A TOOLKIT FOR
Community-Police Dialogue

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A Toolkit for Community-Police Dialogue
About This Tool

Welcome to this guide for implementing the community-police dialogue. This guide was developed to share best practices from the RAND Corporation's work in implementing six community-police dialogues across four sites. This guide provides background on the purpose for the development of the community-police dialogue, guidance for planning and implementing the dialogue, and materials to help carry out the dialogue effectively.

This project was funded by both the Lenzner-Coleman Challenge Fund for Criminal Justice Research and the American Arbitration Association-International Centre for Dispute Resolution Foundation®, which focuses on collaborative and community approaches to dispute resolution, as well as expanding access to alternative dispute resolution to support the prevention and resolution of conflicts. This toolkit should be of use to police departments, community members, and civic leaders across the country.

Justice Policy Program

RAND Social and Economic Well-Being is a division of the RAND Corporation that seeks to actively improve the health and social and economic well-being of populations and communities throughout the world. This research was conducted in the Justice Policy Program within RAND Social and Economic Well-Being. The program focuses on such topics as access to justice, policing, corrections, drug policy, and court system reform, as well as other policy concerns pertaining to public safety and criminal and civil justice. For more information, email justicepolicy@rand.org.
A Toolkit for Community-Police Dialogue
For more than a decade, significant media attention has focused on high-profile incidents involving police officers using deadly force against U.S. citizens who identify with racial or ethnic minority groups (see Table 1).

The U.S. Department of Justice has conducted independent investigations into policing practices in several cities where these incidents occurred, highlighting their significance in the ongoing national conversation about justice and policing.

According to these investigations, a common thread was an underlying lack of trust between local police departments and the communities they serve. These incidents have brought attention to the sometimes difficult relationships that police agencies can have with local community members—especially with racial and ethnic minority communities—and have emphasized the need for change. Such incidents have also led to the development of several large social and political movements focused on criminal justice reform and policing reform, most notably Black Lives

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**TABLE 1**

Sample of Police Use of Deadly Force Incidents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VICTIM’S NAME</th>
<th>CITY</th>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michael Brown</td>
<td>Ferguson</td>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Garner</td>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laquan McDonald</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamir Rice</td>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamar Clark</td>
<td>Minneapolis</td>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel DuBose</td>
<td>Cincinnati</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freddie Gray</td>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter Scott</td>
<td>North Charleston</td>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philando Castile</td>
<td>Minneapolis–Saint Paul</td>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alton Sterling</td>
<td>Baton Rouge</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan Edwards</td>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephon Clark</td>
<td>Sacramento</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antwon Rose II</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Floyd</td>
<td>Minneapolis</td>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breonna Taylor</td>
<td>Louisville</td>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daunte Wright</td>
<td>Brooklyn Center</td>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>2021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Matter. These movements focus on the need for change and reform not only in policing but also in U.S. society at large.

According to a 2020 Gallup poll, the vast majority of Americans feel policing is in need of some change—most report that “major changes” are needed. Ninety-seven percent of the poll’s respondents supported requiring officers to have good relations with their communities, and there was a similar level of support for punishing officer abuse and firing officers with multiple instances of abuse. Other research has emphasized that police reform should be guided by community input as part of an ongoing conversation about policing to understand and resolve conflicting goals and values. But what is the best way to get such a conversation started?

**Developing a Community-Police Dialogue**

Despite widespread recognition that community engagement is important for improving community-police relations, there is little guidance for how to systematically promote and sustain long-term relationship building. Most efforts end up being ad hoc, are led by a few officers or motivated community members, and lack substantial investment, and, thus, tend to be abandoned over time. As community members and police officers observe this cycle of lost relationships, wasted effort, and lack of follow-through, they gradually lose interest. Moreover, when community-police engagement events do occur, they often do not cover many critical issues and concepts that are key to establishing and sustaining an ongoing dialogue. Critically, community dialogues can be situated within broader efforts to promote and measure the effects of positive intergroup contact. Research tends to find that intergroup contact interventions are associated with reduced prejudice,
improved trust, and a greater likelihood of forgiveness for past transgressions.\(^5\) Moreover, intergroup contact has also been discussed as a factor in biased policing,\(^6\) as well as a key element in reconciling with collective trauma,\(^7\) for improving anti-bias training,\(^8\) and for improving police legitimacy.\(^9\) Recent research on dialogue-based approaches to intergroup contact between police and community members has shown some evidence of promise as well,\(^10\) but much of the work in this area is still developing.

In this guide, we present an approach to community-policy dialogue that is structured around three critical, interrelated levers—implicit bias, procedural justice, and reconciliation—that are defined in the “Critical Levers in Community-Police Dialogue” box.

To the extent that officer behaviors are seen as illegitimate (e.g., if an officer conducting a minor traffic stop escalates that stop into an investigation of a more serious, unrelated crime), this may indicate both a lack of procedural justice and the presence of implicit bias. The continuation of illegitimate practices among police officers prevents progress toward reconciliation.

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**Critical Levers in Community-Police Dialogue**

- **Implicit bias** refers to the “attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. Implicit biases are activated involuntarily, unconsciously, and without one’s awareness or intentional control.”\(^a\)
- **Procedural justice** is a multidimensional concept that generally captures whether police are treating people fairly. Procedural justice discussions typically focus on the “why” and “how” aspects of police engagement with the community. Such discussions might examine how police officers interact with the community, how laws are enforced, and how resources are allocated (i.e., why more officers are assigned to certain areas).
- **Reconciliation** involves the process of restoring relations. The National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice identifies seven elements that must be addressed in the reconciliation process:\(^b\)
  - a recognition of past harms
  - sustained listening to members of the public comprising important constituencies and stakeholders
  - an explicit commitment to changing policing in specific ways and in accordance with a clear normative vision
  - fact-finding
  - identification and promulgation of key experiences and narratives on both sides
  - specification of concrete changes in policies and practices that will move toward new policing practices and new relationships
  - a mechanism for driving the implementation of those changes.

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\(^a\) Staats, 2014; Staats et al., 2015.

Conversely, progress on any one of these fronts is likely to have benefits or provide opportunities to improve relations in other areas. For example, efforts to support reconciliation should help police and communities identify harmful practices and promote perceptions of procedural justice and fairness within the community.11

Thus, an understanding of how these concepts are present in community-police interactions and how they appear similarly or differently in the minds of officers and community members is critical for building positive and productive community-police relationships. The dialogue approach uses examples (called scenarios) to evoke these concepts and ensure that these topics are part of the discussion.

**Purpose of This Guide**

The aim of this guide is to provide descriptions, guidance, and materials to help communities implement a structured community-police dialogue. This guidance reflects the experiences and feedback from six dialogues facilitated by the RAND Corporation from 2017 to 2023. The process can be initiated by either the police or community members, although both will ultimately need to participate and engage mutually in planning and carrying out the dialogue.

Our approach builds on the basic concept of a dialogue—a conversation between two or more people—while using a structured and carefully planned process that brings together a diverse group of individuals representing a range of perspectives in a neutral setting to discuss critical issues regarding community-police relations. This kind of dialogue is designed to take two or three hours; each dialogue contributes to an ongoing conversation between community members and the police.

Although RAND has implemented this dialogue only with English-speaking participants, it could be translated into other languages for non-English-speaking communities. If used with non-English-speaking participants, it is important to engage community groups and officers who speak the primary language of the participants.
What Does the Dialogue Look Like?

Our proposed approach is illustrated in Figure 1. We explain the process below.

FIGURE 1
The Dialogue Process

Participants gather in a neutral or community-centered location, where they initially engage in informal conversation while having a meal or other refreshments. After a few minutes, a neutral facilitator begins the formal dialogue by explaining some ground rules to guide the conversation, and participants introduce themselves to the group. Next, the facilitator introduces a hypothetical scenario—a fictional, but plausible, situation that highlights common community-police relations issues—and describes some features of the community in which this scenario occurred (full examples are available in Appendix A). For example, an increase in crime generates increased police activity, leading to some community pushback when the policing is perceived as overenforcement or potentially biased. After this scenario is presented, participants break into small groups of roughly five community members and one or two officers to discuss their reactions to the scenario. The results of these break-out groups are later presented to the full group, which engages in a broader discussion of the issues. This process is repeated one or two times with additional scenarios. The dialogue concludes with a brief facilitated large group discussion about themes that emerged, potential solutions to address concerns that were raised, and the development of a preliminary set of actionable next steps and a plan for continued engagement between the community and the law enforcement agency.

What Do the Community and Law Enforcement Agencies Get Out of This?

Despite the challenges involved in initiating the process, developing an ongoing community-police dialogue can have many benefits. The dialogue has been designed to achieve several goals:

- Enhance capacity and participation. Our approach is intentional about recruiting participants with diverse perspectives, including people who may not typically be responsive to police outreach. It thus seeks to promote a wider
range of views and broader community networks than many other existing approaches. The dialogue emphasizes engaging participants as equal partners and building a shared vision for productive community-police relationships.

- **Promote a deeper understanding of community values and expectations.** While simple exposure to a wide array of viewpoints can improve understanding, the dialogue-based approach allows for a deeper connection between viewpoints and their underlying rationales or values. The focus is on developing a shared understanding, communicating values and expectations, and building connections. Use of a neutral, non-law-enforcement-based setting minimizes the power differential between community members and the police. The dialogue approach and use of hypothetical scenarios for discussion also removes the burden on participants to maneuver politically (i.e., to “win” an argument), make firm commitments during the discussion, or compete for scarce resources. See the sidebar on the next page for further discussion of why the dialogue uses hypothetical scenarios rather than actual events that happened in the community.

- **Create action steps toward improvement and sustainability.** At least some portion of the entrenched issues between police and the communities they serve is the result of prior unfulfilled efforts to build relationships and promises to change that were not realized or sustained. Because of this history, it is important to constantly revisit both the short- and long-term goals that have been identified in the past and to maintain an ongoing conversation. The dialogue is intended to promote greater awareness and understanding of community perspectives and to help maintain open channels of communication between the community and law enforcement for continued engagement after the dialogue.
Why Use Hypothetical Scenarios?

