illnesses, community resources, medication and treatments, and de-escalation techniques, CIT training aims to equip officers with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to successfully navigate interactions with mentally ill civilians (Demir et al., 2009; Ellis, 2014).

As one of the most researched forms of police training to date, findings regarding CIT training have been largely positive (Lum et al., 2016). Research has consistently found that officers who complete CIT training score higher on CIT-relevant knowledge, attitudes, and skills than officers who did not complete the training (Compton et al., 2008; Demir et al., 2009; Ellis, 2014). Moreover, it's been shown that these positive effects persist long after the completion of the training (Compton et al., 2014a). It is argued that the acquisition of the knowledge, attitudes, and skills could lead to important behavioral changes, which may positively impact police–civilian interactions (Demir et al., 2009; Ellis, 2014). Preliminary research appears to support this argument, such that CIT-trained officers are less likely than non-CIT-trained officers to engage in physical force as civilian behavior becomes more resistant (Compton et al., 2014b). Similarly, when presented with vignettes, CIT-trained officers chose to engage in nonphysical actions more frequently than their non-CIT-trained counterparts (Compton et al., 2011). CIT-trained officers have been found to be more likely to use verbal engagement to handle exchanges with mentally ill civilians, and that interactions involving a CIT-trained officer are more likely to conclude with a referral to mental health services or transport to a medical facility rather than an arrest (Compton et al., 2014b).

Despite preliminary research suggesting the efficacy of this training, the literature on CIT training is still in its nascent stages (Demir et al., 2009; Lum et al., 2016). Thus, as departments are increasingly encouraged to incorporate greater de-escalation and CIT trainings into their academy and in-service training practices (President's Task Force, 2015), researchers must continue to investigate the efficacy of such trainings. Specifically, efforts should be taken to examine the content, delivery, and efficacy of specific training programs. There is also a need to examine if the positive effects of CIT training can spillover to interactions with non-mentally ill individuals, as it could lead to wider application of the program. Finally, some have raised concerns that such trainings could put officers at risk (Blake, 2017; Williams, 2015). As such, we must begin to examine the validity of current use of force protocols, taking steps to clarify the situational appropriateness of use of force decisions.

Critical Race Theory and Other Tactics to Address Discrimination and Bias

Emerging in the mid-1970s, critical race theory (CRT) is a theoretical framework utilized to examine the relationship between race, racism, and power in the U.S. With roots in the areas of anthropology, history, law, philosophy, politics, and sociology, CRT arose from critiques that the legal and social advances of the civil rights era had stalled or, in some cases, were being reversed (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000; Kempf, 2020). Unlike implicit bias trainings, CRT emphasizes how race and racism are structurally rooted in institutions (e.g., policing) and considers how this may explain racial inequities and influence dynamics between such institutions and minorities (Chaney & Robertson, 2013). Through its focus on systemic causes, CRT-based trainings may prove a beneficial supplement to bias trainings by educating officers on the history between law enforcement and minority communities. By placing the tense relationship between police and minority communities in a historical and institutional context, officers could be afforded the opportunity to expand their conception of bias and discrimination beyond that of the individual and instead consider how institutional policies and practices have led to the perpetuation of discrimination against minority groups.

To date, it appears only one study has examined the

use of CRT-based training in a policing context. Conducted with officers of the NYPD, researchers investigated the impact of a CRT-based college course on officer attitudes. The course, which lasted one semester, provided officers with an opportunity to:

> expand their knowledge of the history of racism in the U.S., consider how this history influences or shapes their work in policing, discuss daily racialized experiences across all racial lines, identify inappropriate police culture (behavior and communication), reflect on individual behaviors and beliefs systems, and consider peer intervention strategies to promote best practices and prevent misconduct. (Bornstein et al., 2012, p. 179)

When compared to officers who had not participated in the course, officers in the CRT-based course were found to be more aware of White racial privilege, institutional discrimination, and blatant racism. Further, the course was found to be particularly impactful on White officers, such that they experienced the most dramatic change in awareness compared to their Black and Latino counterparts (Bornstein et al., 2012). Taken together, these findings suggest that CRT-based training may provide a fruitful avenue for departments looking to heighten the awareness of officers to issues of race and racism. In fact, some police departments are beginning to implement CRT-based educational courses for their officers. The D.C. police department has recently established a mandatory CRT course for the agency's 3,800 officers. Taught by professors, the course aims to provide officers with a historical understanding of police–minority community relations and policing agencies' role in the enforcement of discriminatory laws and practices throughout history (Jean-Philippe & Williams, 2018).

