

**FAIR & IMPARTIAL  
POLICING**

# **Implicit Bias Awareness Training**

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# Implicit Bias v. “Traditional Notions” of Prejudice

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- Traditional notions:

Discrimination is only caused by ill-intentioned people, who have animus towards groups.

The bias is conscious and the discriminatory behavior is deliberate.

- Implicit bias impacts well-intentioned people outside of conscious awareness.

The discriminatory behavior is not based on animus and is not deliberate.

# Fair and Impartial Policing, LLC

- ▶ Provides Implicit-Bias-Awareness Training (IBAT)
- ▶ Traditional Audience = Sworn law enforcement at all levels
  - ▶ Largest provider, small to large, *Psych Today, Harvard Bus Rev, CBS SM, National Geographic*
- ▶ New programs for:
  - ▶ Community members
  - ▶ Civilians in Law Enforcement agencies
  - ▶ Other CJ professionals

# What is Implicit-Bias-Awareness Training or “IBAT”?

- ▶ Core Content of our courses:
  - ▶ The nature of (and scientific evidence for) implicit biases;
  - ▶ How implicit biases might impact sworn law enforcement personnel;
  - ▶ The consequences of biased decisions/behaviors;
  - ▶ Skills to reduce and manage biases.

# PATROL:

## Individual-Level Skills

- Skill #1: Reduce your biases
- Skill #2: Manage your biases
- Skill #3: Beware of other people's biases
- Skill #4: Reduce ambiguity by slowing it down when feasible
- Skill #5: Know your agency's policy
- Skill #6: Analyze your options with a FIP lens.

# What IBAT can do

- ▶ Motivate well-intentioned individuals to recognize, reduce and manage their implicit biases.
- ▶ Provide them with skills to recognize, reduce and manage their biases.

# What it can't do.

- ▶ NY Post (9/2019): IBAT “is meant to counterprogram the racist responses that supposedly are wired into our brains.”
- ▶ CBS (9/2019): FIP “failed” – did not stop White Supremacist cops from posting ...
- ▶ Unnamed Mayor (9/2019): The national implementation of IBAT “can end this **horrible history** that’s holding us back.” [**History** of discrimination in policing, **history** of poor police-community relations.]

# Does IBAT Work?

- 1) Scientific assessments of skill effectiveness
- 2) Why satisfaction surveys DO matter
- 3) IBAT evaluations
- 4) FIP evaluation



# # 1. Scientific Assessments of Skill Effectiveness

- ▶ Preview: Controlled evaluations in infancy
- ▶ BUT: All content based on voluminous body of science, and
- ▶ Strong empirical support for the effectiveness of mechanisms (“skills”) for reducing and managing biases ...

# Empirical support for skills

- ▶ Knowledge about IB provides motivation to reduce/manage in well-intentioned people (Devine et al., 1991; Pope et al., 2013; van Nunspeet et al., 2015)
- ▶ Mechanisms to reduce bias work (Dasgupta & Greenwald, 2001; Lai et al., 2014; Meleady & Seger, 2016)
- ▶ Mechanisms to manage bias work (Devine et al., 1991; Monteith et al., 2010)

## #2. Satisfaction Surveys

- ▶ When assessing effectiveness, *who cares if police rate the training highly?*
- ▶ I DO!
  - ▶ Picture our “usual audience”
  - ▶ NC Sgt (background).....

“(I) wanted nothing to do with FIP or its philosophy. As fate would have it I was ‘hand-picked’ to attend the train-the-officer classes and forced to go after presenting every excuse I could come up with .... I came in Monday as opposed and defensive as I could covertly be without getting into trouble.... (Cont.)

We will not have an impact unless  
we overcome that hostility.

## And we do.

“(I) wanted nothing to do with FIP or its philosophy. As fate would have it I was “hand-picked” to attend the train-the-officer classes and forced to go after presenting every excuse I could come up with .... I came in Monday as opposed and defensive as I could covertly be without getting into trouble.... It took about two hours and I was sold on the theory of the class and wondering why I had not been through this training sooner.”

