Review of the Ottawa Police Service's De-Escalation and Use of Force Training for New Recruits

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November 11, 2021

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1. Introduction

During the Summer of 2021 we attended multiple training sessions to observe the training that the Ottawa Police Service (OPS) provides to their new recruits, specifically in the areas of de-escalation and use of force.[1] Beyond observing this training, we were also able to speak to the recruits that were undergoing training, review relevant lesson plans, and have in-depth conversations with many of the instructors providing training in these areas, and their superiors. Our primary goal was to assess the content of the de-escalation and use of force training being offered by the OPS, evaluate the way in which the training was being structured and delivered, and gauge the skill level of the instructors who were responsible for this training. We were particularly interested in whether the content, structure, and delivery of training at the OPS aligned with evidence-informed practices that are known to improve the learning, retention, and transfer of material presented during training (e.g., Andersen et al., 2017; Bennell et al., 2021; Jenkins et al., 2021).

Having recently completed a similar project funded by the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, which involved us reviewing the de-escalation and use of force training being provided by a number of police services across Ontario (Bennell et al., 2018), we were also interested in how the current de-escalation and use of force training offered to OPS recruits compared to the training we observed as part of that study. Essentially, training in those sites acted as reference points for us when assessing OPS training. The sorts of issues we considered during our assessment of OPS training generally emerged out of our previous work with the Ministry. We were especially concerned with the following issues, although we speak to several topics that are unrelated to these issues in the material we present below.

Commitment to training

- Is training adequately supported by the organization (e.g., necessary training resources are provided)?

Development of training

- Does the training focus on knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) that are known to be beneficial for improving the quality (including safety) of police-public interactions?
- Does the training rely on dynamic scenarios that mimic situations police officers will encounter in the field?
- Are diverse training scenarios used, which will enhance the decision-making and problem-solving abilities of trainees?
- Are spaced training strategies relied on appropriately to facilitate learning, retention, and transfer?
- Is the format of training (e.g., classroom instruction vs. scenario-based training) appropriately aligned with desired learning outcomes?

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[1] We were also exposed to the training that OPS provides on fair and impartial policing and got to sit in on a half-day session of in-service training with regular members. We provide briefs comments about this training at the end of this report.

- Is training appropriately ordered (e.g., gradually incorporating stress so as not to overwhelm the learner)?
- Is sufficient training time available to achieve a reasonable degree of mastery?
- Is training material well designed?

Implementation of Training

- Are worked examples (i.e., modelling/demonstrations) provided to novice learners?
- Is training simplified for complex material?
- Is appropriate feedback provided by instructors?
- Do the trainers actively engage the trainees in their training?
- Do the trainers create a positive training environment?
- Do the trainers possess the necessary competencies to deliver effective training?

Evaluation of training

- Is the training being delivered evidence informed (i.e., based on research)?
- Is training being evaluated and modified as necessary?

2. General Impressions of OPS De-Escalation and Use of Force Training

As discussed in more detail below, our impressions of the de-escalation and use of force training provided to new recruits by the OPS were overwhelmingly positive. In general, given the constraints that OPS instructors must work within, in terms of infrastructure and time limits, we believe that the training currently being offered in these areas is very good and, in most cases, better than the training we have observed in other police services. The content of the training, and the way that it is structured and delivered, is generally consistent with adult learning principles, and is how training should be designed if the goal is to maximize learning, retention, and transfer of KSAs on the part of trainees. Furthermore, while there was obvious variation in the experience and skill-level of trainers, we were extremely impressed with the quality of instruction delivered by OPS staff, their knowledge of what makes training effective, and their commitment to providing a useful and positive training experience to the recruits.

We were also very pleased with the willingness of the instructors, and their superiors, to provide us with access to their training sessions, material, and staff, listen to our critical feedback and engage in conversations with us about that feedback, and incorporate our feedback into their training in a timely manner to ensure that important improvements were made for the current cohort of recruits. We experienced no resistance from training staff during the evaluation; on the contrary, everyone we spoke to was genuinely interested in hearing our views about how they might improve their training.

