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Baton Rouge Collective Healing Initiative: Final Report

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BATON ROUGE COLLECTIVE HEALING INITIATIVE

FINAL REPORT

LSU

**Social Research &
Evaluation Center**

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The Social Research and Evaluation Center is a unit within the College of Human Sciences and Education at Louisiana State University that fosters healthy social systems and facilitates the development, implementation and evaluation of social programs; conducts research; and provides consultation and expertise to higher education institutions, communities, policy makers, and partners.

The Center for Social Research at Southern University is a university-based unit that contributes effectively to the enhancement of the community by addressing contemporary social, economic and policy issues affecting the community. The Center supports the threefold mission of the University: education, research, and service.

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OVERVIEW

In response to recent and historic traumatic events that caused distrust and strained relationships between law enforcement and their communities, the U. S. Department of Justice, Office of Victims of Crime (OVC), selected five demonstration sites to invest in restorative and healing activities to repair community-police relationships.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) worked closely with the sites over the three-year grant period to improve relations through evidence-based interventions, technical assistance, and peer learning. The program, *Law Enforcement and the Communities They Serve: Supporting Collective Healing in the Wake of Harm* began in the selected cities, which included 1) Baton Rouge, Louisiana; 2) Houston, Texas; 3) Minneapolis, Minnesota; 4) Oakland, California; and 5) Rapid City, South Dakota.

The purpose of Collective Healing was to foster meaningful dialogue and reconciliation among law enforcement agencies and the communities of color they serve, to increase the capacity of victim services programs, and to address officer health and wellness.

Collective Healing programs were led by police departments and supported by victim assistance programs, behavioral

health agencies, grassroots organizations, and academic partners. IACP provided technical assistance and training and conducted site visits to monitor accountability and effectiveness.

The Baton Rouge Collective Healing Initiative was conducted from October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2020. The Baton Rouge Police Department (BRPD) served as the lead and fiscal agent for the project. BRPD hired a program manager to coordinate the partnership and complete grant activities. The original core members of the Baton Rouge Collective Healing Initiative included community partners who were vested in improving community-police relationships.

The core partners included 100 Black Men of Metro Baton Rouge, the Baton Rouge Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Capital Area Human Services, LSU Social Research and Evaluation Center, and the Southern University, Center for Social Research. The initial baseline survey and community listening session assessments informed community and law enforcement efforts and programming. The Baton Rouge Collective Healing Initiative partners worked closely with national technical assistance organizations to gain knowledge about successful interventions to heal community-police relationships.

Throughout the grant period, the Baton Rouge Collective Healing Initiative expanded the number of agencies working on the project. This capacity building strengthens and expands Baton Rouge's ability to strategize and address historically entrenched community-police relationships and can additionally work to reduce violent crime in the capital city.

As the Baton Rouge Collective Healing grant reaches its conclusion, multiple efforts are underway for continuing this work. Innovative, community-based strategies will be continued via Baton Rouge's new Safe, Hopeful, Healthy Initiative. Housed within the Healthy BR organization, a local non-profit organization that promotes healthy lifestyles for Baton Rouge residents, Safe, Hopeful, Healthy will include a community-based violence intervention program, the Baton Rouge Street Community Team (BRST).

BRST is based on lessons learned at a site visit to Newark, NJ. In this model, violence interrupter individuals who hold the respect of the community will work to discover upcoming trouble that could escalate into violence. The violence interrupter model is a deliberate move to deal with community violence as a public health threat. The Baton Rouge Collective Healing Initiative worked with other federally supported initiatives to support these efforts. As a part of the public health model that will address the causes of health disparities (i.e., poverty, economic development, and education), the BRST

will work as crime interventionists.

Recommendations for Baton Rouge Collective Healing work in the future have been generated throughout the grant period. Recommendations are included in this report with status updates of each by BRPD.

POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Global, national, and local events significantly impacted 2020. In early 2020, the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic emerged in the U.S. To date, over 200,000 individuals in the U.S. have died because of COVID-19, creating substantial social, economic, political, and medical crises (Centers for Disease Control [CDC], 2020). Furthermore, several racially charged incidents between law enforcement and Black Americans rippled throughout the country. Subsequent social justice rallies and protests were a source of major division from coast-to-coast. As a result of these collective events, the country remains at high risk for poor public health outcomes and increased civil unrest (Harrod, 2020).

COVID-19

Due to the pandemic, many governors nationwide began issuing emergency stay-at-home orders to their constituents (Hauck, Reyes, & Ortiz, 2020). In Louisiana, Governor John Bel Edwards declared a statewide emergency stay-at-home order from March 16, 2020 to May 15, 2020 directing all residents to shelter in place (Ballard & Karlin, 2020). This mandate, which ordered statewide business and school closures, required residents to practice social distancing. Despite these mitigative measures, high per capita infection and death rates continue to adversely impact Baton Rouge and the State. The disproportionate death rate among people of color is indicative of the

pattern of health disparities found among communities living amidst injustice and racism.

The emergency stay-at-home order adversely affected community residents in unimaginable ways. The dynamics of intimate partner violence (IPV) were heightened, as some survivors were compelled to live with their abusers (Chrisman, 2020). Though the number of calls for service to the Baton Rouge Police Department (BRPD) decreased during the emergency stay-at-home order, incidents of IPV in the city increased (Kennedy, 2020).

Community organizations addressed the issue through social media forums, press conferences, and information sharing (Chrisman, 2020). However, the issue persisted, as recorded in the following examples. During the arrest of a murder suspect who had killed his girlfriend's father during a domestic dispute, a BRPD officer was fatally wounded and another officer was injured. The suspect, who had a substantial history of IPV, was arrested after a long standoff (Skene, 2020).

Social Injustice

On May 25, 2020, Minneapolis resident George Floyd was killed by officers of Minneapolis Police Department during an attempted arrest (Fitz-Gibbon, 2020). Bystanders recorded videos of the incident that showed one of the officers kneeling on Floyd's neck as he pleaded to breathe.

Scenes of his death went viral, sparking public outrage and prompting calls for the officers to be arrested and charged with Floyd's murder

For many, this incident represented one of too many encounters where Black men were killed by police. Subsequently, community residents and activists gathered across the country to protest excessive use of force, racism, and discriminatory practices perpetuated by law enforcement. In Baton Rouge, students used social media to organize peaceful marches. High school student athletes organized a rally at the Louisiana State Capitol and community leaders staged demonstrations near a major retail hub in protest of unfair police practices (Fambrough, 2020; Kemker, 2020). The Baton Rouge Chapter of the NAACP organized peaceful demonstrations and protests at the Louisiana State Capitol (Thomas, 2020).