Using hypothetical scenarios to stimulate discussion distinguishes the RAND approach from many other participatory approaches, such as community forums. The hypothetical scenarios help ensure that everyone is on an even playing field, instead of discussing who was right or wrong in a real-life case. This is because these scenarios carry less weight than real-life events, in terms of the emotions raised, the desire to hold others accountable, and the need to provide clear and immediate solutions. This allows participants to set aside the power differentials that exist in their real-life roles (e.g., police chief versus high school student) and engage in a discussion that considers a variety of alternatives.

Although the scenarios are hypothetical, we ask participants to examine their potential roles and actions based on their actual roles and experiences. That is, we ask people to consider what connections already exist, what actions are available to them, and so on. The scenarios aim to promote discussion, problem-solving, and action planning.

We recognize that the discussion of real-life incidents can also be beneficial; however, there are other formats that may better serve those needs, such as town halls or citizen review boards.
Studies have found that similar types of dialogues have promoted *empathy*, *mutual respect*, and *trust*, with community members feeling they had a stronger voice as a result, and at least one study found positive effects for youth participants. In this research, empathy toward and from officers resulted from explaining their practices and attempting to see community members’ points of view, which served to humanize all participants. Trust in these sessions also appears to be an outgrowth of this empathy and in building relationships. The idea of knowing the officer who shows up in response to a call for service helps reduce fear or uncertainty about unfair treatment. Mutual respect or relationship building stems from hearing others’ experiences, recognizing the validity of different points of view, and building two-way communication. RAND’s own analyses have consistently shown increases in perceived common ground among adult community members, youth, and police after participating in a dialogue (see Appendix D for a sample of our findings from one dialogue session). Other long-term benefits might accrue to both community members and the police, including improvements in legitimacy, community capacity, and even mental wellness (e.g., stress reduction), although these benefits are speculative and in need of long-term research. Table 2 summarizes some of the potential benefits of participating in the community-police dialogue.

**TABLE 2.**
Benefits of Participating in the Community-Police Dialogue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INPUTS</th>
<th>OUTPUTS</th>
<th>IMMEDIATE RESULTS</th>
<th>LONG-TERM RESULTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Partnerships among community members, the police, and advocacy groups &lt;br&gt; • Neutral facilitator &lt;br&gt; • Food and drinks &lt;br&gt; • Host site &lt;br&gt; • 3–4 hours of time</td>
<td>• Expressed opinions &lt;br&gt; • Community dialogue &lt;br&gt; • New relationships</td>
<td>• Attitude change &lt;br&gt; • Knowledge gained &lt;br&gt; • Improved empathy &lt;br&gt; • Improved voice &lt;br&gt; • Mutual respect</td>
<td>• Trust &lt;br&gt; • Legitimacy &lt;br&gt; • Capacity &lt;br&gt; • Health and wellness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How to Use This Guide

The remainder of this guide is divided into three sections:

- “Planning the Dialogue” focuses on short- and longer-term activities involved in organizing a structured dialogue exercise. This section should be of interest to anyone who aims to set up the dialogue process.
- “Conducting the Dialogue” is directed to those who will be facilitating the dialogue and provides guidance both about preparing for and conducting the dialogue.
- “After the Dialogue” is directed toward organizers and other participants and focuses on follow-up activities and surveys that might be used to extend the reach of the dialogue.

We have also included resources in the appendixes to help with planning and facilitating the dialogue. They include example scenarios (Appendix A), a sample timeline and agenda (Appendix B), complementary online resources (Appendix C), an example after-action report from a RAND-implemented dialogue (Appendix D), and participant surveys (Appendix E).
Planning the Dialogue

As noted in the Introduction, the dialogue process can be set in motion by either the police or community members, although both will ultimately need to participate. In this section, we discuss the key steps involved in planning the dialogue. These steps include planning content for the dialogue, such as setting goals and developing scenarios to use for discussion, and managing logistics, such as selecting a venue and arranging for food at the event. Note that some of these steps, such as identifying relevant stakeholders and building partnerships, might occur over an extended period, while others, such as developing an agenda, will be specific to a particular event. There should be at least one point person within the police department and often more than one community representative responsible for planning and recruitment. The facilitator should also be involved as much as possible in the entire planning process and could be one of the community representatives if this individual is viewed by stakeholders as fairly neutral and objective.

Setting Goals

The first step in planning a community-police dialogue is to understand the purpose for such a dialogue and define a relevant goal or goals to serve that purpose. Some potential goals for this kind of exercise may be to enhance relations between the police and the community or to work through specific issues affecting the focal community (e.g., police shootings, negative outcomes of protest events, pretextual stops). There may sometimes be a particular segment of the community that is the focus for the dialogue, such as youth. Understanding the general goal of the exercise will help to identify the potential content of the dialogue and the relevant groups to include in the process and in the dialogue. The goal of the dialogue can be general, such as “improve community-police relations.”

The first dialogue is meant to be more of a beginning to an ongoing conversation and should, therefore, be broad enough in scope to allow for that openness. Setting a broad goal for the first dialogue can encourage participants to discuss whatever is on their minds, including negative experiences and perceptions. It is common that participants will spend a lot of time airing their perspectives in the initial dialogue and setting a goal that allows for the expression of both positive and negative views is an important piece of the dialogue.

Previous community-police dialogues have covered such topics as implicit bias, procedural justice, trust and respect, communication, body-worn cameras, police in schools, response to mental health crises, and maintaining long-term relationships.
These topics can lead to challenging discussions, but they also provide a means for participants to understand others’ perspectives. For example, in one discussion about the increase in police presence in response to rising crime, some youth expressed concern about the uneven impact of this increased presence on racial and ethnic minority communities, saying that the presence of police made them fearful because of their past experiences with the police or having heard about the unpredictable behavior of some officers. Officers attempted to explain why they increase their presence when crime increases and acknowledged the youths’ fear of police as something that’s important to factor into their interactions with community members. Some officers acknowledged that they had also experienced implicit bias based on their gender or race.

**Identifying Relevant Stakeholders and Assigning Key Roles**

The next step in the planning of the dialogue is to identify and engage the relevant groups of people who should be involved in the development and implementation of the dialogue. This step often requires a longer-term process of building partnerships with groups that represent or serve the target populations for the dialogue (e.g., police departments, relevant community organizations, relevant advocacy groups). Community organizations could include faith-based groups, youth-serving organizations, school- or college-based programs, neighborhood organizations, social service agencies, business district groups, or community advocacy organizations. Building these partnerships may require organizers to share information about the goal(s) of the dialogue, the reason(s) for engaging the prospective partners, and what the partnership entails. Partners may take on a variety of responsibilities from
simply sharing information about the dialogue with their group members to actively recruiting participants for the dialogue, or from offering transportation to the dialogue site to providing food, lending a venue for the dialogue, and actively participating in the dialogue.

Clear communication about potential roles will help everyone get on the same page and will set clear expectations for how partners can contribute. The discussion of logistics later in this section may provide more insights about the different responsibilities that may be divided among partners.

**Selecting a Facilitator**

The facilitator is an essential component of the dialogue exercise. The person selected for this role should be someone who is an experienced moderator and, particularly, someone who can navigate difficult conversations and has knowledge of community-police relations. An experienced moderator will possess important skills, such as an exceptional ability to listen to and moderate diverse perspectives without judgment or bias, communicate in a manner that conveys openness and understanding, manage conflict during a discussion, and facilitate consensus building and the respectful acceptance of disagreements. The facilitator should also be engaging, patient, and compassionate in order to help participants feel at ease and comfortable engaging in discussions on sensitive topics.

The facilitator should also be someone who is considered a neutral party, so participants do not feel the facilitator is partial to certain groups or certain perspectives. Often, this requirement will mean selecting someone who is outside the groups participating and, potentially, outside the groups organizing the dialogue. It
will be important for dialogue organizers to work with the facilitator ahead of time to orient them to the goals and the content of the dialogue, so they are sufficiently prepared to lead the participants through the dialogue exercise. The next section, “Conducting the Dialogue,” provides guidance on the facilitator’s role.

In addition to selecting the main facilitator, organizers need to line up a few supporting facilitators with similar neutrality and experience in navigating difficult conversations to moderate some of the smaller group conversations that will take place during the dialogue exercise. Supporting facilitators should also be considered neutral parties as much as possible and likely will be, but do not need to be, affiliated with the lead facilitator in some way. Examples of potential supporting facilitators include college students or professors, members of community organizations who work in and understand the community but are not directly focused on policing issues (e.g., youth-serving organizations, neighborhood organizations, social service agencies, community advocacy organizations), teachers, and possibly members of city government (e.g., those engaged in efforts related to youth development, human rights and equity, cultural affairs, disability, workforce development, housing).

**Identifying and Engaging Participants**

Organizers can identify participants for the dialogue based on the goals and the target populations for meeting those goals. Ideally, the partners selected for carrying out the dialogue will have a connection to these target populations and can help to engage them. In general, community groups and key community members may be good resources for reaching the relevant people for the dialogue. This step may also entail leveraging existing networks and building relationships with others in the community outside those existing partnerships and networks. In some cases, it may be helpful to host pre-dialogue meetings to discuss the goals and plan for the dialogue in order to obtain buy-in from a broader group of individuals who may be able to help with reaching the target audience(s). To ensure that large group discussions are manageable, we suggest that a maximum of 25 community members and six police officers participate in the dialogue exercise.

Several preparations are required for recruiting dialogue participants. One important step is to think through how the dialogue will be described to prospective participants, including specifying what the dialogue is, what the goals are, and what participants will gain from their participation. Among other things, the dialogue may provide an opportunity for participants’ voices to be heard on key topics, help them start to build key relationships to make progress in community-police relations, and provide the impetus for ongoing engagement in this space. These prospective gains may be particularly important in communities where these relationships and types of engagement are lacking, and where specific populations, such as youth, are not traditionally included in these kinds of conversations. Doing some work up front with the partners to understand what the relevant groups for the dialogue might want to get out of such an exercise can help to highlight and com-
communicate those opportunities during the recruitment process. The use of social media, such as Facebook or Instagram ads, or posting flyers on partner organizations’ social media pages could be good ways to increase outreach efforts at no or minimal cost.

