

# SUBJECT TO DEBATE

A NEWSLETTER OF THE POLICE EXECUTIVE RESEARCH FORUM

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VOL. 22, NO. 8 | AUGUST 2008

## Charlotte Police Captain Urges Colleagues To Consider One-on-One Diversity Program

A POLICE CAPTAIN IN CHARLOTTE, N.C. IS WORKING to advance a diversity program called “Friday Friends,” in which people try to expand their horizons by reaching out to someone from a different background.

Capt. Bruce Bellamy of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department’s Metro Patrol Division believes that the program ultimately can improve a police department’s entire relationship with its community. But that is the big picture, and the program is really about expanding a particular individual’s understanding of his community.

The program is very simple: You pick someone of another race, another religion, or another culture, and ask that person to go out to lunch. The person may be someone you know in a limited way, such as one of your children’s teachers or a fellow Little League parent. You explain the Friday Friends concept, and if the person agrees, you break bread together, get to know each other, and learn some things about a person from a different background.

The program is called Friday Friends because its promoters suggest that participants meet for lunch on the last Friday of each month, but everything about the program is voluntary, so of course people are free to meet whenever they find it convenient.

“This does require initiative and offers a chance to get out of your comfort zone, and that is part of the point,” according to Mecklenburg Ministries, a group of religious congregations from the Baha’i, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Quaker, and Unitarian Universalist faith traditions, which developed Friday Friends.

More than 500 people have found a “Friday Friend,” according to Mecklenburg Ministries. The goals of the program include “expanding your understanding of differences; exchanging views of privilege, power, and prejudice; sharing your vision for the future of our community; and exploring ways to move past differences to respect, understanding, appreciation, and deeper self-awareness.”

Police Captain Bellamy recently took it upon himself to take Friday Friends to a national level. Bellamy was in Boston, participating in PERF’s Senior Management Institute for Police (SMIP) program—a three-week educational program for mid- to upper-level police executives. During a session on diversity training, Bellamy said, there was a discussion about the need for police leaders to think of themselves as agents of change, and Prof. Stacy Blake-Beard challenged the class to answer the question, “What can we do to promote diversity in policing?”

“So I said that instead of just looking at what your Police Department is doing, we should look at what we as individuals can do,” Captain Bellamy said. “And I told them about the Friday Friends program. The program encourages individuals to look at themselves and ask themselves what they have done to become a more diverse person, and where they could be doing better.”

Even though the program is conducted on a person-to-person level, it can have a broad impact on an entire police department, Bellamy continued. “It’s individuals looking at themselves and saying, ‘You know what, I need to do better,’” he said. “But if the individuals are progressing, ultimately the police department is going to progress and benefit,

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**Captain Bruce Bellamy, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department’s Metro Patrol Division**

## A Bias for Action

YOU'RE THE POLICE CHIEF OF WASHINGTON, D.C. Summer has not even officially started, and seven people are murdered in a nine-hour period in a relatively small geographic area. You've tried a number of strategies to prevent this kind of spasm of violence from happening, but the traditional strategies don't seem to be working. So you want to do something different to stop the killings. That's your top priority.

You knew that the summer season of violence was coming, so you've been working on developing a new strategy. This new strategy is designed to give a sense of security to the people who live in the most violent parts of your city, by setting up checkpoints in which your officers will stop motorists as they enter the neighborhood. The officers will ask the motorists where they are going and why, and will try to determine if the motorists live in the neighborhood or are visiting friends. In some cases officers will turn away those without a purpose for visiting the area.

You know your checkpoint strategy is going to be controversial, and in a way it's maddening, because you think of all the high-rise condominium complexes and gated communities where checkpoints are not questioned at all. In fact, tight security at these high rises is a selling point because of the sense of security they provide. But because people in Washington's Trinidad neighborhood don't have the same kind of resources to protect themselves, you know that a police checkpoint to protect them will be controversial.

Such was the situation facing Metropolitan Police Chief Cathy Lanier in May. But she ordered that the checkpoints be started. It should be noted that the checkpoints are not a permanent fixture; they last sporadically to reduce the level of violence in the area.

