

# One Key to Program Success:

## How to Obtain Officer Buy-In For Your First Responder Diversion Program

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**Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities' (TASC)  
Center for Health and Justice**

**Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Program (COSSAP)  
Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) Provider for  
First Responder Led Diversion Initiatives**



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# About the IACP

## *Shaping the Future of the Policing Profession*

- The International Association of Chiefs of Police is the largest and most influential professional association for law enforcement in the world. With more than 30,000 members in over 165 countries, the IACP is a recognized leader in global policing, committed to advancing safe communities through thoughtful, progressive police leadership.
- Since 1893, the IACP has been serving communities worldwide by speaking out on behalf of law enforcement and advancing leadership and professionalism in policing worldwide.

# Learning Objectives

After this session, participants will be able to:

- Explain how first responders can serve as an entry point to treatment and services for vulnerable individuals
- Identify strategies for securing buy-in from police officers and various sectors of the community
- Describe how participating in first responder-led diversion programs can help to reduce stigma and increase trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve

# Introduction

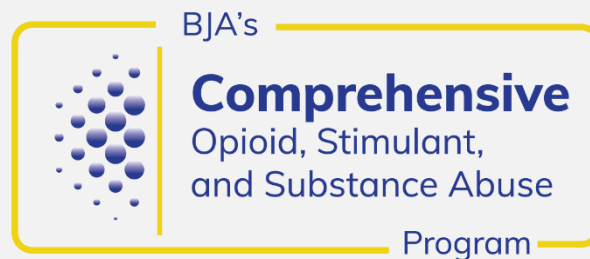
- Fact: Deflection and pre-arrest diversion programs depend on first responders to make referrals
- Fact: There are strategies for obtaining buy-in from agencies and officers for these programs
- Fact: There are benefits for agencies, officers, and communities when deflection programs include collaboration with law enforcement





# Officer and Agency Buy-In for Deflection Programs

Assistant Chief Kevin Hall  
The Tucson Police Department



# Officer Commitment to Deflection

- Buy-In: Understanding and working within specific organizational cultures to garner interest and investment in a new program, initiative, or strategy

# What is Organizational Culture?

This can be complex, but culture can be thought of as a set of shared meanings that people in organizations have with respect to how to adapt to the environments and procedures to *cope with change* (Scandura, 2016).



# 3 Levels of Culture

- 1. Artifacts and Creations**—uniforms, patches, badges, car paint schemes, traditions, etc.
- 2. Values**—underlying reasons for behavior.
- 3. Assumptions**—often unconscious and lie beneath but are based on values. These are motivators that generate behavior (e.g., respect for all versus respect for those who deserve or earn it).

# MIT Professor E.H. Schein

- To really understand an organization's culture, a person must go beyond what they see (artifacts) and delve into a deeper awareness of values first and then assumptions
- A strong culture is based on high levels of agreement among employees about their values and a high intensity toward those values
- Police agencies generally exhibit very strong cultures
  - This is particularly evident in the dynamics of problem-resolution via arrest and incapacitation (incarceration)

# Change, the New Norm

- Strong, authentic leadership facilitates successful organizational culture change
- Transforming Culture is Hard Work!
  - You have to be in it for the long haul
  - You have to be committed
  - You have to believe in the change
  - You may have to compromise

# Harvard Professor John Kotter

- Eight Step Model for Transformational Change
  1. Create urgency (light a fire)
  2. Form a powerful coalition (find your influencers)
  3. Create a vision for change (tell a story/paint a picture)
  4. Communicate the vision (talk about it far and wide)
  5. Empower action (remove obstacles and give authority)
  6. Create quick wins (celebrate all wins)
  7. Build on the change (use the momentum)
  8. Make it stick (employ policy and accountability)

# Step 1: Create Urgency

## This Is About the “Why”

- Fatal Accidental Overdoses
  - More than 400 per year and rising
- More than homicides and fatal traffic collisions combined in Pima County, Arizona
  - Nobody notices (Nobody cares?)
- Part 1—crime increases due to substance use-driven property crime
  - Disproportionate crime rate due to property crime
  - This affects community-perspective and opinion of the community and city government

What we are currently doing is having no effect whatsoever (doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result = crazy town)