Meanwhile, a series of officer-involved incidents occurred in Baton Rouge in the wake of Floyd's death; however, BRPD administration quickly held press conferences and released body camera footage of the incidents in each instance to maintain transparency and public trust. In these cases, a fugitive was killed by a BRPD officer after arming himself with a gun during a search and a K-9 officer was wounded during the shooting. In addition, a BRPD officer was recorded on cellphone and body camera video kneeling on a juvenile suspect during a traffic stop, calling officer training into question (Skene, 2020).

Renewed calls for equality and trust

The public murder of George Floyd by police officers amid a global pandemic appears to have sparked a resurgent call for racial equality not seen since the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Though media headlines have consistently portrayed calls for police reform, others have countered by calling for "law and order." For example, the Baton Rouge Union of Police posted large billboards on Interstate-10 warning motorists to enter the city at their own risk due to high rates of violent crime.

If heightened awareness is the first step toward change, there is no doubt the types of issues identified above can be the impetus for healing. We can only hope that BRPD working with a group of interested stakeholders over the past three years will serve as the foundation for policy and community change. Though there is still much to repair, healing is possible.

"The time is always right to do what is right."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

A COMMUNITY-POLICE INITIATIVE

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) is a group of law enforcement leaders who influence departmental policies and procedures, as well as seek to improve relations between law enforcement and communities through the implementation of evidence-based interventions, technical assistance, and peer learning. In 2017, the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) awarded funds to IACP for the purpose of assisting cities which had experienced recent or historic traumatic events. IACP selected five cities through a competitive grant process to implement a program entitled *Law Enforcement and the Communities They Serve: Supporting Collective Healing in the Wake of Harm* (referred to as *Collective Healing*). Selected cities included: 1) Baton Rouge, Louisiana; 2) Houston, Texas; 3) Minneapolis, Minnesota; 4) Oakland, California; and 5) Rapid City, South Dakota. Each of these cities needed to improve relations among law enforcement agencies and community residents.

The purpose of Collective Healing was to foster meaningful dialogue and reconciliation between law enforcement agencies and the communities of color served, as well as to increase the capacity of victim service programs and to address officer health and wellness. Collective Healing programs were led by police departments and supported by victim assistance programs, behavioral health agencies, grassroots organizations, and academic partners. Furthermore, IACP

provided technical assistance and training, as well as conducted site visits to monitor accountability and effectiveness.

This report provides an overview of the Baton Rouge Collective Healing Initiative from October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2020. The report highlights the activities implemented, technical assistance received, and community partnerships created by the project. Furthermore, this report relates plans for sustainability and provides recommendations for future Baton Rouge Collective Healing work.



Partners of Baton Rouge Collective Healing Initiative attended an IACP All-Sites Demonstration Meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on August 5-7, 2019.

THE CAPITAL CITY

Baton Rouge, Louisiana's capital city, is located on the banks of the Mississippi River approximately 80 miles northwest of New Orleans. Due to its strategic location, Baton Rouge has grown into a major port heavily supported by the petrochemical industry, as well as other commerce-based businesses. Baton Rouge comprises 88 square miles which host a diverse population of 230,000 residents, as well as a metropolitan area surrounding the city which increases the total population to over 825,000. These communities are racially diverse with 55% Black, 38% White, and 7% other races (U.S. Census, 2019).

Historical impacts

Baton Rouge has a long history of systemic racism and discriminatory practices. Black community members led the first successful bus boycott in 1953, pre-dating the more famous Montgomery Bus Boycott (Momodu, 2004). The Baton Rouge bus boycott served as a model for other cities in the south. The public school system was placed under the longest federal desegregation order in history, lasting from 1956 to 2003. Baton Rouge was also placed under a federal consent decree from 1980 to 2019 due to unfair minority hiring and promotion practices within Baton Rouge fire and police departments (Jones, 2020).

Urban stress

Baton Rouge has problems typical of large urban areas, including pockets of deep poverty, substance abuse, urban blight,

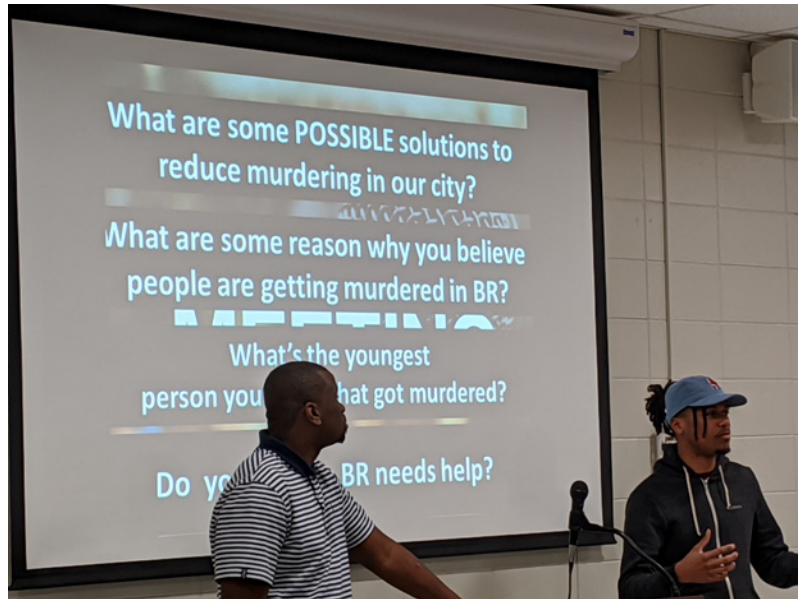
and a struggling public school system. Less typical, however, is the violent crime rate, which remains well above the national average. Given such high violent crime rates, the strained relationship between residents of color and law enforcement remains especially troubling.

Poverty

According to 2010 census estimates, over one in four Baton Rouge residents (25.2%) are living in poverty. The annual median household income was recorded as \$41,761; however, per capita income was only \$27,329 (U.S. Census, 2019). It is well documented that individuals living in low income areas are at increased risk of multiple risks, including mental illness, higher morbidity, and chronic diseases. The compiling of risk is often associated with factors that are rooted in historic and systemic social ills (Healthy People, 2020).

Education

Regarding K-12 schools, the local school system has struggled to improve schools. From 2016 to 2019, Baton Rouge District Performance Scores decreased from 73.5 to 69.1 with letter grades remaining at a "C" rating. More telling is the number of local schools designated in need of intervention for academics, high suspension and expulsion rates, and low graduation rates. In 2017, there were 32 schools, about one third in Baton Rouge in need of intervention and the number of schools has increased to 54 schools in 2019 (Louisiana Department of Education, 2020).



29:11 Academy mentor, Tremaine Sterling and community leader, Emmanuel “Boo” Milton speak during a youth community meeting at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center.