It can be challenging to ensure that the dialogue includes participants who do not typically respond to outreach for engagement with law enforcement. Thus, it is critical to invest time in building relationships with the various groups from which participants will be recruited to capture their perspectives. Potential barriers to participation include a lack of understanding of the goals and objectives and feeling like nothing will change. To address these concerns, develop and distribute informational materials, schedule in-person or video meetings with organization leaders, and offer opportunities to directly engage prospective participants at standing meetings, at scheduled events to address questions, or on an ad hoc basis by phone. Emphasize the possible benefits of participation and the intention to prepare and equip the participants for ongoing engagement to influence change in the community after the event. This open and transparent approach may mitigate some participants’ concerns.

If possible, it will be helpful to obtain some diversity in the dialogue participants, and this may be achieved by recruiting among different organizations or sources or from intentionally seeking out participants with diverse backgrounds. For instance, if recruiting youth, it might be helpful to recruit youth from various racial and ethnic backgrounds, genders, schools, or advocacy groups. If recruiting police officers, it will be helpful to think through such details as whether the goal(s) of the dialogue has a specific focus, in which case it may be helpful to engage offi-
cers who work in that focal area, or if there is a wider focus, command staff may be better suited for the dialogue. If there is a youth focus, it will be preferable to select officers who demonstrate an interest in and experience with helping youth. In general, engage participants who want to make a positive change and who are willing to engage in conversations and listen to varying perspectives.

Officers should ideally be selected based on their direct interaction with community participants. For instance, if the focus is on a particular neighborhood or community, officers who typically work in that neighborhood should be asked to participate first. If the focus is on youth, officers who commonly work in or near schools would be preferred participants. Our past efforts have included line-level officers up to the rank of captain, depending on the relevant participants. For instance, for dialogues that include community leadership (e.g., pastors, city council representatives, school administrators), higher-ranking officers are more appropriate, given the power dynamics represented and the likelihood that discussions will involve higher-level policy decisions. For a typical dialogue with community members who are not in leadership positions, line-level and supervisory officers (e.g., sergeants) are ideal. Officers have participated in the past as part of their regular shift, which requires the department to account for potential staffing changes for the three to four hours of the dialogue. For these reasons, recruiting officers is usually the responsibility of the partner police department. In RAND-implemented dialogues, officers have participated in uniform, but this decision should be left up to the police department and community organizers.

If the dialogue is being carried out as part of a research study, organizers will need to think about whether obtaining consent should be a necessary part of the process when recruiting participants. If youth are involved, it will be particularly important to ensure that processes are in place to obtain proper permission from legal guardians ahead of time and to have youth provide their assent to participate in the exercise. Regardless of whether consent is required as part of the engagement process, it will be essential to communicate with participants about the confidentiality of what is discussed in the dialogue.

We suggest implementing the Chatham House Rule as part of the ground rules and having everyone commit to keeping participant identities and the information discussed confidential, so that everyone feels more comfortable speaking openly about the dialogue topics. However, be aware that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, and participants should be reminded not to share information that they would be uncomfortable with sharing with others outside the dialogue.
Developing or Selecting the Scenarios

The scenarios will be the backbone of the dialogue exercise and will drive the topics to be discussed among participants. For this reason, it is important to keep in mind the goals of the dialogue and the type of issues you hope the participants can work through in their conversations when developing the scenarios. The scenarios should be realistic and relatable to the participants, but they should be hypothetical situations rather than actual events that have taken place in the focal community. Keeping the scenarios hypothetical may somewhat reduce the likelihood of evoking emotional reactions from participants and make it more likely for participants to remain engaged and willing to listen to varying perspectives on a topic. Tailor the scenarios to be particularly relevant to participants. For instance, when developing youth-focused dialogue exercises, the scenarios should contain situations where youth are involved and that are likely to be a common occurrence or issue for youth in the community.

Another aspect of developing the scenarios involves structuring them so that participants are eased into difficult conversations. This can be done by starting off with a scenario where there is a somewhat milder point of friction to discuss, which then develops into a more serious situation. By using two or three scenarios for the dialogue and building on them to get to a more substantial point of conflict, participants can start to build rapport while learning how to have fruitful conversations around somewhat difficult topics. This gradual approach will hopefully carry over similar dialogue dynamics from the rapport-building conversation to the discussion of more-difficult situations.
In developing scenarios, it may be useful to incorporate discussions of implicit bias, procedural justice, and reconciliation, which are all important for improving community-police relations (see our discussion in the Introduction). Some key questions that might be incorporated into the dialogue scenarios are shown in the “Pillars of Community-Police Relations” box.

### Pillars of Community-Police Relations

When considering implicit biases in police agencies, ask the following:

- Do police officers identify with and understand the needs of the community?
- Does the police agency offer evidence-based training to reduce the influence of implicit bias among officers?
- Are police officers racially and ethnically representative of the communities they serve?
- Do police officers employ tactics that might worsen the role of implicit bias in decisionmaking (e.g., engaging in stop, question, and frisk; using arrest or citation quotas as performance measures; unfocused proactive policing)?

When considering procedural justice in police agencies, ask the following:

- Is the police department developing policies and procedures to promote procedural justice as a goal in and of itself?
- Are police officers trained in procedural justice techniques?
- Does the police department provide opportunities for the community to give it feedback about police officers’ practices and interactions with community members?
- Are police resources distributed appropriately? Do law enforcement actions affect certain areas in the community more than others?

When considering reconciliation in police agencies, ask the following:

- Are there open channels for community members to communicate with police officers and are these channels effective?
- Are the stated intentions of the police department clear with regard to its commitment to reconciliation?
- Are police officers aware of the stated goals of the department and are they trained to engage in activities that promote reconciliation?

### Setting the Location, Time, and Other Logistical Details

So far, our discussion of planning has focused on the people and key concepts involved in the dialogue. We now turn to a discussion of its logistics, including the location, timing, and incentives involved in the dialogue exercise.

The location for the dialogue should be a place that is accessible to the target population(s) and where community members would feel comfortable and safe. In selecting the location, organizers should also consider how participants will travel.
to the site. For instance, will there be transportation or travel vouchers provided for those who need them? Is it feasible for some participants to walk to the location? Is there free parking available? Are public transit options nearby? If the dialogue has a youth-specific focus, some of these considerations may be especially important since youth may not be able to drive or may not feel comfortable traveling longer distances on public transit. Partnerships may play an essential role in selecting the location since they may be able to offer up their own spaces or spaces used as part of their work (e.g., YMCA facilities, schools, churches). The space should be set up to foster small and large group discussions with tables clustered around one another, as well as a check-in table. Confirm that the venue allows food and has technology capabilities if needed.

The timing of the dialogue is also largely dependent on the target population(s). For instance, dialogues with a youth focus will need to be scheduled outside school hours. This likely means scheduling the dialogue shortly after school lets out or on a weekend. Feedback from partners on this decision point may help identify days and time frames that are the most feasible for each target population. In general, a good rule of thumb will be to allocate about two hours to set up and break down the dialogue exercise space and about three hours for the dialogue itself, possibly including an interactive meal between all parties involved (the time needed for setup and breakdown may vary depending on the location).

Because the dialogue requires a relatively large time commitment from participants, organizers should consider providing a meal or refreshments. A meal provides a key opportunity for dialogue participants to interact with one another in a more relaxed and informal manner, and we recommend including one on the dialogue schedule. The meal can take place either prior to or halfway through the dialogue, but allocating some time for participants to interact informally prior to the start of the dialogue can serve as somewhat of an icebreaker for the different groups of people participating. If a full meal is not possible, organizers should still plan to provide some form of refreshments. Partners may be able to contribute to this step by offering preferred local vendors or funding. Neighborhood groups, churches, restaurants, businesses, and perhaps even city government may be willing to contribute food and refreshments.

Those organizing the dialogue may also wish to offer other incentives to some or all participants, although it is important to be aware that police officers may not be able to accept such incentives, depending on department policies. Incentives might be monetary or non-monetary. As with meals, engaging partners or other stakeholders at this point may be helpful in providing incentives. Ideally, the incentives will offer sufficient compensation for the time spent participating in the dialogue and may help in some way to meet the needs of the target population(s). At minimum, food and drinks should be provided.
Developing the Agenda

Ideally, organizers should develop two versions of an agenda for the dialogue: one for those planning the dialogue exercise and one for those participating in the exercise. Both agendas should be developed with partner input in mind.

The internal agenda will include the schedule for gathering materials, setting up and breaking down the space, and arranging for the food and refreshments to be ready at the appropriate times, and it will provide a detailed rundown of the entire dialogue exercise. This internal agenda should also specify roles for each task.

The agenda for dialogue participants will be solely focused on the activities during the exercise. This agenda should include time for participants to interact more informally both prior to the start of the exercise and during a break about halfway through. These opportunities for interaction can be centered around food and refreshments.

Developing and Fielding Surveys as Part of the Dialogue

Because the dialogue was developed and implemented as part of a research project, our team developed surveys that were administered at the beginning of the dialogue, after each scenario, and at the end of the exercise. The surveys are tailored to each participant group (e.g., community members, law enforcement personnel). The pre-dialogue survey captures demographic information about the participants, such as their community role or job title, length of time in the community, and baseline information, such as what they hope to gain by participating in the dialogue and their current perceptions of the community or law enforcement. Post-scenario surveys ask about participants’ views of the scenario content and the interaction among participants during the small group discussions. Finally, the post-dialogue survey assesses the extent to which the exercise met participants’ expectations, changed their perceptions, and increased their knowledge. All of these surveys offer valuable information about the immediate impact of the dialogue. See Appendix E for a sample of these survey questions.
To reiterate, the dialogue process can be set in motion by either the police or community members, although both will ultimately need to participate. **Planning the dialogue involves the following steps:**

**Set goals.** Understand the purpose for such a dialogue and define a relevant goal or goals to serve that purpose. Some potential goals for this kind of exercise may be to enhance relations between the police and the community or work through specific issues affecting the focal community (e.g., police shootings, negative outcomes of protest events, pretextual stops).

**Identify relevant stakeholders and assign key roles.** Clear communication about potential roles will help everyone get on the same page and will set clear expectations for how partners can contribute.

**Select a facilitator.** The person selected for this role should be someone who is an experienced moderator and, particularly, someone who can navigate difficult conversations and who has knowledge of community-police relations. The facilitator should also be someone who would be considered a neutral party by participants.

