

POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONS IN LANCASTER, PA

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THE APPROACH

Problem-driven

- problem construction and deconstruction
- problem definition as a way to engage and motivate stakeholders

Iterative and action-driven learning

- addressing complex problem

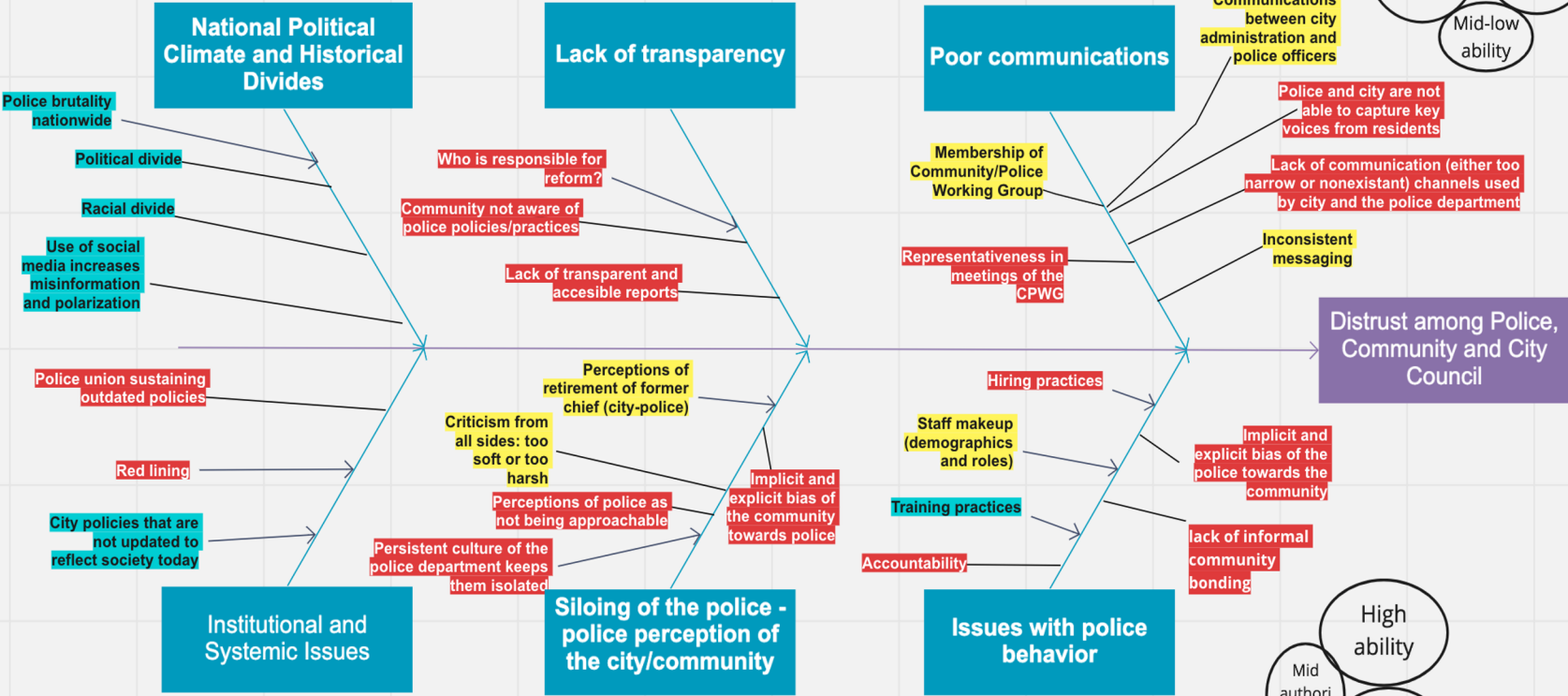
PROBLEM CONSTRUCTION

The problem is that the relationship between the community, the police, and the city government has been strained for some time.

There is a long-standing divide between the police department and the community which was highlighted by the events that occurred in Lancaster in 2020 in addition to the overall climate of national tension.