Crime

The Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program provides year-end crime summary data compiled by statisticians to indicate the number of violent crime incidents. Table 1 reflects the annual counts of violent crime in Baton Rouge, as well as the three-year crime rate from 2017 to 2019.

Table 1: Annual Violent Crime Counts in Baton Rouge

Offense	2017	2018	2019	+/-
Homicide	87	78	69	-20.69%
Forcible rape	100	74	52	-48.00%
Robbery	868	727	645	-25.69%
Aggravated Assault 4a-d	1280	1187	1299	+1.48%

Events ushering in the Collective Healing Initiative

On July 5, 2016, Alton Sterling, a Black man, was fatally shot in front of a local convenience store following a confrontation with two white police officers (Craven, 2016). The event was recorded by cellphone, which garnered direct and immediate public attention. In the following days, protestors surrounded the neighborhood store and marched through the area, blocking local streets and highways.

Activists from outside Baton Rouge arrived to protest, increasing tension between law enforcement and demonstrators. Scenes of marchers and law enforcement in riot gear filled the news and social media. Then, on July 17, 2016, a lone gunman ambushed and shot six BRPD officers, killing three (Stole, 2017).

Twenty-six days later, while Baton Rouge was still reeling from the tragedies, the City and surrounding parishes faced an unprecedented weather event. Over the course of three days, more than 20 inches of rainfall flooded areas of the city (Stole, 2017). Homes, schools, and businesses were inundated by flood waters, causing residents to either evacuate or be rescued by first responders and good Samaritans. Parts of Interstate-10, Interstate-12, and other major roadways were impassable, shutting down significant portions of the City. East Baton Rouge Parish and 20 surrounding parishes were declared federal disaster areas, enabling eligibility for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) assistance. Over the course of three days, more than 75, 000 housing units flooded.

Living with trauma

Baton Rouge residents repeatedly experience severe negative events which keep them in a chronic state of trauma. Neither the U.S. Department of Justice, nor the Louisiana State Attorney General's Office filed criminal charges against the officers involved in Alton Sterling's death (Stole, 2017). Furthermore, results of the federal and state investigations were perceived as failures for the Sterling family and the Black community. After

the decisions were announced, the community gathered again for vigils and protests. These incidents continue to affect community-police relations as collective memories and residual trauma remain. Many community residents, who experienced the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 as children, are now parents themselves who live in the neighborhoods around the site of Alton Sterling's death.

Community collaboration

To deal with these difficult issues, Baton Rouge established collaborative relationships across parish government, law enforcement, service providers, grassroots organizations, faith-based leaders, and university research centers. Leaders in these cross-sectors have committed to tackling the City's issues by implementing violence reduction strategies, neighborhood revitalization efforts, and community-focused initiatives. These activities have provided an opportunity to address pressing social issues in a proactive manner and appear to have softened social exchanges between community members and law enforcement.

THE BATON ROUGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

BRPD serves as the main law enforcement agency for the city of Baton Rouge. Organizationally situated under the Office of the Mayor-President, BRPD consists of 635 sworn officers and 80 civilian staff with 84 vacancies.

On average, BRPD receives approximately 570 calls for service per day (Greater Baton Rouge Business Report, April 9, 2020). According to self-reported survey data collected for the Baton Rouge Collective Healing Initiative (80% completion rate of 654 sworn officers), BRPD personnel are predominantly white (62.7%), male (88.5%), and nearly one-third of the respondents (61.8%) reported 11-30 years of law enforcement service.

BRPD serves a growing and diverse population. BRPD leadership plays a significant role in adapting to the ever-changing demands of law enforcement.

One of the goals of BRPD is to encourage civic engagement through community interactions and initiatives. BRPD actively seeks opportunities to implement strategies designed to bring forth safety awareness and crime reduction.

BRPD has partnerships with community residents, faith-based organizations, and social service agencies to participate in community crime forums, neighborhood clean-ups, and school events.

The mission of BRPD includes the commitment to community-oriented policing (City of Baton Rouge, 2020) with activities designed to open the lines of communication. BRPD works to develop healthy community-police relationships. The BRPD administration supported the Baton Rouge Collective Healing Initiative and made efforts to earn and maintain trust within the community.



BRPD Chief of Police Murphy Paul speaks to community residents during a listening session.

In response to the death of Alton Sterling, the Chief of Police issued an apology to the City and the Sterling family (Skene & Toohey, 2019). His apology was met with mixed reactions as some thought it was a step towards reconciliation while others expressed it was inappropriate. Excerpts of Chief Paul's apology are included in Appendix A (Skene & Toohey, 2019).

BRPD's community-oriented policing model has a dedicated unit of officers. The community-oriented policing philosophy humanizes officers and residents to each other and builds trust between the community and police. This unit frequently attends community events and engages with residents.

Other strong indicators that the BRPD is working on behalf of the community is the designation of a Victim Assistance Coordinator. This officer responds to crime events and assists survivors with victim services.

The Department also has a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) community police liaison to foster positive relations with LGBT community members who may be victims of crime or need other services. These liaisons engage in community outreach, education, and other activities (City of Baton Rouge, n.d.).

THE BATON ROUGE COLLECTIVE HEALING INITIATIVE

The Baton Rouge Collective Healing Initiative was a community-police partnership led by BRPD. The Office of the Mayor-President served as the fiscal agent of the federal grant funds.

At the beginning of the Baton Rouge Collective Healing Initiative, BRPD engaged five organizations as core partners: 1) 100 Black Men of Metro Baton Rouge (100 Black Men); 2) the Baton Rouge Branch of NAACP; 3) Capital Area Human Services (CAHS); 4) the Louisiana State University Social Research and Evaluation Center (LSU-SREC); and 5) the Southern University Center for Social Research (SU-CSR). This group worked closely with IACP to implement grant requirements.

These five organizations have been active in the community for many years but had not all collaborated together. Members of the community-police partnership convened monthly to ensure that the goals of the program were accomplished.

Representatives of the partnership attended IACP demonstration site convenings, technical assistance trainings, capacity building meetings, and monthly IACP conference calls.

BRPD hired a BR Collective Healing project manager, who coordinated with agency leadership to monitor and oversee program activities, resolve barriers to

implementation, and submit monthly progress reports. Each partner carried out specific grant activities aligned with their organization and the grant's mission. The following sections summarize the work of the original program partners.



Deputy Chief Robert McGarner with BRPD, Juanne Porter representing NAACP and Captain Kevin Newman with BRPD attend a monthly Baton Rouge Collective Healing meeting to discuss program goals and activities.