**Identify and engage participants.** Organizers can identify participants for the dialogue based on the goals and the target populations for meeting those goals.

**Develop or select the scenarios.** The scenarios should be realistic and relatable to the participants, but they should be hypothetical situations rather than actual events that have taken place in the focal community.

**Set the location, time, and incentives involved in the dialogue exercise.**

**Develop the agenda.** Ideally, organizers should develop two versions of an agenda for the dialogue: one for those planning the dialogue exercise and one for those participating in the exercise. Both agendas should be developed with partner input in mind.

**Develop and field surveys.** Surveys allow organizers to monitor participant goals, viewpoints, and the impact of the dialogue.
A Toolkit for Community-Police Dialogue
Conducting the Dialogue
(FACILITATOR GUIDE)

The process of conducting the dialogue involves several preparation steps and several activities during the course of the dialogue exercise. These activities are led by the main facilitator (and any supporting facilitators). We first discuss steps to be taken in advance of the dialogue, including the preparation of materials and the development of ground rules. We then walk through the steps in your role as facilitator during the dialogue, including welcoming participants, explaining the goals and ground rules, walking through the scenarios, making the most of the scenarios, dealing with any issues, reviewing lessons learned, and developing an action plan for next steps.

Advance Preparation and Materials

There are several important documents and resources that are needed to support the dialogue. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- signs to direct participants to the dialogue location
- name tags and markers for participants and facilitators
- pens and notepads for participants to use to jot down notes during the discussion
- printed copies of the external agenda to distribute to participants and the detailed internal agenda for facilitators
- printed copies of the Microsoft PowerPoint presentation containing the dialogue scenarios and discussion prompts
- printed copies of the discussion questions
- a laptop computer and flash drive with the above-mentioned Microsoft PowerPoint presentation saved to it and various adapters for connecting to the room’s projector (provided the dialogue site supports such technology)
- printed copies of any consent forms and data collection materials (e.g., participant surveys, audio recorders for each table) if the dialogue is being conducted as part of a research study
- food, drinks, plastic cups and utensils, and paper goods.

You and supporting facilitators should arrive about an hour before the dialogue start time to ensure that tables are set up as requested, test the technology (ensure that the projector works, the Microsoft PowerPoint file opens), distribute printed materials on the tables for each participant, prepare the sign-in table where partici-
pants check in and receive their name tags, and set up the food and refreshments
area. Additional preparations will be needed if a full meal is planned.

**Welcoming Participants and Setting the Tone**

As participants arrive, designate someone to greet them and direct them to their
tables. Be mindful of the participants’ roles to ensure an appropriate distribution of
the various types of participants at each table (e.g., three to four community repre-
sentatives and one to two law enforcement personnel at each table). If people arrive
together, encourage them to sit apart.

The physical space should be set up in a manner that is conducive to partici-
pation and discussion. If, on arrival, you see that it is not, do your best to make
it better. Having people sit in circles rather than in rows of seats is an obvious
example. In the same regard, you (and the other facilitators) should use the physical
space to maximize participants’ contributions. The general management process
of the meeting will alternate between presenting information (introduction and sce-
narios), encouraging group discussion, and guiding group discussion, as necessary.
If the session begins with a meal, you will welcome people and direct them to the
food and allow for casual conversations to start on their own. If someone is sitting
alone or not engaged in conversation, a supporting facilitator can engage them in
conversation.
Establishing the Ground Rules

Ground rules are important to promote conversation and dialogue and to provide structure to the exercise. The ground rules provide the guidelines for a productive meeting. Below, we provide several suggested ground rules in multiple categories. You should feel free to use as many or as few of these ground rules as necessary. While it may seem like these lists are excessive or unnecessary for conversations among adults, they are important for the types of discussions the dialogue is meant to promote. That is, they are especially important for difficult yet productive discussions, which differ from simple everyday conversations that have less inherent structure or purpose.

The first set of general rules that we discuss are directed toward the facilitators. Mengis and Eppler reviewed and synthesized a large body of literature regarding roles and rules in organizational conversations. Their findings provide constructive ways to support group conversation and dialogue. While not all of these points will be useful in every setting, as a facilitator, try to visualize and practice how you might implement some of the following conversational rules:

- Develop alternatives, don’t force consensus, but seek consensus with qualification.
- Disarm attacks by clarifying intentions.
- Legitimize emotions.
- Suspend roles and status.
- Uncover underlying assumptions.
- Ask for the person’s reasoning.
- Suspend assumptions, certainties, and judgment.
- Do not polarize viewpoints, but explore and respect differences and look for their interconnections and the shared meaning by putting yourself in the other person’s shoes.
- Focus on the dynamic nature of relationships.
- Think in terms of positive possibilities and solutions rather than problems.
- Be aware of your intentions and do not impose those intentions on the participants.
- Alternate the contributions of participants in balanced ways.
- Use a neutral and moderate tone.

In addition, you should communicate specific rules for participants, scenarios, and discussions. Below, we provide suggested rules for participants, scenarios, discussion, and specific communities. Breaking up the rules in parts may help people digest and remember them.

PARTICIPANT RULES

Ground rules for participants of the dialogue attempt to prevent barriers to participation and might address potential issues related to the existing roles and relationships among the assembled individuals. Such issues might be related to feelings of inferiority or superiority and resentment toward others and mindsets that are closed
off to exploring new ideas and not trusting other participants. The following list proposes some ground rules to cover with participants:

- Everyone in the room is equally qualified to participate in the dialogue exercise.
- Any existing power differentials in your outside roles do not exist in this room.
- Everyone’s perspective is valued and should be respected during this discussion.
- Do not interrupt one another and do not monopolize the discussion.
- If you are unable to put aside your differences with someone in your discussion group, let the facilitator know immediately.
- No single individual has all the answers. There is no right answer. We are here to listen and learn from one another.
- If you feel yourself getting upset, try thinking about your real-world role from a disconnected or outsider’s perspective. Police officers, no one here is telling you how to do your job. Community members, no one here is telling you that your experience is wrong.
- It is okay to discuss things that were said during the dialogue, but everyone’s comments should remain confidential. Do not attribute comments (good or bad) to any participants after the dialogue ends.

Remind participants to adhere to the Chatham House Rule. In addition to saying these rules to participants, we recommend placing written instructions with these rules at each table that ask participants to respect the diverse opinions of their table-mates and not to identify who expressed any opinions during the dialogue to any of the dialogue participants.

**SCENARIO RULES**

Ground rules that focus on the scenarios are intended to prevent participants from interpreting the scenarios incorrectly and from introducing topics and ideas that stray far beyond the scenario. Some scenario ground rules might include the following:

- By design, no scenario is a perfect reflection of reality. No single scenario will address all components of an issue, but you should try to stick only to the issues present in the scenario.
- Some of the scenarios might be difficult to discuss or very personal to you (i.e., you’ve experienced it). It’s okay to draw on this experience, but realize that others in your group may not have had that experience, or they may have experienced this scenario differently. If the scenario is too difficult for you, please feel free to take a mental break by leaving and come back to the group when you’re ready.
- Try to pinpoint the key issues identified in the scenario and clarify them with the group.
- If you have questions about the scenario, ask the facilitator for clarification.
DISCUSSION RULES

The ground rules for discussion are the most important and the longest list of rules since the success of the dialogue depends on having challenging and engaging discussions:

- Take responsibility for the quality of the discussion. This dialogue exercise belongs to you.
- Do not interrupt one another.
- Ask for clarification if you are confused.
- It is okay to criticize an idea, but not a person. Criticism should be constructive and provide specific examples or suggestions for productive, positive change.
- Be slow to interpret a critique as a personal attack.
- Challenge one another, but do so respectfully.
- Use appropriate language and tone (imagine that you are in church, at school, at work, or talking to an elder or grandparent).
- Do not monopolize the discussion.
- Focus on defining the main issues, problems, and current weaknesses that are preventing appropriate responses to these issues.
- Respond to issues and criticisms, when possible, with hypothetical action steps.

Keep track of which ground rules are used in a particular dialogue exercise and, to improve the next exercise, take notes regarding potential new ground rules that might make the sessions more productive. You might also ask participants if they think there should be other ground rules or if some ground rules were more helpful than others. This latter point might help you identify which ground rules are the most useful reminders for participants during the session.
COMMUNITY-SPECIFIC GROUND RULES

Depending on the history of community-police relations in a given area, it may be necessary to develop specific guidelines for that community, particularly those that relate to controversial past incidents or those that relate to certain relationships that may be sources of conflict. These ground rules might ask participants to avoid discussing certain incidents or issues that are not directly relevant to the dialogue. However, if attempting to avoid such issues prevents the session from being productive, it may be necessary to discuss such issues as part of the dialogue to the extent that this is possible.

In the next several paragraphs, we focus on steps that take place at the time of the dialogue exercise. You should include rules at your discretion, since you know your audience and the purpose(s) of the dialogue that you are conducting.

Opening Remarks

Begin your opening remarks by providing a brief overview of the purpose of the dialogue, introducing facilitators and the community and law enforcement partners who assisted with planning the session, and expressing appreciation for everyone’s participation. Invite participants to introduce themselves briefly by providing their name, affiliation, and the reason they chose to participate.

After participant introductions, provide a brief but detailed description of the dialogue, outlining why this approach was selected, describing the main goals of this approach, and explaining how the dialogue will be conducted, including the ground rules.

Ground rules should be articulated as early in the exercise as possible and definitely before the participants begin engaging in discussion. Make sure everyone understands the rules (ask if there are questions), and get a verbal commitment from participants that they agree to follow the rules. Come prepared with specific examples of how someone might break a ground rule and provide suggestions for how to avoid breaking ground rules and for responding to other participants who break rules. We provide guidance on how facilitators should respond to rule breakers later in this section.

We recommend that you use a visual aid (such as the Microsoft PowerPoint presentations found at www.rand.org/t/tla615-1) to help your participants understand the dialogue format and the ground rules. If necessary, review the consent forms at this time, before beginning the dialogue. Allow about 20 to 30 minutes for opening remarks.

