

Recommendations for the Task Force on 21st Century Policing

Jill Corson Lake

January 8, 2015

The United States stands at the threshold of what Massachusetts Institute of Technology senior lecturers Peter Senge and C. Otto Scharmer call an emerging future. Positive, lasting change in the relationship between police officers and the public is possible in this country if citizens and government officials engage in dialogue, listen to one another, reflect, and act upon what they have learned. “We must find the common ground so that all parties understand the concerns of others,” said Bill Bratton, Commissioner of the New York City Police Department, after the recent funeral of NYPD police officer Rafael Ramos. “Seeing each other, to understand – that means not look past each other, but to really see what is motivating the other” (Pilkington).

The following recommendations for the Task Force on 21st Century Policing address four of the agenda topics identified for the Task Force’s first listening session on Building Trust and Legitimacy:

- Community engagement and dialogue
- Racial reconciliation
- Police leadership development
- Defining the role of the police in a democratic society

The recommendations below will be useful to implement in the five pilot communities identified by the Collaborative for Justice Policy and Innovation, which is led by Task Force member Tracey L. Meares and fellow Yale Law School professor Tom Tyler. They will also be useful to implement in New York City, Cleveland, Oakland, Ferguson, Missouri, and other cities

throughout the United States. Contact information for all individuals and organizations identified in the recommendations is listed in the “Resources” section below.

Community Engagement and Dialogue

The Task Force must recommend convening restorative justice meetings in communities throughout the country involving citizens, police officers, and facilitators. After a Seattle police officer shot and killed John T. Williams, a First Nations wood carver, in August 2010, there was great community unrest. Civil rights attorney Andrea Brenneke offered to facilitate a “Restorative Circle consistent with a restorative justice practice developed in Brazil by Dominic Barter” (Brenneke). The Restorative Circle included members of Williams’ family, their attorney, and representatives of Seattle’s police department. Such dialogues must be held in every community in which a police officer has killed person of color; a person who identifies as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, or intersex; or a person from another marginalized group, including disabled, poor, and homeless individuals.

Please contact and consult with the following individuals who specialize in facilitating dialogue that leads to lasting change in communities:

Adam Kahane, Chairman of Reos North America, who in 1991 and 1992 facilitated the Mont Fleur Scenario Exercise, in which a diverse group of South Africans worked together to effect the transition to democracy. He is the author *Solving Tough Problems: An Open Way of Talking, Listening, and Creating New Realities*, about which Nelson Mandela said: “This breakthrough book addresses the central challenge of our time: finding a way to work together to solve the problems we have created.”

The Public Conversations Project of Watertown, Massachusetts, which fosters constructive conversation where there is conflict driven by differences in identity, beliefs, and values. The organization works locally, nationally, and globally to provide dialogue facilitation,

training, consultation, and coaching. It helps groups reduce stereotyping and polarization while deepening trust and collaboration and strengthening communities.

Otto Scharmer, senior lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Sloan School of Management. He is founding chair of the Presencing Institute, a research community dedicated to social innovation. He devised the Theory U system of dialogue and organizational growth, and wrote *Theory U: Leading from the Future as it Emerges*.

Peter Senge, senior lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Sloan School of Management. He is the founding chair of the Society for Organizational Learning, a global community of corporations, researchers, and consultants dedicated to the "interdependent development of people and their institutions." He has written several books and is the co-author of *Presence: Human Purpose and the Field of the Future*.

These groups and individuals can help the Task Force to craft dialogues that permit members of the public and police officers to share their voices, to be seen and heard, to engage in **racial reconciliation**, and to work together to improve policing in the United States.

Police Leadership Development

Task Force member Sue Rahr, Executive Director of the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission, has shared information about the Washington state police academy's new program, which trains police officers to be community guardians. The curriculum emphasizes expressing empathy, following constitutional requirements, treating citizens with respect and dignity, and using communication and behavioral psychology as tools to gain control and compliance (Miletich). This program provides a laudable **definition of the role of policing in a democratic society**. It may be replicated by other police academies, and it must include instruction on how to examine and challenge one's assumptions and biases (Kies), how to recognize one's own frame of reference, how to engage in the practice of methodological

belief (Elbow), and how to examine one's own thinking through the process of metacognition (Presseisen).

Trainees and veteran police officers must engage in methodological belief exercises to temporarily stand in another person's shoes and to understand the world through that person's point of view and frames of reference. This is a crucial exercise, says writer Tim Wise. "The inability of white people to hear black reality—to not even know that there is one and that it differs from our own—makes it nearly impossible to move forward" (Wise).

Further, anger management training is a critical requirement. "Expressions of anger in an environment filled with guns has, all else being equal, more dangerous and more deadly a potential than in a world in which the standard expressions can only go so far as fists and sticks" (Flanagan).