Although empirical work on the efficacy of CRT-based training in the context of policing is severely lacking, preliminary research and departmental willingness to implement such programs suggests that this is an avenue worth further examination. Training that incorporates learning about systemic and structural racism, and how it may influence current minority–institution interactions, has been largely underexplored as a potential tactic for addressing concerns of bias and discrimination in policing. That said, any attempts to design and implement diversity trainings should be done carefully and guided by best practices to maximize their potential for achieving desired outcomes. Recent meta-analytic findings suggest that diversity training should be integrated with the organization's other diversity-related initiatives rather than a one-time, standalone training session, as an integrated training program can signal the organization's commitment to diversity (Bezrukova et al., 2016). Along similar lines, diversity trainings that are longer in duration have been found to be more effective, such that they provide greater opportunity for practice and

skill development. Diversity trainings should also be designed to include both awareness and skill-development/behavioral components as this can maximize effectiveness of achieving desired outcomes (Bezrukova et al., 2016). Finally, given the sensitive nature of topics such as systemic and structural racism, significant consideration must be given to how content will be presented in order to prevent "backlash among participants in demographic majorities who may feel they are being held indirectly responsible for past histories of discrimination or other inequities" (Bezrukova et al., 2012, p. 222).

Despite widespread endorsement, implicit bias training has failed to provide the behavioral changes needed to mitigate issues of discrimination and bias in policing (Worden et al., 2020). As such, we cannot continue to prescribe it as a cure-all to an issue with such dire consequences. Beyond the potential utilization of CRT-based training, there are a number of other avenues that should be considered when attempting to address concerns of differential treatment. Specifically, we should extend our focus beyond attitudes and beliefs to aspects of the police–civilian interaction that might induce biased or discriminatory actions. Several situational factors have been identified to increase the risk of biased policing, including decision-making latitude, officer inexperience, cognitive demands, departmental focus on crime, and identity salience and identity threat (Swencionis & Goff, 2017). Ultimately, if we hope to develop training interventions that lead to desired behavioral change, we must thoroughly examine potential individual, situational, and systemic factors that may be causally related to racial disparities in police–civilian interactions. Researchers should design and test training interventions that incorporate the most promising of these factors to try to triangulate on this complex but critical problem.

Barriers to Change

Despite numerous calls for reform to police training (Preston, 2020; Stockman & Eligon, 2020) and a multitude of recommendations for how to address specific areas of concern (President's Task Force, 2015; Ruggs et al., 2016; Wolfe et al., 2020), several challenges remain that could act as substantial barriers to effecting desired change. Whereas I-O psychologists are well-versed in the process of designing and implementing successful trainings (Ruggs et al., 2016), we must acknowledge the unique environment that is the policing profession. "Law enforcement as a context and police officers as a population are distinct from many of the workplace environments and civilian employee populations that have informed current I-O knowledge and best practices" (Hall, 2016, p. 598). Thus, researchers and practitioners, alike, should be cognizant of how our standard practices and procedures could prove insufficient in addressing the unique challenges that might be faced when attempting to

reform training in the policing context. Although there are likely several barriers that could prove problematic to the reform of police training, we focus our attention on three broad areas that we believe will prove to be significant hurdles to implementing large-scale change.