3. OPS De-Escalation Training for New Recruits

Below, we discuss the positive aspects of OPS de-escalation training that we observed. We also highlight areas where we feel important improvements could be made to OPS training. Many of

these things were communicated to staff at the Professional Development Centre throughout our time observing their training, and we know that some of these things have already been implemented given that we observed the changes firsthand.

3.1 Positive Aspects of OPS De-Escalation Training

As indicated above, we felt that most aspects of the recruit training we observed were excellent and are consistent with current recommendations regarding how training should be developed, structured, and delivered to maximize learning, retention, and transfer. The following aspects of the de-escalation training we observed stood out as being particularly strong:

- We generally know what the relevant KSAs are for effectively managing police interactions with citizens (e.g., Bennell et al., 2021). OPS recruit training taps into most of these competencies (e.g., knowledge of organizational policy and law, understanding of mental health issues, communication, problem solving, situational awareness, professionalism, post-event articulation, etc.).

- Also related to training content, we know that expertise development is about allowing trainees to acquire schemas that are held in long-term memory, which they can easily draw on in the field as required to process information they are exposed to and decide on the best course of action. The training we observed was compatible with schema acquisition. We particularly liked the degree to which *principles* were being focused on in training (e.g., NRA, ICEN, the importance of proportionality and reasonableness when using intervention options, tactical flexibility, discretionary vs. non-discretionary time, etc.). Principle-based schemas (i.e., schemas based on principles rather than surface features of incidents) will allow trainees to perform more effectively across incidents they encounter where surface features vary, but the principles still apply. This will be the case for most events that new recruits will encounter in the field (i.e., no two interactions with a person in crisis will be the same, so it is critical that recruits can recall principle-based schemas to appropriately guide their decision-making).

- The heavy reliance on scenarios for de-escalation training is excellent. We felt that the scenarios that OPS uses were realistic and, given the time limits, there was reasonable diversity in these scenarios, which is important for developing flexible (i.e., adaptive) schemas. As we discuss below, the sequencing of the scenario-based training we observed was also excellent – complexity and stress were gradually introduced, and trainees took more active roles in the scenarios as the training progressed. This is exactly as it should be. We also really liked that the scenarios were taken right up to the point of arrest. Very often scenarios end prematurely, which prevents trainees from practicing important skills.

- When training time is limited, as it always is in the policing context, spaced practice is challenging. However, we felt that there was good use of spaced practice principles by the trainers (e.g., regularly returning to important material throughout the training, such as some of the principles highlighted above, and using scenarios later in the session to confirm that recruits were able to implement things learned earlier in the session). These sorts of

spaced training strategies should increase learning and, most importantly, retention and transfer of material.

- The sequencing of training material was excellent and consistent with best practices for novice learners. We were particularly impressed with how instructors gradually introduced complexity and stress into recruit training, especially during scenario-based training, as the comfort level and skill level of the recruits grew. This is a perfect way of assisting the recruits to manage their cognitive load as they are learning new concepts.

- The training material that we reviewed was well designed. For example, the PowerPoint slides being used are clean, clear, and had the right amount of material on each slide. The lesson plans we reviewed were also nicely constructed and appeared to be followed by the trainers.

- The use of worked examples (i.e., demonstrations by instructors) was excellent. Modelling of appropriate responses was common and appropriately situated within relevant training sessions. These worked examples provide much needed material for recruits to draw on when they participate in scenarios themselves. The use of these example should allow recruits to manage their cognitive load as they were being exposed to new, challenging tasks. We particularly liked the "modelling-developing-testing" approach. Transitioning from full demonstrations, to scenarios where trainees are actively engaged in the training but with extensive feedback, to scenarios that include slightly less support from instructors is a recipe for building up skills and confidence at an appropriate pace.