100 Black Men

100 Black Men is a non-profit group aimed at mentoring young Black males. This group provides learning opportunities in the areas of education, leadership, financial literacy, healthy lifestyles, and citizenship. As a part of the Baton Rouge Collective Healing Initiative, 100 Black Men scheduled events that instructed its mentees how to safely engage with law enforcement using interactive scenarios.

The 100 Black Men developed these sessions into a five-part educational curriculum called *Coming Together, Building Trust: Collective Healing*. The events, held in school and church settings, reached over 600 students and their parents throughout the course of the grant period.



Dr. Adell Brown, Jr. of 100 Black Men facilitates a student meeting in a school library.

Baton Rouge Branch of the NAACP

Baton Rouge Branch of the NAACP established in 1919, is a political action organization designed to preserve the constitutional rights of all citizens. NAACP addresses issues of inequality and racial discrimination. The Baton

Rouge Branch of NAACP facilitated seven listening sessions and panel discussions, which included the BRPD Chief of Police, to foster positive interactions among the community and law enforcement. NAACP also partnered with The Butterfly Society to highlight the dynamics of intimate partner and community violence. Over 600 community residents attended these meetings.

Capital Area Human Services

Capital Area Human Services is a quasi-governmental agency serving seven surrounding parishes on behalf of adults, children, and adolescents with behavioral health disorders, substance abuse disorders, and developmental disabilities. CAHS participated in the Baton Rouge Collective Healing Initiative as a mental health and addiction services provider and as a behavioral health consultant to inform partners about existing mental health treatment options and support for law enforcement and the community.

LSU Social Research and Evaluation Center

LSU Social Research and Evaluation Center is a multidisciplinary research center that fosters healthy social systems by designing, implementing, and evaluating community and social initiatives. LSU-SREC generates knowledge through research on social, economic, and behavioral health and provides professional services, outreach, and capacity building to their partners through collaborative initiatives, grant development, and rigorous evaluation. As a part of the Baton Rouge Collective Healing Initiative, LSU-SREC collected, analyzed, and disseminated law enforcement survey data to the core partnership. LSU-SREC also served as a consultant to the partnership providing information about best practices in community engagement and mental health treatment and support.

SU Center for Social Research

SU Center for Social Research is a university-based unit within a historically black college and university (HBCU) that seeks to build communities through education and research. SU-CSR uses research methods to address social and economic problems impacting vulnerable communities. As a Baton Rouge Collective Healing partner, SU-CSR moderated a series of community-wide listening sessions with vulnerable populations. SU-CSR analyzed and disseminated the information to the core partnership. SU-CSR also served as a consultant providing information about community engagement to the partnership.

Over the three-year grant period, the Baton Rouge Collective Healing Initiative expanded the number of agencies working on the project. The Baton Rouge Collective Healing Initiative added local grassroots organizations to further engage the community and to work toward program goals. While these organizations had been active in the community, not all of them had previously worked with BRPD or one another. These organizations formed the new Baton Rouge Healing Coalition (BRHC) to implement activities on behalf of the initiative. The mission of the BRHC is “collectively healing our city one person at a time to prevent further trauma and violence in the city of Baton Rouge.” The current BRHC organizations are listed in Appendix B.



Twahna P. Harris, Founder and Executive Director of the Butterfly Society speaks to participants at a Butterfly Society Domestic Violence March.

THE BATON ROUGE COLLECTIVE HEALING INITIATIVE ACTIVITIES

The Baton Rouge Collective Healing Initiative conducted activities based on an action plan developed by IACP in partnership with BRPD and the core partners. As first steps, partners conducted community listening sessions and administered law enforcement surveys. These activities measured the attitudes and perceptions of community members and law enforcement to inform future programs and activities.

Additionally, BRPD provided copies of departmental policies to IACP as required by the grant directives. These activities provided a baseline of police and community attitudes for the initiative's relationship-building work.

Community listening sessions

SU-CSR coordinated and moderated ten community listening sessions. The sessions gathered information about the levels of trust and cooperation between law enforcement and the community. Community listening sessions were designed (1) to identify and address issues that affect trust, (2) to discuss events that cause barriers to reconciliation, and (3) to gauge the use of victims' services.

The dialogue focused on meaningful and respectful ways to connect community and law enforcement. Discussion centered on the perceived challenges and strengths of law enforcement.

The listening sessions were held in areas where survivors and vulnerable individuals lived. These individuals had experienced trauma and typically did not seek or receive help from victim assistance services. The locations were in distressed and violent-afflicted areas of Baton Rouge. Participants represented a variety of perspectives from different races, religions, and socioeconomic statuses including transient men and women; survivors of intimate partner violence; parents who had lost children to violence; members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (questioning), intersex, asexual (ally), and other sexual minorities [LGBTQIA+] community; and formerly incarcerated individuals.

SU-CRS successfully engaged participants in sensitive subject matters. SU-CSR analyzed information gathered during community listening sessions for themes and trends. Dufelmeier (2019) summarized the findings in the following section.

Community viewpoints

Identifying strengths of law enforcement was difficult for participants. Although only a few law enforcement strengths were identified, the responses were useful, thoughtful, and reflective. The responses to questions about law enforcement strengths were short and lacking in detail.

Identified strengths included officers' presence in neighborhoods and positive relationships with younger children. Participants also noted that law enforcement officers were responsive to crime victims and connected those people to victim assistance services and agencies.

The following quotes are recounted as stated by the respondents.

"The only strength to me is just their [the police] presence... Them standing there actually does ward off a little bit, you know."

"The cops got called to a bunch of kids playing basketball and when the cops go there they started playing basketball with them."

"They do have a resource guide that they're given, like now, to new recruits."

"They are very much present now, not just showing up to make an arrest. They're making it their business, consciously, to show up at schools crossing guards. You know, you don't see that often."

"Chief Paul, ... He has made some efforts to have an impact and change some of the things that we see happening. The fact that we're here right now is the effort of Chief Paul."

In contrast to the discussion about law enforcement strengths, participants readily responded when asked to identify challenges with law enforcement. In this case, conversation flowed easily. It seemed as though participants previously had discussed similar issues which made for insightful responses. Factors that contributed to the challenges with law enforcement included mistrust, a lack of police training, and knowledge of community services.

The following quotes do not capture all responses but provide insight into problems and concerns raised by community residents. All quotes are recounted as stated by the respondents.

"They [police] have poor judgement in situations. My great grandfather was a sergeant for the New Orleans police department back in the sixties and he never shot anybody but he got shot." It has got to be a lot of training. It has to be collaborative. It has to be a whole lot of training together."

“The police in the communities don’t have relationships.”

“We talk about criminal justice reform and criminal justice reinvestment, but also that part of that piece is not just for the service providers. It’s also for the people who we depend on to protect us, which is law enforcement and they need to get on board that.”