Conducting the Dialogue Exercise

After setting the tone, allowing participants to get to know each other through introductions, explaining the purpose of the dialogue, and reviewing ground rules to ensure that all participants are comfortable with expectations, it’s time to begin the dialogue. The exercise includes the following components: presenting the hypo-
Presenting the Hypothetical Community

During the planning stage for the dialogue, community and law enforcement partners should have discussed the focal community, issues relevant to the community, and the overall goals of the dialogue. This information should inform the development of the hypothetical community. The description of the community should include information about the community members (e.g., gender, age, race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status) and law enforcement personnel characteristics (e.g., the racial and ethnic composition relative to the community). In addition, highlight national issues that relate to, but are not exactly the same as, concerns expressed by the focal community in which the dialogue is conducted (e.g., national unrest and protests regarding police-involved shootings). This approach provides high-level context for the more-specific issues occurring in the community.

For example, if the community is concerned about law enforcement personnel’s disparate treatment of members of racial and ethnic minority groups, it may be useful to present a hypothetical community that has characteristics that will allow for discussion of this issue. Draw connections between the national and local issues to help narrow the focus on the hypothetical community. For example, national issues about policing could lead to more protests of police by local community members or youth, and in response, the police department begins to pull back its services in these communities, particularly if officer actions are subject to external review. See the “Setting the Community Context” box for an explanation of how the scenarios follow a common pattern.

**Setting the Community Context**

In their existing format, the scenarios are shaped around common themes seen in policing of urban, racial and ethnic minority communities (see Appendix A). They usually involve topics that highlight the pillars of community-police relations and other common themes, such as these communities feeling overpoliced and underprotected. In the example where national events lead to local protests and more scrutiny of local police behavior, when the police department responds by reducing officer activity, the community’s concerns about overpolicing are not being received in a way that increases community members’ protection. Community criticism and the negative reaction by the police widens the lack of understanding across the two groups. The scenarios are intended to highlight these dynamics so that they are obvious to all parties.
After presenting the hypothetical community, remind the participants that you would like them to consider the following questions during the scenario reviews:

- What’s your reaction?
- What’s most important to you?
- Who do you trust for information?
- Who would you talk to?
- What would you want to happen next?

Introducing these broad questions will encourage participants to begin thinking about their priorities, issues related to trust, key stakeholders, and how best to respond to such situations.

**Describing the Scenarios**

Each dialogue typically includes two to three hypothetical scenarios that escalate in intensity from the first to the last scenario. The specific topics presented should be informed by the goals and objectives of the dialogue and issues the community and law enforcement partners would like to begin to address. Scenarios should aim to reflect perspectives of the various stakeholders who are participating in the dialogue (e.g., community members may perceive that they are being overpoliced, while law enforcement officials might view community members as uncooperative with police inquiries). Scenarios should also create opportunities for mutual learning about participants’ behavior and actions (e.g., police officers may explain why their presence has increased in certain communities).

Scenarios are presented along a four- to six-month time frame, with about two months in between. The initial scenario includes a set of moderately problematic
events that begin to generate tension between the community and law enforcement. For example, there is a spike in crime, which results in increased police presence and frequent stops of community members for minor offenses. Community members become frustrated and complain of overpolicing, excessive use of force, and racial bias. In response, the police chief defends the officers’ behavior but authorizes an external audit of police practices. Police officers express concern that they are subject to undue scrutiny, and this contributes to low morale. Each scenario increases in intensity and concludes with a scenario that depicts a flashpoint event (e.g., a police-involved shooting). See Appendix A for example scenarios.

Following each scenario, present a set of general and scenario-specific questions for participants at each table to discuss. If possible, each table should include a facilitator to help guide the discussion, take notes of important themes and possible solutions, and manage any interpersonal conflict that may arise. Depending on the number of scenarios included, allocate about ten minutes for a small group discussion, then invite each group to share key insights with the larger group. The large group discussion should last about 20 minutes.

**Facilitating Small Group and Large Group Discussions**

Scenario discussions are at the heart of the community-police dialogue. Their main purpose is to give participants a topic to discuss rather than having to start from scratch. Also, since the dialogue scenarios are hypothetical, they carry less weight (in terms of evoked emotions, the need to provide clear and immediate solutions, being held accountable) than real scenarios. This allows participants to engage in discussions that consider a variety of alternatives and to set aside power dif-

**Scenarios should also create opportunities for mutual learning about participants' behavior and actions.**
ferentials inherent in their roles external to the dialogue (e.g., police chief versus neighborhood watch coordinator). During the discussions and throughout the entire dialogue, you should reiterate that everyone is equal and no one’s view is superior to anyone else’s, and immediately correct any instances where power differentials are imposed. Most of the time, participants will freely discuss the issues presented in the scenarios, since they are likely familiar with similar scenarios and are interested participants. In this context, your role as facilitator will be to guide the discussions to ensure that participants stay on track and to prevent any discussions from getting too emotional or accusatory. In other cases, you may need to actively encour-

Reiterate that **everyone is equal and no one’s view is superior to anyone else’s**, and immediately correct any instances where **power differentials are imposed**.

The scenarios are meant to stimulate discussion on their own. An important part of the dialogue exercise involves addressing constitutional policing and the three pillars of community-police relationships: implicit bias, procedural justice, and reconciliation. Admittedly, these are multifaceted concepts that may be new to some participants, and it is likely that only a few participants will have extensive experience discussing them. You should regularly remind participants of the definitions of these concepts and prompt participants to speak to these

**ENCOURAGING DISCUSSION**
You should think about what the ideal dialogue exercise discussion would look like in your community. This is the standard to work toward while facilitating the exercise. Your part will depend on the participants’ willingness to engage, of course, but you should be prepared for the discussion to go in any direction. The scenarios are meant to stimulate discussion on their own.

An important part of the dialogue exercise involves addressing constitutional policing and the three pillars of community-police relationships: implicit bias, procedural justice, and reconciliation. Admittedly, these are multifaceted concepts that may be new to some participants, and it is likely that only a few participants will have extensive experience discussing them. You should regularly remind participants of the definitions of these concepts and prompt participants to speak to these
concepts as much as possible. This approach should provide ample opportunity for discussion.

You should try to foster a sense of fairness and equity in participation. Some people will be more willing to participate and have more to say than others. Participation should not be forced, but you should feel free to ask people who seem hesitant if they’d like to add their opinion. The exercise can include activities that involve going around the entire group for input or commentary. The most common way to do this is to have everyone introduce themselves, or have people discuss in pairs before discussing with the group. This approach can be replicated for other simple topics or questions as well.

**MAKING TENSE DISCUSSIONS PRODUCTIVE CONVERSATIONS**

During the exercise, it is likely that at some point, everyone participating (including facilitators) will feel uncomfortable or tense. This is normal, since it is not only a consequence of starting a new dialogue among unfamiliar people but also a consequence of having conversations about emotionally charged topics. Discussions about community-police relationships inevitably involve emotion, with complicated histories and uncertainty about the future. Your goal should be to harness the energy provided by the emotion and tension and direct it toward productive dialogue. You could do this by acknowledging participants’ feelings and sentiments, encouraging participants to refocus on problem-solving, and finding helpful ways to address the concerns that contribute to these emotions.

Importantly, you should remember that tense conversations can also be good conversations. What do we mean by good conversations? First, think about the last good conversation that you had and how it made you feel. Some emotions that might result from a good conversation include feeling uplifted, energized, and optimistic about the future. It’s unlikely that you will perfectly realize that ideal state when you facilitate, but this is a useful mental model to have for what the exercise should look like and it can help you focus your preparation on working toward that ideal.

**TABLE FACILITATION**

The supporting facilitators at each table play a critical role in this process. Some key things to consider are listed here. In general, only a light touch is necessary. First, come prepared for the discussion. Understand you will be managing different perspectives and that there are power dynamics at play between the community and the police. Another preparatory step is to preemptively summarize the content of the conversation and emphasize that you understand that these are sensitive subjects. Next, as a table facilitator, be prepared to maintain neutrality no matter what is said. Use neutral responses, such as “That’s
interesting,” “I see your point,” or “I hear you” to avoid revealing your own viewpoints or biases. Once the dialogue has started, the main role of the table facilitator is to listen. This means actively listening to everyone at the table, referencing their points in the discussion as it progresses, and affirming the validity of their thoughts. As part of this, you may need to probe people's discussion points, even if they might be a little off-subject. Additionally, keep track of who is participating and actively engage everyone at the table. If someone is controlling the discussion, gently solicit others’ thoughts at an appropriate time. In particular, make space for individuals who are particularly quiet. Involving them early will help them gain confidence throughout the session. This is particularly important if there are obvious power dynamics at play. At appropriate times, be sure to reflect on the points made during and after discussion. Here you are trying to truly consider what people are saying and engage with their thoughts to build out the discussion. You should advise participants to think and reflect carefully before talking. Finally, throughout the dialogue session, try to leave space for informal interaction (during meal or refreshment breaks or during ice breakers) and less serious conversations.

DEALING WITH RULE BREAKERS OR DISRUPTIVE PARTICIPANTS

While the ground rules for the dialogue exercise will likely be obvious and agreeable to many participants, it only takes one rule breaker to disrupt the entire session. If this occurs, you should take the following steps to reestablish order:

- First, if possible, simply redirecting the group conversation in a more productive direction (e.g., “What are some action steps we can identify for this issue?”) will be useful for some instances of rule breaking.
- A second course of action might involve reminding the small group or the entire group about one or two specific ground rules. By framing this point as a helpful reminder for everyone, it doesn’t directly target the rule breaker and may be helpful to others. This approach reflects the assumption that some ground rules might be more difficult to follow than others.
- A third option is to address the rule breaker directly by paraphrasing their statement, asking them to clarify it, or asking them to come up with a solution. This approach reflects the assumption that the individual may be trying to articulate something productive, but they are doing so in a manner that might not be appropriate for the situation.
- Finally, if the rule breaking is extreme (e.g., yelling or inciting violence) or particularly distracting to the group, it may be necessary to remove the person, temporarily or permanently, from the exercise, leaving the decision of whether to return to the dialogue up to the rule breaker, contingent on them agreeing to follow the ground rules. The person(s) responsible for removing a disruptive participant should include at least one person from the facilitation team, with the option of including someone who knows the disruptor personally.
The “Tips for Dealing with Disruptive Participants” box summarizes these general tips for dealing with rule breakers and disruptive participants.