As expected, Chief Lanier's checkpoint initiative became a national story. We received phone calls here at PERF from reporters in Washington and across the country asking about it. And before Cathy Lanier could blink an eye, the ACLU was upset, and while some of her community members were supportive and others were upset, some were talking about taking her to court.

And so Cathy Lanier was caught between the challenge of doing something right away that would prevent further violence and being challenged by those who saw the tactics as violating Constitutional law. This problem is typical of the kind of conflict that police chiefs face between balancing crime prevention strategies with individual rights. And this is exactly the kind of tough, complicated issue that the founders of PERF created the organization to address. We call our newsletter *Subject to Debate* because these are the types of questions we want to discuss. So when our editor Craig Fischer suggested doing a "pro-con" piece about Chief Lanier's initiative, I readily agreed.

Garry McCarthy seemed like a good candidate to take the "pro" side. Garry ran the Compstat program for NYPD for years and now is succeeding as chief in Newark, reducing crime rates there to unprecedented levels.

And Joe McNamara seemed a likely choice to take the "con" side and argue against Cathy Lanier's program. Joe, one of the original founders of PERF, is also from NYPD where he was a

captain in Harlem. Joe has a lot of experience in Kansas City and San Jose, where he served as chief, and he is now a senior fellow at Stanford University.

Garry and Joe, both loyal and involved PERF members, found time to accommodate us, and the results can be found in this issue. Both Joe and Garry are eloquent and profound in their remarks, and I'd like to thank them for sharing their views with us and giving us the benefit of their years of experience.

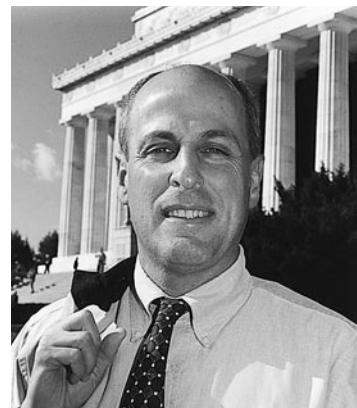
I encourage you to read Garry and Joe's commentaries. They have somewhat different views, but as I read what they wrote, it occurred to me that in all these years I've been working with police chiefs, what has struck me is that unlike other executives in either private or public life, chiefs have a bias for action, to do something, even when it may be controversial. The common denominator that I see in the writings of Joe McNamara and Garry McCarthy is this desire to do something when people are getting hurt.

Garry McCarthy says it very forcefully: "I think the Constitution revolves around protecting an individual's liberties. And those liberties start with the freedom to walk down the street without getting hit in the back of the head by a bullet... For us police chiefs, the mere possibility that we're going to lose something in court does not necessarily mean that we shouldn't do it. Trying to save lives is the primary thing that we do. And you can't always worry about losing in court if you feel that what you're doing is the right thing to do."

And while Joe McNamara is concerned that police might find it tempting to use checkpoints like the one in Trinidad on a routine basis, he agrees that people in violent neighborhoods "want and deserve action," and they hate it when police give them excuses about how they are handcuffed by court rulings and can't stop the violence. "The police must robustly respond to violent crime," he wrote. Joe goes on to say "occasional barricades as temporary responses to specific emergencies are lawful. Routine closing of neighborhoods and expelling people who are innocent is not."

What makes police chiefs different from others in society is this inherent bias for not sitting still. They don't have the luxury to wait and wait and wait until the situation has settled and all the courts have spoken and there is no dissenting voice to be heard. Police chiefs act, and they act with compassion for the people who are being victimized. If it turns out months later that a court determines that what they have done was improper, that action has to be measured against the conditions on the ground that the chief encountered.

While others were discussing and contemplating, Cathy Lanier issued an order and took action. 🏛️



**Chuck Wexler,**  
PERF Executive Director  
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# Guidelines Detail Elements of Police Response To Persons with Mental Illness

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS (CSG) AND PERF have released a set of recommendations regarding police agencies' response to persons with mental illness.

For years, individual police departments have experimented with various models for handling calls for service involving persons with mental illness. The new recommendations describe 10 essential elements of *any* program designed to provide a specialized response to this problem.