“The community does not trust the police base on killing unarmed black men.”

“That trust been broken with the police even dealing with the history.”

“The first challenge is they have to want to help.”

The community identified opportunities and significant shortcomings to address problems and improve police community relations. Four key areas of improvement included: (1) leadership; (2) trust; (3) community-oriented policing; and (4) becoming a trauma-informed police department.

Broken trust was a repeated and common theme in nearly all conversations. Community members identified areas where the BRPD engaged in trust building activities such as participation in community events and playing basketball with police officers.

The community members’ key points was that trust needed to be built with BRPD in general, as well as with specific officers working in their respective communities. The community members noted that BRPD officers needed more buy-in to build relationships with the communities they serve. Many community residents also expressed an explicit desire to have BRPD hire people from within the communities being served.

Law enforcement perspectives

Baton Rouge Collective Healing administered two surveys developed by the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) to BRPD personnel. The first survey was the *Officer and Agency Wellness and Resiliency Perceptions Survey*, and the second survey was *Victims Services Survey for Officers*. LSU-SREC worked with police leadership on a plan to administer the surveys. LSU-SREC compiled resultant data and presented a report to BRPD and IACP/DOJ.

The surveys were designed to: (1) gain knowledge about officers' understanding of and experiences related to trauma; (2) measure knowledge of officer wellness support; (3) gain an understanding of officers' knowledge of victim services, referrals, and sense of adequacy in dealing with victims; (4) view police policies and procedures regarding victims of crime; and (5) examine police policies, procedures, and services regarding officers' mental health. The surveys also evaluated organizational culture and job satisfaction. The surveys were disseminated via email to 654 sworn officers working in BRPD. All responses were anonymous and included demographic characteristics of respondents such as gender, age, ethnicity, rank, and length of law enforcement service.

The response rate for the surveys was high with an over 80% completion rate for both surveys. One-third of the respondents are ranked command and two-thirds are uniform patrol, aged 30-43. A vast majority (n = 594; 90.8%) of BRPD officers responded to the *Officer and Agency Resiliency and Wellness Perception Survey*. Of the respondents, who noted their rank, 165 were command officers, 20 were leadership officers, and 407 were patrol officers. The responses are disaggregated to see similarities or differences in perceptions based on an individuals' rank.

Appendix C details findings about officer job satisfaction, department leadership, and BRPD organizational policies and procedures. Regarding the *Victim Services*

Survey for Officers, over three-fourths (n = 500; 76.4%) of BRPD officers responded to the statements related to adequate training, response to victims, and victim services. Key findings related to these issues are recounted in Appendix C.

Survey findings were shared with IACP, BRPD administration, and BR Collective Healing Initiative partners. The surveys provided snapshots of law enforcement perspectives on their work and knowledge of services for victims of crime. The information is useful to develop law enforcement interventions such as health and wellness initiatives and victim services.

OFFICER HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Promoting and improving officer health and wellness was a primary goal of Collective Healing. Healthy officers produce safe and thriving communities (IACP, 2018), and this is important to their personal safety and the safety of the communities being served. Officers work in highly stressful situations that affect their physical, mental, and occupational health.

Some officers also experience difficult family dynamics and financial hardships that affect their overall well-being and job performance. It is the responsibility of police departments to develop health and wellness programs to address these chronic conditions and to create environments free from the stigma of seeking professional help and support.

Quality health and wellness programs offer comprehensive evidence-based strategies that are holistic and designed to bring about positive outcomes. These strategies address healthy lifestyles, occupational burnout, and promote positive community-police relations. Health and wellness information is shared as a part of department orientation and at the confidential request of officers needing assistance.

Members of the BRPD Peer Support Team attended a training with the SAPD Officer Safety and Wellness Team to learn helpful strategies to address health and wellness.



Health and wellness in BRPD

BRPD addresses officer health and wellness with a Peer Support Team. The team's mission is "to provide pre-incident training, on-site support, psychological first aid, peer-to-peer support, and continuing care referrals to those who have experienced a critical incident or who are experiencing the effects of unmanaged stress." The services, education, and support provided by the program will assist officers and families in living healthier lives" (BRPD Critical Incident Stress Management Team, 2018).

The Peer Support Team members include 30 volunteers consisting of current or retired BRPD officers. Team members must be in good standing with the department, complete training, and follow the policies and procedures set forth by the unit's leadership.

The Peer Support Team provides assistance and resources to address health and wellness in the physical, mental, and occupational domains. The Peer Support Team provides support to the families of fallen officers and other officers injured in the line of duty. Monthly newsletters are circulated with information about the BRPD employee assistance program and health and wellness best practices.

The Peer Support Team leadership was intentional in creating relationships with local licensed mental health professionals (LMHP) that they believe are a good fit to address the unique issues specific to law enforcement. While these LMHPs do not proportionally resemble the race and ethnicity of the department, the LMHPs are familiar with law enforcement culture, and have participated in peer support trainings. The Peer Support Team also partners with Under the Shield, a non-profit organization with a history of working with first responders and their families. However, Under the Shield is not an evidence-based intervention program (Under the Shield Foundation, 2017). The Peer Support team was encouraged by the BR Collective Healing Initiative partners to follow best practices and implement an evidence-based model in addition to

Under the Shield.

The Baton Rouge Collective Healing Initiative recognized the need to address the daily stressors experienced by BRPD officers. The Baton Rouge Collective Healing Initiative assisted the Peer Support Team by providing support for consultation and training. BRPD consulted with the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) to enhance the Peer Support Team's standard operating procedures. SAPD was designated as a promising program for Officer Safety and Wellness by IACP (IACP, 2018). SAPD provided a five day in-person training to the BRPD Peer Support Team. BRPD Peer Support Team leadership also attended IACP Officer Wellness Symposiums in San Antonio, Texas and Miami, Florida.

CAPACITY BUILDING

As the Baton Rouge Collective Healing Initiative continued to address issues that exist in the City, the group identified additional resources to address trauma and violence. The Baton Rouge Collective Healing Initiative leveraged local resources and connected with additional organizations to carry out innovative trauma-informed resolutions. This network of organizations and resources provided opportunities for increased collaboration and enhanced services to law enforcement and the community.

A partnership was formed with the **BR Resiliency in Communities After Stress and Trauma (ReCAST)** federal grant program in the Office of the Mayor-President. The mission of ReCAST is “to use trauma-informed approaches to promote healing and resiliency among community members in the aftermath of civil unrest and traumatic events that surfaced in Baton Rouge during the summer of 2016” (ReCAST, 2020). Since the implementation of the Baton Rouge Collective Healing Initiative, efforts have been made to effectively align resources as these groups advocate for the same populations. ReCAST is an ongoing resource for BRHC partners.