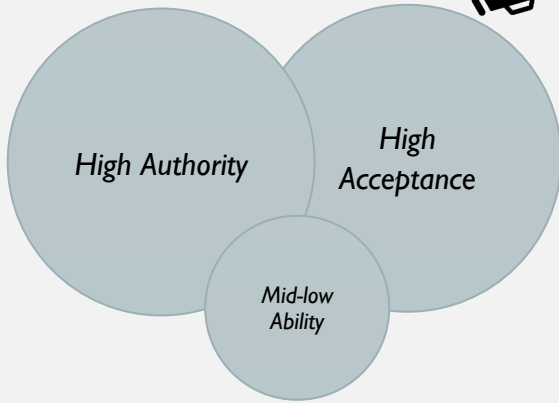
Community members and the police department alike have perceptions of mistrust, lack of communication, and historical bias.

PROBLEM DECONSTRUCTION

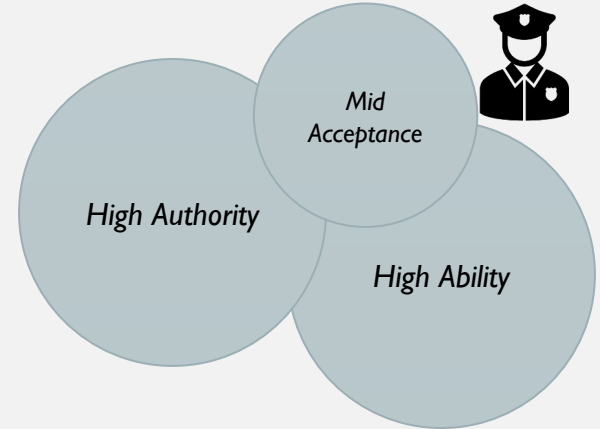


ENTRY POINTS

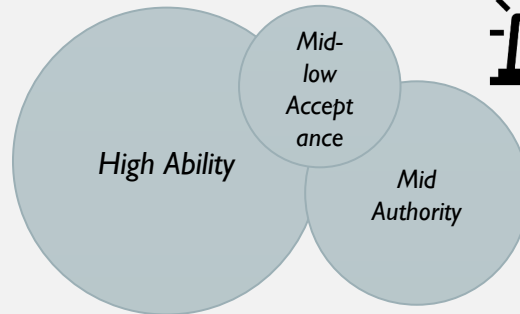
Poor Communications



Isolation of Police



Issues with Police Behavior



IDEAS

Poor Communications

- Initiate dialogues (1-1 conversations and larger meetings)
- Test & iterate on current and new communication channels
- Prioritize and incentivize police attendance at community events and meetings
- Conduct surveys into community perception
- External Best Practice: Start on the right foot, with new officers knocking on doors and introduce themselves in the neighborhood they will be serving



IDEAS

Isolation of Police

- Continue integration of police department, city government, and other departments
- Implement requirements for out of car experiences
- Promote examples of good policing to highlight value of police to community and reduce community bias
- Emphasize values and mission statement to the community



IDEAS

Issues with Police Behavior

- Give officers opportunities to engage informally
- Promote core values and mission statement
- Learn from Lancaster Fire Department's training reform process
- Promote or expand existing Police Cadet Program to bring in more officers from the community
- External Best Practice: Learn from cities with good de-escalation training and use of force policies
- External Best Practice: Learn from cities with robust teams of social workers



LEARNING STRATEGIES

There is a lot left to learn about the problem!

- Establish a team that continues to gather insights from the community
- Create spaces for reflection and synthesis to ensure that there is monitoring and evaluation for the efforts from the team
- Use specific tools to encourage dialogue with different stakeholders
- Measure success by interacting with new people - expanding the network of stakeholders to better understand the problem.
- Continue to focus on building the trust within the police department team

ACTION LEARNING AGENDA

Build New Relationships Across the City

- Engage in trust-building conversations with community
- Reflecting on such conversations as a group
- Working to strengthen new relationships
- Framing these relationships as a partnership between the community and the police

Create a culture of open sharing and constant experimentation

- Deliberately seek out and meet with diverse people who represent different parts of the community
- Focus on outreach to under-represented groups in the community
- Curate and share experience of informal opportunities for police and community bonding
- Celebrating small successes continuously to keep the momentum going

OUR WORKING PROCESS

Reflection & Synthesis in the classroom

- share and celebrate our progress
- share our challenges and get perspectives from the teaching team

Weekly Meetings with Authorizer

- to share our learning about the problem
- to gather their perspectives
- to align on action items

Weekly Team Meetings

- to discuss individual take-aways
- brainstorm on the next steps
- assign responsibilities