# Step 2: Form a Powerful Coalition

- Engage both your formal and informal leaders
- Include those influencers at the line-level. These may be your most powerful allies!
- They must be powerful in either influence, reputation, skills, or position
- Build the group as you progress but keep it manageable

# Step 3: Create a Vision for Change

Do your homework:

- What problem(s) are you trying to solve?
- What outcomes are you trying to achieve?
- Determine a starting point
- Create the story, vision, or message to compel interest and passion both internally **and** externally

# Step 4: Communicate the Vision

Political and cultural awareness will guide how you do this in your agency

- Officers must demonstrate unequivocal, top-down support!
- What is the tolerance for change?
- Incremental implementation or all in? (dip your toe or cannonball)
- Spend time analyzing the risk; this is important.
- Use your influencers here!

Be authentic! Cops know BS when they see and hear it!



# Step 5: Empower Action

- Delegate, get your team involved. It increases their buy-in!
- Evaluate what is feasible and what is not. Take a realistic look the available resources
- Continue to monitor the cultural temperature among all collaborators
- Two extremely important points:
  1. What you build must be easier for the cops than arrest and booking
  2. Emphasize the autonomy of discretion. It is still their choice! (Otherwise, it will be seen as a loss of power.)

# Step 6: Create Quick Wins

- Message at every step the value of the program
- Celebrate small victories (1<sup>st</sup> successful deflection, 1<sup>st</sup> OD reversal, time saved vs. arrest, etc.)
- Testimonials by clients, cops, and service providers are gold (handwritten thank you notes by client at intake)

# Step 7: Build on the Change

Do not take your eye off the ball

- Leadership must stay engaged to maintain momentum
- Effective cultural change can take years
  - Have a succession plan (new champions and influencers)
- Process evaluation: encourage feedback from the officers to critique and improve the process
- Incentivize program use through rewards, recognition, training opportunities, etc.

# Step 8: Make It Stick

- Institutionalize the program
- Once the program becomes “the way we do things around here” you know it has stuck
- Even at this point, continued monitoring for cultural acceptance is necessary
- Continued top-down support and awareness tells the troops that you are paying attention, and that means its important

# Challenges and Barriers

- There may be resistance to change overall (change represents loss). The message can be that they are gaining an additional tool and losing nothing (remember officer discretion).
- Change fatigue—If you are a progressive, adaptive agency, then your staff may simply be tired of a constant sense of changing.
- Apathy, cynicism, and disengagement.

# What Did Tucson Do?

- Built collaborations and commitments from multiple service providers
- All partners were brought in as early as possible
  - Some will commit, some will wait and see, and some will bow out. Keep a relationship with all of them with an eye to the future.
- With knowledge of what resources were available, we built a hybrid model around our 24/7 MAT Clinic
  - Other social service partners (who we maintained relationships with) eventually jumped on board
- Engaged University of Arizona for process, impact, and cost-benefit analysis (this adds legitimacy to the strategy—an unbiased evaluation)

# What Did Tucson Do?

- We built off an existing robust mental health diversion model
  - Mental Health Support Team (MHST)—2 sergeants, 2 detectives, 8 officers, 2 mental health clinicians, 4 peer support
- Expectations among partners were discussed at length
- Initial trepidation by county attorney was quickly overcome
- Communication was valued above all else as the model was designed and implemented
- Carefully crafted messaging was provided to media who were invited to training sessions, clinics, and provided interviews. **Do not skip this step!**

# What Did Tucson Do?

- Developed Training
  - Base level understanding ACE's, MAT, neurobiology of addiction, etc.
  - Emphasized a tolerance for relapse
  - Executive staff attended each training session to answer questions and stress the importance of the program
- Developed Policy
  - This is critical; cops want structure. They need to know what the rules are.



