POLICE AND INVESTIGATIVE PSYCHOLOGY

POLICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY PSYCHOLOGY

In 2017, a police officer saved a woman from a burning car by punching out the car windows with his baton. In another state, an off-duty officer rescued a half-blind dog from a ravine.

In 2020, in the midst of a global health care crisis, police officers across the nation faced unprecedented demands, including calming fears, dispersing groups who violated orders not to congregate, transporting people to clinics and hospitals, and responding to increases in domestic violence calls.

In 2020, decades of systemic racism were symbolized in an incident, captured in real time, in which an unarmed Black man died after a police officer held a knee to his throat for 8 minutes and 46 seconds.

Law enforcement work requires many and varied skills. Like most other occupations, it attracts a range of personalities. Most who enter this occupation probably begin hoping to make a positive difference, such as by helping people or protecting child victims. Others enter with less noble motives, and if not screened out prior to becoming sworn officers, their behavior on the force should be carefully scrutinized. Training and supervision are essential elements in ensuring policing that truly protects and serves every citizen and resident, every age group, every race, every ethnicity, every gender. Nevertheless, subsequent experiences, including dealing with distrust from the community, public demands for accountability, the failings of fellow officers, as well as personal crises in their nonpublic lives, can produce stress and burnout. Faced with the realities of police work, many perform their duties admirably, but they can be helped in doing this by the police and public safety psychologists who are the topic of this chapter.

At a time when policing has come under intensive public criticism, police and public safety psychologists themselves face challenging tasks. Although they will continue to consult with law enforcement agencies in ways they have over many years—ways we cover in both this and the next chapter—they also cannot ignore nationwide concerns

Chapter Objectives

- Define and describe the common activities and tasks of police and public safety psychologists.

- Discuss police culture and emphasize that it is not necessarily homogeneous.

- Summarize the concepts of job analysis and various types of validity as they relate to the assessment of police applicants.

- Review psychological assessment methods and instruments.

- Examine the prevalence and risk factors for police suicide.

- Describe the roles of psychologists and mental health professionals in assessing and treating officers after critical incidents, such as hostage taking, mass casualties, and shootings.

- Review recent research findings on shooter bias and the use of excessive force by police.

about police performance that have only recently come to the forefront of public attention. For some groups, these concerns have always been there. In this chapter, we begin with general information about policing, move on to discuss tasks of police and public safety psychologists, cover stress in law enforcement, and end with the important topic of officer involved shooting and the use of force.

LAW ENFORCEMENT NUMBERS TODAY

There are approximately 15,000 general-purpose law enforcement agencies in the United States, employing 701,000 full-time sworn officers (Hyland & Davis, 2019). General-purpose law enforcement agencies include municipal, county, and regional police departments; most sheriff's offices; and primary state and highway patrol agencies. General-purpose agencies do not include special-purpose agencies, such as sheriff's offices that are restricted to jail and court duties, and federal law enforcement agencies. Local police agencies make up the majority of the general-purpose police agencies, representing 80% (12,261 police departments) and employ 468,000 of the full-time sworn officers. Sheriff's offices represent 20% (3,012 agencies) of the total general-purposes law enforcement agencies, and employ 173,000 full-time, sworn officers (Brooks, 2019a). There are 49 primary state/highway patrol police agencies employing roughly 60,000 full-time sworn officers. Hawai'i does not have a state/highway patrol agency.

As noted, federal law enforcement agencies are categorized as a separate group distinct from general purpose agencies. At the end of 2016, federal agencies in the United States and U.S. territories employed approximately 132,000 full-time law enforcement officers (Brooks, 2019b), authorized to make arrests and carry firearms. The primary purpose of three quarters of federal law enforcement officers is to provide protection to the public, officials, and institutions. When members of the public think of federal officers, they are likely to think of those with high profiles, such as Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Secret Service, or Border Patrol agents. Most people are not aware that there are about 83 federal law enforcement agencies that are attached to an array of government agencies.

In addition, there is a wide range of private and public safety agencies. Some are private security agencies, and others are supported by public funding, such as campus police departments on public university and college campuses. Virtually every university and college campus, public or private, has a public safety department, whose officers may or may not be armed and may or may not be invested with police powers. Two thirds of public colleges and universities employ armed officers, which is more than double the number of private colleges that employ armed officers (Reaves, 2015). Private security personnel, some armed, also are found in hospitals, schools, corporate offices, and large retail establishments.

In the past two decades, the composition of law enforcement officers across the nation has become more diverse, proportionally more female, more educated, and specialized (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2015). In 2016, approximately 12% of full-time offices in local police departments were women (Hyland & Davis, 2019). During that same year, about 27% of full-time officers in local police departments were Black, Hispanic, or of other races and ethnicities (Hyland & Davis, 2019). Law enforcement agencies also have expanded significantly in size during this time, exceeding even the annual increase in the U.S. population (Reaves, 2012b). At the same time, officer retention has continued to be a problem, with people leaving the field or being forced to resign (Reaves, 2012b). Furthermore, in many communities across the United States, relationships between police and the public have been strained because of shootings, perceived increases in violence, fear, and the national

political climate. All of these issues provide professional challenges for psychologists working with law enforcement.

Police and public safety psychology (PPSP) is the research and application of psychological knowledge and clinical skills to law enforcement and public safety. As we noted in Chapter 1, the degree of interaction between psychology and law enforcement has waxed and waned over the years. We have now reached the point, however, where psychologists play a vital and expanding role in many police and public safety agencies, as both in-house employees and community consultants (Mitchell & Dorian, 2017, 2020; Scrivner, Corey, & Greene, 2014; Trompetter, 2017). As Mitchell and Dorian (2020, p. 279) state, "[o]nce considered rare birds in the law enforcement landscape . . . today's psychologists are integral to the effective functioning of both large and small police departments."

POLICE PSYCHOLOGY: A DEVELOPING PROFESSION

Precisely when a partnership between law enforcement and psychology first began is unclear. To a certain extent, community psychologists offered some type of consulting service to police, usually on an "as needed" basis, throughout the 20th century. Their earliest contributions were in the form of cognitive and aptitude testing of applicants for police positions, with psychologist Louis Terman being the first to use these methods in 1917.

Police psychology probably began in the United States as a viable profession in 1968, however, when Martin Reiser was hired as a full-time in-house psychologist by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). Reiser (1982) himself modestly claimed that he was not altogether certain he was the first "cop doc." However, there is little doubt that Reiser was the most prolific writer on police psychology in the United States throughout the 1970s. He also established the first graduate student internship in police psychology at the LAPD, in conjunction with the California School of Professional Psychology. By 1977, at least six other law enforcement agencies in the United States employed full-time psychologists (Reese, 1986, 1987).

In the years spanning the 20th and 21st centuries, numerous books and journal articles on police psychology were published in the academic literature. They included works on screening candidates for law enforcement positions, coping with stress in policing, police culture, police corruption, police suicide and relationship problems, the legitimate use of force, and women in policing, among many other topics. Notable contributions were made by Blau (1994), Kurke and Scrivner (1995), Niederhoffer and Niederhoffer (1977), Scrivner (1994), and Toch (2002). Later, books by Kitaeff (2011) and Toch (2012) continued to focus on psychological aspects of police work. Throughout these years, and into the present, a rich store of psychological research has been developed, much of which will be visited in this and the following chapter.

Recognition of PPSP as a growing profession has expanded greatly in other ways during the past decade as well. For example, in 2011, the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) established a specialty board to serve as an avenue for psychologists to become certified in this field (Corey, Cuttler, Cox, & Brower, 2011). This was heralded as the "most significant event in the history of the field" (Scrivner et al., 2014, p. 447). In addition, PPSP was recognized as a specialty by the American Psychological Association in 2013. This has encouraged APA-accredited doctoral programs in clinical psychology to offer degree concentrations in police and public safety psychology. Some organizations also have developed graduate, postdoctoral, and continuing education standards and opportunities for persons planning careers in the field (Gallo & Halgin, 2011).

Currently, there are five national police psychology organizations in the United States: (1) the Police Psychological Services Section of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP-PPSS), (2) Division 18 (Police and Public Safety Section) of the American Psychological Association (APA), (3) the Society of Police and Criminal Psychology (SPCP), (4) the American Academy of Police & Public Safety Psychology (AAPPSP), and (5) the American Board of Police & Public Safety Psychology (ABPP; Corey, 2013). In Canada, which has its own parallel history of police psychology, the major organization for police and forensic psychology is the Criminal Justice Psychology Section of the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA). This section is divided into several subsections, including police psychology and psychology in the courts.

As reflected in the name of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), police agencies across the world share goals and cooperate in training. Specifically related to psychology, the IACP-PPSS has established guidelines for police psychological service (e.g., IACP, 2002). The guidelines have been updated often, most recently in 2016 (Brewster et al., 2016; IACP, 2016). They cover many areas of professional practice, including pre-employment psychological evaluations, psychological fitness-for-duty evaluations, officer-involved shootings, and peer emotional support during times of personal or professional crises. The Canadian Psychological Association also passed guidelines in 2013 for Canadian psychologists who conduct preemployment psychological assessments of police candidates.

In sum, there is a vast and ever-expanding literature on police and public safety psychology. To help organize the material in this chapter, we adopt the approach of Aumiller and Corey (2007), who divide police psychology—and by extension police and public safety psychology—into four general and sometimes overlapping domains of practice: (1) assessment, (2) intervention, (3) operational support, and (4) organizational/management consultation. (Table 2.1 gives examples of activities associated with each domain.) Aumiller and Corey were able to identify over 50 activities or services that police psychologists may

Table 2.1 Common Activities and Tasks of Police and Public Safety Psychologists

Assessment	Intervention	Operational Support	Consulting and Research
Job analysis	Individual therapy and counselling	Crisis and hostage negotiations	Research on interrogation, lineups, use of force, police stress, and other law enforcement issues
Psychological evaluations of police applicants	Group, couple, and family therapy and counseling	Police academy education and training	Management and organizational consultation
Fitness-for-duty evaluations	Critical incident early intervention and debriefing	Threat assessments	Supervisory consultation
Psychological evaluations of specialty police units	Critical incident stress management and therapy	Criminal activity assessment and offender profiling	Development of performance standards for agency personnel
Emergency consultations concerning individuals with serious mental disorders	Substance abuse and alcohol treatment	Operations-related consultation and research	Mediation

be expected to provide. These categories are virtually identical to those identified in publications of the PPSP specialty: assessment, clinical intervention, operational support, and organizational consulting (Brewster et al., 2016).

FORENSIC ASSESSMENT IN POLICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY PSYCHOLOGY

"Psychological assessment is considered a core competency for psychologists specializing in police and public safety" (Corey & Borum, 2013, p. 246). The two categories of assessments most commonly done in this context are preemployment psychological screening and fitness-for-duty evaluations. **Preemployment psychological screening** occurs when psychologists evaluate a person's psychological suitability for police work prior to being hired. Cochrane, Tett, and Vandecreek (2003) conducted a survey of police agencies across the nation and reported that nearly 90% used psychological testing for preemployment selection. Psychological screening of candidates for police positions is mandated by law in at least 38 states (Corey & Borum, 2013). It is estimated that 100,000 preemployment assessments of law enforcement applicants are conducted by 4,500 psychologists each year in the United States (Mitchell, 2017). In **fitness-for-duty evaluations (FFDEs)**, psychologists evaluate an employed police officer's ability to continue performing the job, at least for the time being. This often occurs after officers have been through personally stressful experiences, either in their personal life or on the job (e.g., sudden death of a spouse, being taken hostage, or involvement in a shooting incident).

We discuss both candidate screening and FFDEs later. As Corey and Borum (2013) note, these psychological assessments should be conducted by psychologists who have a fundamental and reasonable level of understanding and who are knowledgeable about police work. This brings us to the important topics of police culture and job analysis.

Police Culture

A police psychologist does not have to be a former police officer to be an effective service provider to law enforcement agencies. However, the police psychologist must be highly familiar with and knowledgeable about what policing involves, as well as the **police culture**, defined as the rules, attitudes, beliefs, and practices that are thought to be accepted among law enforcement officers as an occupational group. Woody (2005) notes that one of the clear requirements to be a successful police psychologist is to recognize and understand this culture, and he adds that the psychologist should reasonably accommodate it as long as it does not endanger the public safety, police ethics, or the mental, physical, or behavioral health of the officer.

Nearly all occupations have a "culture," and persons who enter them become socialized, or learn these cultures as they progress on the job. Manning (1995) describes occupational cultures as having "accepted practices, rules, and principles of conduct that are situationally applied, and generalized rationales and beliefs" (p. 472). The occupation of law enforcement is unique in that the working environment is not only potentially very hostile or dangerous, but officers have also been granted the legitimate power to create, display, and maintain their authority over the public (Paoline, 2003). Consequently, police officers work together to develop and maintain a unique occupational culture that values control, authority, solidarity, and isolation (L. B. Johnson, Todd, & Subramanian, 2005). As Scrivner, Corey, and Greene (2014) noted, the profession has often been characterized as highly structured, paramilitary, tight knit, and bureaucratic. The coping mechanisms

prescribed by the police culture are often critical to handling the many stresses that this work environment entails (Paoline, 2003). Police, perhaps more than people in other occupations, depend on one another for the protection and social and emotional support they need to do their jobs. This can be particularly important at times when police actions come under intense public scrutiny. In 2020, two officers were arraigned and charged with simple assault after pushing to the ground a man who walked up to them peacefully during a small demonstration. The 75-year-old man fell backward, hitting his head, and blood began to flow. A line of officers walked by, some looking down at the man; one who tried to help him was told, apparently by a commanding officer, to move on. A few days later, as the two arraigned officers walked out of the courtroom, a crowd of fellow officers and members of the community cheered in support. Commentators noted that this show of solidarity did little to improve police–community relations. Nevertheless, most scholars and practitioners in the field (e.g., Kirschman, 2007; Kitaeff, 2011; Mitchell & Dorian, 2020; Scrivner et al., 2014; Toch, 2012) note that it is crucial for police psychologists to understand this about police work. They depend on one another.

Paoline (2003) perceptively observes, though, that researchers, scholars, and practitioners (including psychologists) often make the mistake of assuming that there is a single, homogenous police culture. He emphasizes that police cultures may vary in terms of the style, values, purpose, and mission of the organization itself, starting from the top down. The culture of a federal agency, for instance, is likely to be different from that of a county sheriff's department. The culture may also vary according to rank. The street cop culture is apt to be quite different from the cultures in administration and supervision. In addition, there may be "subcultures" within the ranks, with some officers adopting a different style of policing from that of others. Some supervisors may play strictly by the book, whereas others may be flexible in interpreting departmental procedures and policies. Finally, the changing face of law enforcement as a result of recruitment of women and people of color has certainly affected the concept of police culture. Paoline notes,

> As police forces have become more heterogeneous, one would expect a single cohesive police culture to give way to a more fragmented occupational group. The modal officer of the past . . . is continually changing as the selection and recruitment of officers has diversified. (p. 208)

In short, claiming to be an expert without understanding and earning the acceptance and respect of a police agency, and without acknowledging the many facets of police culture, will likely lead to limited success for a new or inexperienced psychologist. Interestingly, although law enforcement experience is not necessary, some police and public safety psychologists choose that path after spending some years as police officers (e.g., Fay, 2015). For those without prior police experience—the majority—entry into the field of police psychology usually begins with providing limited consulting services to police agencies, such as screening and selection, or psychotherapy or counseling of police officers and their families. Ride-along programs, in which the psychologist accompanies police officers in patrol cars, are usually helpful in educating psychologists about the realities of the police experience (Hatcher, Mohandie, Turner, & Gelles, 1998). Mitchell and Dorian (2020) also encourage psychologists—most of whom are working as consultants rather than as "in-house" psychologists—to spend time with the department when possible, such as by attending department functions or meetings beyond those that are directly concerned with work as a consultant. As both exposure and experience accumulates, the agency becomes more familiar with the psychologist, and the psychologist may be asked to do many other things, such as perform FFDEs or become a member of the hostage/crisis negotiation team.