Equal Justice USA provided technical assistance to members of the Baton Rouge Healing Coalition during a site visit to Newark, New Jersey.



Another primary goal of Collective Healing was to assist crime victims. The Baton Rouge Collective Healing Initiative met the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement that serves as the local administrators of the **Victim of Crimes Act (VOCA)** to inquire about the process to receive VOCA funds. Some BRHC partners applied for VOCA funding but were unsuccessful. However, organizations will continue to submit proposals. Additional meetings will be held with the local VOCA administrator to talk about how BRHC partner organizations and the BRPD Victim Assistance Coordinator can assist survivors of crime. More needs to be done to ensure the BRHC and local organizations are familiar with the process of applying for VOCA funds.

To advance knowledge, members of the BRHC (see Appendix B) attended site visits to learn more about projects including healing approaches, violence prevention, and trauma-informed policing. Support in the areas of community engagement and organizational capacity building were provided by Equal Justice USA (EJUSA). EJUSA is a national organization that helps community organizations implement programs addressing racial trauma, social injustice, and other public health inequities. BRHC members travelled to Newark, New Jersey, to observe the **Trauma to Trust: Police and Community Collaborative Training program**. Trauma to Trust seeks to encourage compassion and facilitate communication among law enforcement and community residents. The training promotes understanding of the symptoms of historical, vicarious, and community-based trauma while building skills to address the trauma and other issues. A Trauma to Trust trainer facilitates discussions with an on-site LMHP to address strong emotional responses. BRHC partner organizations believe this model would benefit the Baton Rouge community and are planning to host upcoming sessions.

During the same site visit, members also learned about the **violence interrupter model** implemented by the **Alliance for Safety and Justice**, which uses individuals familiar to the community to intervene in emerging violent-prone conflicts or situations (Ritter, 2009). Violence interrupters establish rapport with community members, including those

who are justice-involved, and serve as public health outreach workers to mediate conflicts, retaliation, and violent acts.

A group of BRPD officers attended site visits in Oakland and Stockton, California, to learn about the **procedural justice (PJ)** model. This law enforcement framework focuses on an open and unbiased approach to interacting with the public. It also promotes community trust and addresses trauma. The Baton Rouge group was especially interested in ways to integrate procedural justice into current policies, including academy training and everyday interactions with the community. Procedural justice is now a state requirement at academy training to address trauma impacting the community and law enforcement.

BRPD Public Information Officers (PIO) attended an IACP **Social Media For Community Engagement** training in Washington City, Utah, to learn about effective social media platforms and approaches. PIOs learned how to effectively use social media platforms to engage the community and to communicate in a transparent manner. A well-known media strategist also visited Baton Rouge and provided written recommendations.

SUSTAINABILITY

As the Baton Rouge Collective Healing three-year grant reaches its conclusion, multiple efforts are underway for continuing this work. The Baton Rouge Collective Healing has developed into a community-minded group that can leverage multiple segments of the Baton Rouge community to promote healthy community-police relationships and to reduce violence. Multiple agencies mentioned in this report continue to work together and plan projects and funding applications to continue the work of this IACP funded grant.

Innovative, community-based strategies will be continued via Baton Rouge's new **Safe, Hopeful, Healthy Initiative**. Housed within the Healthy BR organization, a local non-profit organization that promotes healthy lifestyles for Baton Rouge residents, Safe, Hopeful, Healthy Initiative will include a community-based violence intervention program. The Baton Rouge Street Community Team (BRST) is based on lessons learned at the site visit to Newark, NJ. In this model, people with respect from the community will work to discover upcoming trouble that could escalate into violence. The BRST will receive training to mediate the conflict and resolve problems. In other communities, Street Teams are paid a living wage and often consist of formerly justice-involved individuals. A consultant will continue to work with Baton Rouge after the conclusion of the grant to assist partners with the Street Team program implementation.

Jazzika Matthews, BR Collective Healing Program Manager, partners with TRUCE to conduct an anti-violence neighborhood canvass.



The violence interrupter model is a deliberate move to deal with community violence as a public health threat. The Baton Rouge Collective Healing Initiative worked with other federally supported initiatives to support these efforts. The U.S. Department of Justice's Community-based Crime Reduction (CBCR) grant is one example, which will establish a multiagency, multidisciplinary CBCR Advisory Council to support crime reduction efforts in Baton Rouge. Other funds that can support these efforts include the CARES Act federal funds (DeRobertis, 2020). As a part of the public health model that will address the causes of health disparities (i.e., poverty, economic development, and

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations have been generated over the three-year grant period. Some of these recommendations are already in various stages of implementation, and the authors recount them here for accountability and additional strategy development. Each recommendation includes a status update from BRPD.

Recommendation	BRPD Response
Law enforcement leadership should continue to strengthen transparency and accountability to bolster police-community relations. This should include plans to address training/retraining, accountability, communication with the public, and integration with other entities that interface with the community. Law enforcement should maintain a strategic plan that provides actionable steps for rank and file officers on how to meet and uphold the strategic plan.	Transparency and accountability have been two of the main focuses of the BRPD. We realized that those two factors are necessary to develop trust and has included it in every aspect of the operations of the department.
Law enforcement should include community policing as a core component of its policing strategies and training. Community policing should ensure fair and compassionate policing in all neighborhoods including minority neighborhoods and those with high rates of violent crime.	Fair and impartial policing as well as procedural justice has been incorporated in all aspects of community-police strategies and training.

Recommendation	BRPD Response
<p>BRPD should ensure that the community-policing model is augmented with the trauma-informed policing strategies including a commitment to understanding individuals experiencing trauma/crisis (e.g., mental health, substance use, and traumatic events), de-escalation of tense situations, and the appropriate use of force. BRPD should embrace the ideals of restorative justice practices. Restorative justice augments trauma informed policing by not only addressing perpetrators of crime, but also strives to repair the harm caused by the crime. Training for police officers in restorative justice and intentional trust building activities can build improved police community relations.</p>	<p>Restorative justice has been a focus of the BRPD as we strive to repair and improve community-police relationships. To aid in the objective, BRPD adopted and implemented mandatory procedural justice training for both sworn and civilian personnel. The advance training will also include members of the community.</p>
<p>BRPD should focus on the wellness of its officers and address the social and emotional needs of all officers in a comprehensive and responsible way.</p>	<p>The BRPD created a full time Officer Wellness division to provide onsite support, psychological first aid, peer to peer support, and continuing care referrals to those who have experienced a critical incident or who are experiencing the effects of unmanaged chronic stress.</p>