# What Did Tucson Do?

- Implemented program as a “pilot”
- Aggressively solicited feedback from first users for process evaluation and made immediate changes based on officer feedback
- Provided department wide highlights of early use, success stories, notes of thanks, etc.
- Top two patrol officers sent to out-of-state training as a reward in the first year

# What Worked for Us

1. Be patient, tolerant of early mistakes
2. Change represents loss, allow time to digest and contemplate
3. Emphasize the power of individual officer discretion
4. Strongly suggest that you do not make deflection mandatory
5. Incentivize deflection (we use training, commendations, etc.)
6. De-emphasize arrest as a measure of productivity
7. Ask for on-going process improvement suggestions
8. Executive leadership team must show united support for program
9. Members of executive leadership should be present for as many trainings as possible to lend importance and credibility to program
10. Isolate and influence informal leaders (sergeants, FTO's, tenured officers)
11. Highlight success stories, no matter how small

# Deflection Programs Led by Non-LE Stakeholders

**Bring law enforcement leaders to the table and ask for input as early as possible**

- Provides feeling of ownership for program—leaders will help secure line officer buy-in
- Creates/enhances relationships with other program partners
- Creates pathways for collaboration on future efforts

**Suggestion: Hire a program manager with law enforcement background**

- Will be trusted by officers who must implement the program
- Can advocate for the goals of the program and help train officers
- May have additional strategies for securing officer buy-in to the program or perspectives to share with program administrators

# Conclusion

- Determine the culture of your organization or the organization you are working with and tailor a strategy that will work for you
- This is not a “one size fits all” model. It is simply a strategic approach that is working in Tucson, Arizona, based on a classic change model (Kotter eight steps).
- Stay positive and believe in the collaboration

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**Law Enforcement Reestablishing Healthy Community Relationships that Support Public Safety and Public Health: Creating Trust and Reducing Stigma**

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# Objectives

Participants will:

- Be able to define relationship and its contextual use in terms of community
- Examine the importance of law enforcement's role in establishing relationships that enhance public health and public safety
- Examine how to build and sustain relationships with its community members, treatment organizations, and other stakeholders
- Learn some tips on how to establish and sustain relationships with diverse communities, peers, and collaborating organizations
- Be able to define stigma and examine how law enforcement can overcome biases associated with the substance using population
- Review the importance of taking care of self to accomplish their goals within the community



# What is the True Meaning of Relationship?

*The way in which two or more people, groups, countries, etc., talk to, behave toward, and deal with each other*

Relationships are the building blocks for all community organizing activities.





# The Significance of Law Enforcement to Diversion Program Success

## Law Enforcement:

- Are the gatekeepers of the criminal justice system. They regularly are the first point of contact with substance users and those with mental health disorders and their families.
- Can refer vulnerable individuals to community-based, evidenced-based treatment programs and reduce the criminalization of substance use disorder
- Play a vital role in preventing and intervening in the cycle of offending and advancement through the criminal justice system



# The Significance of Law Enforcement to Diversion Program Success

- Engaging communities in neighborhood association meetings are an awesome way to establish relationships and get the support of community leaders and religious organizations
- Attending the stakeholder meetings of the community diversion program allows first responders to establish relationships with program partners and become more aware of the services available within the community

**The success of pre-arrest diversion programs are dependent on first responders' ability to establish linkages between community members and organizations**



# Strategies for Law Enforcement to Use to Establish Relationships

- Build relationships one at a time
- Be friendly and make a connection
- Ask people questions
- Tell people about yourself
- Go places and do things
- Accept people the way they are
- Assume other people want to form relationships too
- Overcome your fear of rejection
- Be persistent
- Invite people to get involved
- Enjoy people



# How Do You Build Relationships With People of Different Cultural Backgrounds?

- Learn about their culture
- Take a stand against their oppression
- Understand that making mistakes is part of the process
- Attend community events of people from different cultures
- Ask questions
- Visit organizations that provide services to the people of the culture and establish relationships with staff. They will be a great resource to assist you when problems or challenges arise.



# Establishing Trust With Community Members and Partner Organizations to Support Public Health and Safety

- Make every contact with a person or organization, and take every opportunity to build relationships and change the narrative
- Build relationships before you need them or before a conflict or crisis arises
- Follow up on referrals
- Change the narrative surrounding law enforcement by increasing the number of non-enforcement engagements
- Engaging in partnerships with healthcare and service providers can reduce the time officers spend with low level offenders, which allows them to address more serious criminal activity



# How Do You Sustain Your Newfound Relationships?

- **BE CONSISTENT**
- Pay attention to people
- Communicate openly
- Appreciate
- Extend yourself
- Volunteer to do some work for their organization
- Challenge each other to do better
- Back each other when things get tough