Job Analysis

The psychologist conducting assessment procedures should have a good understanding of what the job involves. The tasks required go far beyond those reflected in media and popular culture. Although some tasks are similar regardless of the agencies, others are specific to the nature of the job or the setting. In order to evaluate whether someone is a good candidate for law enforcement, one must first understand what the job entails. In order to assess whether someone is fit to return to duty, one must understand what that duty involves. Job analysis, then, is the process of identifying and analyzing how, where, and why a particular job is done. In the context of this chapter, **job analysis** is a systematic procedure for identifying the skills, abilities, knowledge, and psychological characteristics that are needed to do public safety work successfully. A comprehensive job analysis of a particular law enforcement agency should reveal the essential functions of the personnel,

> the working conditions unique to their respective ranks and assignments, the common and novel stressors inherent in public safety work, the normal and abnormal adaptation to occupational stress and trauma, [and] the research pertinent to resilience and recovery in public safety. (Trompetter, 2011, p. 52)

The first step is to understand what officers working within a particular agency do on a day-to-day basis. In the past, many law enforcement screening procedures were based on intuition and "gut feelings" rather than a comprehensive analysis of job requirements. Gradually, psychologists possessing research skills were asked to conduct or update job analyses. There are various procedures for doing this, but most analyses are done through interviews and questionnaires. In some cases, observations of job behavior may be necessary. Officers and supervisors are asked what is done on a daily basis; what skills and training they believe are necessary; and what temperament, personality, and intellectual capacities best fit particular tasks or responsibilities. The information gathered from a well-done job analysis is summarized as a job description that details what is done, how, and why (McCormick, 1979; L. Siegel & Lane, 1987). Without a job analysis to justify the choice of psychological measures, it is extremely difficult for the psychologist doing the screening to know what to look for—let alone measure it (Aumiller & Corey, 2007).

Job analyses have revealed characteristics that are desirable, and sometimes necessary, for all successful police officers. For example, successful candidates need to have good judgment and common sense, appropriate decision-making skills, interpersonal skills, a solid memory, good observation talents, and communication skills (both oral and written; Spielberger, 1979). (See **Photo 2.1**.)

▶ **Photo 2.1**
A police officer speaks with a woman at the scene of a crime. Even as the officer is comforting the woman, he is obtaining information about the incident she has witnessed.

Integrity and trustworthiness are certainly other important traits. Overall emotional stability and the ability to remain steady under stress are also considered critical traits for successful and competent police and public safety officers (Detrick & Chibnall, 2006, 2013). Although the emphasis that each agency places on the preceding characteristics may differ slightly, they tend to be universal psychological requirements for law enforcement work.

Police psychologists who assess candidates for hire, fitness for duty, promotion, or special assignments should be familiar not only with the general literature on job analysis

but also with specific requirements of the agency. For example, a department may require psychological strengths in addition to the general requirements listed earlier, such as the ability to work in special units with victims of sexual abuse, searching for missing children, or hostage negotiation. In addition, a job analysis must be carefully done and the assessment measures that are selected should comport with the analysis. That is, the approach to selection that is ultimately used should be able to be justified by referral to the analysis. Data may be subjected to legal scrutiny concerning cultural and ethnic biases and reliability and validity of psychological testing. For example, police applicants who feel they have been unfairly evaluated may challenge the entrance exam used by the agency on the grounds that the test is not valid or is discriminatory. If it is demonstrated that the exam comports with a carefully done and nondiscriminatory job analysis, the agency is unlikely to be found at fault.

Preemployment and Post-Offer Psychological Evaluations

Nearly all law enforcement agencies are subject to law, regulations, or accreditation standards that require psychological evaluations of public safety candidates (Aumiller & Corey, 2007; Mitchell, 2017). Ideally, evaluation methods should comport with a solid job analysis, as noted in the previous section. At least 38 states mandate psychological evaluations for police officers and an estimated 72% to 98% of police agencies require psychological evaluations of their police officers (APA, 2017; Reaves, 2010). These psychological evaluations—usually in the form of personality measures that may or may not be accompanied by interviews—help ensure that the candidates are free of mental or emotional impairments that would interfere with effective, responsible, and ethical job performance as a police officer. A candidate who is severely depressed, or one who has strong paranoid tendencies or is prone to aggressive behavior with minimal provocation, is unlikely to perform well as a law enforcement officer. Consequently, psychological evaluations are necessary to identify any job-relevant risk behaviors and the presence of job-critical personal and interpersonal qualities that are likely to endanger public safety.

As mentioned earlier, the IACP Police Psychological Services Section (2016) has developed guidelines for police psychologists who conduct preemployment psychological evaluations. The guidelines spell out recommended standards for examiner qualifications, conflict-of-interest issues, and informed consent recommendations for those police candidates who undergo the examination. The guidelines also offer advice on what should be included in the psychological report and what procedures and psychological measures should be included in the evaluation. Another valuable source of information for this purpose is an evidence-based approach that was introduced in California (Spilberg & Corey, 2017). According to Mitchell and Dorian (2020), this approach "represents a state-of-the-art achievement in this area and has impacted the practice of police psychology in much of the United States" (p. 284).

The measures used to evaluate officers have never been consistent across the United States, however. In the mid-20th century, psychologists often administered intelligence tests, and agencies used scores on these tests to help in their hiring decisions. Over the years, it became clear that intelligence tests per se were not effective measures of how an officer is likely to perform on the street. Although some psychologists continue to use these tests as a standard practice in other contexts (e.g., various court-ordered evaluations, educational assessments, and prisoner intakes), intelligence tests are not commonly used in psychological screening of law enforcement applicants. A majority of police agencies and police academies still require a written or aptitude test, though, which may or may not have been prepared with assistance from consulting psychologists. Interestingly, it has

been documented that neither high intelligence nor a college education necessarily means that an individual will be a good police officer (N. Henderson, 1979; Spielberger, Ward, & Spaulding, 1979). Nevertheless, college-educated officers have been shown to have better communication skills, and they have earned promotions at a higher rate than noncollege-educated officers (Cole & Smith, 2001). Furthermore, officers with a college education also have an effect on changes in the police culture (Paoline, 2003). Most federal and state agencies, and many local ones, now require a minimum of 2 years of education beyond high school for entry into police work, and some require a 4-year college degree.

In most cases, only licensed or certified psychologists or psychiatrists who are trained and experienced in psychological assessment instruments and their interpretation should conduct candidate evaluations. As mentioned previously, it is also important that the examiners be knowledgeable about what law enforcement demands as well as the research literature on public safety. The examining psychologist should also be familiar with ethnic and cultural norms and practices among candidates applying for law enforcement or public safety positions, although such information is not always available, particularly in paper-and-pencil measures. For example, some applicants may interpret questions differently than others, and their responses may be outside the norms, but they should not be disqualified on that basis. Finally, the examiner must be aware of developments in the law relating to the hiring of candidates. One of the most relevant laws is the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Beyond

The **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** is a far-reaching civil rights law that prohibits discrimination and mandates equal treatment of all individuals regardless of physical or mental disabilities. Its sections on employment prohibit public employers and private employers with 15 or more employees from discriminating against any qualified persons with a disability who can perform the essential (as opposed to marginal or incidental) functions of the job they hold or seek. A qualified individual with a disability is an employee or job applicant who meets the legitimate skill, experience, education, or other requirements of a job. As such, the law has a significant effect on day-to-day police practices and—for our purposes here—on screening procedures used in law enforcement. The police psychologist who designs employment screening, selection, and promotional procedures for police agencies must be familiar with all the nuances of the act as well as any case law that has emerged from its interpretation.

At the turn of the 21st century, several U.S. Supreme Court decisions limited the scope of the ADA, to the point that critics estimated that it went from protecting 43 million Americans when it was first passed to protecting 13.5 million (Rozalski, Katsiyannis, Ryan, Collins, & Stewart, 2010). In 2008, Congress amended the act to attempt to restore more protection, in the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA). Congress also passed another law, the Genetics Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA), which placed limits on the type of information law enforcement agencies could use in screening applicants (Scrivner et al., 2014). Although both the ADA (and ADAAA) and GINA are pertinent to a wide variety of employment situations—not just law enforcement—it is obviously crucial for police and public safety psychologists to remain up to date with changes to and requirements of these laws.

In balancing individual rights and an organization's right to know of an applicant's physical and mental fitness, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has divided disability inquiries into two stages: (1) pre-offer of employment and (2) post-offer/pre-hire. At the pre-offer stage, a police agency, for example, must not ask applicants any health or fitness questions that elicit information about disabilities. The agency *may* ask general "job performance" questions, such as presenting a scenario and asking candidates how

they would handle it. At the post-offer/pre-hire stage, a police department may make direct inquiries about disabilities and may require applicants to undergo medical and psychological examinations. Such post-offer inquiries are allowed because the employer, by making a conditional offer of employment, can rescind that offer if it can be shown that the person is unable to perform the essential functions of the job, even with reasonable accommodation.

Screening Out and Screening In

Law enforcement agencies often hope police psychologists will help them both avoid candidates who would not perform well and hire those who would be good or even exceptional. This is a challenging task, and thus far there has been more success at screening out than screening in. In fact, screening out procedures are those most commonly used by police psychologists (Varela, Boccaccini, Scogin, Stump, & Caputo, 2004). **Screening-out procedures** try to eliminate those applicants who appear to be poorly suited for work in law enforcement. For example, the candidate may be evaluated as showing signs of poor judgment and common sense or poor stress tolerance. The screening procedure may also reveal that the candidate shows an unwillingness to follow rules, exhibits difficulty working within a chain-of-command work environment, or demonstrates a lack of *basic* ability or mental acuity to perform the job in a safe and responsible manner. **Screening-in procedures**, on the other hand, are intended to identify those attributes that distinguish one job applicant as being potentially a more effective officer than another applicant. Implicit in this approach is the ability to rank-order applicants, allowing agencies to select the top candidates from a pool that passed the initial screening procedures. This approach assumes that there are traits, habits, reactions, and attitudes that distinguish an outstanding officer from a satisfactory one. Scrivner et al. (2014) observe that the development of screening-in measures has progressed in recent years. To date, though, there is little evidence that psychologists have reached the goal of establishing valid measures for ranking applicants in some hierarchical order of suitability, although some tests may be more useful than others.

Before listing instruments commonly used in police screening, and discussing one in particular, it is helpful to review the importance of validity in psychological testing. Validity addresses the question, "Does the test or inventory measure what it is designed to measure?" Although psychologists discuss many types of validity, three are of particular relevance here: concurrent validity, predictive validity, and face or content validity.

Concurrent validity is the degree to which a test or an inventory identifies a person's *current* performance on the dimensions and tasks the test is supposed to measure. Many personality measures are called inventories rather than tests. An *inventory*, which is typically self-administered, is a list of items, often in question form, used in describing or investigating behavior, interests, and attitudes. A *test* is a standardized set of questions or other items designed to evaluate knowledge or skills.

To develop a concurrently valid inventory (or to consider using an established inventory), the psychologist should assess the personality, interests, or attitudinal characteristics of already-employed police and public safety officers to establish predictors of good performance. Typically, the inventory is administered to officers representing varying degrees of success in law enforcement work, with "success" determined by supervisor evaluations, peer ratings, or both. For example, if a high percentage of officers evaluated by supervisors as "successful" respond differently to certain questions on a scale from a group of "unsuccessful" officers, the scale is considered a good evaluator of *current* on-the-job performance. Applicants who subsequently take the inventory should obtain results that are similar to those of the successful officers in order to be assessed as suitable candidates for employment.

Research that examines the current performance of individuals already on the force has a critical limitation, however, because it ignores the important psychological characteristics of those officers who were hired but dropped out because of various problems during the course of their career path. Thus, significant segments of the population are missed. One of the primary reasons for using any screening instrument is to discover the potential dropouts or failures as early as possible in their careers, which could save both time and money for the department and better serve and protect the public.

Predictive validity is the degree to which an inventory or test *predicts* a person's subsequent performance on the dimensions or attributes the inventory (or test) is designed to measure. In other words, an instrument has predictive validity if it is able to identify which candidates will and will not succeed at law enforcement work. As a research procedure, predictive validation is more useful and rigorous than concurrent validation, but it is rarely implemented because it requires a longitudinal design in which officers must be evaluated over an extended period, usually several years. Candidates are tested during a pre-employment stage and then followed over their careers to see how the initial testing results could have predicted eventual problems and successes. If a test or inventory is able to distinguish those who eventually perform well from those who do not, it has high predictive validity and is considered a powerful device for the screening and selection of candidates prior to entry into law enforcement.

A test or inventory has **face (or content) validity** if its questions appear relevant to the tasks needed in law enforcement—in other words, someone looking at the inventory will attest that it seems relevant, regardless of whether it really is. Face validity refers not to what the test actually measures, but to what it superficially *appears* to measure (VandenBos, 2007). In reality, there may be no empirical support for these assumptions. However, face validity is helpful because examinees believe the exam is at least pertinent to the job for which they are applying. In addition, Otto et al. (1998) emphasize the importance of face validity for application in the legal context because any measuring instrument should look pertinent and relevant to the legal questions at hand. Judges, lawyers, and jurors may have more faith in a test or inventory with face validity. Psychologists know, though, that unless other types of validity are also ensured, the fact that a test has high face validity has little overall bearing on whether it measures what it is supposed to.

In summary, of these three forms of validity, predictive validity is the most desirable to achieve but also the most challenging to establish. Face validity is probably the easiest to establish and is also desirable, particularly if we must persuade non-psychologists of the value of an inventory. However, face validity alone is not sufficient to establish a test or inventory's ability to measure what it is designed to.

Commonly Used Inventories in Police Screening

There is a lack of consensus concerning which personality inventory or measure is most useful in the screening and selection process. Research on law enforcement screening (e.g., Cochrane, Tett, & Vandecreek, 2003) indicates that the following six personality measures are the most commonly used:

- The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory–Revised (MMPI-2) and MMPI-3

- The Inwald Personality Inventory (IPI) and IPI2

- The California Psychological Inventory (CPI 260 and CPI 434)

- The Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI)

- The NEO Personality Inventory–Revised (NEO PI-R)

- The Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire–Fifth Edition (16-PF)

In addition to these six, a restructured version of the MMPI—the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-Revised-Restructured Form (MMPI-2-RF)—is increasingly being used.

To say these measures are commonly used is not to say they are necessarily the best measures, however. The jury is still out as to which is most deserving of continued use. Furthermore, many agencies make use of alternative approaches, particularly measures designed specifically for preemployment screening of police candidates (Scrivner et al., 2014; Spilberg & Corey, 2017). One example of these alternative measures is the Matrix-Predictive Uniform Law Enforcement Selection Evaluation (M-PULSE; R. Davis & Rostow, 2008). However, it is critically important for alternative tests to be validated for use in police officer selection procedures. As mentioned earlier, the approach promoted by Spilberg and Corey (2017) seems to hold considerable promise.

In the next section, we focus only on the MMPI-2 because it is—by far—the most commonly used personality assessment instrument in police screening and selection. The other assessment instruments in the above list are used by some police agencies and some police psychologists, but most police agencies and police psychologists prefer the MMPI-2 or MMPI-2-RF.

Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-Revised (MMPI-2)

For over six decades, the most commonly used psychological instrument for police and public safety preselection screening has been the **Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-Revised (MMPI-2)** (Ben-Porath, Corey, & Tarescavage, 2017). Police officer candidates often know it by its length ("that endless test"—it has 557 questions!). The MMPI-2 is a revision of the MMPI, and both were originally designed to measure psychopathology or behavioral disorders. In recent years, however, psychologists have modified the scoring of the MMPI-2 to measure positive personality traits, such as stress tolerance, emotional maturity, self-control, and judgement.