"Until now, there has been limited agreement at the national level about what was needed to successfully implement a specialized response," said Milwaukee Police Chief Edward Flynn, a board member of PERF as well as the CSG Justice Center. "This guide will help law enforcement and their partners provide safe and effective responses to people with mental illness."

A new 11-page report, produced by CSG and PERF with support from the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Assistance, notes that approximately 3 to 7 percent of all calls for service to police agencies involve behaviors that appear to result from mental illness. "Although these encounters may constitute a relatively small number of an agency's total calls for service, they are among the most complex and time-consuming calls that officers must address," the report states.

Officers typically take into custody approximately 30 percent of the people with mental illness whom they encounter, the report said. A 1999 study found that large jails in Los Angeles County and New York City held more people with mental illness than any inpatient psychiatric facilities in the United States.

And to the extent that police are able to handle calls involving people with mental illness informally, without taking them into custody, the police response often provides only a short-term solution to the person's long-term needs, the report said.

The result is a frustrating cycle in which police are repeatedly called to the same locations to deal with the same mentally ill people.

To help local police agencies devise a more effective response, CSG and PERF consulted with a range of police experts and mental health practitioners to identify the key elements of effective programs. These include the following:

**Collaborative response:** Police agencies must develop partnerships with other organizations, such as mental health service providers, drug abuse treatment providers, housing officials, hospital administrators, elected officials, and community groups.

**Analysis of the local problem:** Sometimes, a tragic incident prompts a study of the particular bottlenecks or other problems that result in the poor handling of persons with mental illness. In other cases, police executives notice that there is a problem when officers repeatedly come into contact with the same mentally ill people, or officers spend an inordinate amount of time trying to get mentally ill persons admitted to hospital emergency rooms. Police and other officials must analyze their local problem and develop a plan based on local conditions, the report indicates.

**Specialized training:** Some police agencies provide comprehensive training to all officers about how to respond to incidents in which a person's mental illness appears to be a factor. Other agencies provide basic training to all officers, and more comprehensive training to a smaller group that specializes in this kind of response.

At a minimum, specialized training should give officers an understanding of mental illnesses and their impact on individuals, families, and communities; signs and symptoms of mental illness; stabilization and "de-escalation" techniques; disposition options, community resources; and legal issues.

Police dispatchers and others should receive special training tailored to their roles.

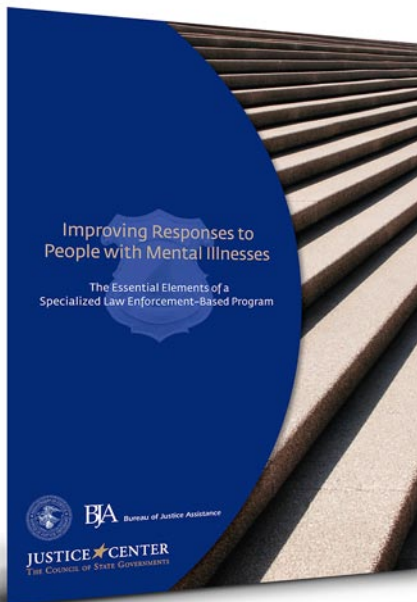
**Dispatcher protocols:** When 911 call-takers receive a request for service that they suspect involves a person with mental illness, they should gather descriptive information about the person's behavior, whether the person appears to pose a danger to himself or others, whether the person is holding or has access to weapons, and whether the person has any history of mental health or drug abuse treatment, violence, or victimization.

Call-takers should have an understanding of the purpose of their department's program for handling persons with mental illness, as well as information about staffing patterns over all shifts so they will know how to find police and/or mental health officials who are designated to respond to a particular location.

"All communications personnel and responding officers should be instructed to avoid using slang and pejorative language when describing individuals thought to have a mental illness," the report adds.

**Stabilization, observation and disposition:** Specialized programs are intended to resolve officers' encounters with people with mental illness safely, and, when appropriate, to link these people to

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The new report, *Improving Responses to People with Mental Illness: The Essential Elements of a Specialized Law Enforcement-Based Program*, is available online at [www.consensusproject.org](http://www.consensusproject.org).