- We were also very impressed with the amount and quality of feedback provided to trainees in most cases. At this stage, providing feedback at the point where mistakes are being made or progress is stalled is appropriate, and the instructors we observed did this very well. Debriefing as a group upon the completion of a training session, which was regularly done, is also very valuable as it gives trainees time to decompress from the scenario and reflect on their performance and the initial feedback received. Providing delayed feedback and encouraging active participation in these debriefing sessions will allow recruits to process and internalize the feedback they receive.

- Active engagement in scenario-based training sessions is relatively easy, but this is harder in classroom sessions. The instructors we observed did a wonderful job actively engaging the trainees in these sessions through interactions, reflections, and getting them to explain their thoughts. This active engagement encourages deeper processing of training material, which will influence learning and retention. The nature of the engagement that we observed should also enhance the ability for recruits to apply the material they were learning to real world incidents they experience in the field.

- We felt that the training environment was very positive and supportive, which is particularly important at this stage of training. Recruits are already stressed enough, especially while being observed in training, that they shouldn't be further stressed by a negative training experience. From our perspective, humour was used appropriately,

trainees were respected for the adult learners that they are, and care was shown to recruits who were struggling.

- As we mention above, we were extremely impressed with the instructors at the Professional Development Centre. They appear to be extremely effective, competent trainers who seemed committed to getting the best out of the recruits. Based on our observations and discussions with recruits, we also believe that they saw the trainers as being highly credible, which is imperative. The trainers were able to achieve a nice balance between presenting content with academic rigour while infusing their own personal and practical experiences into training, which is important.

3.2. Recommendations for Changes to OPS De-Escalation Training

Despite our positive impressions of the training we observed, there were also a number of things we think OPS training staff should consider as they strive to improve their training. None of these changes fundamentally alter the way in which the OPS delivers their de-escalation training (we generally found the training to be of high quality). However, changes based on these recommendations would have the potential to further strengthen their training. Some of the considerations highlighted below relate to content issues, whereas others relate to structural issues.

3.2.1. Training Content

- During classroom de-escalation sessions, it would be useful to include additional slides that explicitly address the impact of de-escalation training. Several relevant studies have recently been conducted in Canada and the US, which training staff can draw on to show recruits that the type of training they are receiving will likely have a tangible, positive impact (e.g., it likely decreases the need for use of force in the field). Providing this information will further validate the training experience for recruits and will encourage them to invest even more effort in their training.

- Training staff may also want to include additional slides in classroom sessions that directly address the impact of stress on the various KSAs that are relevant to de-escalation (e.g., recognizing signs of mental distress, communication, decision-making) and what can be done to slow down thinking when that's appropriate. This has recently been done in other police organizations and the response has been positive.

- Training staff should consider including graphics of models discussed in class to help illustrate points that the instructors are making. For example, including the graphic of Andersen's new decision model for police encounters will help the trainees visualize the various components that are being focused on in your training (e.g., internal/external monitoring, approach, position, communication, etc.; Huey et al., 2021). This will decrease the abstractness of these discussions.

- We believe that training staff should consider including very specific worked examples of key parts of scenarios where trainees appear to struggle. For example, one aspect of the de-escalation scenarios where all recruits appeared to struggle was transitioning from a

conversation with a person in crisis where the primary goal was to develop rapport and enhance safety to having a conversation about why that person is now having to be handcuffed. A demonstration from instructors about how to navigate that transition would be very useful.

- Knowledge of community resources, and appropriate referral to these resources, is a critical aspect of assisting people in crisis. Given this, it would be useful to have recruits refer to community resources specifically as part of their scenarios or during table-top exercises to ensure that they have knowledge about these resources and are drawing on that knowledge in an appropriate fashion. Familiarizing recruits with community resources is important and having them practice presenting those options to people who are not yet in crisis or do not meet the threshold for apprehension may prevent them from presenting these options at inappropriate times. This will also encourage recruits to see such referrals as part of the process when interacting with people in crisis.