Cochrane et al. (2003) discovered that the MMPI-2 was used in 70% of all surveyed police departments in the United States in preemployment screenings. This is probably a good thing, because a large amount of research has demonstrated that the MMPI-2 is a useful predictor of police officer job performance (Ben-Porath et al., 2017; Caillouet, Boccaccini, Varela, Davis, & Rostow, 2010; Detrick, Chibnall, & Rosso, 2001; Sellbom, Fischler, & Ben-Porath, 2007; Weiss, Vivian, Weiss, Davis, & Rostow, 2013). Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that performance on the MMPI-2 should be only one factor to be considered in the overall screening or evaluation process. Other sources of information— such as background checks, performance on oral board examinations, aptitude tests, and prior law enforcement experience—are all pertinent.

In 2008, the **Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-Revised-Restructured Form (MMPI-2-RF)** was published (Ben-Porath & Tellegen, 2008). Although this inventory used 60% of the items from the MMPI-2, it should not be considered a revision of the MMPI-2 (Butcher, Hass, Greene, & Nelson, 2015). "Rather, it is a new test, made from MMPI-2 items, that has to be researched and validated to establish its own merits and not just accepted as a newer version of the MMPI-2" (Butcher et al., 2015, p. 251).

The MMPI-2-RF has 338 items and 51 scales, compared with 10 clinical and 4 validity scales on the MMPI-2. Preliminary research suggests that it appears to be a somewhat stronger measure than the MMPI-2 for predicting law enforcement officer performance (Sellbom et al., 2007; Tarescavage, Corey, & Ben-Porath, 2015, 2016). As noted by Ben-Porath, Corey, and Tarescavage (2017), the MMPI-2-RF builds on the power of the MMPI-2 with "a comprehensive, modern literature documenting associations between pre-hire scores and a broad range of job-relevant variables" (p. 69). Nevertheless, practicing psychologists prefer the MMPI-2 to the MMPI-2-RF by a 3 to 1 margin (Butcher et al., 2015). The MMPI-2-RF is intended to be used by clinicians to assist in the general assessment of adult mental disorders and treatment planning. It is not restricted only to law enforcement screening.

The MMPI-3 is scheduled to be released in late 2020 or early 2021. The goal of the MMPI-3 is to improve the questions, optimize existing scales, introduce new scales where warranted, and update the test norms. However, rather than updating the MMPI-2, the revision appears to be more an improvement of the MMPI-2-RF (Friedman & Nichols, 2017). "An MMPI-3 based on the MMPI-2-RF is not an authentic successor to the MMPI and MMPI-2 and their 70-year history of research and successful clinical use" (A. Friedman & Nichols, 2017, p. 3). Once again, the MMPI-2 is currently more widely used than the MMPI-2-RF, and will likely continue to be the most popular among psychologists for the foreseeable future (Lally & Williams, 2017; Williams & Lally, 2017).

Fitness-for-Duty Evaluation (FFDE)

Police officers, emergency personnel, crisis team members, and firefighters who witness an especially disturbing event—such as the bodies of young children, terrorist attacks, victims of child sexual abuse or sex trafficking, plane crashes, the devastation following natural disasters, or catastrophes involving fellow officers—may exhibit intense emotional or psychological reactions. In addition, officers may experience personal crises, such as the sudden death of someone close to them or the shooting of a suspect later found not to be armed. In these situations, they may take a leave of absence or be placed on administrative leave. Following such leaves, a FFDE may be required. In other situations, the officer may have displayed behavior that is of concern, such as harassing or abusing a citizen with a firearm, displaying wide variations in mood and irritability while on duty, talk of committing suicide, or being unreliable in completing assigned tasks. In any one of these situations, the FFDE may be needed to determine whether the officer has the mental and psychological stability to continue as an effective officer on the street, at least for the foreseeable future. This requires a much more extensive assessment than the psychological screening evaluation for initial employment positions.

Psychologists are often asked to perform FFDEs for organizations in addition to law enforcement agencies. Large private corporations, federal agencies, universities, hospitals and other health care agencies, and licensure bureaus often ask them to do FFDEs (Bresler, 2010). The basic goal of any FFDE is "to ascertain to what extent an employee is, or is not, able to meet job expectations" (p. 1). However, our focus here is on FFDEs designed to serve law enforcement agencies. In addition, we focus on psychological issues instead of physical impairments; in the latter, the examination obviously requires medical personnel, such as a physician, nurse practitioner, or other qualified professional.

The order or request for the FFDE for law enforcement comes from the department supervisor or head, and the evaluation is usually conducted by a police psychologist or qualified licensed psychologist who is highly familiar with police psychology issues and

research. As noted earlier, it may be ordered or requested when an officer displays behavior that raises serious questions as to whether they are fit to carry out public safety duties. For example, Anthony V. Stone (1995) estimated that the alleged use of excessive force accounted for 19% of FFDE referrals. In addition, some FFDEs are ordered because the officer displays change of behavior on the job that presumably arises from personal or job-induced stress. However, some agencies also *require* these evaluations as standard procedure after a critical incident (such as a fatal shooting), whether or not an officer displays problematic behavior. (See Focus 2.4 later in chapter for more information on fatal shootings.) Therefore, it should not be assumed that a request for an FFDE occurs only when there are signs that an officer is facing problems on the job.

FFDE evaluations require that the examining psychologist carefully consider the balance between the agency's need for the assessment and the officer's understandable desire for confidentiality. Supervisors are given appropriate feedback, but the psychologist also must carefully explain the limits to confidentiality to the officer being evaluated (Mitchell & Dorian, 2020). The evaluations must be done with the informed consent of the officer, but the examiner is under no obligation to explain the results to the officer. The "owner" of the FFDE is essentially the agency requesting the evaluation. On the other hand, the agency is not entitled to any more psychological information regarding an employee than is necessary to document the presence or absence of job-related personality traits, characteristics, disorders, propensities, or conditions that would interfere with the performance of essential job functions (IACP Police Psychological Services Section, 2010). Mayer and Corey (2015) emphasize that "[p]sychological FFDEs are often contentious examinations in which the employee being evaluated has much to lose, public and officer safety is at risk, and the likelihood of an administrative grievance, arbitration or litigation is high, particularly when the officer is deemed to be unfit for duty and the results are contested" (pp. 110–111).

In addition to carrying out the evaluation, the examining psychologist should recommend intervention methods or reasonable accommodations that would help improve the officer's effectiveness. These may involve counseling, retraining, or treatment. However, the psychologist conducting an FFDE should not be the one providing treatment to the officer being evaluated because this would constitute a dual relationship (assessor and treatment provider), which is frowned upon by the Ethical Standards and Code of Conduct.

Scrivner et al. (2014) note that many police departments, including those that have had a pattern of inappropriate police behavior in the past, have developed an **early intervention system (EIS)** "wherein supervisors learn to recognize certain types of behavior and help the employee get assistance before a problem develops to a level that a mandatory evaluation is required" (p. 450).

The FFDE report usually includes the psychological measures used, a conclusion regarding the determination of fitness for duty, and a description of the functional limitations of the officer. In most instances, the FFDE report is provided to the department as a confidential personnel record. Periodic evaluations of the officer may also be necessary. The IACP (2010) recommends that the psychologist conducting the FFDE include performance evaluations, commendations, testimonials, reports of any internal affairs investigation, preemployment psychological screening, formal citizen/public complaints, use-of-force incidents, officer-involved shootings, civil claims, disciplinary actions, incident reports of any triggering events, medical/psychological treatment records, or other supporting or relevant documentation related to the officer's psychological fitness for duty. The IACP further recommends that only personality, psychopathology, cognitive, and specialized tests that have been validated be used in the assessment process.

Special Unit Evaluations

Psychological assessments are also done as standard procedure for members of special teams, such as special weapons and tactics teams (SWATs) and tactical response teams (TRTs); undercover agents; and narcotics, internal affairs, and crisis/hostage negotiation teams, to determine if they are psychologically fit to undergo the pressures and possess the judgment requirements of high-stress positions. These evaluations are usually referred to as psychological evaluations for police special assignments (PEPSA; Trompetter, 2017). Successful members of SWAT teams, for example, tend to be "self-disciplined, conscientious, adherent to rules, comfortable accepting rules, conforming, and helpful" (Super, 1999, p. 422). Special units usually deal with the execution of high-risk search warrants or high-risk arrest warrants, barricaded persons, hostage situations, heavily armed offenders, terrorist acts, and suicidal persons.

It is not unusual for team members to be reevaluated periodically to identify problems before they develop into more serious behavioral patterns that would interfere with effective job performance. However, very little research has focused on the validity of assessment procedures used to aid in special team selection. Some time ago, Super (1999) indicated that "[t]here is a serious need for rigorous research regarding psychological assessment and special unit appointments" (p. 422). Since that time, the National Tactical Officers Association (2015a, 2015b) in conjunction with the IACP proposed standards for tactical police teams, and increasing efforts are taken to assess candidates for these roles as well as evaluate support services offered by the agencies.

Conclusions on Psychological Testing for Police and Public Safety Personnel

Although many different assessment techniques and personality inventories have been used in the screening, selection, and promotion of law enforcement officers, only a few have emerged as reasonably valid predictors of effective on-the-job law enforcement performance. Police officer candidates are usually administered two self-report inventories that measure abnormal and normal behaviors, a practice that is quite common for many law enforcement officer evaluations. In some cases, the revised MMPI-2 and the relatively new MMPI-2-RF can serve as both measures. Although some agencies also employ psychologists, either in-house or as consultants, to conduct interviews to help select candidates, the predominant method of interviewing is the oral board, which is conducted by department supervisory personnel, with or without in-house psychologists present.

There is increasing work on validating the various personality inventories used for both prescreening and later assessment, and some testing instruments have performed better than others in both of these domains (Corey & Borum, 2013). As Scrivner et al. (2014) write, "[i]rrespective of the tests selected for a suitable battery, it is very clear that the research component of this domain has expanded considerably, and today there is a rich literature available on assessing police candidates for psychological suitability" (p. 449). Empirical investigations evaluating relationships between initial selection standards (predictors) and the actual job performance of law enforcement officers must continually be undertaken. The two most promising and validated psychological inventories to date are the MMPI-2 and the MMPI-2-RF, although the MMPI-2 remains the more popular. The MMPI-2 has accumulated extensive research data over the past six decades, and the MMPI-2-RF is showing very promising data pertaining to the selection of law enforcement personnel.

Psychologists using any of these measures also must be aware of any research relating to how they apply to diverse populations, such as women compared with men or various ethnicities.

For example, ethnic diversity sometimes does have an effect on MMPI-2 or other personality inventory scores, a factor that must be taken into account by the evaluating psychologist, though it should not affect final conclusions.

The psychologist working with a police agency for screening and selection purposes should have a strong background in and solid knowledge of psychological testing, including experience with the specific tests used. The selected test or personality inventories should also meet the criteria recommended by the "Standards for Psychological and Educational Testing," which were developed by the Joint Committee for the Revision of the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing of the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education. The intent of the Standards is to encourage the sound and ethical use of tests and to provide criteria for their evaluation. The most recent revision of the Standards was released in July 2014.

Single psychological tests as predictors of effective law enforcement performance take considerable and carefully designed research. This is partly due to the diversity and complexity of behaviors required of law enforcement officers, but it is also due to varying work situations across departments. Police duties range from preventing and detecting crime to investigating accidents, intervening in disputes, handling domestic disturbances, and responding to a wide range of requests from the public. The smaller the department, the more varied are the responsibilities of individual officers. It is not unusual to find a local, small-town law enforcement officer offering safety tips to an elementary school class and, on the same day, dealing with a violent domestic altercation. Because specialization is a luxury very small departments cannot afford, it is difficult to establish objective performance criteria on which to base predictions. Some officers may perform very competently on certain tasks while failing at others. The officer who relates exceptionally well to fun-loving teenagers may perform poorly in crisis situations involving difficult adults.

To tap the heterogeneity of law enforcement activities, screening devices should contain a number of predictors based on a multitude of behaviors, but few psychological measures are able to do this. In addition, because law enforcement work often differs from one jurisdiction to another, a test may be adequate for a given department but may not suffice elsewhere. Rural or small-town law enforcement may require different behaviors and talents from metropolitan or urban law enforcement work.

The broad scope of law enforcement, together with the urgent need for more vigorous and sophisticated methods of study, warn us that we should expect few solid conclusions in the research literature as to what are adequate predictors of success or failure in law enforcement work. As expected, the literature is littered with inconclusive or mixed results. This does not mean that reliable and valid psychological assessment is beyond reach. It may mean, though, that a successful testing program may have to be tailor-made to reflect the needs of a particular agency. In addition, it is certainly acceptable to "screen out" those candidates who exhibit gross indicators of problems, such as mental disorder, highly aggressive or antisocial behaviors, or poor judgment.

PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTION ACTIVITIES

The second major category of tasks performed by police and public safety psychologists, according to Aumiller and Corey (2007) as well as Brewster et al. (2016) includes a variety of services that provide support to individual officers, their colleagues and families, and the police organization itself. Primary examples are stress management, dealing with post-traumatic stress from shooting incidents, and preventing police suicide.

Stress Management

The management of stress became a dominant theme in police psychology from the mid-1970s to the early 1980s and remains an important consideration today. The earliest full-time police psychologists, as well as community consultants, were called on to identify and dissipate stress, which, if left unmanaged or untreated, could result in an array of psychological and physical health problems for the officer and potentially put the public at risk due to faulty judgment and decision making. *Stressors*, *burnout*, *post-traumatic stress disorder* (*PTSD*), and *critical incident trauma* became standard terms in the police psychologist's vocabulary. The focus on stress was significant because it moved police psychologists away from their traditional assessment functions and into a much larger realm of opportunity and services. Consequently, psychologists began to offer not only stress management but also crisis intervention training, hostage negotiation training, domestic violence workshops, and substance abuse and alcohol treatment.

Many researchers, as well as officers and their families, consider law enforcement to be one of the most stressful of all occupations, with correspondingly reported high rates of divorce, alcoholism, suicide, and other emotional and health problems (Finn & Tomz, 1997; Ricciardelli, 2018; Rouse et al., 2015; Santa Maria et al., 2018). Persons in many occupations may argue that they face more physical danger than law enforcement officers. Construction workers, miners, stunt pilots, firefighters, and demolition workers are all exposed to potential death or physical injury. However, perhaps few occupations encounter the wide variety of stressors, ranging from organizational demands (e.g., shift work) to the nature of police work itself (e.g., exposure to violence, suffering, and tragedy at all levels), as consistently as law enforcement. An additional source of stress in the current political climate is the tension between police and the community they serve in communities across the country, where shootings by police have resulted in citizen distrust and, in some cases, federal investigations. We discuss this again later in the chapter when we cover police bias (including shooter bias) and the use of excessive force.

A common strategy employed in the police stress literature is to divide the occupational stressors identified by police officers into four major categories: (1) organizational, (2) task related, (3) external, and (4) personal.

Organizational Stress

Organizational stress refers to the emotional and stressful effects that the policies and practices of the police department have on the individual officer. These stressors may include poor pay, excessive paperwork, insufficient training, inadequate equipment, weekend duty, shift work, inconsistent discipline or rigid enforcement of rules and policies, limited promotional opportunities, poor supervision and administrative support, and poor relationships with supervisors or colleagues. Rural police officers and sheriff's deputies often deal with limited training, old equipment, lack of proper resources, and outdated technology (Page & Jacobs, 2011; Ricciardelli, 2018). Organizational stressors in major departments may also include antagonistic subcultures within the department, such as intense competition between specialized units, precincts, or even shifts. Being investigated by the internal affairs division is another troubling stressor.