# Washington, D.C. Uses Vehicle Checkpoints To Stop Murderous Rampages in Trinidad Area

THIS MONTH, *SUBJECT TO DEBATE* TAKES A LOOK at a recent initiative undertaken by the Metropolitan Police Department in Washington, D.C. to address a serious problem with homicides in the city's Trinidad neighborhood. After seven people were killed and three more were wounded near the Trinidad area during a nine-hour period in May, Police Chief Cathy L. Lanier launched a program called the Neighborhood Safety Zone (NSZ) initiative, which had been under development for some time. The cornerstone of NSZ is checkpoints in which motorists entering the NSZ are stopped and questioned about their reasons for entering the area.

The checkpoints were designed to prevent people who did not live in Trinidad from driving into the area, shooting from vehicles, and fleeing. The checkpoints were conducted at random times over a six-day period, from June 7 to June 12. During that time, more than 700 vehicles were allowed to enter the NSZ, and 46 vehicles were turned away, according to MPD statistics. There were no shootings in Trinidad while the checkpoint program was in place.

Later, on July 19, Chief Lanier announced that the NSZ checkpoints had been reinstated following another violent night in Trinidad, in which seven people were shot and one was stabbed. "We had a group of brazen individuals who once again entered the Trinidad neighborhood in a vehicle and repeatedly approached groups of people on the street, robbing and shooting them," Chief Lanier said. The goal of the NSZ program is "to fence them out," she said.

Lanier said she worked with the Washington, D.C. Attorney General's office as well as the U.S. Attorney's office in developing

the NSZ program, and had received assurances that it was Constitutional. Others have expressed doubt about that.

The program has proved controversial in the Trinidad neighborhood. Many local leaders expressed strong support for Chief Lanier and the NSZ program. For example, Kathy Henderson told the *Washington Post* that objections from civil liberties groups were mere "academic discussion."

"Our rights are being violated every time people descend on our community and commit crime," Ms. Henderson said. "We are tired of having to listen to gunfire."

On the other hand, many Trinidad residents who attended a community meeting expressed opposition to the checkpoints, saying they were oppressive and ineffective, because people could avoid the checkpoints and find other ways into the neighborhood.

In an editorial, the *Post* said that Chief Lanier deserved credit for recognizing that the crime problem in Trinidad was "a true public emergency that warrants new thinking and bold action."

Noting that an ACLU official had said that "the sad answer is that there may be nothing that prevents crime in a crowded urban area in the summertime," the *Post* said: "That kind of unfortunate thinking—that certain neighborhoods must accept violence as a fact of life—is a reason that there was more of an outcry over police efforts to stop the killings than over the killings themselves. And therein lies the real outrage."

*Subject to Debate* asked two police leaders—Newark, N.J. Police Director Garry McCarthy and retired San Jose, Calif. Chief Joseph McNamara—for their perspectives on the NSZ initiative:

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## Checkpoints Are an Integral Part of Crime Reduction

BY GARRY F. MCCARTHY

TO ME, CAR STOPS AND CHECKPOINTS ARE AN integral part of any crime reduction strategy. For example, in Newark, N.J., what criminals do is go out and steal a car, and then use that car to do robberies, and unfortunately, occasionally to commit shootings. So as part of the Compstat process of studying where and how crimes are being committed, we're constantly looking at how many shootings from vehicles we're having, how many car stops we're doing, how many checkpoints, where we're doing them, and why we're doing them.

That does not mean that checkpoints are a panacea. Any crime reduction tactic, by itself, is probably ineffective. I've read studies in which people argue that camera technology does not reduce crime. Yes, camera technology in itself is not going to reduce crime. But when you couple it with having somebody monitoring the cameras, and a real-time >> continued on page 5 (left column)

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## Police Barricades Should Not Be a Routine Solution

BY JOSEPH D. MCNAMARA

HALFWAY THROUGH MY 35-YEAR POLICE CAREER, I became a big city police chief. One of the first things I learned was to go to community meetings and listen to people whose lives were made hellish by drugs and violent crime. The second most important thing I learned was that neighborhood folks didn't want to hear that their 'hood actually had lower or comparable rates of crime to other parts of the city. And what they most detested was a police lecture on how cops were "handcuffed" by various court Constitutional rulings.