- Over the longer term, we think that consideration has to be given to including additional training on KSAs that we don't think are adequately covered at the moment. The one that stands out most perhaps is stress management. This is a critical KSA, not only from a health perspective for officers, but also because other critical KSAs will be compromised if stress is not effectively managed by officers (e.g., communication, decision-making, problem solving). Just talking about stress, its effects, and how to manage it is not enough; trainees must learn how to manage acute stress through practice. Existing training programs exist, which can accomplish these things, although they are quite time consuming (e.g., Andersen's iPREP; Andersen & Gustafsberg, 2016).

- It will likely be useful to have officers reflect on their own potential triggers, so they don't become escalated themselves if these triggers become relevant during an interaction with a member of the public. Related to this, making clear connections in de-escalation training to the fair and impartial police training will be important. Reintroducing material from other sessions helps reinforce that material.

- While there are always challenges associated with this, the Professional Development Centre should explore the possibility of exposing recruits to people with lived experience (e.g., a person with a mental illness who has interacted with the police). Relevant community organizations (e.g., CMHA) may be able to assist with this. In our experience, these sorts of experiences are incredibly beneficial for police officers and have a significant impact on the empathy that officers will have for people that they encounter in the field who are experiencing a crisis. If live sessions cannot take place, various videos are available, which might provide some value (although the lack of interactivity would be far from ideal).

- We would also recommend that OPS training staff review other training that is available for police interactions with persons with mental illness to see if it provides additional value for recruit (or in-service) training. Given its Canadian focus, the training developed by Krameddine and her colleagues (2013) might be particularly useful.

- The de-escalation training module should be reviewed to identify training redundancies. There was overlap between training modules that could be eliminated. While reiterating useful concepts is important, the level of redundancy shouldn't be too high. Redundant material can be replaced with interactive class discussions, table-top scenarios, or additional scenario-based training, all of which are known to be highly valuable training experiences.

- Similar concepts (i.e., de-escalation strategies) are being framed in different ways across the training. For example, in some modules, trainees are asked to think about de-escalation strategies using the CID framework (e.g., recognizing impact of officer presence, use of effective physical cues, use of effective verbal cues), whereas in other modules Andersen's framework is used (e.g., approach, position, communication, containment, assistance; Huey et al., 2021). We think that training staff should consider using a single model for framing de-escalation throughout the training (we prefer Andersen's approach because we think it's more comprehensive, the CID components are subsumed within it, and it encourages everyone to think about de-escalation as a process that includes multiple components/phases). The use of multiple frameworks complicates matters and will likely have a negative impact on learning.

- In terms of ordering, the post-incident management session is a logical but unfortunate way to end the training. Trainees have built up confidence talking to people in crisis and working towards successful resolutions, and we think it would be ideal to end on this note. Also, given the gravity of the issues discussed at the end of the de-escalation module (e.g., police shootings), it might be useful to have time to debrief with the recruits if necessary. Perhaps consider moving this short module to a session during another module, where any issues that arise can be more adequately worked through earlier in the training day.

4. OPS Use of Force Training for New Recruits

As we did with OPS de-escalation training, below we discuss the positive aspects of OPS use of force training that we observed. We also highlight areas where we feel improvements could be made. Like the recommendations above, many of these things were communicated to staff at the Professional Development Centre throughout our time observing the training, and we know that some of these things have already been implemented.

4.1. Positive Aspects of OPS Use of Force Training

As with the de-escalation training we observed, most aspects of the use of force training we reviewed were excellent and are consistent with current recommendations regarding how training should be developed, structured, and delivered to maximize learning, retention, and transfer. Most of our reactions were the same as those presented above, so we will deal with them only briefly here.

- The sequencing of use of force training was consistent with evidence-informed practices (i.e., gradually introducing complexity and stress into the scenarios as initial mastery develops).

- The use of scaffolding was excellent (i.e., gradually reducing instructional support at an appropriate pace so that the recruits weren't overwhelmed in the early parts of training and didn't become dependent on trainers as training progressed).