First, with over 18,000 local policing agencies and a total of 664 training academies (Reaves, 2016; U.S. Department of Justice, n.d.), the decentralized nature of policing in the United States will likely be a large obstacle in any attempts to address systemic issues in police training practices. Given that departments across the country are subject to the varying laws and regulations of their local and state governments, we cannot expect for training reform to happen quickly or without difficulty (Robinson, 2020; Wolfe et al., 2020). Furthermore, the decentralization of policing means that funding is highly variable (den Heyer, 2013), so although larger agencies can adjust their budgets to partake in additional trainings, smaller agencies have less flexibility. As 48% of departments in our country employ less than 10 officers (Reaves, 2015), we must be conscious of the limitations of individual agencies to implement new trainings.

Second, the lack of current research on police training could prove problematic in future attempts to reform training curricula. Due to the dearth of research on effective trainings, departments have had to turn to nonempirically based "best practices" to address the present concerns surrounding police conduct (Robinson, 2020). However, there are increasing expectations that policing agencies implement evidence-based policy and practices when addressing concerns surrounding excessive force and discrimination (Engel et al., 2020b). Producing this evidence requires policing agencies and researchers to partner to empirically test promising interventions in the field. Successful researcher–agency partnerships require attention to building and sustaining the relationship. This requires that all parties see value in the partnership, identifying shared goals and prioritizing them. Structural considerations (e.g., time requirements, financial obligations, personnel involved) should be determined early in the partnership, and establishing trust is key to successful ongoing collaboration. As discussed in the following paragraph, law enforcement personnel can often be wary of outsiders. Thus, it is imperative that researchers clearly communicate a genuine desire to help the department. For more detailed guidance on establishing and maintaining successful partnerships with policing agencies see Alpert et al. (2013), IACP Law Enforcement Policy Center (2017), and Serpas and Wellford (2007).

Third, both researchers and practitioners need to be cognizant of the charged environment that is policing in the United States. The profession has faced significant media attention and public scrutiny in recent years regarding incidents of police misconduct (Nix & Pickett, 2017; Ruggs et al., 2016). However, despite public criticism and calls for reform, we cannot assume that policing agencies and individual officers are ready for change (Chatterjee, 2016). Police officers feel under attack, with some even perceiving current publicity as a "war on cops" (Nix et al., 2018). This tense relationship between police and the general public has intensified an already strong "us versus them" mentality common among officers, (Nix & Pickett, 2017), which is concerning as the profession has a long tradition of banding together during periods of external threat ("blue wall of silence"; Chin & Wells, 1998). As a result, attempts to implement new trainings, especially those focused on topics at the center of controversy, could be perceived as an attack and met with large-scale resistance.

If I-O psychologists truly hope to effect lasting change in law enforcement, we must acknowledge the limitations of our expertise and take steps to educate ourselves on the unique complexities of the context which we desire to reform (Chatterjee, 2016; Hall, 2016; Jacobs et al., 2016). Paying special attention to the principles of effective change, we must work with law enforcement professionals to: (a) diagnose areas in need of change; (b) identify constraints that may affect the implementation of reform efforts; (c) gauge readiness for change among stakeholders; (d) determine appropriate, evidence-based solutions; and (e) equip agencies with the resources needed to institutionalize change efforts (Foster-Fishman et al., 2007; Stouten et al., 2018). By considering the above steps and collaborating with policing agencies, we can: (a) inform the design, development, and implementation of effective trainings to address critical policing issues; and, (b) expand our knowledge base in design and implementation of training interventions with unconventional populations in unique contexts.

Conclusion

The recent deaths of George Floyd and other Black civilians at the hands of the police have sparked national outrage, calling into question the conduct of police (Nix & Pickett, 2017; Ruggs et al., 2016). Demands for large-scale reform have been met with a multitude of recommendations, as departments, politicians, and others aim to mitigate issues of excessive force and discrimination in law enforcement (President's Task Force, 2015; Lum et al., 2016). Among the proposed solutions, training stands out as a crucial area in which I-O psychologists can provide guidance and assistance.

Based on available evidence and best practice, we make general training recommendations to use training needs analysis to prioritize training needs, to employ active approaches to training for police–civilian interactions, and to use training "boosters" to prevent skill decay in areas

TABLE 1.
Key Takeaways

Current state of police training

Current structure of police training
- Training policies and practices can vary significantly nationwide; however, all police recruits must complete an academy program, which covers a variety of topics and field training to become certified officers. Once certified, officers can continue to receive training throughout their career, called in-service training.