Training must also address the strange misconception by some whites that that blacks experience less physical pain than others (Trawalter). Jason Silverstein, a Ph.D. student in Anthropology at Harvard, reviewed a 2012 study by Sophie Trawalter and Kelly M. Hoffman of the University of Virginia's Department of Psychology and Adam Waytz of the Kellogg School of Management research at Northwestern University, which found that white nursing students and others believed that blacks experience less physical pain than others.

Police officer training must address the underlying belief that there is a single black experience of the world. Because this belief assumes blacks are already hardened by racism, some people believe blacks are less sensitive to pain. Because they are believed to be less sensitive to pain, black people are forced to endure more pain (Silverstein).

Training must include African-American history, U.S. civil rights history, histories of other marginalized groups in the U.S. Please contact and consult with **Tricia Rose, Ph.D.**, Director, Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America, at Brown University, and **Doug**

Shipman, Chief Executive Officer, National Center for Civil and Human Rights. And, training must include information about the LGBTQI community (LGBTQ Center).

Claudia Card, professor of philosophy, University of Wisconsin at Madison, explains that such training may be very difficult for individuals. "When our identities are at stake, oppression is hard to face. Beneficiaries face guilt issues and are liable to defensiveness" (Card).

Police officers must be offered the opportunity and encouraged to engage in ongoing dialogue-based support for trauma and PTSD to help them deal with job-related traumatic incidents or trauma endured during military service, if they are veterans.

Please contact and consult with the following individuals who specialize in engaging in dialogue with aid workers, police officers, and veterans who deal with trauma and PTSD:

Bob Doppelt, Executive Director of the Resource Innovation Group, a non-profit affiliated with Willamette University, who leads the Leadership for Resilience Workshop at the Garrison Institute, which teaches mindfulness, calming techniques, and coping skills.

The Garrison Institute, which leads Contemplative-Based Resilience Training, a proactive psychosocial intervention that fosters resilience and thriving for individuals who work in stressful and traumatic environments, such as humanitarian relief and development workers.

Michael C. Johns, Director, Veterans Services Department, Foxborough, MA, who leads "Mutual Mondays" dialogue support group for veterans. His thesis for the M.A. in Critical and Creative Thinking at University of Massachusetts Boston describes this work (Johns).

Thank you for considering these recommendations.

Jill Corson Lake works as Director of Global Advising at Parsons The New School for Design in New York. She is a student in the M.A. program in Critical and Creative Thinking offered by the University of Massachusetts Boston. She may be contacted at corsonj@newschool.edu.

Works Cited

- Brenneke, Andrea. "A Restorative Circle in the Wake of a Police Shooting." Tikkun. Tikkun.org. 1 Feb. 2012. Web. 14 Dec. 2014. <<http://www.tikkun.org/nextgen/a-restorative-circle-in-the-wake-of-a-police-shooting>>
- Card, Claudia. "One Feminist View of Ethics." *Twenty Questions: An Introduction to Philosophy*. G. Lee Bowie, Meredith W. Michaels, Robert C. Solomon. 7th ed. Boston: Wadsworth, 2011. 606-608. Print.
- Costa, Arthur L.. "Habits of Mind." *Developing Minds: A Resource Book for Teaching Thinking*. Ed. Arthur L. Costa. 3rd ed. Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2001. 82. Print.
- Elbow, Peter. "The Believing Game and How to Make Conflicting Opinions More Fruitful." *Nurturing the Peacemakers in Our Students: A Guide to Teaching Peace, Empathy, and Understanding*. Ed. Chris Weber. Alexandria, VA: Heinemann, 2006. Web. 8 Jan. 2015. <www.procon.org/sourcefiles/believinggame.pdf>.
- Flanagan, Owen. "Destructive Emotions." *Twenty Questions: An Introduction to Philosophy*. G. Lee Bowie, Meredith W. Michaels, Robert C. Solomon. 7th ed. Boston: Wadsworth, 2011. 391-398. Print.
- Johns, Michael, "Mutual Mondays, PTSD and Dialogue Process with Veterans of Armed Conflict: Becoming a Facilitator, and Healing Along with Participants" (2011). *Critical and Creative Thinking Capstones Collection*. Paper 158. <http://scholarworks.umb.edu/cct_capstone/158>
- Kahane, Adam. *Power and Love: A Theory and Practice of Social Change*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2010. Print.

Kahane, Adam. *Solving Tough Problems: An Open Way of Talking, Listening, and Creating New Realities*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2004. Print.