- The reliance on scenario-based training was exceptional (e.g., scenarios were realistic, well-designed, and delivered appropriately, while also focusing on relevant KSAs). Importantly, the KSAs that were focused on in the scenarios included those related to de-escalation, which provided recruits with further opportunities to practice these skills (including the skill of adapting to situational cues and responding appropriately to threats, or the lack thereof). We were also particularly impressed with how instructors broke down complex tasks into simpler components during their scenario-based training. This is important for novice learners.

- The diversity of the scenarios was also a positive aspect of the use of force training and will likely contribute to the formation of adaptive/flexible schemas that the recruits can draw on when they encounter new situations in the field.

- The quality of individualized feedback that was provided by instructors to each recruit was excellent in most cases (although see the recommendations below). The regular use of group debriefs was also appropriate and appeared to be effective.

- As was the case with de-escalation training, despite having a short amount of time to present training, which necessarily limits opportunities for spaced practice, spaced training strategies (e.g., focusing on important concepts at various points throughout training) were used.

- The trainers created a positive environment and dealt with remedial training with appropriate attention, care, and compassion.

- Finally, the trainers providing the use of force training, especially the senior instructors, appeared very competent, not only in terms of content expertise, but in how they delivered training.

4.2. Recommendations for Changes to OPS Use of Force Training

Again, there were no really significant problems that we observed with the use of force training that would lead us to recommend dramatic changes to what is currently being done by OPS training staff, but there are things that can be considered which would likely strengthen the training.

4.2.1. Observational Learning

- Consistent with what happens in most police services, recruits spend a lot of time during use of force training watching others actively participate in scenarios. Given this, it's important to make sure that the trainees are really engaged to facilitate observational learning. We would recommend using strategies to maximize engagement. Specific strategies to consider include: encouraging recruits to think about the positive and negative things they are seeing while watching the scenarios, reminding observers that they can ask questions after the scenario, telling observers that they may be asked questions after the scenario to encourage focused attention during the scenario, etc.

4.2.2. Instructor Feedback

Overall, we felt the instructional feedback was very good, but we would encourage trainers to consider the following issues:

- Recruits are stressed during and immediately after realistic scenarios, and therefore trainers need to be cautious about how much feedback they provide at these times and what type of feedback they provide. Under stress, recruits are unlikely to be able to process and internalize a lot of feedback, especially if the feedback is complicated (something that was confirmed by the trainees during our conversations with them). Rather than providing too much feedback quietly in the ear of trainees as they are performing, we'd encourage pausing the scenario when necessary and prioritizing what feedback is provided. If such feedback is kept to a minimum (1-2 key points) and is provided in short, simple statements, trainees will be more likely to process and internalize it. Getting some sort of cue from the trainee that they have heard the feedback and understood it will also be important. Similar strategies can be used upon the completion of a scenario. Research suggests that it will take 10 minutes or more for stress to subside after a high stress scenario, so trainers will want to keep the immediate post-scenario feedback simple and prioritize the most important points. Using some sort of structured approach for feedback will likely help instructors with this task, while also ensuring that the type of feedback provided to trainees is somewhat consistent across instructors.

- Given the previous point, delayed group feedback will likely be very important in use of force training. Most of the trainees will have had a chance to recover at this point and reflect on their own performance and the feedback they received. This should allow them to process the delayed feedback to a greater extent and internalize that feedback to improve future performance. Getting critical feedback in a group setting also decreases its threatening nature (this form of feedback doesn't have to be as individualized, so people aren't singled out for errors they may have made).

- It is important that trainees develop the ability to reflect on their own performance and learn how to self-assess and self-correct, especially because augmented feedback (i.e., feedback provided by trainers) will soon be unavailable. While the recruits are still too inexperienced to have self-analysis replace trainer feedback entirely, trainers should consistently encourage some self-assessment at the beginning of feedback sessions so that trainees begin to develop this skill, and trainees should be required to indicate how they can self-correct their behaviour based on this assessment.