Recommendation	BRPD Response
<p>BRPD should actively recruit and hire officers who reside in the communities where they work as this demonstrates a commitment to serve the local community.</p>	<p>After spending decades under a federal consent decree, recruitment and hiring was a priority of this administration. Changes in personnel was one of the first steps taken. The very aggressive approach taken by recruiters focused on the minority demographic. As a result, the current recruit training class has one of the most diverse makeups in the history of the BRPD. With over 65% of the class being minorities and approximately 24% of those being females, the additional category of residency was another area in which we saw success. Over 62% of the recruits that were hired are residents of the community they will be assigned to police.</p>
<p>BRPD should encourage the community's understanding of crime data to build better community-police relations. The City of BR provides a free data share portal, which can be used to foster transparency and relationship building. OPEN DATA Baton Rouge is an existing resource that can continue to be leveraged to share data, and as a repository to share new policies and practices adopted by the department.</p>	<p>The BRPD has focused on being a data driven organization over the last three years. The previously established resource of the OPEN DATA portal was expanded to release even more categories of data. With transparency being the purpose in hopes of building trust, the BRPD has now began to post their policy and procedures online for public view.</p>

Recommendation	BRPD Response
<p>BRPD should pursue evidence-informed interventions to build community relationships. One example is the Trauma to Trust intervention, in which law enforcement and community residents meet to discuss and resolve events that cause trauma.</p>	<p>Efforts are ongoing.</p>
<p>BRPD should facilitate and maintain procedures to report officers who do not adhere to standard law enforcement policies and practices in order to ensure the department's reputation and community safety.</p>	<p>The BRPD has enacted policy that requires mandated reporting of all violations of policy to include excessive use of force.</p>
<p>BRPD should continue to work with nationally recognized organizations such as EJUSA, the Alliance for Safety and Justice, and other partners who can advance knowledge and skills to improve police-community relationships and heal the trauma experienced in Baton Rouge.</p>	<p>Efforts are ongoing.</p>
<p>BRPD should continue to make strong connections with municipal safety departments and other agencies for automatic referrals and follow-up for victims of crime.</p>	<p>Efforts are ongoing.</p>

Recommendation	BRPD Response
<p>Law enforcement and the BR Collective Healing Coalition should strengthen connections with other local initiatives, such as TRUCE, the Family Justice Center at the Family and Youth Service Center (FYSC), and the Victim's Assistance Program in the Office of the District Attorney.</p>	<p>The BRPD has invested addition resources to strengthen connections with other local initiatives. Not only has the department dedicated a member to sit on the board of TRUCE, but we have also assigned an additional sergeant to act as a fulltime liaison.</p>
<p>BRHC should expand collaborations with current and other local programs such as Sexual Trauma Awarness Response (STAR), IRIS Domestic Violence Center, area hospital violence intervention programs, and local hospitals systems to assist survivors of crime.</p>	<p>The BRPD has expanded our relationship with programs such as the Butterfly Society to assist survivors of crime.</p>
<p>VOCA funding should be sought and leveraged to serve agencies that assist victims of crime. Processes to access VOCA funds should be transparent and encouraged.</p>	<p>The BRPD has sought VOCA funding and though denied, will continue to seek the aid to further assist victims of crime.</p>

Recommendation	BRPD Response
<p>BR public safety and public health leadership should consider the formulization of a public safety community advisory group to coordinate and align multiple interventions and use resources efficiently. This centralized board may include community members, area leaders, policy makers, and content experts (e.g., mayor, police, sheriff, district attorney, public defender, warden, community members, faith leaders, K-12 schools, mental health and substance abuse, and higher education).</p>	<p>Communication by all involved should be clear that violence is a public health issue. This shift would promote and leverage public health strategies to reduce violence and build trusting relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve.</p>

After examining these recommendations, BRPD has concluded that while a tremendous amount of progress has been made over the last three years, there is still alot of work ahead: “Many would categorizes these accomplishments as successes, but we see them as additional opportunities for improvement and growth.”

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The people of Baton Rouge and those who serve them are resilient. A myriad of historically catastrophic events has tested the City time and time again, and many Baton Rougeans still suffer from institutionalized and historic injustices. The federal grant award, *Law Enforcement and the Communities They Serve: Supporting Collective Healing in the Wake of Harm*, was an opportunity to strengthen and forge new relationships that would identify paths to ongoing recovery.

The grant award signaled that the community-police relationship needed to be repaired. This report recounts how a group of committed partners were willing to join together to build and repair. In many ways the success of the BR Collective Healing Initiative is not the positive strides that have been made to date on behalf of the police and the community, but rather the future work that is yet to be done.

Plans are underway to support officer wellness, survivors of crime, and to reduce violent crime in Baton Rouge. More community members and agencies need to be identified to join in this work. Leaders must continue to listen and work together with the community to ensure a healthy and vibrant Baton Rouge.

Organization representatives with the BR Healing Coalition held planning meetings to discuss their overall goals and mission.



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world: Indeed it’s the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead

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APPENDIX A

EXCERPTS FROM BRPD CHIEF OF POLICE APOLOGY TO THE STERLING FAMILY AND THE CITY OF BATON ROUGE

“I think that we have to be honest when we try to understand the history of policing in the city of Baton Rouge. We must recognize and acknowledge that some of our policing practices have traumatized parts of our community. This is bigger than Alton Sterling. That was just the tipping point for some in this community.”

“Baton Rouge, we are sorry. We’re sorry for hiring a person who was intentionally untruthful and misleading, who failed to report information requested during the hiring process. We’re sorry for our failure not to discipline an officer who demonstrated unprofessional behavior and violated our code of conduct consistently, escalating incidents. We’re sorry, Baton Rouge.”

“While we obviously can’t change the past, it is clear that we must change the future. I sincerely apologize for the actions of the past and the role that our profession has played in building barriers in communities of color in the city of Baton Rouge.”

“We are a department committed to healing and to safety. We have honorable men and women who work for the Baton Rouge Police Department.”

APPENDIX B

BATON ROUGE HEALING COALITION PARTNERS

4th Floor Productions

29:11 Mentorship Academy

AGILE Planning Solutions

The BRidge Agency

The Butterfly Society

Community Against Drugs And Violence (CADAV), Inc.

Communities Healing And Nurturing Growth through Edification (C.H.A.N.G.E)

Emmanuel “Boo” Milton

Family Services of Greater Baton Rouge

Ment-2-Fit

Office of the Mayor President

Resiliency in Communities After Trauma and Stress (ReCAST) Baton Rouge

Tonja Myles, Consultant

United Christian Faith Ministries

APPENDIX C

SURVEY RESULTS

Results from the IACP- Officer and Agency Resiliency and Wellness Perceptions

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction was high among survey respondents. Over half of respondents were very pleased with their work. Often/always responses were indicated for the following statements: (a) my work is important—80.4%; (b) I am satisfied with my job—53.4%. While half of the respondents reported pride in their department (52.6%), over one third (36.9%) thought their department is a good agency and a good place to work.