**Tips for Dealing with Disruptive Participants**

- Position yourself near them or so that they can see you.
- Redirect their statements by paraphrasing and asking them to clarify.
- Turn negative statements into positive ones by asking them to generate solutions or action steps.
- Ask for another group member’s input (directed at the issue, not the negative comment).
- Remind people about the specific ground rules that are being broken.
- Check in with the person individually.

If there are multiple disruptors and the tone of the entire conversation has taken a turn in a negative direction, there are a few options to get the dialogue back on track. One option is to pause the discussion, bring everyone together, go over the ground rules again, and ask for everyone’s agreement to the ground rules. Another option is to have the entire group take a short break, restarting with a review of the ground rules and moving on to a new scenario. Ending the dialogue completely should be a last resort. One drawback is that ending the session abruptly could reinforce existing attitudes toward collaboration, leading to the conclusion that it is impossible to work together. On the other hand, such a result could be seen as a wakeup call. The fact that the group is unable to follow conversation rules to interact in a civil manner toward each other might be embarrassing to many of them and could motivate future efforts of cooperation.

**Concluding the Session**

While it is important to debrief and summarize the main points from the dialogue exercise, most of the concluding steps should involve identifying next steps for moving forward. Below, we discuss some concluding steps and provide tips for how to follow up on the initial dialogue with another exercise or other activities.

**ENDING ON A POSITIVE NOTE**

Although individual discussions and the exercise discussion as a whole will certainly involve criticisms of or areas for improvement in participating organizations, try to never let discussions end negatively. It is important to turn a criticism or negative point into a search for potential action steps. To have the most productive session possible, you should guide discussions toward creating positive solutions or ideal end results. You could also guide the group to consider results and actions by
asking open-ended, reflective questions: Where is it we want to get to? What results do we want to achieve? How are we going to get there? What actions should we take to achieve our desired results?

If time permits, it might be useful to ask one representative from each participating organization about their experience in the session. Specifically, they might share one thing they were surprised by, one thing they want to understand better, and one thing they are certain they will do between now and the next session.

**TAKEAWAYS**

A great way to wrap up the session is to poll the group for their perceived takeaways of the discussions. You can ask each table to come up with a list or ask the larger group for one, depending on your preference. The prompt can be open-ended, but if that is the case, you will have to make sure the responses are related to the dialogue or the goals of the dialogue. Takeaways are important for benchmarking the state of the group discussions and identifying areas for improvement.

**ACTION STEPS**

Next, ask the group if there are any immediate action steps that they would like to take. Ideally, these would be self-assigned so that people will be motivated to pursue them, although you can help make sure the action steps are specific and clear. It may also help to set a target date for some of the action steps, which gives you and the group something concrete to check on to track progress.

**PLANNING FOR THE NEXT DIALOGUE**

Planning for the next dialogue can be done at the end of the exercise or during follow-up discussions after the exercise is completed. Simply ask people to think about a general time frame during which they would be able to participate in another discussion and, possibly, regular meetings after that.
In this section we described your role, as a facilitator, including steps to take both in preparing for the dialogue and in leading the dialogue exercise. **Key planning steps include the following:**

**Gather documents and resources needed to support the dialogue.** These materials include signs, name tags, pens and notepads; printed copies of the agenda, the Microsoft PowerPoint presentation, and the discussion questions; a laptop computer and flash drive; consent forms, if needed; and food, drinks, plastic cups and utensils, and paper goods.

**Establish ground rules.** The ground rules provide the guidelines for a productive meeting.

We recommend that facilitators prepare general ground rules and specific rules concerning participant behavior, scenarios, discussion, and, if relevant, the specific community involved in the dialogue.

**Key facilitating steps during the dialogue exercise include the following:**

**Welcome participants and set the tone.** Designate someone to greet participants as they arrive and direct them to their tables. Be mindful of participants' roles to ensure there is appropriate distribution of the types of participants at each table.

**Make opening remarks.** Provide a brief overview of the purpose of the dialogue, introducing facilitators and the community and law enforcement partners who assisted with planning the session, and expressing appreciation for everyone's participation. Invite participants to introduce themselves briefly by providing their name, affiliation, and reason for participation.

**Conduct the dialogue exercise.** The exercise consists of four parts:

- **Present the hypothetical community.** Provide information about community member and law enforcement personnel characteristics, as well as national issues that relate to, but are not exactly the same as, concerns expressed by the focal community in which the dialogue is conducted.

- **Describe the scenarios.** Begin with a fairly benign scenario with the intention of building up to more challenging issues.

- **Facilitate small group and large group discussions.** Guide the discussions to ensure that participants stay on track and to prevent any discussions from getting too emotional or accusatory. If necessary, actively encourage discussion or act to transform tense discussions into useful conversations. If a participant breaks the ground rules, take steps to reestablish order.

- **Conclude the session.** End the discussion on a positive note. If time permits, it might be useful to ask one representative from each participating organization about their experience in the session. A great way to wrap up the session is to poll participants for their perceived takeaways of the discussions or to ask them if there are any immediate action steps that they would like to take. You might also discuss plans for the next dialogue.
A Toolkit for Community-Police Dialogue
This dialogue is not a magic cure for healing strained community-police relations. The first session, in our experience, has as much to do with airing grievances and understanding one another’s point of view as making tangible progress. This does not mean that the initial dialogue sessions were unproductive or lacked impact for the participants. Indeed, an overwhelming majority of participants in the RAND-implemented dialogues saw value in the format of the dialogue for promoting difficult discussions in an atmosphere where people felt open to discuss their views without fear of backlash. Viewpoints will still be challenged by other participants, but the structure and guidelines of the dialogue prevent retaliation.

A key challenge in building strong communication networks is to keep the momentum going. Because of this, it is important to keep in contact with the group after the exercise. Organizers should follow up immediately with the group as soon as possible to share lessons learned and describe any recommendations, next points of discussion, or next steps for the dialogue participants. This follow-up contact should include soliciting feedback from the group about when to conduct the next dialogue.

Follow-Up Activities

Follow-up activities could take a variety of forms, including holding another dialogue. In the past, most of the follow-up has involved future in-person contact. In one instance, one participant met another at their business to continue their discussion. In another, youth participants made plans to meet up with an officer at the
local McDonald’s. Each of the cities we have worked in have expressed interest in continuing to host the dialogue on their own, which is why this toolkit is essential.

In three prior sites, we conducted an analysis of participant surveys and audio recordings of the discussion to collect participants’ feedback and identify themes and potential next action steps from the dialogue. We wrote up our findings into an after-action report that we distributed to participants. An example after-action report can be found in Appendix D.

Nevertheless, progress has to be determined collectively by the local community. There’s no prescription for the best path forward. Therefore, the RAND dialogue model is one of many potential tools or strategies to improve community-police relations. As discussed above, other formal approaches to facilitating a community-police dialogue exist. There are also other ways to approach procedural justice and implicit bias. In fact, a well-rounded approach likely includes a variety of efforts to reach as much of the community as possible. It’s certainly likely that the community members who are interested in participating in a dialogue do not fully represent the entire community. We think the RAND dialogue model can be a useful tool to address implicit bias, procedural justice, and reconciliation at the same time, but we also think the dialogue can be used as a structured way to facilitate discussion on (1) which other methods might be appropriate for the community and (2) to track the progress and success of these alternative approaches. We briefly categorize and provide examples of alternative approaches that likely complement the RAND dialogue model in Appendix C.

Many similar guides have existed for quite some time, which leads to questions about the current reality of community policing, community partnerships, and community-police relations. For instance, are police departments following the recommendations of existing guides and are these recommendations effective? Or,
is it the case that police departments still lack strong implementation of community policing principles? Also, are the media portrayals of community-police relations accurate nationally, or are they accurate for only specific locations? If the latter, are police departments in these locations following community policing principles? What distinguishes a community with an officer-involved shooting that leads to community outrage and protests from one that reacts differently to a similar incident? The answers to these questions are certainly complex, but they speak to a long-standing lack of attention given to community-police relations until recently.

Nevertheless, dialogue-based approaches to improving community-police relations are being increasingly developed and studied. These approaches highlight how important effective communication and positive intergroup contact are as building blocks of trust. Most importantly, dialogues offer both structure and perspective-taking that are critical to overcoming bias but also to building communication channels between the community and the police. As noted earlier, one of the many challenges of community-police relations efforts is that they are driven by people who are already amenable to police, and often the same people participate in these efforts (i.e., selection effects). By being intentional about participant recruitment and ensuring broad community representation while using a framework that fosters open dialogue, progress can be made where it is most needed.
Toolbox

APPENDIX A
Scenarios
- Adult scenarios
- Youth scenarios

APPENDIX B
Miscellaneous Documents
- Sample checklist
- Sample agendas

APPENDIX C
Other Resources

APPENDIX D
Example After-Action Report

APPENDIX E
Example Surveys
- Community Member Survey
  - Pre-Dialogue Survey
  - Scenario Survey
  - Post-Dialogue Survey
- Law Enforcement Personnel Survey
  - Pre-Dialogue Survey
  - Scenario Survey
  - Post-Dialogue Survey
Scenarios

We have prepared two Microsoft PowerPoint presentations (available at www.rand.org/t/TLA615-1) that contain suggested scenarios for both adult- and youth-focused dialogues.
APPENDIX B

Miscellaneous Documents

Sample Checklist

- Arrive at dialogue location at [x hours before start time]
- Room signs
- Room prep (tables, chairs, food and refreshments, presentation technology)
- Laptop, adapters, and power cords
- Seating assignments
- Name tags, markers, pens, and notepads
- Print surveys and distribute copies at tables; collect in folders with numbered order
- Print agendas
- Print youth assent forms and adult consent forms (if required)
- Print discussion questions and place on tables
- Print Microsoft PowerPoint slides
- USB drive with the Microsoft PowerPoint file; email file and a backup to self
- Audio recorders
- Set up food, drinks, plastic cups and utensils, and paper goods

Sample Agenda to Share with Participants

10:00 a.m. Welcome! Arrival and Introductions
10:35 a.m. Scenario 1 Discussion
11:20 a.m. Scenario 2 Discussion
12:00 p.m. Lunch
12:45 p.m. Scenario 3 Discussion
1:30 p.m. Conclusion and Debrief
2:00 p.m. Adjourn
Sample Working Agenda

