Evaluation and Assessment: Methodological Lessons Learned and Best Practices

Sean E. Goodison, Ph.D.
Deputy Director, Police Executive Research Forum
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Important Questions for an Evaluation

- **Purpose**: does the program work?
  - What are the goals? What should change?
    - UOF incidents, specific type of interaction, culture, etc.
  - **What does success look like?**
    - Short-term and long-term

- **Methodology**: how do we judge?
  - What measure/evidence exists?
    - Importance of planning, timing
  - *Can you rule out alternative explanations?*
Best Practices for Evaluation

- Plan **concurrent with** implementation
  - After is too late, misses best opportunities

- Make process **structured** and **transparent**
  - Predictions of change
  - Measures of change
    - Validity and reliability
    - Perceptions and behaviors
    - Comparison group

- Best methods to determine “what works” are **tailored** and **focused**
  - Experimental and quasi-experimental
  - Work with research partners
  - Confidence in results
Types of Evaluation

**Process**
- Short-term
- Did the implementation go as planned?
  - Curriculum to teachers
  - Teachers to students
- Initial changes post-training
- Provide proper context for subsequent outcomes

**Outcome**
- Long-term
- Changes out in the field, with citizens
Hypothetical Evaluation

- **Process**
  - Random assignment of initial officers to training
  - Observation of training
  - Develop surveys (perception) and/or scenarios (behavior) to measure responses before and after training
    - Compare to non–trained officers

- **Outcome**
  - Compare trained officers
    - Themselves at earlier time
    - Non–trained officers
  - Measures depend on your goals, what success is
    - Reduction of shootings (limited outcome)
    - Change in distribution of UOF incidents
    - Community perceptions
Questions?

Sean E. Goodison, Ph.D.
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sgoodison@policeforum.org
www.PoliceForum.org