- Training staff should consider using a formalized rubric to assess performance. This could be completed by a trainer that is observing the training. This could help structure the sort of feedback provided to recruits. A completed rubric could also be provided to recruits after a training session so that they have something to take away from training, which indicates areas of deficiency that they need to work on (this might also prompt additional conversations between the trainees and trainers). Potential rubrics already exist, which have been validated for both de-escalation and use of force training (e.g., the DePICT[2] tool for assessing competencies related to de-escalation).

4.2.3. Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- Many relevant KSAs are tackled in OPS use of force training, but there are some KSAs that require additional attention in our view. As highlighted previously, stress reduction stands out as an example, as does emotion and behaviour regulation, which has been shown to be important (Owens et al., 2018).

4.2.4. Encouraging Adaptive Schemas

- As discussed above, principle-based schemas are particularly important to develop because they will be applicable across situations and allow for flexible decision-making and problem solving. Given this, it's important to emphasize relevant principles in training during both pre-scenario and post-scenario debriefs. While this was sometimes done during the use of force training we observed, it wasn't consistently done.

4.2.5. Supporting Recruits

- It's extremely important that all recruits feel supported through their training, not only for personal reasons related to mental health, but because recruits that feel anxious, overwhelmed, or otherwise distressed during training will be less likely to learn and retain training material. This issue should be addressed during classroom sessions on wellness to ensure that recruits know they can come to the trainers to discuss these things without fear that it will reflect badly on them. Also, we'd recommend following up privately with recruits that may be underperforming or exhibiting signs of distress to ensure they are ok. By following up with recruits individually, training staff will also be reinforcing that there is (like you say in your training) a culture within the OPS that promotes officer well-being.

5. Other Reflections

We'd like to make two other comments based on our observations of the fair and impartial police training that OPS delivers, and the portion of the in-service training we participated in.

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[2] https://researchcentres.wlu.ca/centre-for-research-on-security-practices/news/2021/improving-police-interactions-with-people-in-mental-health-crisis.html

5.1. Training on Fair and Impartial Policing

We were very pleased to see that serious attention is being given to fair and impartial policing by the OPS. The trainer we interacted with during this session was exceptionally well versed on this topic and extremely committed to this type of training. The training was very thorough and based in rigorous academic research. We know of no other approach to this type of training that covers the topic as well as Fair and Impartial Policing. That being said, given the lack of research evaluating these types of training programs, the OPS must be careful in assuming that recruits who receive this training will act in unbiased ways in the field. Indeed, one of the few studies that has been conducted on this type of training did not find positive results with respect to on-the-job behaviour, even though knowledge did seem to be positively impacted by training (Worden et al., 2020). As further evaluations are conducted on anti-bias training, we would encourage the OPS to evaluate that research and make whatever changes are necessary to their fair and impartial policing training program (including the elimination of this program in favour of validated anti-bias training).

5.2. In-Service Training

We only observed one morning of in-service training at OPS, so we are limited in what we can say about this training. That morning consisted of a range of training for OPS officers including an update on organizational policies and relevant laws, a brief discussion of the importance of police legitimacy, and a refresher on de-escalation tactics, which included a group-based discussion of video simulations where conversations took place about the sorts of de-escalation strategies that might be effective for dealing with the situations depicted in the vidoes. While we were pleased to see these topics covered and were impressed with how much material was addressed by instructors in a short amount of time, a morning session is clearly not long enough to adequately cover these important topics. The major challenge is that a large part of the training day that we attended is taken up by the officers' annual firearms qualification. Indeed, the entire afternoon session is dedicated to this.