One study from the early 2000s reveals that excessive shift work contributes to more errors in judgment and greater increases in stress than perhaps any other factor in the police environment (Vila & Kenney, 2002). Some officers work more than 14 hours a day on a regular basis, and some "moonlight" for extra income. Excessive hours on the job not only interfere with sleep and eating habits but also wreak havoc with family life and responsibilities.

Furthermore, irregular hours often interfere with social get-togethers and family activities, isolating the officer even more from social support systems. Also, the organizational structure of large police departments often promotes office politics, lack of effective consultation, non-participation in decision making, and restrictions on behavior. In fact, organizational stressors have been considered to be the most prevalent and frustrating source of stress for law enforcement personnel (Bakker & Heuven, 2006; Finn & Tomz, 1997).

Task-Related Stress

Task-related stress is generated by the nature of police work itself. These stressors include inactivity and boredom; situations requiring the use of force; responsibility of protecting others; the use of discretion; the fear that accompanies danger to oneself and colleagues; dealing with violent or disrespectful, uncivil individuals; making critical decisions; frequent exposure to death; continual exposure to people in pain or distress; and the constant need to keep one's emotions under close control. In many rural police or sheriff's departments, the officer must deal with the situation alone or without immediate backup.

Law enforcement is frequently confronted with interpersonal violence, confrontational interactions with individuals, and emotionally charged encounters with victims of crimes and accidents (Bakker & Heuven, 2006). Police are expected to keep their emotions under control, a process that has been referred to as "emotional labor" (G. Adams & Buck, 2010; Grandey, 2000). Furthermore, they must regulate their emotional *expressions* to conform to societal norms and expectations. Although this is expected to some degree in many other occupations (e.g., lawyers, physicians, health care workers), this is especially expected of police officers on a day-to-day basis. Police officers are expected to regulate their emotions to display a facial and physical expression that is neutral, solid, and controlled. Moreover, police officers are expected to master the art of constantly switching between a more human response and the control of emotional expression (Bakker & Heuven, 2006) because sometimes a more "human" response is desired, as when an officer must inform people of the death of a loved one. Grandey calls this emotional regulation "surface acting," which is accomplished by suppressing the emotion that is actually felt (e.g., anger or sadness) and faking the appropriate emotion that the situation (or job) demands. Some researchers refer to this response as *emotional dissonance* (G. Adams & Buck, 2010). In essence, "emotional dissonance is the discrepancy between authentic and displayed emotions as part of the job" (Bakker & Heuven, 2006, p. 426). Increasing evidence supports the view that emotional dissonance has detrimental effects on health and well-being (Heuven & Bakker, 2003).

Stressful assignments, such as undercover duty or drug raids, also play a role in the stress equation. Police officers also fear air- or blood-borne diseases, either intentional (e.g., spread by terrorists) or accidental, and exposure to toxic or hazardous materials or natural occurring diseases such as COVID-19 (coronavirus; Calfas, 2020; Dowling, Moynihan, Genet, & Lewis, 2006). (See **Focus Box 2.1** for police stress during COVID-19 crisis in 2020.) In addition, budget cutbacks and fiscal uncertainty due to the economy can result in concerns about job security and opportunity for advancement.

Task-related stress also occurs when officers experience role conflict, such as being at once an enforcer of the law, a social worker, a counselor, and a public servant (Finn & Tomz, 1997). For reasons to be discussed in later chapters, there is also increasing police interaction with individuals who are mentally ill, for example, which requires special skills on the part of the officer. **Community-oriented policing (COP)**, an approach whereby police and citizens work more closely together in positive endeavors, has added new pressures, but supporters see it as a better approach than "law-and-order" policing.

FOCUS 2.1 POLICING DURING A PANDEMIC

In the first 6 months of 2020, persons who serve the public were faced with increased challenges as the coronavirus outbreak spread across the globe and was officially declared a pandemic. Health care workers; teachers; restaurant owners and servers; ministers, pastors, and priests; administrators and workers in group homes and domestic violence shelters; firefighters . . . these were but a few of the helping and service professions affected. Police and public safety officers were no exception.

Here are a few anecdotes:

- Police were called to an apartment building by a woman who complained that the children of her upstairs neighbor were too loud. The children ranged in ages from 3 to 10, schools were closed, and families were told to remain home as much as possible. The officer responding to the call tried to speak to the complaining woman from a 2-foot distance, but she continually came close to him and angrily insisted that he do something about the noise.

- Because many communities asked people to avoid gathering in groups, some police were called on to disperse groups who despite warnings gathered for block parties, pickup basketball games, and the like. On more than one occasion, officers were jeered at, sometimes at very close range.

- The number of domestic violence calls increased, doubling in some communities.

- In some areas, officers were prepared to issue fines to people who broke the rules against social gatherings.

- In city after city, as the virus spread, police officers were both physically and emotionally exhausted because of the demands placed upon them. Many did not return to their homes after their shifts, fearful of exposing their families to the virus.

Questions for Discussion

1. Based on information from the text, what future services will police and public safety psychologists likely be asked to provide in relation to this and possibly other health crises?

2. Is the stress brought on by the pandemic different from the job-related stress otherwise experienced by police during the course of their work?

3. In some areas, officers were prepared to issue fines to people who broke the rules. Is this an example of law-and-order policing, community-oriented policing, neither, or both? How is this question relevant to the work of psychologists who consult with police?

(See **Focus Box 2.2.**) It requires that officers "give up" a certain amount of control by "walking the beat," meeting with citizens, and adopting a service orientation more than a crime-fighting orientation. (See **Photo 2.2.**) COP does not ignore crime or public safety, but it encourages police to form partnerships with citizens to prevent crime and improve safety for the public. Although its benefits are apparent, some officers find it difficult to adapt to its accompanying changes in strategies and policies.

Perhaps the most troubling task-related stress in police work is dealing with **critical incidents**. These are emergencies and disasters that are nonroutine and unanticipated, such as an active shooter or a family hostage-taking situation involving young children. These events tend to be very stressful primarily because they threaten the perceived control of the police officers (Paton, 2006) and have the potential to cause many deaths and injuries. Critical incidents can produce a number of psychological, neurological, and physical symptoms in responding officers, including confusion, disorientation, chest pain, sweating, rapid heart rate, and loss of memory. If these symptoms occur during a critical incident, the officers

▶ **Photo 2.2**

Officer greets children at a Night to Unite event in a mall.

must still perform their duty to the extent possible. They cannot be an excuse for unlawful police conduct, such as using excessive force.

Delayed post-incident stress symptoms may occur weeks or months after the incident. These delayed symptoms include restlessness, chronic fatigue, sleep disturbances, nightmares, irritability, depression, problems in concentration, and misuse of alcohol or illegal substances. In addition, officers are often concerned about how they reacted in critical incidents, and they want to know whether their psychological reactions were normal and appropriate (Trompetter, Corey, Schmidt, & Tracy, 2011). For example, confrontations that might involve the use of deadly force are rapidly unfolding, ambiguous, and highly dangerous, and after the incident, the officer is often unsure whether they performed adequately (Trompetter et al., 2011).

Considerable research strongly supports the effectiveness of immediate intervention after traumatic events (Trompetter et al., 2011; A. Young, Fuller, & Riley, 2008). Moreover, it appears that this intervention is especially effective if it occurs at or near the

FOCUS 2.2 COMMUNITY-ORIENTED POLICING AND LAW AND ORDER POLICING: CAN THEY COEXIST?

Community-oriented policing (COP), an approach whereby citizens and police work as partners to improve the community, has received positive reviews from members of the public, politicians, researchers, and many law enforcement officials. As indicated in the text, COP is not always easy to implement, particularly because it seems to require that police give up some of their legitimate authority. At its best, though, COP lets police maintain their authority and fight crime while also gaining more respect from the public they are sworn to serve and protect.

In the early 21st century, two very different issues have put COP to the test in some communities. First, there were apparent increases in the targeting of people of color, not only by harassing street stops but also by outright brutality, sometimes ending in the deaths of unarmed individuals. Second, there was an effort, particularly but not exclusively by federal agents, to identify and detain undocumented immigrants. Both of these tactics were disturbing, not only to the recipients but also to members of the community who did not approve of these approaches.

"Stop-and-frisk" refers to stopping people temporarily, asking questions, and possibly doing a brief pat-down search. It is important to emphasize that police have legal authority to do this if they have reasonable articulable suspicion that crime is afoot (*Terry v. Ohio,* 1968). The pat-down is technically for the officer's protection, in the event the individual has a weapon. However, stop-and-frisk policies become questionable when stops are random or are disproportionately used against certain groups. Numerous individuals—particularly young Black males—have been submitted to such stops. Police brutality, specifically in the form of excessive force, which drew extensive attention in the early months of 2020, is a related but separate problem.

The second issue, cracking down on undocumented immigrants, found federal agents and sometimes local police canvassing areas where groups of people met (e.g., support groups, soup kitchens, bars, churches) and asking for proof of citizenship. Persons who lacked documentation were then detained and many were deported. Some communities declared themselves sanctuary cities, making it clear that persons seeking asylum were welcome into their community, while federal agents seeking to detain them were not. In some communities, police and other law enforcement officials cooperated with the federal

agents, while in others they resisted doing so. In California, a state law limiting cooperation with federal agents seeking to detain immigrants was challenged by the federal government, but the U.S, Supreme Court refused to hear the case, allowing the law to remain (*United States v. California*, 2020).

Questions for Discussion

1. Is it possible to achieve community-oriented policing if a stop-and-frisk policy is widely used? Is it possible to achieve it if police are charged with finding undocumented immigrants?

2. After attention was brought to systemic racism in policing in 2020, many criminal justice reforms were proposed. Some advocates of reform argued that we should not expect police to serve social service functions, such as helping persons with mental disorders during a crisis or offering support to community youth groups. Rather, police budgets could be curtailed and these public funds could be shifted to separate social service programs. Do you agree?

3. Is it possible for community-oriented policing and law and order policing to coexist?

location of the crisis (Everly, Flannery, Eyler, & Mitchell, 2001; A. Young et al., 2008), which is not easily achievable. Some psychologists work as members, advisors, or consultants on critical incident stress management (CISM) teams, also called critical incident stress debriefing (CISD) teams or crisis intervention teams (CITs). The primary focus of these teams is to minimize the harmful effects of job stress as a result of very unusual crisis or emergency situations. As we note later, however, the value of this immediate debriefing and its impact on preventing further symptoms down the line (e.g., symptoms of PTSD) is debated in the literature (Scrivner et al., 2014).

Many departments do not wait for an officer to be confronted with a critical incident. Rather, as part of candidate training, officers are provided with pre-incident education, which helps to psychologically immunize them by teaching them to anticipate and understand how traumatic events may affect them. Furthermore, with experience on the job, police officers usually go through a desensitization process whereby they become accustomed to many taxing events that can be expected to occur within the normal routine of policing. However, some traumatic events may be considered extraordinary and beyond preparation. Critical incidents most likely to cause high levels of stress include the following: the suicide or fatal shooting of a colleague, the accidental killing or wounding of a citizen by the police officer, death or serious injury to a child or multiple children, events that draw high media coverage, and events involving a number of deaths, such as major fires, terrorist bombings, or far-reaching natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, or tornadoes.

External Stress

External stress refers to an officer's ongoing frustration with the courts, the prosecutor's office, the criminal justice process, the correctional system, the media, or public attitudes. Available data suggest that for every 100 felony arrests, 43 are typically dismissed or not prosecuted (Finn & Tomz, 1997). Although this is not necessarily a bad thing, police often find it troubling. Moreover, many law enforcement officers feel court appearances are excessively time consuming, and they are often frustrated over what they perceive as inefficiency and "unjust" court decisions.

Another example of stress from external sources is that arising from police–citizen relationships, particularly when tied to various encounters. Since 1991, when the infamous incident involving the arrest of Rodney King was captured on a video recording, many other police–citizen or police–suspect encounters have been recorded on cell phones, street cameras, and police body cameras and they are often circulated on the internet, particularly

if they involved the use of force. As noted at the beginning of the chapter, this has become all the more problematic in recent years. Later in the chapter, we focus more on police use of force and psychological factors associated with it.

Another area receiving increasing attention in recent years—and mentioned in Focus 2.2—is law enforcement approaches to immigration. Policies and procedures regarding undocumented immigrants, children separated from their parents at borders, those awaiting reviews of their immigration status, and more, have confounded police and public safety officers in many states, and sometimes in communities within a state. Sanctuary cities were established, granting safety to immigrants and discouraging various law enforcement agencies from detaining them. Some states passed laws allowing undocumented immigrants to obtain driver's licenses and prohibiting the sharing of this information with Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Advocates hailed these laws as humane and sensible, enabling vast numbers of people without access to public transportation to travel freely to jobs and medical facilities while awaiting review of their status. Others, who took a more punitive stance toward immigration issues, were not supportive. Police and public safety officials could be found in both camps, and they were often at odds with the community they served.

Personal Stress

Personal stress refers to stressors involving marital relationships, health problems, addictions, peer group pressures, feelings of helplessness and depression, discrimination, sexual harassment, and lack of accomplishment. Some officers worry about their competency to do the job well or worry about doing something against regulations. Many police officers feel that the nature of their work has an adverse effect on their home life and social life. Older officers, because of their long, stressful careers, are especially vulnerable to serious physical and mental health problems (Gershon, Lin, & Li, 2002). In addition, female officers appear to be more prone to depressive symptoms and suicide due to stress factors than male officers (Violanti et al., 2009). This finding does not imply a weakness on the part of the officer; rather, it is more likely a symptom of the traditionally male environment in which the female officer works.

Although criminal justice literature frequently mentions exceedingly high divorce rates and general marital unhappiness among law enforcement officers, documentation is very difficult to obtain. Borum and Philpot (1993), in their study, found that divorce rates among police families were no higher than those found in the general population. Similar results are reported by Aamodt (2008). Yet, there is little doubt that the whole family suffers the stressors inherent in law enforcement work. In one study of 479 spouses of police officers, 77% reported experiencing unusually high amounts of stress from the officers' job (Finn & Tomz, 1997). According to Finn and Tomz (1997), the most common sources of spousal stress include the following:

- Shift work and overtime

- An officer's cynicism, need to feel in control at home, or inability or unwillingness to express feelings

- The fear that the officer will be hurt or killed

- The officer's and other people's excessively high expectations of their children

- Avoidance, teasing, or harassment of children because of their parent's job

- The presence of a gun in the home

In light of the above data, it is not surprising that police departments are increasingly hiring either full-time police psychologists or psychological, counseling, or mental health consultants who are available to consult on cases as well as offer their services to individual officers and their families. Delprino and Bahn (1988) reported that 53% of police agencies in their sample used counseling services for job-related stress. Since that survey, police psychologists have moved from providing counseling services for stress to a broad range of law enforcement-related activities (Dietz, 2000). About one third of these agencies also hired psychologists to provide relevant workshops and seminars. In addition, many support groups for families of police officers are appearing throughout the United States, frequently at the instigation of police spouses who band together to discuss and solve common problems. In some cases, police psychologists provide therapy or group counseling sessions to spouses or other family members of law enforcement officers without the participation of the officers themselves (Trompetter, 2017).

Peer counseling programs are available in a number of departments, but many police officers prefer to work with mental health professionals who are knowledgeable about police work but who are *not* police officers themselves. Officers are often resistant to discussing with other police officers the problems that are generally unacceptable within the police culture, such as sexual dysfunction, fear of getting hurt, or an inability to use force when perceived to be necessary in the line of duty. This varies, though, because other officers distrust clinicians whom they may see as working for the police administration. In any case, it seems that psychologists must be careful *not* to try to act and talk like police officers as a means of gaining acceptance, or they may be labeled as "cop wannabes." Nonetheless, psychologists who consult with police should not hesitate to be on the premises and allow members of the department to get to know them on a more casual basis (Mitchell & Dorian, 2020).