1. **Welcome—introductions** *(20 minutes)*
   a. Direct to assigned seats
   b. Option for law enforcement department leadership to address the group
   c. Individual introductions for the entire group

2. **Explanation of the dialogue exercise and ground rules** *(10 minutes)*
   a. Overview
      i. Why are we here?
      ii. What is a dialogue?
      iii. Why use a dialogue?
   b. Informed consent language and recording notice
   c. Scenario discussions ground rules
   d. Pre-dialogue survey *(5 minutes)*

3. **Background context description slides** *(3 minutes)*

4. **Scenario 1**—explanation and refresher on how participants should think about scenarios and discuss *(5 minutes)*
   - *Non-facilitators: listen to conversations, prompt or redirect with discussion questions or other questions*
   a. Small group discussion *(10 minutes)*
   b. Large group discussion; prompt a few groups for a summary of small group discussion *(20 minutes)*
   c. Scenario survey *(5 minutes)*

**Lunch** *(45–60 minutes)*

5. **Scenario 2**—explanation *(3 minutes)*
   a. Small group discussion *(15 minutes)*
   b. Large group discussion; prompt a few groups for a summary of their small group discussion *(20 minutes)*
   c. Scenario survey *(5 minutes)*

6. **Conclusion and Debrief** *(10 minutes)*
   a. Action steps
   b. Post-dialogue survey *(5 minutes)*
Other Resources

The list below includes a variety of community engagement approaches that are commonly used by police departments. Many of these approaches have limited research evidence. For example, Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) has been found to be ineffective in reducing drug use.¹⁸

- **Interaction or dialogue**
  - Hearings, public meetings, and town halls
  - Workshops
  - Citizen comment cards
  - Community-police sports and youth leagues
  - Community walks
  - Community meetings and neighborhood watch meetings

- **Active engagement, training, and education**
  - Downtown and Community Safety Ambassadors
  - Citizen Police Academy, cadet academy, or citizens on patrol
  - D.A.R.E. webpage (https://dare.org), flyers, pamphlets, and social media posts

- **Institutionalized activities**
  - Police Advisory Boards and Citizen Oversight Committees
  - Community Police Partnering Centers, such as the Community Partnering Center supported by the Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio (https://www.ulgso.org/community-partnering-center)
  - Community relations offices and outreach programs
  - Foot patrol
  - Community surveys, such as the “Building Relationships of Trust: Community Perception Survey” available at the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) online resource center (https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter/Home.aspx?page=detail&id=COPS-W0732)

This is far from a comprehensive list. Since the establishment of COPS in 1994, countless activities have taken place in the name of community policing and community relations, which is often a criticism of community policing as a general strategy—it means different things to different people. Thus, community policing is a general strategy that is often defined broadly, making it challenging to narrowly describe what it involves or identify individual components that seem to be effective or ineffective. Moreover, community policing should be inherently tailored to
the preferences of the community and the community’s values, meaning approaches should be expected to vary.

There are also plenty of guides available for building community-police partnerships and implementing other facets of community-oriented policing and community-police relations. We provide a brief list of examples of a selection of resources offered by COPS, noting that this list is likely incomplete.

- The COPS webpage (https://cops.usdoj.gov) and Office of Justice Programs provide various ways to **build productive partnerships**, such as
  - the “Collaboration Toolkit: How to Build, Fix, and Sustain Productive Partnerships,” which is available both online and as a photocopy (https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/cops-collaboration-toolkit-how-build-fix-and-sustain-productive)
  - the “Collaboration Toolkit for Community Organizations: Effective Strategies to Partner with Law Enforcement,” which is available both online and as a photocopy (https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/collaboration-toolkit-community-organizations-effective-strategies)

- to **improve communication**, such as


- Other related materials that might be of interest include
  - the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy at George Mason University has a webpage devoted to “Building Trust” (https://cebcp.org/evidence-based-policing/building-trust)
  - the Vera Institute of Justice provides a “Police Perspectives Guidebook Series: Building Trust in a Diverse Nation,”


Example After-Action Report

Dialogue Exercise Description

The RAND Community-Police Dialogue is a structured activity that was developed to facilitate discussion and communication between police and community members. It focuses on key issues and challenges affecting community-police relations nationwide and uses principles of serious gaming and tabletop exercises to help police and community members discuss these issues in a productive format. Using hypothetical but realistic scenarios, the dialogue asks participants to discuss their initial reactions and how they might respond to any given scenario. These discussions can be used to assess the current level of preparedness and gaps in communication that may exist within and between all groups of participants (e.g., within the police department, between the police and the community, and within the community).

Participants

Community members were recruited through outreach to community organizations and by distributing flyers in the [relevant police department’s district]. Law enforcement officers were recruited by the department. The [city name] dialogue included 11 community members and 7 police officers. Many (6) of the community members described themselves as working for a community-based organization, and 3 described themselves as activists. Community members had spent an average of 38 years living in the community and police had spent an average 11 years in law enforcement.

Community members and police officers both expressed interest in improving community-police relations and in developing connections with each other. The community members who participated trended toward favorable views of the police: 73% reported that they either mostly or fully trusted the police, 64% reported that the police understand some but not all community perspectives and needs, and 55% said that they support some but not all of the [police department’s] actions. The majority of police participants, likewise, shared that they believe that the community mostly or fully trusts them (67%), that they understand some but not all of the community’s perspectives and needs (100%), and that the community supports some but not all of their behavior and actions (100%).
**Scenarios**

The exercise proceeded in a sequential fashion, beginning with a description of the purpose and rules of the exercise. Next, participants were presented with an initial scenario, given discussion questions, and asked to discuss their reactions in small groups. Following this discussion, the entire group debriefed the important concepts or issues that came up in their small group discussions. After this debriefing, a new, but related scenario was presented to the group and the discussion-debrief process started over. This process was followed for three scenarios, followed by a general full group debrief at the end of the exercise.

The hypothetical scenarios begin with national events bringing attention to local policing, protests, and de-policing in high crime neighborhoods. In the first scenario there is a spike in violent crime that leads to increased stops for minor offenses, which leads to community complaints and low morale among officers. The second scenario includes escalating tensions and communication breakdowns, culminating in a use-of-force incident in which a man having a mental health crisis is injured. In the third scenario, we learn that the officer’s body-worn camera was off during the incident and leaked text messages reveal bias and negative attitudes about the community among officers. The majority (90%) of participants reported that the scenarios were realistic and that they brought up important issues.

**Key Themes**

Participants were asked to fill out five surveys: a pre-dialogue survey, a survey after each of the three scenarios, and a post-dialogue survey. In addition, discussions at each table were individually recorded for analysis. Finally, three interviews with participants were conducted in the weeks following the activity. Several themes emerged:

- **Implicit bias.** Community members brought up issues of racial bias and profiling in policing, as well as their own attitudes toward police and how one’s environment and upbringing may influence one’s perceptions. While officers seemed to agree with the discussion of implicit bias in community attitudes toward the police, some were hesitant to acknowledge any bias in their own behavior. One officer responded to a community member’s discussion of unconscious prejudice by affirming that they “do not treat people differently based on race and I follow standardized procedures in all my interactions with the community.” After the officer’s response, the conversation veered away from implicit bias and concentrated more on explicit bias (e.g., racial profiling).

- **Procedural justice.** Police officers discussed the need to make quick decisions and process a lot of information in a short amount of time when interacting with community members, and how doing so might lead to making a snap judgment that results in a community member being hurt. They also discussed the reasoning for ramping up stops in response to spikes in crime and
the difficulty of balancing this method of making stops for lower-level crimes with procedural justice concerns. Community members discussed feeling targeted and as if they were stopped for “every stupid little thing,” although they acknowledged that enforcing the law is an officer’s job. Community members also acknowledged the role that they play in interacting with the police and how that can escalate an otherwise simple interaction, while also calling attention to police behavior that causes situations to escalate.

- **Trust and respect.** Trust and respect came up often throughout the dialogue, and community members and police officers had similar grievances about lack of respect from the other group. Community members discussed the need to have positive experiences with the police in order to build trust and respect, and police officers discussed the importance of the language that they use when speaking to and about the community. Both discussed the need for police and community members to interact often in order to build trust, and the dialogue lunch break offered space for more casual chatting that allowed people to ask questions and begin to build relationships. “Treating one another like human beings” was also mentioned by police and community members as a means of demonstrating respect. Although both groups noted the need for building trust, a few of the officers involved in the exercise used language that could have been perceived as defensive and condescending language, particularly when describing their training and preparedness for situations involving mental health crises. Ultimately, this response may have had a negative impact on the goal of building trust and reflected a power dynamic that appeared difficult for participants to overcome. Other officers approached this issue differently, admitting that they are ill-equipped to judge and respond to all situations involving a mental health crisis.

- **Communication.** Discussions highlighted the need for better communication, particularly from the police department to the community. Police officers discussed how important it is to share where and what types of crime are occurring within the community. They also acknowledged the importance of communicating their strategy for addressing spikes in violent crime. Community members agreed, expressing the need for more communication from the police department that explains why they may see increases in enforcement of low-level offenses. Community members also addressed the barriers to communication on their end, including fear of retaliation and trust issues. Finally, officers discussed the need for [the police department] to be more vocal about the training that they received and improving communication with the public following community-police interactions that may be perceived as negative.

- **Scenario-specific issues.** The dialogue scenarios brought up issues around body-worn cameras and police response to mental health issues, both of which provided for fruitful discussion and highlighted the need for more information to be shared with the community surrounding these issues. Discussions about body-worn cameras focused on community complaints that
officers did not always have their cameras turned on. Officers explained their limitations in doing so, such as the technical aspects of the cameras and the speed with which events escalate. Officers at multiple tables conducted brief demonstrations on the difficulties of turning on a camera during an acute situation, and community members responded with appreciation for these limitations.

Officers gave disparate accounts of their preparedness to deal with mental health issues. Some officers expressed concern over their ability to read and respond to mental health issues and the need to bring in mental health experts, such as the department’s Mental Evaluation Team. Others expressed confidence in their ability, discussing in-depth training and frustration that community members assume that they are not able to handle acute mental health crises. Some community members proposed diverting resources to the mental health department or to non-police response, and officers suggested that this might weaken the capacity of the police department to respond to such issues and may put citizens in danger. The community members were generally surprised to hear about the extensive amount of training that the police receive and police-led services that exist.