Stakeholder Interviews

- conducted to understand the viewpoints of the different actors involved
- conducted by two or three of the student team members

Team Constitution; Shared Accountability & Trust

TEAM LESSONS

- Avoid the temptation of coming to a quick conclusion about the solution.
- Understanding complex problems will require entertaining multiple perspectives
- Be patient with the process and don't jump into action.
- Diverse teams often see the problem better
- Conversations with the stakeholder increases their engagement with the problem

Conclusion

Many projects fail because brilliant teams spend their time solving the wrong problems. PDIA is a process that ensures that teams define the right problem by seeking the voices of the stakeholders experiencing the problem, determine the entry points for which the authorizers have the agency to start acting, learn from the successes or failures of the process, adapt quickly, and iterate. With PDIA it is clear that even with little resources and little time a team can start unveiling the root cause of a problem and empower their authoriser to taken on interventions that they have the most capacity to execute however Covid-19 has also shown us that this can be done remotely without ever setting a foot in the state, country, or continent.

APPENDIX - LEADS

- Connections to Community/Police Working Group
- Connections to model cities (Camden, NJ; Eugene, OR; maybe Baltimore, MD under new mayor)
- Engage Lancaster platform as a potential avenue for communications, feedback, and accountability
- Community members connected to us through interviews
- Model programs (e.g. Basketball Cop Foundation) and programs within the city that have potential for expansion (e.g. Citizens Police Academy)
- Model police officers (Sgt Sumrall and Sgt Morant are seen as exemplary officers by community members, so learn from their knowledge/experience)
- Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
- Our synthesis of stakeholder meetings

APPENDIX - TEAM CONSTITUTION

Goal:

Provide clarity about the problem of community/police relations, an understanding of how it is viewed by those involved (mayor's office, police department, community members), and possible entry points to working towards solutions

Norms:

- i. Disagreement is not disrespect: we can feel comfortable disagreeing and presenting different opinions to learn from each other
- ii. Google drive use for shared note-taking and keeping work accessible
- iii. We will make sure that work is fairly distributed among team members
- iv. cc team members on emails with authorizer
- v. We will provide agenda/calendar invite before meeting with authorizers (at least 24 hours ahead)
- vi. We will share written debrief after meetings,
- vii. Will email summaries and takeaways to authorizers after meetings with them
- viii. All team members will meet with one stakeholder/participant/community member weekly
- ix. Accountability: each member will take ownership of the work, communicate what they are doing/what they need from others to do their work, and when they expect delays
- x. We will communicate with the authorizers through emails, and through text messages/whatsapp for urgent matters
- xi. We will recognize and respect any privacy or information sensitivity concerns the authorizers might have
- xii. This constitution is a live document and will be revisited and updated regularly

APPENDIX - DOCUMENTS READ

[Reimagining Rights - Racial Discrimination](#)

[Engage Lancaster platform; https://engage.cityoflancasterpa.com/en/projects/community-and-police-working-group-1](https://engage.cityoflancasterpa.com/en/projects/community-and-police-working-group-1)

[Lancaster Online Article](#)

[ABC27 Article on Social Work](#)

[State of the City](#)

[New Era of Public Safety: A Guide to Fair, Safe, and Effective Community Policing from the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights](#)

[“Who Replaces Me?” from The Daily](#)

<https://lancasterpolice.com/>

[City Council Regular Meeting Minutes, September 22](#)

[City Council Regular Meeting Minutes, October 13](#)

[City Council Regular Meeting Minutes, Oct 27](#)

[City Council Regular Meeting Minutes, November 24.](#)

[Stated Meeting- City Council- September 22, 2020](#)

[Police and Community Working Group Strategic Plan](#)

[What Disbanding the Police Really Meant in Camden, New Jersey](#)

[This town of 170,000 replaced some cops with medics and mental health workers. It's worked for over 30 years](#)

[Lancaster Online Protest Article](#)

[Lancaster Online Protest Article 2](#)

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/5477026/video/91733930>

[City of Lancaster, PA Public Documents \(ecode360.com\)](#)

<https://lancasteronline.com/>

<https://www.cityoflancasterpa.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Lancaster-BOP2019>

<https://www.justice.gov/crs/file/836401/download>

<https://lancasterpolice.com/community/citizens-police-academy/>

<https://www.justice.gov/crs/file/836486/download>

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/227286571>