It is probably fair to speculate that most law enforcement officers have experienced one or more highly stressful situations, though they have not necessarily sought professional help in dealing with them. It is the atypical officer, for example, who has *never* been worried about getting hurt, *never* experienced marital or relationship problems, *never* been devastated after seeing a dead child, and *never* had sleep problems. At least one of these must have been experienced. In the following sections, we cover two situations that are less common and thus perhaps far more problematic to the individual officer who experiences them.

Post-Shooting Traumatic Reactions

A **post-shooting traumatic reaction (PSTR)** represents a collection of emotions and psychological response patterns that may occur after a law enforcement officer shoots a person in the line of duty—which in itself is usually considered a critical incident. The traumatic reaction is especially likely when the victim dies. Fortunately, in contrast to what is depicted in so many media portrayals of police work, most law enforcement officers complete their career without ever firing a weapon in the line of duty.

Nonetheless, officer-involved shootings are the subject of both media and psychological research on cognitive science as it applies in forensic settings (Herrera, Sharps, Swinney, & Lam, 2015; Sharps & Hess, 2008; J. Tate, Jenkins, & Rich, 2020). (See **Perspective 2.1** in which Dr. Sharps refers to his work in this area.) Stressful effects on the officers also are studied. L. Miller (1995) estimated that in the United States, two thirds of the officers involved in shootings demonstrate moderate to severe psychological problems after the shooting, and about 70% leave the force within 7 years after the incident. The most common psychological problem after a serious critical incident is PTSD. Prevalence rates of PTSD among police officers after a serious critical incident range from 7% to 19% (Brucia, Cordova, & Ruzek, 2017). According to Brucia, Cordova, and

Ruzek, "[d]uty-related critical incidents most strongly associated with PTSD are killing someone in the line of duty, the death of a fellow officer, and physical assaults" (2017, p. 121).

In 2018, 106 law enforcement officers were killed in the line-of-duty incidents (FBI, 2019c). Of these, 55 as a result of felonious acts, and 51 officers died in accidents. In 2019, 89 law enforcement officers were killed in line-of-duty incidents (FBI, 2020). That year, 48 were killed as a result of felonious acts, and 41 died in accidents. Approximately 50,000 officers were victims of line-of-duty assaults. These numbers are unfortunate and not to be diminished. Nevertheless, they are smaller than the numbers of individuals who are killed by police.

The *Washington Post* has compiled a database of every fatal shooting in the United States by police in the line of duty since January 1, 2015. Since the database project began, police nationwide have shot and killed about 1,000 people each year (Tate et al., 2020). The *Post* tracks more than a dozen details describing each killing, including the race of the deceased, the circumstances of the shooting, whether the person was armed, and whether the person was experiencing a mental health crisis. Interestingly, The *Post* documented more than twice as many fatal shootings by police as recorded by the FBI in 2015, which

FROM MY PERSPECTIVE 2.1

Eyewitness Memory and Forensic Cognitive Science

Matthew J. Sharps, PhD
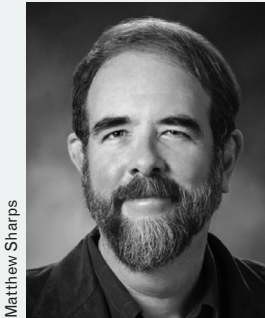
My work as a professor of cognitive psychology focuses on forensic cognitive science, especially eyewitness cognition. I came to this field from other areas of cognitive psychology almost 30 years ago, when I was asked to serve as an expert witness on memory in eyewitness cases. Eventually, I served as a consulting investigative psychologist on nearly 200 such cases. Although only a fraction of those actually went to court, I began to recognize that the principles of eyewitness cognition extend to many important areas in law enforcement and criminal justice.

Modern eyewitness research was essentially begun by Professor Elizabeth Loftus over 40 years ago. In her groundbreaking studies, she showed that the language of a given investigator's question can actually change what eyewitnesses remember or think they remember. This comes as a surprise to many people. We tend to think of our memories as reliable, permanent records, even though we know that bits and pieces are forgotten.

Yet this idea of memory is far from the truth. In 1932, psychologist Frederic Bartlett showed that memories change significantly. Over time, even over very short times, memories become briefer and details are lost, leaving only the gist of what was actually experienced. Most significantly, memories reconfigure in the direction of *personal belief*—often we remember what we *want* to have happened, rather than what actually did. Important elements of Bartlett's research have been replicated in modern times, including in my own laboratory.

Reconfiguration is very important in eyewitness memory. In 2009, my research students and I published the first *taxonomy*, a descriptive listing, of the types of errors witnesses make regarding a realistic crime scene (Sharps, Janigian, Hess, & Hayward, 2009). The most common errors were mistakes about the clothing and physique of the suspect. Not too surprising, but the witnesses made, on average, almost two errors of these types in virtually every case! That's a lot of mistakes, enough to send a lot of people to prison wrongfully, and it's especially important to realize that our "witnesses"

were sitting calmly in a well-lighted room. The memory of real witnesses, especially in relative darkness while afraid or angry, is going to be far worse.

But we were especially surprised by the next most common error type: *errors of the imagination*. The average witness made one and one quarter errors of this type, which involved, literally, *making things up!* For example, our witnesses transformed power tools into guns, at least in their own minds. They saw moustaches on clean-shaven suspects. Sometimes, they saw a male perpetrator where a female suspect was actually present, and they even remembered actions that weren't present in the stimulus items at all, such as physical movements and violent mannerisms.

Our witnesses weren't lying, and they saw our crime scenes under ideal conditions. But as suggested by the works of Bartlett and Loftus, they reconfigured the crime scenes to conform to their own beliefs. This resulted in accounts that were wrong in many important details. The importance of this finding for criminal investigations and court proceedings is hard to overestimate.

My students and I continued to study these effects. One of our studies involved what happens when witnesses tell their story several times, as is the case in every criminal investigation. We found that the first time a witness was questioned, we got more correct details than false ones. But by the third recounting, *we actually got more false than correct details*. This is because every time a witness tells a story, that retelling becomes part of the memory. Any false details accidentally included give rise to more false details, until the eyewitness account may bear little relationship to reality.

This and the rest of our work to date is summarized in my 2017 book *Processing Under Pressure*, which deals with eyewitness memory as well as with other aspects of *forensic cognitive science*. Why do I use that term, rather than just talking about eyewitness memory?

It's important to understand that *there is continuity in the nervous system*—when we find a mental process operating in one functional domain, we're likely to find something like it operating in other realms as well. And this is absolutely the case with eyewitness cognition.

It is important to realize that eyewitnesses to an event can be both police officers and lay witnesses. Then, if a case goes to trial, the cognitive witnessing of jurors also comes into play.

Consider, for example, an officer-involved shooting (OIS) in which the officer is later criminally charged. The officer's actions are based on his or her "eyewitness memory" of what the suspect did, with hands or weapon, usually less than a second ago. Later, the jurors who will judge that officer will base their judgments on their own "eyewitness memories" of what they've heard in the trial.

When we applied these ideas to OISs, we found some rather disturbing facts (Herrera et al., 2015; Sharps & Hess, 2008). First, average people, faced with a life-or-death situation, will choose to shoot an assailant wielding a handgun; but they will also shoot the same person wielding a power screwdriver. Their expectations lead them to see the screwdriver as a gun—the object is reconfigured in the direction of *personal belief*, as suggested by Bartlett.

What if the assailant has a real gun? Well, in situations in which 100% of law enforcement officers would be expected to fire on the assailant, only 11% of our potential jurors thought an officer should *ever* fire. This illustrates the huge gap between reality and personal belief in potential jurors, and it also illustrates the power of integrating the cognitive principles of eyewitness processes with those of the OIS.

In summary, forensic cognitive science is crucially important for our understanding of eyewitness processes; but the principles involved extend much farther, into virtually every aspect of law enforcement and the criminal justice system. We have even applied the principles of eyewitness cognition to the detection of bombs in counterterrorism operations, improving the ability of trainees to find improvised explosive devices significantly (Sharps et al., 2010; Sharps, Herrera, & Lodeesen, 2014).

We are just beginning to understand forensic cognitive science, and the field is growing. There is a significant need now and in the future for the work and ideas of young research psychologists and criminologists, in all relevant specialties, in this critically important area.

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prompted the FBI to begin changing its data collection methods on police shootings. It is important to emphasize that the fatal shootings referred to here are not considered unjustifiable, though some may be. Some also may have been preventable, but that is a separate issue that will be addressed shortly.

Shooting incidents are not the only factor in precipitating PTSD or stressful reactions in police officers. Law enforcement officers can be traumatized "by other incidents that resonated with their personal lives and struggles, as well as other types of life-threatening on-duty incidents" (Rouse et al., 2015, pp. 102–103). For example, witnessing a fatally injured child after a car accident can be highly stressful event for any police officer.

The standard operating procedure in large agencies after a critical incident—such as a shooting or other stressful event—is to immediately contact the on-duty post-shooting peer support team members and the police psychologist. The psychologist will consult with supervisors to determine whether the psychologist should arrange to meet with the involved officers at that time or see the officer at a later time. Police psychologists generally realize that many police officers have a reputation for shunning mental health services under a wide range of circumstances. L. Miller (1995) writes that some officers have a notion of the psychotherapy experience as akin to brainwashing or as a humiliating, infantilizing experience. More commonly, the idea of needing "mental help" implies weakness, cowardice, and lack of ability to do the job.

These attitudes may be changing, however, and L. Miller himself later noted (2015) that the vast majority of officers who were involved in justified deadly force encounters return to the job quite soon afterward. Despite cynicism toward mental health professionals, many agencies require that the involved officer or officers receive immediate attention from both the peer support group and the police psychologist, regardless of the circumstances. Some agencies provide a "companion officer" as soon as possible, preferably a trusted colleague who also has been through an officer-involved shooting (Trompetter et al., 2011). Some researchers (e.g., Kamena, Gentz, Hays, Bohl-Penrod, & Greene, 2011) note that psychologists have a valuable role to play in training peer support teams. If the officers see a mental health professional after the incident, Trompetter, Corey, Schmidt, and Tracy (2011) assert that—if possible—the most effective post-shooting intervention occurs if the officer is offered privileged communication while working with the mental health professional. Nevertheless, in reality, some officers prefer to go to a respected mental health professional than to a peer support group. Both options—the professional psychologist and the peer team—should be available. (See **Focus 2.3** for related topic.)

It is also standard procedure at most agencies for the involved officer to immediately be placed on administrative leave for 3 days or longer. During that leave, it is usually common practice to recommend that the officer see the police psychologist for critical incident stress debriefings (CISDs). Usually, the CISD takes place within 24 to 72 hours after the critical incident and consists of a single group meeting that lasts approximately 2 to 3 hours (L. Miller, 1995). Thereafter, affected personnel may be seen individually or in groups. Interestingly, some research indicates that debriefing of this sort may be harmful, does not prevent PTSD, and should not be mandatory (Choe, 2005; McNally, Bryant, & Ehlers, 2003). Commenting on this research, Scrivner et al. (2014) say it is clear that further study is needed to resolve some of these issues.

Police Suicide

Data on the prevalence or frequency of police suicide are extremely difficult to obtain. Law enforcement agencies are often reluctant to allow researchers access to police officer suicide data (O'Hara, Violanti, Levenson, & Clark, 2013). However, some recent data indicate that 172 police officers died by suicide in 2018 and 228 did so in 2019 (Barr, 2020). The

FOCUS 2.3 FIREFIGHTERS, EMTS, AND MORE

The term *public safety personnel* encompasses numerous individuals other than those engaged in law enforcement. Firefighters, emergency medical technicians (EMTs), paramedics, search and rescue workers, emergency dispatchers, and other first responders all keep the public safe and may come into contact with forensic psychologists. These professionals are routinely exposed to crises, disasters, danger, and life-threatening situations, often unexpectedly. They are often responsible for the recovery of the seriously injured and the dead, and in many cases, they are expected to console the family and acquaintances of victims at the scene of the tragedy.

These professionals met unexpected challenges in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 just as did police officers mentioned in Focus 2.1. First responders (e.g., paramedics and EMTs) were not only overwhelmed by the demands but also faced problems such as the lack of personal protective equipment, masks, and gowns. Physical distancing rules were in effect. As one responder noted, he could not even reach out to console a man whose wife died before she could be transported to a hospital.

As a result of their frequent encounters with trauma, shock, and grief, these public safety professionals—like law enforcement officers—often exhibit trauma-related symptoms of PTSD, depression, and drug and alcohol problems (Kleim & Westphal, 2011). Research reveals, for example, that 8% to 32% of first responders show signs of PTSD, usually at moderate levels (Haugen, Evces, & Weiss, 2012). It is not unrealistic to expect that this may occur as a result of the coronavirus crisis as well.

PTSD and depression, if left unrecognized and untreated, result in significant impairment and inability of public safety personnel to do their jobs effectively. Increasingly, clinical forensic psychologists and police psychologists are used in the screening, selection, training, and treatment of public safety personnel at all levels. At this point, however, while there is growing research literature on the screening and selection of law enforcement applicants, there is very little research on these topics for first responders. Furthermore, effective treatment methods for helping public safety professionals deal with consistent encounters with trauma and tragedy are also heavily weighted toward law enforcement, and very little is directed at other public safety professionals beyond the importance of social and peer support (Haugen et al., 2012; Kirby, Shakespeare-Finch, & Palk, 2011; Kleim & Westphal, 2011). "The literature is startlingly sparse and is not sufficient for evidence-based recommendations for first responders" (Haugen et al., 2012, p. 370).

Questions for Discussion

1. In many communities across the United States, firefighters, EMTs, and other first responders work part time or as community volunteers. Is this part-time or volunteer status likely to affect the likelihood that they will develop task-related adjustment problems?

2. Compare and contrast the work of a firefighter and a law enforcement officer. To what extent are the topics discussed in this chapter relevant to both professions?

3. Consider the work of EMTs and paramedics, such as highlighted earlier during the COVID-19 crisis. Are they as likely to have a "culture" as law enforcement officers? If yes, what might be features of that culture and how would they be transmitted? To what extent should police and public safety psychologists be attuned to this?

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common assumption is that the rate of suicide among police officers is one of the highest of any occupational group in the United States (Violanti, 1996). It is estimated that twice as many officers die by their own hand as are killed in the line of duty (Violanti et al., 2009). This observation appears to be supported by the police killed in line-of-duty data reported by FBI (2020; mentioned earlier) and the data reported by Barr (2020). Moreover, most victims are young patrol officers with no record of misconduct, and most shoot themselves while off duty (L. Miller, 1995). A study of police suicide conducted by Aamodt and

Stalnaker (2001), however, suggests that the suicide rate among police officers is significantly well below the rate of suicide in the sector of the population comparable to police officers in age, gender, ethnic and racial group. Similar results were found in later studies (Aamodt, Stalnaker, & Smith, 2015; O'Hara & Violanti, 2009; O'Hara et al., 2013).

The study by O'Hara, Violanti, Levenson, and Clark (2013) documented that only 126 police suicides occurred in 2012, a decrease from earlier studies by the researchers in 2008 and 2009. In 2012, suicides clustered around the police group of 40 to 44 years of age with 15 to 19 years of experience. O'Hara et al. also discovered that police departments apparently did not notice warning signs of the impending suicide. Ninety-six percent of the officers seemed to slip completely "under the radar" by hiding their symptoms of distress before taking their lives. The authors write, "Law enforcement does have its own code of conduct and subculture and many officers still feel a need to disguise signs of psychological distress for fear of being perceived as 'soft' or weak" (p. 35).