# How do we do it?

- ▶ Science-based, not accusatory/blaming
  - ▶ Non-threatening (to SB)
- ▶ Put experienced cops in the front of the room
  - ▶ Talking about how biases impact *them*
- ▶ We tell the truth
  - ▶ e.g., People of color ARE.....
  - ▶ “Disparity stats” do not prove bias
  - ▶ Yes, your implicit biases could help you in some situations, but.....





# How do we do it?

- ▶ Science-based, not accusatory/blaming
  - ▶ Non-threatening
- ▶ Put experienced cops in the front of the room
  - ▶ Talking about how biases impacted them
  - ▶ Lots of frank, realistic discussions
- ▶ We tell the truth
  - ▶ e.g., People of color ARE.....
  - ▶ “Disparity stats” do not prove bias
  - ▶ Yes, your implicit biases could help you in some situations, but.....

# Evaluations from LE

- ▶ Overwhelmingly 4's and 5's on 5-point scale
- ▶ NYPD, even though under court order...
  - ▶ 85% rate it as 4 or 5
  - ▶ 83% report that the training will help them do their jobs more effectively
  - ▶ Similar proportion: training will help them personally.

# #3. Outcome Evaluations of IBAT

- Lacking! (At least in terms of controlled evaluations that go beyond self-report.) BUT ...
- Devine et al., (2012):
  - Evaluated an implicit bias training/intervention
  - Premise:
    - If we raise awareness about implicit biases and their negative consequences .....
    - people will be motivated to implement strategies to address their biases and .....
    - those strategies will work.
  - Randomized, control design.

# Devine et al., 2012 (Cont.)

- ▶ Intervention, participants received:
  - ▶ Feedback on their IAT scores
  - ▶ Information on how IB impacts behavior, producing discriminatory behavior
  - ▶ Five strategies for reducing/managing bias

## Devine et al., 2012 (Cont.)

- ▶ RESULTS, intervention group showed:
  - ▶ Increased concern about bias and discrimination [huge for police!]
  - ▶ Greater IB consciousness (important for managing biases)
  - ▶ Greater:
    - ▶ Willingness to use strategies
    - ▶ Reported use of strategies
  - ▶ Recall from #1 above: Strategies to reduce/bias work.

# #4. Controlled Outcome Evaluation of FIP

- Occurring in the context of our NYPD training of 36k
- “Controlled” early participants are the “intervention” group compared to later participants (before they take FIP course)
- Sources of data
  - Before/After (After x 2) surveys: Knowledge, attitudes, skills (intent to use skills, did they use them)
  - Interviews with selected trainees
  - Disparity in activities.

# Sample Survey Items

- ✓ Implicit biases can affect even individuals who consciously reject prejudice and stereotypes.
- ✓ Biased policing is produced only by racist officers.
- ✓ Implicit biases may lead officers to be over-vigilant – that is, act aggressively when someone is not a threat.
- ✓ Bias in the police profession is merely a “fiction” produced by the media.
- ✓ After #1: Do you intend to use these skills.....?
- ✓ After #2: Did you use these skills...?

# Caveats, Disparity-in-activities Measures

- Including as outcomes some low-discretion activities (e.g., felony arrests).
- For the high-discretion activity outcomes, serious concerns about validity/reliability of data.
- We don't assume IBAT impacts everyone (but no link between survey data and activities)
- **Producing fair and impartial policing on the streets is about MUCH MORE than training line personnel in implicit bias awareness .....**



# Elements of a “Comprehensive Strategy to produce FIP”

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- Recruitment, Hiring & Promotion
- Policy
- Training
- Leadership, supervision & accountability
- Measurement
- Operations
- Outreach to diverse communities

# Summary:

## “Does it work?”

- Quite limited in terms of controlled, outcome evaluations (of IBAT & FIP)
  - And critical challenges associated with them
- We do have empirical support for key aspects of IBAT
  - Can produce motivation
  - Motivation can produce skill use
  - Skills to reduce/manage biases are effective

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