Outcomes

Nearly all participants who responded to the survey immediately following the exercise shared that they were able to identify gaps in law enforcement and community responses to the scenarios, were able to share their perspectives, and that they identified action steps for similar incidents. All (6 of 6) community members who completed the survey reported a better understanding of police actions, and the majority (3 of 5) of police officers who completed the survey reported that community members were more supportive of their behavior than they had previously thought.

When discussing action items, police and community members agreed that interactive activities, such as ride-alongs, internships, the community police academy, and more ongoing dialogue exercises, are useful tools for building trust and understanding. They also discussed more engagement with the community through social media to explain what the police are focusing on and how officers are addressing those issues.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Better and more proactive communication between the police and the community could address multiple issues. Specifically, (1) communication about department policies and procedures (e.g., increases in stops for minor offenses), and discussion of why these practices are implemented, may help community members feel less targeted, and (2) communication about police preparedness and services, such as how officers are trained to deal with mental health crises or body-worn camera limitations, could help community members understand the level of support that officers are able to provide to the community on these issues.
More-casual interaction (e.g., “coffee with a cop”) could increase trust and respect, while more-formal interaction (e.g., the community police academy and ride-alongs) would go deeper to help community members understand officers. Further, developing a plan to maintain the relationships, communication, and partnership developed during the dialogue could extend the value of the dialogue beyond one day of trust building.

Finally, considering implicit bias training or refresher training could be useful for officers. At least one discussion involved a community member that challenged an officer’s view that there was no bias, and the officer redirected to a discussion of overt/conscious bias. That said, most of the officers handled this discussion well. Therefore, it may reflect a need for [the police department] to assist or provide guidance for officers on acknowledging community concerns and perspective-taking. A relevant concept is emotional intelligence, which is an emerging concept in policing and involves recognizing and responding to others’ emotions in interactions and resolving conflict.¹

**Project Updates**

[Facilitator’s name], [city name] United School District, [Community College], and the [city name] Police Department are collaborating again for another dialogue exercise that will be focused on interactions with youth in [city name].

APPENDIX E

Example Surveys

Community Member Survey

1. Please select the option that best fits your role(s) in the community:
   - Religious leader
   - Politician
   - Activist
   - Community-based organization leader or employee
   - Community member
   - Other: _______________________________________________________________________

2. How long have you lived in this community? (Please answer in years) ______

Pre-Dialogue Survey

1. What are you hoping to get out of this exercise? (Select all that apply)
   - To better understand why law enforcement officers do what they do and behave the way they do
   - Provide my point of view/share my opinions about police practices
   - To improve the relationship between police and community
   - To develop connections with the police department
   - I’m not sure
   - I don’t expect to get anything out of this
   - Other: _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

2. How much common ground do you expect to have with the police? (Circle the one that applies)
   - 0
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - 6
   - 7
   - 8
   - 9
   - 10
3. **What level of trust do you have in the police department?** *(Select the one that applies)*
   - I mostly or fully trust them.
   - I might call them in an emergency situation, but I am generally distrustful of police.
   - I am very distrustful of them.

4. **How well do you feel like most law enforcement officers understand the perspectives of the community?** *(Select the one that applies)*
   - They understand the perspectives of the community very well.
   - There are some community perspectives that they understand and others that they do not.
   - They understand very little about the perspectives of the community.

5. **How well do you feel like most law enforcement officers understand the needs of your community?** *(Select the one that applies)*
   - They understand the needs of the community very well.
   - There are some community needs that they understand and others that they do not.
   - They understand very little about the needs of the community.

6. **To what extent do you support law enforcement officers’ behavior and actions in the community?** *(Circle the one that applies)*
   - I am very or mostly supportive of their behavior and actions.
   - I support some, but not all of their behavior and actions.
   - I am unsupportive of most or all of their behavior and actions.
Scenario Survey

Please rate the following statements based on your experience in scenario X:
(Check the box with your response)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>NEUTRAL</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The scenario was realistic.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The scenario brought up issues that are important to me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was surprised by some of the responses that I heard.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The police officer(s) at my table were respectful of me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am confident in the ability of our police department to handle similar incidents appropriately.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Post-Dialogue Feedback

1. What were you able to accomplish with your discussion group? (Select all that apply)
   - We identified gaps in law enforcement and community responses to the scenarios.
   - Different parties were able to share their perspectives.
   - We identified action steps that may help with the community and/or police response to similar incidents.
   - Other: ______________________________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________________________

2. What did you gain, if anything, from this exercise? (Select all that apply)
   - A better understanding of why police officers do what they do and behave the way they do
   - I was able to provide my point of view/share my opinions about police practices
   - I developed connections with the police
   - I’m not sure
   - I did not get anything out of this
   - Other: ______________________________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________________________
3. How much common ground did you find that you have with law enforcement?
   Please answer on a scale of 0–10, with 0 being no common ground. *(Circle the one that applies)*
   
   0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

4. Did you find that the law enforcement officers understood the needs of your community at the level that you expected? *(Select the one that applies)*
   
   - I found that they understood the needs of my community better than I thought.
   - I found that their understanding on the needs of my community were average.
   - I found that they don’t understand the community’s needs as well as I had thought.

5. Did you find that the law enforcement officers understood the perspectives of your community at the level that you expected? *(Select the one that applies)*
   
   - I found that they understood the perspectives of my community better than I thought.
   - I found that their level of understanding on my community perspectives was average.
   - I found that they don’t understand the community perspectives as well as I had thought.
Law Enforcement Personnel Survey

1. Please describe your role(s) in the police department:
______________________________________________________________________________________

2. How long have you worked in law enforcement? (Please answer in years)
______________________________________________________________________________________

3. How long have you been assigned to XX? (Please answer in years)
______________________________________________________________________________________

Pre-Dialogue Survey

1. What are you hoping to get out of this exercise? (Select all that apply)
   - To better understand why community members do what they do and behave the way they do
   - Provide my point of view/share my opinions about police practices
   - To improve the relationship between police and community
   - To develop connections with the community
   - I’m not sure
   - I don’t expect to get anything out of this
   - Other: ___________________________________________________________________________
      ___________________________________________________________________________
      ___________________________________________________________________________

2. How much common ground do you expect to have with community members? Please answer on a scale of 0–10, with 0 being no common ground. (Circle the one that applies)

   0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

3. What level of trust do you believe that community leaders have in the police department? (Select the one that applies)
   - They mostly or fully trust us.
   - They might call us in an emergency situation but are generally distrustful of police.
   - They are very distrustful of police.
4. **How well do you feel like you understand the perspectives of the community that you serve? (Select the one that applies)**
   - I understand the perspectives of community that I serve very well.
   - There are some community perspectives that I understand and others that I do not.
   - I understand very little about the perspectives of the community.

5. **How well do you feel like you understand the needs of the community that you serve? (Select the one that applies)**
   - I understand the needs of community that I serve near perfectly or perfectly.
   - There are some community needs that I understand and others that I do not.
   - I understand very little about the needs of the community.

6. **To what extent do you believe that community leaders support the police department’s behavior and actions in the community? (Select the one that applies)**
   - They are very or mostly supportive of our behavior and actions.
   - They support some, but not all of our behavior and actions.
   - They are unsupportive of most or all of our behavior and actions.
**Scenario Survey**

Please rate the following statements based on your experience in scenario X:
*(Check the box with your response)*

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**Post-Dialogue Feedback**

1. **What were you able to accomplish with your discussion group?** *(Select all that apply)*
   - We identified gaps in law enforcement and community responses to the scenarios.
   - Different parties were able to share their perspectives.
   - We identified action steps that may help with the community and/or police response to similar incidents.
   - Other: ___________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________

2. **What did you gain, if anything, from this exercise?** *(Select all that apply)*
   - A better understanding of why community members do what they do and behave the way they do.
   - I was able to provide my point of view/share my opinions about police practices.
   - I developed connections with the community.
   - I’m not sure.
   - I did not get anything out of this.
   - Other: ___________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
3. **How much common ground did you find that you have with community leaders?**
   Please answer on a scale of 0–10, with 0 being no common ground. *(Circle the one that applies)*
   
   0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

4. **Did you find that your understanding of the perspectives of the community that you serve was accurate?** *(Select the one that applies)*
   - I found that I understood the perspectives of the community better than I thought.
   - I found that my understanding of the perspectives of the community was average.
   - I found that I don’t understand the community’s perspectives as well as I had thought.

5. **Did you find that your understanding of the needs of the community that you serve was accurate?** *(Select the one that applies)*
   - I found that I understood the needs of the community better than I thought.
   - I found that my level of understanding of community needs was about average.
   - I found that I don’t understand the community’s needs as well as I had thought.

6. **Did you find that the community leaders support your behavior and actions at the level that you had thought?** *(Select the one that applies)*
   - They are more supportive of my behavior and actions than I expected.
   - Their level of support was about average/what I anticipated.
   - They are less supportive of my behavior and actions than I had anticipated.
Notes

5. Pettigrew et al., 2011.
15. For example, people with criminal histories might not wish to participate. Typically, we have not provided a list of attendees beforehand. Since the goal of the dialogue is to foster positive interactions, organizers should determine and communicate whether people with active warrants should participate in the dialogue. We do not think conducting background checks for participants should be required. Participant screening should address these issues as necessary.
16. The Chatham House Rule states that “[w]hen a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed” (Chatham House, undated).
18. Pan and Bai, 2009; West and O'Neal, 2004. However, D.A.R.E. might be associated with long-term improvements in attitudes toward the police among African American youth (Schuck, 2013). This finding is far from conclusive, however, given a limited research design, the presence of long-term but not short-term effects, and the open question of whether other approaches might be more beneficial.
References


Despite widespread recognition that community engagement is important for improving community-police relations, there is little guidance for how to systematically promote and sustain long-term relationship building. This guide was developed to share best practices from the RAND Corporation’s work in implementing six community-police dialogues across four sites. This guide provides background on the purpose for the development of the community-police dialogue, guidance for planning and implementing the dialogue, and materials to help carry out the dialogue effectively.