Stress-based training model
- Most academies utilize a stress-based training model, which is characterized by rigorous physical requirements and psychological demands. It is argued that the militaristic environment and "warrior-like orientation" produced in stress-based academies inadequately prepares recruits for the work they will do as officers.

Use of force training
- Academies emphasize training on use of force rather than de-escalation. It is suggested that this focus on use-of-force tactics is disproportionate to the percentage of interactions on the job that will require force. There are also concerns that current use of force training does not provide a realistic training environment.

Implicit bias training
- Departments are increasingly utilizing implicit bias training, which aims to make people more aware of unconscious, discriminatory attitudes that can affect decision making, to address issues of disparate treatment. However, empirical work suggests that implicit bias training has failed to provide desired behavioral outcomes. Furthermore, some argue that the framing of this training reduces perceptions of the seriousness of discrimination.

Recommendations for training

General training recommendations
- Perform a training needs analysis to identify gaps in officer skills related to successfully managing police–civilian interactions. Employ active learning approaches to promote adaptive transfer of soft skills. Implement training "boosters" to give trainees practice using trained skills relevant to low-base-rate work events. Incorporate rigorous training evaluation to improve future training and add to the knowledge base in the area of police training.

Non-stress-based training model and adult learning theory
- The non-stress-based training model involves a more relaxed and collegial environment and emphasizes community-focused policing values that are increasingly being adopted by departments. Preliminary work suggests this model leads to favorable outcomes. It is also suggested that academies would benefit from incorporating the more active learning tactics of adult learning theory into academy trainings.

De-escalation and crisis intervention team (CIT) training
- De-escalation training involves educating people on strategies to prevent and manage aggressive and violent behaviors during interpersonal interactions. Focusing on people with mental illness, CIT training is the most highly researched form of de-escalation training. Initial research suggests CIT training can produce favorable outcomes.

Critical race theory (CRT) and other tactics to address discrimination/bias
- CRT emphasizes awareness of systemic causes of discrimination. CRT training has been largely unexplored as a tactic for addressing discrimination, but preliminary work and departmental willingness to implement suggest it warrants further exploration. Additionally, we should also consider situational factors when addressing issues of discrimination, including decision-making latitude, officer inexperience, cognitive demands, and identity threat.

Continued on next page.

where there is limited opportunity for on-the-job practice. With regard to the complex skills necessary to successfully navigate dynamic, real-time, high stakes police–civilian interactions, we suggest promising approaches for training reform. Specifically, we recommend moving to a non-stress-based training model in police academies and increasing focus on de-escalation training, such as CIT training, to reduce issues of excessive force in police–civilian interactions. To address the problems of bias and discrimination at the center of police controversy, we call for reconsideration of the focus on implicit bias training, in favor of research and field-based empirical testing on promising alternatives, including CRT-based training.

Finally, we call attention to a number of barriers that

TABLE 1 CONTINUED.
Key Takeaways

Barriers to change

A decentralized system
- The decentralized nature of policing will impede any attempts to address systemic issues in training practices, as departments are subject to the varying laws and regulations of their local/state governments.

A lack of empirical research
- Policing agencies are increasingly expected to implement evidence-based policies and practices, however, limited empirical research on the efficacy of trainings and interventions means that extensive research will need to be conducted prior to implementation.

A charged environment
- Significant public scrutiny surrounding the policing profession has led police to feel under attack. As a result, officers may not be receptive to change and resist attempts to implement training interventions.

could hinder attempts to successfully implement training reform. These challenges include the decentralized nature of policing, a highly charged political environment, officer resistance to training, and a limited research base for which to guide best practice. Although some of these barriers are beyond the purview of I-O psychologists, we are well positioned to address the dearth of empirical field research that is needed to establish evidence-based policies and practices. By engaging in collaborative partnerships with policing agencies, we stand to inform best practices to ensure safety, justice, and peace for both officers and the communities they serve.

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