We cops sympathized with the people. These low-income, mostly black neighborhoods correctly pointed out that they were living with the failure of government to fulfill its fundamental duty of protection of life and property, something that didn't happen in white middle-class settings. On the other hand, the police did have to abide by court, prosecutor, >> continued on page 5 (right column)

response because you have officers deployed in the vicinity of those cameras, what you're creating is a force-multiplier. Checkpoints and car stops fall into that same category. When crimes are being committed via vehicle, we've got to do checkpoints. We've got to intercede at the places and times when crimes are being committed, or on the escape routes that are being used. Checkpoints also help to provide a sense of police "omnipresence," and show that we're out there doing affirmative police work. All of that matters.

Like other tactics, police checkpoints and car stops must be explained to the community. The key to police-community relations is communication, because people don't see the world in a vacuum. You have to make sure you tell the people the reasons why you're doing what you're doing. Otherwise they'll see it through the prism of what somebody else says, which may be that "the police are brutal and they use Gestapo-like tactics." But it has been my experience that a community under siege will want an effective police response. And even people in the community who are not accustomed to supporting the police will be willing to take a risk on a crime-fighting initiative, as long as we communicate why we're doing things.



**Newark Police Director  
Garry F. McCarthy**

As for legal questions, I have a very strong feeling about Constitutionality. I'm using a broad brush here, but I think the Constitution revolves around protecting an individual's liberties. And those liberties start with the freedom to walk down the street without getting hit in the back of the head by a bullet. When we construct our strategies in policing, we address that liberty as our first priority. And if we articulate what we're doing well, spelling out exactly what we're doing and why, I think that most of these programs that are a little bit controversial will be found to be Constitutional. I don't believe that police chiefs are ever justified in launching some initiative that they believe is clearly unconstitutional. But I believe that one of the things that makes this country great is that we can try something and it can be challenged on a very practical level. For us police chiefs, the mere possibility that we're going to lose something in court does not necessarily mean that we shouldn't do it. Trying to save lives is the primary thing that we do. And you can't always worry about losing in court if you feel that what you're doing is the right thing to do. There are usually legal points to be made on both sides of these issues. You have to go ahead with aggressive policies to save lives. 

Garry F. McCarthy is police director of Newark, N.J., and former Deputy Commissioner of Operations at the New York City Police Department.

and correctional department rulings, and the number of officers we could hire and assign was determined by our bosses, elected officials. Many chiefs, including myself, were under strict orders not to pressure politicians by informing the public that somehow the city had to hire more cops.

Just meeting and sympathizing with neighborhood groups helped both cops and the public toward better cooperation. TV and media coverage of the often stormy meetings gave some "activists," who earned a living running dubious programs to attack the "root" causes of crime while they groomed themselves for future political office, got a forum to criticize the police.

Yet people wanted and deserved action. We, the police, responded as best we could, often with misgivings about the legality of what the neighborhoods requested of us. One persistent demand was to keep outsiders from flooding local neighborhoods seeking prostitutes and drugs. It seemed a more than reasonable request to cops.




**Hoover Institution Research Fellow  
Joseph D. McNamara**

I remember during my many years in New York's Harlem, local residents bluntly telling us that they didn't want white "Johns" and drug seekers from the 'burbs cruising their streets. As a result, white motorists slowly driving the streets of segregated neighborhoods late at night were given all sorts of traffic citations and told to leave the neighborhood. Cops were totally unashamed of what we were doing. It was what the neighborhood wanted, and it kept crime down.

Only years later, in a chat with Harvard Law School Professor Randall Kennedy, was I convinced that our "emergency" response to high crime was actually reinforcing the deeply entrenched racial segregation of American society. Cops were actually racially profiling and punishing whites for visiting Harlem, even though they were innocent of crime until proven guilty.