While we obviously see the importance of officers having to qualify annually to use their firearm, it is unfortunate that so much valuable training time is taken up by a task that is unlikely to have much value in predicting whether officers will be able to use their firearm effectively in the field and make appropriate lethal force decisions. For example, average accuracy rates ranging from 14-38% have been observed in officer involved shootings (e.g., Donner & Popovich, 2018; Morrison & Garner, 2011; Morrison & Vila, 1998), which is in stark contrast to the almost 90% accuracy rate reported in range-based annual firearms qualifications (e.g., Anderson & Plecas, 2000; Brown et al., 2021). Of course, the qualification test used by the OPS is provincially mandated, so they have little control over how it should be carried out. However, we would strongly recommend that the OPS lobby the Ministry of the Solicitor General to change the annual firearm qualification to make it more useful. For this to be the case, we would argue at a minimum that the qualification must include dynamic situations where accuracy and decision-making are assessed under stress.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, we were very impressed with the quality of the de-escalation and use of force training we observed, which is currently being provided to OPS recruits. Especially given the many constraints that exist within the police training environment, most notably the amount of material that needs to be covered in a very limited amount of time, the OPS training staff, in our opinion, is doing an excellent job. We believe that the training being delivered aligns well with evidence-informed training practices and is likely to result in significant learning, retention, and transfer of KSAs to the field. Of course, training can always be improved, and we think OPS recruit training would improve if the recommendations provided above are acted upon.

While we believe that the current training will allow recruits to manage interactions with the public in a safe and effective manner, we cannot confirm that this is the case. To address this, we have just embarked on an empirical study with the OPS to examine the efficacy of the de-escalation training offered by OPS to their recruits. We will be tracking the new recruits who completed the training we observed for the first year of their career as an OPS officer. Our goal is to determine, through self-report surveys, interviews with the recruits, field officer training assessments, and observations of the recruits during ride-alongs, whether these recruits are implementing their training in the way that is intended by OPS training staff. We will report back to the OPS on the results from that study upon its completion and recommend further modifications to their training if necessary.

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About the Authors

Craig Bennell is a Professor in the Department of Psychology at Carleton University where he also acts as Director of the Police Research Laboratory. His research is regularly funded through grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. Most of his current research is conducted in collaboration with Canadian police services. He primarily focuses on the use of de-escalation and use of force by police officers and the quality of training provided by police services in these areas, but he and his students are also conducting several evaluations of programs designed to improve police responses to people experiencing mental health crises. He is the author of 75 peer-reviewed journal articles on various aspects of policing, the author or editor of 7 books, and he has presented widely at both national and international conferences. He currently sits on the Research Advisory Committee for the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, is the Canadian Director for the Society for Police and Criminal Psychology, and serves on the editorial boards of several leading police and forensic psychology journals.

Tori Semple is a doctoral student in the Department of Psychology at Carleton University where she works in the Police Research Laboratory under the supervision of Dr. Craig Bennell. Most of her current research focuses on police use of force and de-escalation, as well as how to improve training in these areas. Her dissertation research is evaluating the effectiveness of a co-response team in London, ON that pairs a police officer and a mental health professional or community paramedic, and proactively provides support to individuals at risk of experiencing mental health-related crises. She is the author of 14 peer-reviewed journal articles and 1 book chapter on various aspects of policing and she has presented at several conferences on her research. She is currently the Book Review Editor for the journal *Police Practice and Research* and has completed several ad hoc peer reviews for forensic psychology journals.

Genevieve Brook is a master's student in the Department of Psychology at Carleton University where she works in the Police Research Laboratory under the supervision of Dr. Craig Bennell. While her undergraduate research was conducted in a correctional setting, much of her current research focuses on policing topics, such as injuries and death proximate to police encounters, as well as police use of force and de-escalation training. She has additional experience interacting with persons in crisis as a crisis counsellor. Her master's thesis will interview people who have interacted with co-responding teams while they were in crisis to assess what their experience was.

Declarations

There are no conflicts of interest to declare. No funds were provided to the authors for carrying out this assessment of training for the OPS. It was done on a purely voluntary basis in the hope that the assessment would improve the quality of de-escalation and use of force training that is offered to OPS recruits.