Kies, Daniel. "Underlying Assumptions." *HyperText Books*. (2013): n. page. Web. 8 Jan. 2015.
<<http://papyr.com/hypertextbooks/comp2/assume.htm>>.

LGBTQ Center, Brown University. *A Guide for Brown University Safe Zone Program Participants 2012-2013*. Providence: Brown U LGBTQ Center, 2012. Web. 8 Jan. 2015.
< <http://brown.edu/campus-life/support/lgbtq/sites/brown.edu.campus-life.support.lgbtq/files/uploads/SafeZoneManual%2012-13.pdf>>

Miletich, Steve. "Police Academy 2.0: Less Military Training, More Empathy." *The Seattle Times*. 14 July 2013. Web. 8 Jan. 2015.

<http://seattletimes.com/html/localnews/2021389398_policeacademyxml.html>

Moraff, Christopher. "Can Different Training Make Police Officers Guardians, Not Warriors?" *Next City*. nextcity.org. 4 Dec. 2014. Web. 12 Dec. 2014.

<<http://nextcity.org/daily/entry/change-police-training-task-force-empathy-policing>>

Pilkington, Ed. "NYPD Chief Defends Mayor de Blasio and Criticises Police Funeral Protest." *The Guardian*. 28 Dec. 2014. Web. 7 Jan. 2015. < <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2014/dec/28/nypd-bratton-defends-de-blasio-criticises-officers-funeral-protest>>

Presseisen, Barbara Z. "Thinking Skills: Meanings and Models Revisited." *Developing Minds: A Resource Book for Teaching Thinking*. Ed. Arthur L. Costa. 3rd ed. Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2001. 51. Print.

Scharmer, Claus Otto. *Theory U Learning from the Future as It Emerges : The Social Technology of Presencing*. San Francisco, Calif.: Berrett-Koehler, 2009. Print.

Senge, Peter, C. Otto Scharmer, Joseph Jaworski, and Betty Sue Flowers. *Presence: Human Purpose and the Field of the Future*. New York: Crown Business, 2004. Print.

Silverstein, Jason. "I Don't Feel Your Pain: A Failure of Empathy Perpetuates Racial Disparities." Slate. [slate.com](http://www.slate.com). 27 June 2013. Web. 10 Dec. 2014.

<http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/science/2013/06/racial_empathy_gap_people_don_t_perceive_pain_in_other_races.html>

Trawalter S, Hoffman KM, Waytz A (2012) Racial Bias in Perceptions of Others' Pain. PLoS ONE 7(11): e48546. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0048546.

<<http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0048546>>

Wise, Tim. "Repetitive Motion Disorder: Black Reality and White Denial in America." Tim Wise. [timwise.org](http://www.timwise.org). 24 Nov. 2014. Web. 5 Dec. 2014.

<<http://www.timwise.org/2014/11/repetitive-motion-disorder-black-reality-and-white-denial-in-america/>>

Resources

Robyn Brentano
Executive Director
The Garrison Institute
www.garrisoninstitute.org
<http://www.garrisoninstitute.org/transforming-trauma/contemplative-based-resilience-training>
(845) 424-4800 ext. 102

Bob Doppelt
Executive Director
The Resource Innovation Group
www.theresourceinnovationgroup.org
[http://www.garrisoninstitute.org/component/civicrm/?task=civicrm/event/info&reset=1&id=536
&Itemid=534](http://www.garrisoninstitute.org/component/civicrm/?task=civicrm/event/info&reset=1&id=536&Itemid=534)
bob@trig-cli.org
(541) 654-4054

Katie Hyten
Program Manager
The Public Conversations Project
www.publicconversations.org
khyten@publicconversations.org
(617) 923-1216 ext. 27

Michael C. Johns
Director
Veterans Services Department
Town of Foxborough, Massachusetts
http://www.foxboroughma.gov/Pages/FoxboroughMA_Veteran/index
mjohns@town.foxborough.ma.us
(508) 543-1204

Adam Kahane
Chairman
Reos North America
www.reospartners.com
kahane@reospartners.com
(617) 401-2650

Tricia Rose, Ph.D.
Director
Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America
Brown University
<http://www.brown.edu/academics/race-ethnicity/about>
csrea@brown.edu
(401) 863-5775

C. Otto Scharmer, Ph.D.
Senior Lecturer
MIT Sloan School of Management
www.ottoscharmer.com
scharmer@mit.edu
(617) 253-0486

Peter Senge, Ph.D.
Senior Lecturer
MIT Sloan School of Management
www.solonline.org
Diane Nakashian, Assistant, djnak@mit.edu
(617) 253-1575

Doug Shipman
Chief Executive Officer
National Center for Civil and Human Rights
www.civilandhumanrights.org
dshipman@civilandhumanrights.org
(678) 999-8990