When asked about authority and support, 50.5% reported that the department provided sufficient authority to accomplish their job, and 40.2% felt that the department gave them sufficient support to accomplish their jobs. A vast majority were committed to their profession (90.1%) and their department (94.4%), and 64.9% indicated that BRPD values the idea that members trust and offer support to one another. Similarly, more than half of respondents agree/strongly agree that BRPD is an environment that seeks to maintain moral and ethical standards: (a) agency values demonstration of respect for all personnel—66.4%; (b) disparaging comments and other demonstrations of disrespect are not tolerated—71.8%; and (c) diversity is welcomed, respected, and valued—73.8%.

Leadership

Some of the highest responses indicated that staff agreed/strongly agreed that leadership was effective in communicating and enforcing policies in key areas: (a) concerning sexual harassment—84.6%; (b) concerning workplace violence, including bullying/hazing—78.1%; (c) concerning intimate partner violence within or outside the workplace—80%; and (d) concerning discrimination based on age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, religion, ability, etc.—76.5%.

Also, 87.7% agreed/strongly agreed that supervisors ensured that policies and procedures were in place to address employee grievances.

Results from the IACP- Officer and Agency Resiliency and Wellness Perceptions

Organizational policies and procedures

When asked about organizational policies and procedures at the agency level, half of respondents expressed never/rarely for addressing work-related stress and trauma: (a) agency provides training and education to all employees on strategies on how to address work-related stress and traumatization—46.7%; (b) agency uses a protocol to address organizational stress—47.8%; and (c) agency uses a protocol to address specific concerning behaviors (e.g. low morale, substance abuse, and absenteeism—57.2%. However, over half of the respondents cited often/always for addressing workplace trauma: (a) agency uses a protocol to address line-of-duty deaths—62.5%; and (b) agency uses a protocol to address critical incidents—67.8%. BRPD respondents reported a lack of focus on some policies at the agency level as over two thirds of staff indicated strongly disagree/disagree to the following statements: (a) agency's policies support mental health and wellness—44.8%; (b) agency's policies support physical health and wellness—46.5%; and (c) performance evaluation includes a discussion of organizational and individual strategies to minimize risk for traumatization—48.8%. However, 66.7% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that leaders demonstrate their understanding of the risk of trauma and the importance of both individual and organizational strategies to address it by making final hires aware of the agency's strategies to reduce the negative impact of the work.

Results from the IACP Survey for the Victim Services Survey for Officers

Adequate training

Many officers agreed/strongly agreed that the training they received allows them to respond to victims appropriately as listed in the following statements: (a) I feel that I received adequate training while in the Academy on providing support when interacting with victims, both on scene and off scene—85.9%; (b) I feel that I received adequate training within the Academy to address the needs and understand the differences across a diversity of victims and crime types—85.6%; (c) I have continued to receive formal training that is relevant and useful on providing support when interacting with victims, both on scene and off scene, since graduating from the Academy—74.7%; (d) I feel that I received adequate training while in the Academy on providing support when interacting with victims, both on scene and off scene—85.9%; (e) I feel that I received adequate training within the Academy to address the needs and understand the differences across a diversity of victims and crime types—85.6%; (f) I have continued to receive formal training that is relevant and useful on providing support when interacting with victims, both on scene and off scene, since graduating from the Academy—74.7%; (g) I have learned how to respond to victims and my knowledge comes from both formal training as well as while on the job—93%; and (h) I feel confident in my abilities to effectively respond to all types of crime victims, no matter their age, race, other characteristics, such as disability or mental health status—96.2%.

Response to victims

An overwhelming majority of officers reported feeling adequately trained to respond to victims on the scene. Nearly all of the officers responded agree/strongly agree to the following statements: (a) I've been trained to immediately ensure the safety of victims—97.2%; (b) I've been trained to render first aid to all harmed individuals, as needed—91.8%; (c) I've been trained to request additional medical assistance or resources, as needed—98.6%; (d) I've been trained to ensure emotionally distraught victims are not left alone and receive access to crisis intervention—83.2%; (e) I've been trained to be perceptive and patient to the victim's psychological state while obtaining evidence—88.7%; (f) I've been trained to consider the method, manner, location, and timing of the victim interview to best meet the needs of the victim and gather meaningful information from him/her—87.1%; (g) I've been trained to document in my report that the victim was properly informed of rights and available protections and was provided with information and referrals—87.5%; (h) I've been trained to document in my report that victim was provided with information and referrals regarding relevant victim services—73.2%; and (i) I have learned how to respond to victims and my knowledge comes from both formal training as well as while on the job—93.1%.

Victim services

Based on statements asked about victim services, most officers were aware of services available to victims in East Baton Rouge Parish, and officers were able to share this information with them. Most indicated agree/strongly agree for the following statements: (a) I am knowledgeable about what services for victims are available in my jurisdiction to adequately inform victims—73.5%; (b) I feel equipped to effectively advise victims of services that might help them deal with their victimization—81.8%; (c) I have adequate time during calls for service and ensuing investigations to follow-up with victims of crime—60.6%; (d) I am able to provide victims with information about victims' services in my jurisdiction and how to access those services—79.5%; (e) During initial interactions, I encourage victims to ask questions about services available to them—71.6%; and (f) I am encouraged to look at the totality of circumstances to determine all potential needs for the victim—93.5%. However, 51.4% reported that there were not an adequate number of services for victims in their jurisdiction, and officers indicated gaps in services for individuals dealing with mental health, domestic violence, and homelessness. While many officers were knowledgeable of victims' services, 59.1% felt that they were not encouraged to follow-up with victims, in the aftermath of an incident/crime, outside of specific calls for service, and 65.5% did not have a working relationship and/or direct line of communication with victim services staff within BRPD.

Perceptions of victims

Respondents were asked who they perceive as victims of crime. A majority of officers agreed/strongly agreed with the following statements: (a) a male who refuses to file charges in a domestic situation is a victim—78.6%; (b) a person injured during an attempt to buy drugs is a victim—82.4%; (c) a suspect (while being taken into custody) is assaulted by his/her victim. The suspect is now a victim —84.8%. However, 55.3% respondents disagreed/strongly disagreed that females were more likely to be victims than males. Most notably, when asked if those experiencing behavioral health issues were more likely to be victims compared to those who were not experiencing behavioral health issues, the respondents who agree and disagree with that statement was nearly split, 45.7% and 42.1%, respectively.

