Training Advisory Council Coursework Comments and Suggestions

Introduction to Implicit Bias Training

May 12, 2018

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INTRODUCTION TO IMPLICIT BIAS TRAINING

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1. TAC Participants

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2. High Level Summary

Overall the members of TAC who attended the dry-run were impressed with the course. Central concerns were in the area of increasing the training to push the officers farther beyond their comfort zone. While it is understood that implicit bias is a difficult and sensitive topic to discuss, it was felt that the importance of the topic warrants a greater pushing of the officers to consider and evaluate their own biases.

3. Comments and Suggestions

Training Advisory Council members who attended the implicit bias training dry run on May 12, 2018, shared appreciation for the work that has gone into creating this class.

We also offered suggestions for change, of which the following is a brief summary:

- Productive debriefing may be one of the most important elements of this training.
- Use the language of intersectional identities during introductions, as a way of setting up for the value of examining one's origins and how they affects one's biases, and how that in turn can make one a better LEO. This can help demonstrate how the "fluffy" or "touchy-feely" stuff is a source of strength.
- Set up for success by opening with encouragement for everyone to keep an open mind.
- Open with a slide saying what the training is and isn't. Not: check the box. Not about making you feel like a POS. Class is about increasing your awareness so when you need to make a call you can know more confidently that you made a clear call and not one covered in noise.
- Instructors really need to believe in the material, and in the importance of the training.
- Great job setting the stage for self-examination; please take the discomfort further, at least in the last 30 minutes. Sworn members may be more able to handle challenging material than you're giving them credit for; when attempting to keep students from disengaging, don't water down the material so much that it's irrelevant.

- Point out that implicit biases affect how we act around others: tone of voice, facial expression, body language, and who we give our attention to (and how).
- Be clear that actions (including discriminatory actions) can be (and often are) unconscious, and that they can seem innocuous to the person doing them; when the same small action occurs many times, the effects add up, and people engaging in the behavior are less likely to notice than those around them. e.g.: littering. e.g.: twitching hands. e.g.: resting one hand on a weapon, or in a pocket. e.g.: a creased brow or a scowl when you see a member of a particular group.
- Great phrase from the training: "your brain makes shortcuts and fills in blanks."
- Biases aren't "mostly accurate" — they're mostly noise. All these thinking-shortcuts did to get lodged in your brain was keep you from thinking and not get you killed the first time you relied on them; that's where they come from. Not having died, your brain thinks, "that worked," and relies on that shortcut any time it can.
- Save normalization of implicit bias for after you've defined it.
- Include examples of a wide variety of biases — confirmation bias, gambler's fallacy, hindsight bias, attribution bias — as another way of showing that bias is normal.
- Confirmation bias may be easier to introduce after the educational clip, which can then set up exploration of conscious and unconscious processing.
- Include police biases toward members of the general public, eg by neighborhood.
- Don't just leave it to the community members to say that police implicit biases can be harmful to the public they're sworn to protect.
- Include examples of police biases that have endangered innocent civilians or the general public, and some which might lead to unfairly imbalanced application of the law.
- Include examples of police biases that favor other police (ingroup bias), and how that can interfere with law enforcement work.
- Reiterate for participants that this class is a starting place, an introduction.
- Research has found consistently that implicit biases are reduced by certain meditations.
- Engaging in activity that generates insight is more valuable than repeating information.
- Encourage participants to take the IAT. Do acknowledge that it can be challenging to look at this part of oneself. Don't discount or say things to discredit the IAT.
- Normalize taking IAT multiple times. It may be helpful for first-line leaders to openly disclose that they've taken IAT, too.
- Instructors, talk about implicit biases you've discovered in yourself. Use real examples from your own lives.
- When discussing the Lethal Weapon clip, be sure to call attention to the fallacy espoused by Joe Pesci's character — that all persecuted communities are equal and experience the same kind of suffering. It isn't true.
- Las Vegas incident video was compelling, and flowed well after the activity. Also suggest adding a real-life (personal) example at that point.
- Include examination of potential biases (and how they may have affected actions and outcomes) in After Action Review, or other between-trainings activity.
- Loved the setup for the community panel. Establishing safety for community members greatly serves the purpose of the panel.
- Great recommendation for officers to notice their own reactions, emotions, thoughts, and body sensations during the community panel.
- Many thanks to the students, teachers, and transformational leaders who made up the community panel.

4. PPB Contacts

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