# Disagreements Don't Mean the End of Relationships

*Be realistic; disagreements occur and are not necessarily a bad thing*

- Take time to listen to the other person's point of view
- Put yourself in the other person's shoes
- Look at what is true about what the other person is saying
- Separate emotions from reality
- Continue to appreciate and respect each other
- Speak from your heart
- Don't give up your principles
- Hang in there when things get hard
- You can act independently to improve any relationship



# Relationships With Adversaries Are Significant as Well

- Take time to listen to each other
- Put yourself in the other person's shoes
- Look at what is true about what the other person is saying
- Separate emotions from reality
- Continue to appreciate and respect each other
- Speak from your heart
- Don't give up your principles
- Hang in there when things get hard
- You can act independently to improve any relationship





# What is the Meaning of Stigma?

- A mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance, quality, or person
- Negative attitudes and beliefs toward a group creates prejudice, which leads to negative actions and discrimination



# Addiction Stigma and Stereotyping

## Negative Assumptions About Substance Users:

- Drug use is immoral, so people who use drugs are immoral
- They could stop if they wanted to
- They like using drugs and don't want to get better

You may not even know that you know people who are in recovery!



# Addiction

People may become addicted because of:

- Childhood trauma
- Intimidation from a parent, partner, or other individual
- Genetics and environment
- Rx prescribed after surgery or injury

No one has ever said, “I want to be an addict when I grow up!”

Addiction is a chronic brain disease—not a moral failing



# Addiction, Stigma, and Stereotyping

## Why Stereotyping People With SUDs Can Be Harmful

- The shame and guilt keeps people from seeking help
- This vulnerable population is discriminated against
- The substance users can internalize society's messages and begin to believe they can't get better
- It increases the challenges of getting law enforcement and others to buy-in to programs that invest in helping this group
- People with SUDs are forced to live on the margins of society



# Law Enforcement Lead Diversion Programs Can Help Reduce Stigma

- Community members and organizations get to see law enforcement in a different light apart from arresting someone
- By treating people who have SUDs with dignity and respect rather than stigmatizing them, officers set an example for the community
- Following up on a referral reinforces to the community that an officer cares about the individual with SUD, which can change perceptions about police
- Non-enforcement engagements change the narrative surrounding law enforcement as being there just to arrest community members
- Law enforcement also demonstrates for substance users that they are worth helping and can contribute to their communities

**All of these contradict the assumptions held by the substance users about how society views their worth**



# Remember

## The Most Important Relationship You Have Is Your Relationship With SELF!!!

### Self Care is Important

- Take time to nurture the family relationships and friendships you have
- Be each other's eyes and ears
- Be conscious of the impact your work may be having on you. Ask for help.
- This work is not for the faint at heart. Building relationships and changing culture is challenging work and doesn't happen over night.
- Find ways to be at the table when these policies are being created. You have valuable ideas and input as well.



# Remember

## The Most Important Relationship You Have Is Your Relationship With Yourself

- Own your biases, and in doing so you can change them
- Find reasons to believe in the vision and help others believe
- Remember—you get good at what you practice
- Supporting your leaders is important to the esprit de corps

Remember the vision

Embrace all successes, regardless of how small



# Contact Information

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IACP's COSSAP Project Page: <https://www.theiacp.org/projects/comprehensive-opioid-stimulant-and-substance-abuse-program-cossap-law-enforcement-first>



# Need TA?

To request training and technical assistance, contact CHJ:

**Ben Ekelund**

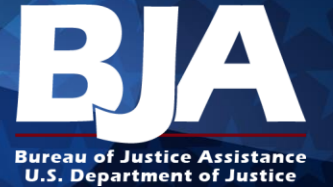
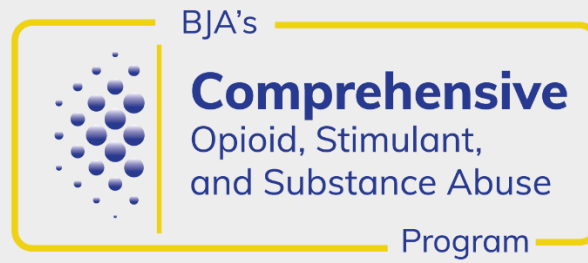
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