Yes, the police must robustly respond to violent crime, enlisting as much public support as possible, while firmly adhering to rules set by a free elected government. It's not easy talking the talk and walking the walk along the line between professional law enforcement and the ever-tempting calls to cross the line. Occasional barricades as temporary responses to specific emergencies are lawful. Routine closing of neighborhoods and expelling people who are innocent is not.

We shouldn't forget that more than 200 years ago, red-coated British soldiers pushed Americans around so much that it started a revolution, leading to a new concept of individual liberty throughout the world.

It's a tough job for American police leaders to find the right balance, but it's what they get paid for. 

Joseph D. McNamara, retired deputy inspector NYPD, former police chief of Kansas City, Mo., and retired police chief of San Jose, Ca. is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

# A Message from Gil Kerlikowske, President of the Major Cities Chiefs

I WANT TO TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE my fellow PERF members with some information about the Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA). As the current president of the MCCA and a former PERF president, I am convinced of how important it is to recognize the areas where PERF and MCCA can collaborate and strengthen each other.

First, a little history of the MCCA: the organization is over 30 years old and has 56 United States member agencies (the agency is the member, not the chief or sheriff) and seven Canadian members. Generally, the membership consists of agencies that provide primary police service to populations of 500,000 and above. Many of you have worked with Tom Frazier, the MCCA Executive Director (part-time). Tom, as many of you will recall, retired from the San Jose Police Department, was Police Commissioner in Baltimore, headed the COPS Office and was also a PERF president.

MCCA members meet three times a year; once in conjunction with IACP, in an overlapping meeting with the National Executive Institute, and in a winter meeting hosted by a member. MCCA meetings primarily consist of roundtable discussions about issues facing our agencies and our profession. Members undertake most of the work of the MCCA, whether it is a review of court cases affecting law enforcement, legislative issues, or new projects. Many retired personnel, including those from federal law enforcement, continue to provide much-needed advice and assistance to the MCCA.

As all of you know, effective police management depends on the ability to forecast the next big thing and to stay up with or be

ahead of crime issues, technology, and legislation. These are areas where PERF and MCCA are able to support each other and to benefit our respective members by sharing reports and research information. MCCA members, for example, have valued PERF's leadership and its reports on the crime trends seen in many cities. By the same token, PERF members may be interested in two reports that the MCCA has produced recently. These reports have to do with the role of local law enforcement in immigration and our position on homeland security. Both are available on the MCCA website at [www.majorcitieschiefs.org](http://www.majorcitieschiefs.org).

With all of the challenges facing us as law enforcement executives, this seems like an opportune time for both organizations to work together even more closely. Breaking down communication barriers between law enforcement agencies is critical if we are to address effectively the global issues of identity theft and terrorist threats, as well as the emerging crime trends and chronic public safety issues here at home. We can all learn from each other's successes and, quite frankly, from projects and programs that are not particularly successful.

I would welcome any suggestions you may have for strengthening collaboration between the MCCA and PERF. Please see my contact information for any comments you may want to provide.



**Chief Gil Kerlikowske**  
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## NIJ Issues Law Enforcement Guide To Domestic Violence Research

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE HAS ASKED PERF to inform its members of the availability of three important new reports that summarize what research tells us about domestic violence. The documents are tailored to three groups of criminal justice practitioners: police, prosecutors, and judges. The reports have been reviewed by panels of police executives and other practitioners, and are designed to make the implications of the research as helpful as possible to the officials faced with the challenge of responding to domestic violence incidents.

*Practical Implications of Current Domestic Violence Research, Part 1: Law Enforcement*, a 65-page report, is written in a question-and-answer format. The questions include the following:

**How widespread is the problem?** What percent of police calls are for domestic violence? When does it occur? How widespread is stalking? How widespread is fatal domestic violence?

**What domestic violence is actually reported to law enforcement?** When do victims report? Which victims are likely to

report? Does the quality of the law enforcement response influence reporting? Is arrest the best response?

**Who are the perpetrators?** What age are they? Are they likely already known to law enforcement? Are they likely to be drug and/or alcohol abusers? Are they likely to be mentally ill, or to have certain personality types?