Even though suicide rates among police officers may not be higher than found in a comparable population, suicide is still a serious and devastating problem. Each public safety officer who commits suicide leaves behind family, partners, supervisors, friends, and a depressing void within the department (D. Clark, White, & Violanti, 2012). Police suicide may result from a number of factors, including psychological reactions to critical incidents, relationship difficulties, internal investigations, financial difficulties, frustration and discouragement, and easy access to weapons (D. Clark & White, 2017; Herndon, 2001). Rouse et al. (2015) found that alcohol abuse may play a prominent role in suicide risks for police officers, and suggested rigid cognitive thinking may also be a significant factor. Generally, cognitive rigidity refers to the inability to switch from thinking about things one way to another way. Overall, psychological research has indicated that the strongest reason for police suicide, however, appears to be difficulties in marital or intimate partner relationships, followed by legal problems and internal investigations (Aamodt & Stalnaker, 2001).

In recent years, police psychologists have worked on improving the sophisticated screening procedures and rigorous evaluations at the time of hiring, increased use of stress awareness training, better police training, increased counseling opportunities, and the many services provided by police psychologists and other psychologists working closely with police agencies. A recent study by Conn and Butterfield (2013) reported that a large segment (80%) of the new generation of police officers expressed a desire for access to mental health resources, including counseling and psychotherapy. As noted earlier, findings such as this suggest that the police cultural resistance toward mental health assistance may be changing.

OPERATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

A major shift in the role of police psychology in recent years has been in the area of operational support (Dietz, 2000; IACP, 2016; Mitchell & Dorian, 2020). Though assessment and intervention services continue to be crucial, psychological input has become important in many areas that were previously often overlooked or attended to only minimally. A few, listed by Scrivner et al. (2014), include liability mitigation (minimizing the likelihood of being sued), program evaluation, conflict management within the agency, training to reduce the effects of racial bias, and training to improve police performance in specific skills. Operational support also may include assisting in hostage-taking incidents, crisis negotiations, criminal investigations, and threat assessments. Investigation will be covered in some detail in Chapter 3. Here, we discuss hostage taking and crisis negotiation.

Hostage-Taking Incidents

Police and public safety psychologists often serve as consultants, either training for hostage-taking incidents or assisting during the incident itself. A *hostage situation* is characterized by a person (or persons) holding victims against their will who are used to obtain material gain, deliver a sociopolitical message, or achieve personal advantage. Typically, the hostage taker threatens to take the lives of victims if certain demands are not met within a specified time period. A *barricade situation* is one in which an individual has fortified or barricaded themself in a residence or public building or structure and threatens violence either to the self or to others. Barricade situations may or may not include the taking of hostages. Included in the broad hostage-taking category are abductions and kidnappings, vehicle abductions (including aircraft or other forms of public transportation), school captive takings, and some acts of terrorism. Nearly 80% of all hostage situations are "relationship driven" in that perceived relationship difficulties and resentment seem to be the precipitating factor (Van Hasselt et al., 2005).

Police experts have classified hostage takers into four very broad categories: (1) political activists or terrorists, (2) individuals who have committed a crime, (3) prisoners, and (4) individuals with mental disorders (Fuselier, 1988; Fuselier & Noesner, 1990). Political terrorists, who take hostages primarily to gain publicity for their cause, are considered the most difficult to deal with. Their demands often go beyond the authority of the local police departments and usually require the involvement of federal officials. According to Fuselier, political terrorists take hostages for four basic reasons:

> (a) to show the public that the government cannot protect its own citizens; (b) to virtually guarantee immediate coverage and publicity for their cause; (c) to support their hope that after repeated incidents the government will overreact and place excessive restrictions on its citizens; and (d) to demand the release of members of their group who have been incarcerated. (1988, p. 176)

The hostage taker who committed a crime is usually trapped while committing the crime, such as robbery or domestic violence, and is trying to negotiate some form of escape. Prisoners, on the other hand, usually take hostages (typically correctional personnel) to protest conditions within the correctional facility. Persons with mental disorders take hostages for a variety of reasons but primarily to establish their sense of control over their life situations. Research suggests that more than 50% of all hostage-taking incidents are perpetrated by individuals with mental disorders (Borum & Strentz, 1993; Grubb, 2010). Consequently, the need for well-trained psychologists as part of the crisis negotiation team is becoming increasingly apparent to many police agencies. However, in many departments, consulting psychologists participate in training sessions to prepare officers for possible hostage-taking incidents, whether or not they participate during a hostage-taking crisis.

Hostage negotiation is essentially a tactical team endeavor, which, as just indicated, may or may not involve the assistance of a psychologist (Palarea, Gelles, & Rowe, 2012). The hostage taker or takers hold and threaten others under their control, and the negotiation team may defuse the situation without other assistance. Or, hostage taking may require a tactical response, such as a SWAT team or other specialized unit, when—despite negotiation efforts—a peaceful resolution appears unlikely (Vecchi, Van Hasselt, & Romano, 2005).

Research data reveal that in about 83% of the cases, hostages are released without serious injury (Daniels, Royster, Vecchi, & Pshenishny, 2010; McMains & Mullins, 2013). Butler, Leitenberg, and Fuselier (1993) discovered that police agencies that used a psychologist on the scene or in some other capacity (e.g., phone conversation) to assess suspects reported significantly fewer incidents in which the hostage taker killed or seriously

injured a hostage. More specifically, police agencies that used a psychologist reported more hostage incidents ending by negotiated surrender and fewer incidents resulting in the serious injury or death of a hostage. The data confirmed the observation that psychologists can make valuable contributions in resolving hostage incidents with a lessened chance of injury or death.

Crisis Negotiation

Crisis negotiation is very similar to hostage negotiation, except *crisis negotiation* is a more general term, involving a broad range of situations and strategies. All hostage taking is a crisis, but not all crises are hostage-taking incidents. For example, a jumper situation is a special crisis involving thoughts of suicide by a depressed or highly emotionally upset person, requiring empathy, understanding, and considerable psychological skill. Police psychologists are more directly involved in crisis than in hostage situations.

Law enforcement and public safety personnel are often present in crisis situations that do not involve hostage taking. "Crisis negotiation is closely linked to the behavioral sciences and, more specifically, to psychology" (Palarea et al., 2012, p. 281). These authors note that the knowledge, skills, and training possessed by psychologists are well suited for operational application to crisis negotiations. The negotiation task, for example, may involve talking a suicidal person down from jumping off a bridge or ledge of a high office building, where a tactical response is uncalled for. You do not usually send a SWAT team in to prevent someone from committing suicide, although there are exceptions. One might be a "suicide-by-cop" situation, where an armed person is threatening to kill police but taunting them to kill him before he does that.

In many crisis situations, law enforcement officers can be trained by psychologists to effectively negotiate, and the crisis negotiation team—like the hostage negotiation team—may comprise both law enforcement officers and psychologists. As noted by A. T. Young (2016), "A primary negotiator endeavors to understand and have empathy for the individuals involved, allow for emotional expression, establish a relationship of trust, develop rapport, and then tries to problem solve and find solutions for the situation at hand" (p. 310). The perpetrators may be highly emotional, under the influence of drugs or alcohol, suicidal, violent, stressed, or struggling with psychological disorders (A. Young, 2016).

Gelles and Palarea (2011) and Palarea et al. (2012) point out that police psychologists have several important roles during each of three phases of crisis negotiations. They are (1) pre-incident duties, (2) intra-incident duties, and (3) post-incident duties. During the pre-incident phase, psychologists may provide psychological screening and selection of negotiators; deliver training to negotiators on the psychological aspects that are pertinent to crisis negotiations, such as active listening and persuasion techniques; and suggest strategies for a quick threat and violence risk assessment. (This should be distinguished from threat and violence risk assessments performed by psychologists in other contexts, which are complex and are discussed in later chapters.)

During the intra-incident phases, the psychologist on the premises may monitor the negotiations, offer advice on the emotional state and behavior of the individual in crisis, and assist negotiators in influencing the person's behaviors and intentions. During the post-incident phase, the psychologist may provide stress management strategies, debriefing, and counseling services to the crisis management team. This may be especially needed if the crisis was not resolved successfully but is still relevant even if the worst possible situation was successfully averted.

Palarea et al. (2012) recommend that the psychologist involved in the intra-incident phase of the operation not be the psychologist to offer post-incident debriefing or

counseling to the crisis team. As a member of the crisis team, they may be unable to maintain the necessary objectivity during the post-incident phase.

Individuals aspiring to be on the crisis-negotiation teams as psychologists, however, should realize that multiyear training—as expected of all crisis-negotiation team members—is necessary to become an effective member of the team. This includes not only crisis negotiation training but also the appropriate level of operational experience and training (Gelles & Palarea, 2011). Part of that training may require some "street experience" such as ride-alongs with experienced officers and observations of seasoned officers in hostage or other crisis situations. "The chaos of the field or street situation, the military-like police command structure, and presence of real personal risk can come as quite a shock, no matter how professionally well trained one is" (Hatcher et al., 1998, p. 463). Negotiators should have interview and listening skills; the ability to deal with stressful situations; and an easygoing, nonconfrontational personality style (Terestre, 2005). They should be ready to be called, 24 hours a day.

In addition, psychologists aspiring to be involved in crisis negotiation should remain mindful of how individuals within various cultures and ethnicities differ (Gelles & Palarea, 2011). In recent years, there has been a discernible shift in the cultural diversity of hostage takers and other crisis situations (Giebels & Noelanders, 2004). This trend demands that psychologists increase their efforts to study and identify cultural differences in approaches to social interaction and understand how violent individuals from various cultures are likely to react to efforts to dissuade them from causing harm to their victims or themselves (Giebels & Taylor, 2009). According to Giebels and Taylor, "a more sophisticated understanding of cross-cultural communication will help police formulate culturally sensitive negotiation strategies and enhance their appreciation of why perpetrators react the way they do" (2009, p. 5). In addition, forensic psychologists and other mental health personnel can play a critical role in the training of negotiators and police officers by providing workshops and training sessions in cultural differences in persuasive arguments during crisis negotiations.

In years past, an estimated 30% to 58% of law enforcement agencies with a crisis or hostage negotiation team used a mental health professional in some capacity, of which 88% were psychologists as opposed to psychiatrists, social workers, and other professionals (Butler et al., 1993; Hatcher et al., 1998). More recently, the use of psychologists on crisis/hostage negotiation teams appears to be on the increase (Call, 2008; Mitchell & Dorian, 2020; Scrivner et al., 2014; Van Hasselt et al., 2005).

CONSULTING AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

In describing the roles of the consulting police psychologist, Aumiller and Corey (2007) mention the development of performance appraisal systems, which "involves the design and development of organizational policies, processes and instruments for measurement and feedback of individual job performance" (p. 75). These activities are intended to improve performance and help in the career development of the individual officer. In some cases, they may be used in promotional considerations. Consulting psychologists may also be expected to participate in the resolution of interpersonal conflict among individuals within the organization or between the department and the community.

Consulting psychologists often do some training and education to assist agency personnel in optimizing their leader, management, and supervisory effectiveness (Aumiller & Corey, 2007). In recent years, many departments in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada have asked psychologists for assistance in training officers in such areas as interviewing witnesses and suspects (Brewster et al., 2016; Eastwood, Snook, & Luther, 2018, 2019).

We discuss this more in Chapter 3. In general, consulting and in-house psychologists are frequently shifting their roles to meet the crisis or problems that must be dealt with on an ongoing basis. In this section, we discuss a few of the concerns police administrators might have, including creating opportunities for women and persons of different ethnicities on the force and confronting problems involving excessive force and corruption.

Gender and Racial/Ethnic Issues

Before the 1970s, many police departments did not hire non-whites (Cole & Smith, 2001), and female officers, few in number, were often restricted to specified duties, such as processing female arrestees or interviewing child witnesses. However, the makeup of departments and assigning women to limited duties changed beginning in that decade.

Improvements in racial and ethnic diversity in local police departments nationwide have been noted over the past 20 years. The largest increase in recent years has been Hispanics or Latinos. In 2016, about 10% of full-time sworn officers in the United States were Hispanic men, and 2% were Hispanic women (Hyland & Davis, 2019). During that same year, 9% of full-time officers were Black men and 3% were Black women. As might be expected, the larger police departments were more ethnically diversified. In large police departments, an estimated 16% of male officers were Black and 5% of female officers were Black. Also in large departments, 21% were Hispanic male officers and 6% were Hispanic female officers. In the federal system, across many law enforcement agencies, people of color made up one third of officers with arrest and firearm authority in 2016 (Brooks, 2019b).

On the whole, ethnic and racial groups are better represented in law enforcement than are women. At the turn of the 21st century, women still remained a small minority in law enforcement nationwide, comprising only 11.5% of active duty police officers in the United States (FBI, 2016a), a figure that is about 3 percentage points higher than in 1990. In large departments, women account for 16% of the sworn officers (Hyland & Davis, 2019). In small and rural departments (fewer than 100 police officers), women comprise an even smaller number—8% of the officers (Hyland & Davis, 2019). However, law enforcement opportunities appear to be increasing for women in recent years. For example, the number of female officers in local police departments grew by 36% from 1997 to 2016, increasing from 10.0% to 12.3% (Hyland & Davis, 2019). In major metropolitan areas and in cities where a few women are chiefs, the percentages may be higher. In both the federal law enforcement system and sheriff's departments across the nation, 14% of officers with arrest and firearm authority in 2016 were women (Brooks, 2019a, 2019b).

The major long-term impediment to women gaining a greater proportion of representation in law enforcement agencies across the country is the common perception that policing is a male-oriented profession, requiring physical strength and a display of physical prowess for many of the tasks. This perception seems to hold even though women are as capable at police work as men. Moreover, female police officers are far less likely than male officers to use excessive force, while maintaining effective policing strategies (Bergman, Walker, & Jean, 2016). However, women who might be attracted to law enforcement work may be reluctant to apply when a department has the reputation of being hostile toward women or has a high female officer turnover rate.

Researchers also have found that women are making some progress in acquiring promotions and administrative positions, although they have traditionally encountered resistance from police managers, supervisors, and administrators (S. E. Martin, 1989, 1992). At the turn of the century, less than 4% of supervisory positions were held by female officers, though the percentages were higher in larger departments (National Center for Women

& Policing, 2002). In 2016, approximately 3% of local police chiefs nationwide were female, but in the largest departments 6.5% police chiefs were women (Hyland & Davis, 2019). Also worth noting, in 2013, women headed seven major law enforcement agencies in Washington: the D.C. Metropolitan Police, the U.S. Park Police, the U.S. Marshal's Service, the Secret Service, the FBI Washington field office, Amtrak Police Department, and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). In 2018, Carla Provost became chief of the U.S. Border Patrol, after being acting chief for a short period. She was the first woman to lead the agency in its 93-year history but did not remain in the position long. She became eligible for retirement and stepped down in January 2020. To this day, women hold about 12% of all agent positions.

Interestingly, Worden (1993) found very few differences between male and female officers in their *attitudes* toward policing. She wrote,

> Overall, female as well as male police officers were predictably ambivalent about restrictions on their autonomy and the definition of their role, only mildly positive about their public clientele, complimentary of their colleagues, and unenthusiastic about working conditions and supervisors. (p. 229)

She suggested that much of this gender similarity in policing may be due to occupational socialization, a process that seems to wash out many of the major differences in gender roles. *Occupational socialization* refers to the learning of attitudes, values, and beliefs of a particular occupational group (Van Maanen, 1975). Recall that earlier in the chapter we discussed the concept of an occupational culture as it relates to police. In general, women have the ability to become socialized into the police culture as successfully as men. An increase in their numbers, however, can also have a positive effect on that culture.

Accumulating research, both in the United States and internationally, indicates that the style of law enforcement used by women as a group may be more effective than the policing styles employed by men as a group (Bergman et al., 2016; Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2001). For example, many law enforcement administrators, peer officers, and members of the public are convinced that female officers are more skillful at defusing potentially dangerous, difficult, or violent situations (Balkin, 1988; Seklecki & Paynich, 2007; Weisheit & Mahan, 1988). They are also less likely to become involved in incidents of excessive force (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2001). Worden (1993) found that female police officers seem to be guided more by altruistic and social motives than men, who tended to be more motivated toward the financial rewards of the occupation.

Female officers *as a group* generally possess better communication and social skills than their male colleagues and are better able to facilitate the cooperation and trust required to implement a community policing model (Bergman et al., 2016; Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2001). It is important to stress group rather than individual differences, because many male officers also possess communication and social skills and can adapt well to a community policing model. Women also may respond more effectively than men in situations involving violence against women (such as domestic abuse or sexual assault), although more research is needed in the area. Some research (e.g., Rabe-Hemp & Schuck, 2007) suggests that female officers may be at greater risk of being assaulted in domestic violence situations, especially when the assailant is drug or alcohol impaired. Nevertheless, hiring more women is likely to be an effective way of addressing the problems of excessive force and citizen complaints and also of improving community policing in general. It should also reduce the problem of sex discrimination and sexual harassment by changing the climate of the agency.

Shooter Bias and Excessive Force

As indicated at various points throughout the chapter, law enforcement agents today are under considerable public scrutiny. Both the entertainment and the news media, along with social media, are not hesitant to portray bad cops, particularly those who use excessive force in carrying out their duties. Although force is justifiable in many circumstances, examples of its overuse are not difficult to find. Today, with the help of portable video equipment such as smartphones, police–citizen encounters are often recorded and circulated, letting the world see behavior that has long been familiar in some communities.

In the summer of 2014, Eric Garner, a Black man allegedly selling cigarettes illegally on a street corner, was confronted by several police, placed in an illegal chokehold by a white officer, and subsequently died. A grand jury refused to indict the officer in Garner's death, but he was later removed from the force. "I can't breathe," the words uttered by Garner, became a rallying cry during nationwide protests of police brutality following that and similar incidents. These protests continued well into 2020, the year another unarmed Black man, George Floyd, was held facedown while police investigating the passage of a counterfeit $20 bill restrained him, one officer by kneeling on his neck. Floyd also died, and four officers were fired and charged with second degree murder or manslaughter. A trial date for all four officers was set for March 2021.

The vast majority of police carry out their work responsibly, legally, and humanely. However, there are multiple other illustrations of questionable or illegal actions taken by police, often but not exclusively against Black men. Shortly before the George Floyd incident, police executing a "no-knock warrant" entered the home of Breonna Taylor, a Black woman, and shot her dead. Taylor, a 26-year-old EMT, was not the subject of the warrant. During the same period, Ahmad Aubrey was jogging and confronted by three white men—one a former law enforcement officer. Aubrey was shot to death. The details of each of these incidents, along with many others through the years, cannot be repeated here. In the following sections, however, we address research that makes it clear that many problems continue to require public attention.

Shooter Bias

Police bias against racial/ethnic groups has been a major area of concern for some time. Members of these groups are stopped, questioned, and frisked on streets, and they are disproportionately pulled over for traffic violations on the nation's highways. Various reports indicate that police appear to use greater force with Black than white suspects (Hyland, Langton, & Davis, 2015), and additional data suggest that Black suspects are about five times more likely than white suspects to be killed by the police (Correll et al., 2007). According to some research, Black and Latino suspects are subjected to force earlier during police interaction, while white suspects are subjected later during the interaction (K. Kahn, Steele, McMahon, & Stewart, 2017). At its worst, racial bias by law enforcement leads to excessive or fatal force. In the United States, there have been multiple occasions where law enforcement officers have "shot and killed unarmed Black men after reportedly thinking the suspect was armed" (Sim, Correll, & Sadler, 2013, p. 291).

Bias against groups—commonly thought of as holding racial stereotypes—is culturally ingrained, and law enforcement officers are no more or no less likely than others to hold stereotypical views (K. Kahn & McMahon, 2015, and references within). It is important to recognize that even well-intentioned people have implicit biases, which are outside their sphere of awareness. The biases themselves do not lead to "bad" action; that is, if we recognize that we have biases and take steps to reduce them, we can temper our actions accordingly.

Media reports and research on police shootings continually suggest that the interpretation of a person as dangerous, and the decision to shoot, will vary as a function of the person's race or ethnicity. Psychologists have conducted many laboratory studies in which they examined some of the complexities in the decision to shoot during an encounter with a criminal suspect. These research projects are important because they provide specific information on improving law enforcement training designed to reduce the shootings of unarmed suspects or innocent civilians. We highlight some of this research next. (Also, see **Focus 2.4** for a summary of other research on this topic.)

FOCUS 2.4 SHOOTER BIAS

It is well-documented that police officers rarely discharge their weapons in the line of duty. "[T]he discharging of one's weapon in the line of duty is a rare and profound event that almost always leaves a psychological trace on the officer involved" (L. Miller, 2015, p. 107, citing multiple references). Firing a gun does not always result in a death, but when it does an investigation of this "officer-involved shooting" invariably follows. The majority of these incidents of deadly force are found to be justified, but in some, officers are charged with crime. Both indictments and convictions are rare.

Extensive publicity in recent years has focused on lethal shootings of minorities, particularly Black men and youth. Although guns are almost always used, the weapon also may be a knee, as it was in the death of George Floyd. Victims like Floyd, Michael Brown, Walter Scott, Breonna Taylor, Tamir Rice, Ahmad Aubrey, and others have become symbols of systemic racial bias displayed by some members of the law enforcement community. It is widely recognized that racial bias exists throughout society, sometimes explicitly but more often implicitly. Forensic psychologists are not immune to implicit bias, a point made in Chapter 1. When bias produces discriminatory behavior, this becomes a problem. Is bias at the root of decisions to use force, including shooting members of a racial/ethnic group? Not surprisingly, a number of psychologists and criminologists have conducted research examining the decision to shoot.

Following are highlights of some of this research. You will note that some findings seem to be contradictory.

- Officers of any race or ethnicity are equally likely to be involved in a deadly force incident (McElvain & Kposowa, 2008; Salerno & Sanchez, 2020).

- Personal philosophies of chiefs and other supervisory personnel, not the level of crime in the community, are determinants of police shootings (Fyfe, 1988; H. Lee & Vaughn, 2010)

- Training and experience are effective in minimizing the effect of implicit bias (Correll et al., 2007; Sim et al., 2013).

- In simulated experiments, police demonstrate less bias in shooting than community samples, including college students (Correll et al., 2007).

- Racial bias tends to be demonstrated more in response time (i.e., how long it takes to make a decision) than in the ultimate decision to shoot (W. Cox, Devine, Plant, & Schwartz, 2014; Salerno & Sanchez, 2020).

- Officers use more deadly force against Blacks than whites (Goff & Kahn, 2012; A. Hall, Hall, & Perry, 2016; Sim et al., 2013).

- The quality and amount of dispatcher information received by the responding officer(s) has a major influence on police decisions to shoot (D. Johnson, Cesario, & Pleskac, 2018; P. Taylor, 2019).

- Black boys are seen as older by police and less innocent than white boys (Goff et al., 2014; Hall et al., 2016).

- Black and Latino suspects were subjected to force earlier during police interaction, while white suspects were subjected later during the interaction (K. Kahn et al., 2017).

In general, the literature on shooter bias shows mixed results, with some indicating little overall bias
(Continued)

when other factors are controlled, while other research suggests strong racial stereotyping. What are we to make of these different and sometimes divergent findings? Although research on the extent of disparate treatment must continue, it is clear that effective training of police to recognize their implicit biases and to exercise cognitive control in making decisions is essential (K. Kahn & McMahon, 2015).

Questions for Discussion

1. These are just a few conclusions from research relating to shooter bias in policing.

Find and discuss results of a recent study on this topic. Is it consistent with the research highlighted here?

2. Laurence Miller (2015, p. 104), notes that most actual shooting scenarios involve "petty criminals, mentally disordered subjects, domestic violence escalations, or the posturings of young-and-dumb juveniles." Assuming Miller is correct, how might this affect the officer who did the shooting?

3. In the quote in Question 2, is Miller justifying the shootings?

In a series of research projects, Correll and his colleagues (Correll, Park, Judd, & Wittenbrink, 2002; Correll et al. 2007) examined some of the variables in police decisions to shoot unarmed persons. The primary goal of the studies was to identify the specific conditions that might prompt what has become known as **shooter bias**. Shooter bias generally refers to an implicit racial bias among law enforcement officers to shoot Black juveniles or adults. In their early research, Correll et al. (2002) designed four separate studies that used a simplified videogame, "which roughly simulates the situation of a police officer who is confronted with an ambiguous, but potentially hostile, target, and who must decide whether or not to shoot" (p. 1315). In the video game, images of a young male who is either armed or unarmed, and either African American or white, appears unexpectedly in a variety of contexts. The video game allowed the researchers to present an ambiguous and threatening target similar to what a police officer might face when arriving at a dangerous crime scene.

In three of the studies, Correll et al. (2002) used college undergraduates (who were predominately white) as participants. In a fourth study, the researchers gathered 52 adults from bus stations, malls, and food courts in Denver, Colorado.

In all four studies, results indicated that shooter bias exists. "Both in speed and accuracy, the decision to fire on an armed target was facilitated when that target was African American, whereas the decision not to shoot an unarmed target was facilitated when that target was White" (Correll et al., 2002, p. 1325). Shooter bias was present among white college students (Studies 1–3) and among a community sample that consisted of both whites and African Americans (Study 4). The researchers concluded that ethnicity influenced the shoot/don't shoot decisions primarily because of violent or dangerous traits commonly associated with African Americans within the American culture. These cultural biases appeared to significantly influence the participants' perceptions of an ambiguous and threatening target. As summarized by A. Hall, Hall, and Perry (2016), these racial stereotypes appear to be "held by the general population, and they are not specific to law enforcement agents or Whites alone" (p. 178).

In a subsequent study, Correll et al. (2007), using the same videogame setup, compared the shooting decisions of police officers and community civilians (DMV workers). In this investigation, police differed from the community members on several critical variables. The officers clearly did better than community members on several measures. Police officers "were faster to make correct responses; they were better able to detect the presence of

a weapon . . .; and they set a significantly higher criterion for the decision to shoot, indicating a less 'trigger happy' orientation" (p. 1020). However, police officers were similar to the community sample in one specific measurement. Although police officers were faster than community participants in making correct responses in shoot/don't shoot decisions involving *armed* Black or *unarmed* white targets, they were as slow as the community sample when the targets were *unarmed* Black or *armed* white men.

The tendency for the police officers to be slow in decision making to shoot/don't shoot in the second condition may have been due to the officers' stereotypical tendency to associate aggression, anger, and violence with Blacks (Salerno & Sanchez, 2020). Although Correll et al. (2007) interpreted this latency in responding as a sign of racial bias, they also admitted that police are usually trained to hold their fire when they are uncertain or to wait for greater clarity when the situation is more ambiguous than usual. Consequently, the video may have been ambiguous rather than presenting a clearly biased scenario.

Dispatcher Information

Interestingly, recent research reveals that the information provided to officers by dispatchers is extremely critical in situations that may be ambiguous. D. Johnson, Cesario, and Pleskac (2018) examined the critical importance of dispatcher information that police officers receive before arriving at an emergency situation. Johnson et al. hypothesized that lethal force may be more likely to occur when officers (especially novice ones) have little advance information or have misinformation about the person(s) they encounter.

The researchers first surveyed the type of information dispatchers typically relay to responding officers. "Officers responding to an emergency call typically receive, at minimum, demographic information about the person in question from dispatch" (p. 617). For example, the dispatcher might relay physical descriptions of a person's sex, race, age, weight, hair color, and clothing. In the case of a possible crime, dispatchers routinely ask the caller whether weapons are present, and they immediately pass this information to the officers.

Johnson et al. (2018) used three laboratory studies to test how dispatch information and police experience affected the decision to shoot. The researchers focused on race and presence of a weapon. Johnson et al. consistently found that giving "incorrect dispatch information increased the likelihood that participants mistakenly shot unarmed men" (p. 619).

A classic example of dispatch misinformation is exemplified by the shooting of Tamir Rice in 2014, a case that has since received nationwide attention. Tamir was a 12-year-old African American boy who was throwing snowballs and playing with a realistic-looking, airsoft-style pellet handgun (which fired plastic pellets) in a park in Cleveland, Ohio. The pellet handgun belonged to an older friend who allowed Tamir to carry it temporarily while the friend took care of an errand. The gun, a Colt replica, was a few years old. Although the handgun had an "orange safety tip, intended to distinguish it from a pistol that fired real bullets, it had been removed or had fallen off" (Dewan & Oppel, 2015, p. A1). While in the park, the boy played around with the toy handgun, repeatedly pulling it out of his pocket until someone called 911 to inform the dispatcher that there was a male in the park pointing a gun at people.

The 911 caller was calm throughout the report, even pausing to exchange pleasantries with the dispatcher. The caller also said the person with the gun was "probably a juvenile" and twice emphasized that the "gun" was probably fake. Nevertheless, the dispatcher reported the incident as a "Code 1," indicating the incident was the police department's highest level of urgency. The dispatcher did not inform the responding officers that the caller indicated the gun was probably a fake, and that the carrier was probably a juvenile.

Two Cleveland police officers arrived at the scene, drove the police vehicle very close to the picnic area where the "suspect" was located. One of the officers immediately got out

of the car and within seconds shot the preteen in the abdomen from point-blank range. It was unclear whether and when the officer gave any warnings because there were discrepancies in his subsequent accounts to investigators and to a grand jury. He said he shot because he feared his life was in danger. He also said he thought the boy look around age 20, 12 years older than he was. Remember, the dispatcher failed to mention to the officers that the caller said the male was "probably a juvenile."

Hall et al. (2016) report that research finds that Black boys are commonly perceived to be older and less innocent than white boys, and this "adult-like" quality makes them "appear to be more appropriate candidates for greater use of police force" (p. 176). In research conducted by Goff, Jackson, Di Leone, Culotta, and DiTomasso (2014), for example, both civilians and police officers perceived Black youths nearly 5 years older than they were.

A grand jury investigation produced no criminal charges against the officers, apparently due to the critical miscommunications between the dispatcher and the officers. Dewan and Oppel (2015) write that "with the county sheriff's office reviewing the shooting, interviews and recently released video and police records show how a series of miscommunications, tactical errors and institutional failures by the Cleveland police cascaded into one irreversible mistake" (p. A1).

The officer who shot Tamir Rice was eventually fired two and a half years after the incident. He was fired not because of the shooting incident but because he had provided false information in his original application to the department. After investigations, both the dispatcher and the officer who drove the police car were suspended for brief periods. The officer who fired the shot was hired by another police department in Ohio in 2018.

Based on their research data, Johnson et al. (2018) concluded that racial bias in shooting decisions, as observed in laboratory studies, might be more likely when an officer is relatively untrained, has no dispatch information about a person, and has to make the decision in a short amount of time (p. 617). The researchers add, "Considerable research has stressed that stereotypes are more likely to be used in situations where information is ambiguous" (p. 618).

Nonfatal Excessive Force

When the level of force exceeds what is considered justifiable under the circumstances, it is called **excessive force**. Excessive force is unacceptable and illegal behavior demonstrated by an individual officer or group of officers, or it might be a pattern and practice of an entire law enforcement agency. In many instances, excessive force probably reflects some combination of both. However, the line between excessive and justifiable force is not a clear one to draw. Sometimes, changes in policy are needed to specify what is and what is not allowed. The "chokehold," which by 2020 was allowed in some departments and banned in others, is a case in point.