**Who are their victims?** Why do some victims behave as they do?

**How many abusers are going to do it again?** Are abusers at risk for committing new non-domestic violence crimes, too?

**Which abusers are likely to do it again?** Is age important? Is prior arrest history important? Is substance abuse important? What factors are *not* associated with reabuse?

**Which abusers are most likely to try to kill their victims?** What about firearms and other weapons?

**Are specialized law enforcement domestic violence units effective in responding to domestic violence?** Do they influence victim behavior? Do they reduce reabuse?



The law enforcement report is available online at [www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/222319.pdf](http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/222319.pdf).

The prosecutors' guide can be found at [www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/222320.pdf](http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/222320.pdf), and the judges' guide at [www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/222321.pdf](http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/222321.pdf).

because it will have a workforce of officers who are more diverse, more in tune with people of different backgrounds and different faiths. And that will help when something comes up like a controversial shooting. You will have developed relationships out in the community, and people outside the police department will speak on your behalf. You'll have people out in the community saying, 'I personally know this officer or that officer, and I know that they take diversity training seriously.' Having advocates like that can go a long way. A minister in a prominent church can reach out to his or her congregation and sort of 'quiet the storm.' It carries more weight if you can have somebody outside the department saying positive things about you."

Bellamy said that since returning to Charlotte from Boston, he has kept in touch with his SMIP classmates via email, and that some have told him they are taking the Friday Friends concept to their departments and have begun to think about whom to approach as their first Friday Friend.

Bellamy said that he met his first "Friday Friend," Charlotte businessman Wes Jones, while working at a golf tournament, and that he became good friends with Jones and got to know his family. The Friday Friends program is not a one-time thing, he explained; "once you get to know one person and have a friendship develop, you move on and develop another relationship," he said.

Friday Friends can help advance the principles of community policing, Bellamy indicated. "I try to get to know the people in my district in a way that is 'business,' but also on a personal level to some extent," he said. "So if something is going on in my division, I can easily pick up the phone and ask them about it—not as 'captain-citizen,' but in terms of 'Hey, this is Bruce, I have a question for you.' By doing that, the person can feel comfortable pointing out some deficiencies in the Police Department; and vice-versa, I can say, 'This what we need from you' or 'Let me explain some things.'"



For additional information, contact Capt. Bruce Bellamy, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, 601 E. Trade Street, Charlotte NC 28202. (704)336-8293. Additional information about Friday Friends is available online at [www.fridayfriends.org](http://www.fridayfriends.org).

mental health services that can reduce the chances of future interactions with the criminal justice system, the report states.

This often is easier said than done, the report indicated: A responding officer must assess whether a crime has been committed, observe the person's behavior to determine if mental illness may be a factor, decide whether the person's behavior appears to pose a danger, try to de-escalate the tension of the situation, and obtain information from others at the scene, while keeping in mind legal mandates and their knowledge of available community services.

"In the rare case when an incident involves barricaded individuals or de-escalation fails, responding officers will require additional support," the report states. "Some agencies may equip officers who most frequently encounter people with mental illnesses with less-lethal weapons.... [A planning committee] should develop protocols to make certain there is effective coordination among specialized law enforcement responders, SWAT teams, and mental health professionals. Although agencies often are under pressure to resolve these situations quickly, it may be best, when there is no imminent threat of danger, to allow time for mental health [experts] to communicate with the individual."

**Information sharing:** Police and mental health professionals should exchange information about people with mental illnesses who often come into contact with the justice system, the report states. Mental health providers at receiving facilities can conduct a more effective evaluation if police share their observations about the person's behavior. However, information must be shared in a way that protects individuals' confidentiality rights as well as their Constitutional rights as potential criminal defendants. A planning committee should carefully consider the types of information that are needed and barriers to the exchange of information. The committee then can write protocols to guide the actions of officers.



*Improving Responses to People with Mental Illness: The Essential Elements of a Specialized Law Enforcement-Based Program* is available online at [www.consensusproject.org](http://www.consensusproject.org).



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*Subject to Debate* is generously supported by a grant from:



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