Studies reveal that when male police officers use what the public believes is excessive force or threaten force, the public trusts them less and perceives the officers to be less effective (Salerno & Sanchez, 2020). Female officers are less likely to use force in general compared to male officers, but when female officers do use force, the public tends to believe it is probably justified and not excessive (Salerno & Sanchez, 2020). This finding indicates that when female officers use force, the public perceives their behavior to be a result of the dangerous external situation that requires the force rather than due to any personal, internal traits. On the other hand, when male officers use force, the public often attributes their behavior to internal traits, such as a tendency to be aggressive and emotionally reactive.

A comprehensive source of information about police use of force is the Bureau of Justice Statistics (E. Davis, Whyde, & Langdon, 2018). This is a survey of police and public contacts based on interviews with residents rather than on police records. According to Davis et al. (2018) in 2015, 53.5 million U.S. residents age 16 or older had contact with the police. (See **Table 2.2.**) Among those residents who had contact with the police, nearly 1 million experienced threats or use of force. About 3.51% perceived the force as excessive. Men were more likely than women to experience threats or the use of force, and Blacks and Hispanics were more likely than non-Hispanic whites. According to Davis et al., examples of threats or nonfatal excessive force include the following:

- Threatening to use force
- Handcuffing
- Pushing, grabbing, hitting, or kicking
- Using a chemical or pepper spray
- Using an electroshock weapon
- Pointing a gun
- Using some other type of force (such as threatening to arrest)

A 2010 study by the Cato Institute (summarized by Granot, Balcetis, & Stern, 2017) discovered that "approximately one in every 100 American police officers was accused of misconduct, most of which were incidents of excessive force" (p. 177). However, once again it is important to distinguish between true excessive force and justifiable force. To illustrate, a report released by the Department of Justice in 2006 revealed that there were 26,556 citizen complaints about police use of force involving large state and local law enforcement agencies (Hickman, 2006). About 8% of these complaints were supported by investigations and were sufficient enough to justify disciplinary action against the officer or officers. The remainder of the complaints were not supported or were unfounded. Without further evidence to the contrary, they would then be presumed to be justifiable force. Nevertheless, the 8% figure remains a troubling one. When nearly 10% of citizen complaints are found worthy of disciplinary action against officers, this is a problem for both police and the community they serve.

Table 2.2	Residents With Police Contact Who Experienced Threat or Use of Force, by Race or Hispanic Origin, 2015		
	Face-to-Face Contact	**Force Threatened or Used**	**Force Perceived as Excessive**
All races	53.4 million	985,300 (1.8%)	3.51%
White	37.3 million	485,700 (1.3%)	4.5%
Black	6.1 million	201,100 (3.3%)	7.66%
Hispanic	6.7 million	203,100 (3.0%)	8.36%

Source: Davis et al. (2018).

Other research involving force, both justifiable and excessive, is worth noting as well. The National Institute of Justice (NIJ; K. Adams et al., 1999) released an earlier report summarizing what is known about police use of force. The report found the following:

- Police use force infrequently.

- Police use of force typically occurs at the lower end of the force spectrum, involving grabbing, pushing, or shoving.

- Use of force typically occurs when police are trying to make an arrest and the suspect is resisting.

Police psychologist Ellen Scrivner (1994), in a report sponsored by the NIJ, investigated some of the psychological attributes characteristic of officers who engage in excessive force. Police psychologists assigned to conduct fitness-for-duty evaluations should be knowledgeable about the behaviors outlined in the report. Scrivner identified five different officer profiles that are prone to excessive force complaints or charges:

1. Officers with personality patterns that reflect a lack of empathy for others and antisocial, narcissistic, and abusive tendencies

2. Officers with previous job-related experiences such as involvement in justifiable police shootings

3. Officers who experienced early career-stage problems having to do with their impressionability, impulsiveness, low tolerance for frustration, and general need for strong supervision

4. Officers who had a dominant, heavy-handed patrol style that is particularly sensitive to challenge and provocation

5. Officers who had personal problems such as separation, divorce, or perceived loss of status that caused extreme anxiety and destabilized job functioning

In a more recent study, Trinkner, Kerrison, and Goff (2019) found that officer cynicism may be a key variable in officers' use of excessive force. *Police cynicism* is defined "as a pessimistic and suspicious perspective towards their job, the public, and society in general" (Caplan, 2003, p. 304). It is similar to psychological "burn out." Moreover, it "is a progressively evolving characteristic of even the most idealistic police officers" (Caplan, 2003, p. 304).

Trinkner et al. (2019) surveyed 784 patrol officers and sergeants of a large urban police force over a period of 8 weeks. The survey revealed that cynical officers not only are more likely to distrust the public, they are more prone to engage with community members in hostile, aggressive, forceful ways. Trinkner et al. write, "In this respect, one would not expect them to support the department's use of force policy or engaging with the public in a fair and respectful manner to the same degree as less cynical officers" (p. 431).

Trinkner et al. (2019) also found that female officers were more likely to support fair and just policies compared to male officers. They also discovered the officer's age made a difference in the use of excessive force. Older, more experienced officers were less likely to use coercive, forceful policing compared to their younger colleagues.

There are other factors that influence the tendency of law enforcement to use force—whether justifiable or excessive—beside officer personality. For example, police are more likely to use force in neighborhoods that are known for high crime rates and previous encounters with difficult suspects (Reyes & Houston, 2019; Terrill & Reisig, 2003). Reyes and Houston also note that age, income, race, and education level also influence the level of force used by police, "with male, youth, minority, and lower-income suspects found to be more likely to have higher levels of force used against them to effect an arrest" (p. 315). Use of force is also likely to occur if the suspect resists arrest (Terrill, Leinfelt, & Kwak, 2008). In addition, the psychological or mental status of the suspect may also be a factor in the amount of force used in an encounter with police.

The studies described focused primarily on the psychological profiles of individual police officers. It was not intended to give attention to the properties of entire police organizations that may implicitly (or explicitly) promote or condone excessive force within their ranks. For example, an agency may have an aggressive policing policy that encourages confrontational tactics that increase the probability of violence on the part of officers as well as members of the public. As K. Adams et al. (1999) stated, "[a] major gap in our knowledge about excessive force by police concerns characteristics of police agencies that facilitate or impede this conduct" (p. 11). Adams and his colleagues further assert that many formal aspects of the organization—such as hiring criteria, recruit training, in-service programs, supervision of field officers, disciplinary mechanisms, operations of internal affairs, specialized units dealing with ethics and integrity, labor unions, and civilian oversight mechanisms—plausibly are related to the levels of officer misconduct.

As suggested earlier, police and public safety psychologists should realize that, in some cases, the law enforcement agency itself might be a major factor in implicitly encouraging the use of excessive force by its officers. Police training, both at a police academy and on the job, is another extremely important component. Officers who have not been taught appropriate deescalation tactics, for example, may find it tempting to resort to force when it should not be needed. Agencies that have not banned or severely limited the use of chokeholds also may be more likely to attract citizen complaints. Possibly, agencies may be placed on a continuum signifying the degree of aggressive policing they advocate in the community. At one pole, the agency advocates that minimum force be applied when dealing with suspects, but at the other pole, the agency encourages force—and, if necessary, something approaching excessive force—in dealing with the suspects.

In summary, research data consistently show that most police officers do not engage in excessive force in dealing with the public, but even a small minority that does becomes problematic for both the public and the law enforcement agency. Fortunately, an "early warning system," used by an increasing number of departments, can help supervisors identify problem officers early and intervene through counseling or training to correct problem behaviors (S. Walker, Alpert, & Kenney, 2001), not only those related to the use of force. **Early warning systems** of various types are increasingly being introduced into police agencies nationwide (Scrivner et al., 2014). They are data-based management tools, usually consisting of three basic phases: (1) selection, (2) intervention, and (3) post-intervention monitoring (Bartol & Bartol, 2004). The criteria by which officers are placed in an early warning category vary from agency to agency but usually include some threshold combination of citizen complaints, civil litigation, firearms discharge or use-of-force reports, high-speed pursuits, and resisting-arrest incidents (S. Walker et al., 2001). Preliminary research on the effectiveness of early warning systems suggests that they are effective, especially if used in combination with department-wide attempts to raise standards of performance and

improve the quality of police services. Unfortunately, as has been demonstrated in recent years, agencies nationwide vary widely on the extent to which they develop standards and monitor behavior of individual law enforcement officers.

Police Corruption

The term *police corruption* covers a wide range of illegal behaviors that represent a violation of the public trust. Accepting bribes, confiscating drugs or drug money, planting evidence, and soliciting sexual activity in exchange for giving a suspect a "break" are all illustrations. Can police psychologists assist departments in selecting out candidates who are likely to be engaged in corrupt activities?

The Defense Personnel Security Research Center (PERSEREC) conducted one of the most extensive studies on the ability of personality measures to predict police corruption and misconduct. The PERSEREC began the Police Integrity Study in 1992, using four commonly used personality inventories in law enforcement: the MMPI-2, IPI, 16-PF, and CPI. Sixty-nine departments met all the prerequisites for participation and supplied personality test data on 878 officers, 439 of whom demonstrated misconduct and 439 of whom did not. (The departments were asked to identify equal numbers from each group.) The preemployment personality inventories most frequently administered to those officers when they originally applied to their respective departments was the MMPI-2 (92.7%), followed by the CPI (41.0%), 16-PF (11.2%), and IPI (11.0%). (These percentages will total more than 100% because many departments administered more than one personality inventory during the screening and selection stage.)

Overall, the study concluded that the personality data could only modestly identify later misconduct (including the use of force discussed earlier) or corruption. The few personality inventories that had any success tended to indicate that those officers who engaged in misconduct or corruption during their careers not surprisingly had more of the following characteristics:

- Difficulty getting along with others
- Delinquent or problem histories in their police careers
- Indications of maladjustment, immaturity, irresponsibility, or unreliability

Basically, the study found that the *single* best predictor of corruption was not a personality measure administered prior to hire, but rather misconduct on the job after employment had begun and usually relatively early in the officer's career.

In other words, none of the preemployment psychological tests then being used by law enforcement departments appeared to offer a general scale or dimension that could reliably and validly differentiate officers at the beginning of their career who were likely to violate the public trust later in their career (Boes, Chandler, & Timm, 2001). As mentioned earlier in the chapter, these tests, particularly the MMPI-2, continue to be used. This is not to question their use; it is simply to emphasize that they do not predict corruption. Rather, the *strongest* predictor was post-hire misconduct. Officers who got into trouble for misconduct early in their careers were most likely to be punished for later acts of corruption. Furthermore, the study found that the decision of whether or not to engage in acts of corruption is largely shaped by environmental factors, such as opportunity combined with the values particular police subcultures allowed or that were condoned by certain departments.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Individual psychologists have consulted with various law enforcement agencies in the United States throughout the 20th century, but police psychology as a subfield of applied psychology was not officially recognized until the late 1960s or early 1970s. Since then, it has expanded rapidly and is more commonly referred to as police and public safety psychology. It was recognized by the APA as a specialty in 2013. The many professional organizations devoted to this work and the increasing number of publications in the professional literature attest to the fact that police and public safety psychology is thriving.

Police psychologists today participate in the screening and selection of law enforcement candidates, conduct promotional exams and fitness-for-duty evaluations, provide counseling services to officers and their families, offer workshops in stress management, and assist in hostage negotiation training, among many tasks. They are also increasingly more involved in consulting with administrators in areas like optimal shift schedules, training for special operations, program evaluation, or conflict management within the agency. In addition, there is a rich store of psychological research on topics relating to law enforcement work, most of which is conducted by academic or legal psychologists. Examples of such research topics include police handling of those with mental disorders, excessive force, adaptations to stress, gender differences in policing, police response to crisis situations, racial bias, police interrogations, and reliability and validity of various instruments for use in screening. Police and public safety psychologists can bring this research to the attention of the police agency.

The screening and selection of police candidates has been a fundamental task of police and public safety psychologists. Psychologists typically administer and evaluate psychological tests designed to identify desirable characteristics (screening in) or detect problem behaviors (screening out). Before deciding on how to perform this task, the psychologist must have a thorough understanding, not only of police culture, which may be variable, but also of the requirements of the specific job at hand. Some qualities are common to all good officers—for example, compassion or remaining calm in the face of danger. In other situations, such as assessments for work in special units, specific competencies may be required.

We gave particular attention to the MMPI-2, which is by far the most commonly used measure for screening police candidates, but other measures are available as well. Some agencies also ask police psychologists to conduct in-person interviews, different from the department's own interviews or oral board exams. It is important, though, that the approach taken be empirically validated and that the tests conform to federal laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act and its revision. Candidate screening has traditionally focused more on detecting problems or pathology than on identifying positive features that predict success in law enforcement. In recent years, more tests have been developed with a goal of identifying the positive features. These must be continually subjected to validation, however.

Police work ranks high among stressful occupations. We discussed a number of occupational stressors that officers encounter, including those that are organizational, external, task-related, and personal. Police psychologists not only study the effects of stress, but also provide direct service to officers and their families. Critical incidents—such as hostage-taking situations, mass casualties, or police shootings—are good examples of task-related stress. Both in-house and consulting police psychologists are often asked to assist officers who have experienced a critical incident. When unaddressed stress reaches high levels, there is danger of major dysfunction in personal relationships or police suicide. Although research does not support a higher incidence of suicide among police than among the general population, when suicide occurs, it has a major impact on the police community.

Racial bias among police has received increasing attention in recent years, particularly in relation to highly publicized shootings of unarmed Black suspects. Implicit bias is not unique to law enforcement officers; it is a characteristic shared by many if not most individuals as a result of cultural indoctrination. In public safety officers, however, bias that is reflected in discriminatory actions is unacceptable and illegal. A substantial amount of research has been done on this topic. Research indicates that police as a group do treat some individuals, particularly Blacks, more harshly than other racial groups. This is demonstrated in police stops, arrests, use of force, and even in lethal actions. "Shooter bias," which has been substantiated in several current studies, refers to an officer's tendency to use deadly force (even if it does not result in death) disproportionately

against persons of color. However, studies also indicate that training can attenuate the effects of implicit bias.

We reviewed both classic and recent research on police use of force, including excessive force. Research suggests that officers who received excessive force complaints were more likely to have displayed personality factors like lack of empathy or narcissism, showed evidence of behavior problems early in their careers, had heavy-handed patrol styles, and experienced marital or other relationship problems. However, it is important to emphasize that the culture within a department, as well its policies, also may encourage the use of force, even in excessive amounts. Many departments have now adopted early warning systems to offer peer and professional support to officers who may be showing signs of problem behaviors, but it is equally important to be alert to an agency's own approach to interacting with the community it serves.

Like excessive force, corruption is unlikely to be predicted before a candidate is hired. Research on police corruption indicates that it is often related to the environment of the department—it is not typically associated with a single officer. Once again, focus on individual officers to the exclusion of considering the entire agency, or sectors within in, is not likely to solve this problem. Assessment measures given by psychologists are unlikely to predict eventual corruption, although consulting psychologists can help alleviate stressful events that may be associated with a pattern of misconduct.

KEY CONCEPTS

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QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What have researchers learned about "police culture"?

2. Why is job analysis an important task for police and public safety psychologists?

3. Briefly describe the MMPI-2 and MMPI-2-RF.

4. Give examples of each of the four types of stressors that are common in law enforcement.

5. Provide examples of five racial/ethnic minority or gender issues relating to law enforcement.

6. Other than candidate screening, describe any three special evaluations that might be conducted by a police psychologist.

7. List at least five findings of the research on racial bias in policing.

8. Discuss the common psychological reactions police may have to a shooting incident.

9. In the Scrivner study, what five different officer profiles were prone to excessive force complaints?