

DISCUSSION SESSION

Police Responses to Suspicious Persons Calls
with Possible Racial/Ethnic Bias

DERRICK JACKSON

jacksond@WashtenawSheriff.org
734-891-2243

- Director of Community Engagement, Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office
- Southeast Michigan
 - Ann Arbor is largest city
 - Metro Detroit area
- Been with the agency for 10 years
- Social worker who became a police officer and now helps run a police agency

GARY CORDNER

gcordner@gmail.com
484-560-9123

- Research Advisor, National Institute of Justice (DOJ)
- Senior Police Advisor, ICITAP (DOJ)
- Former police officer, police chief, CALEA commissioner
- Goldstein POP award judge for 20+ years
- Retired professor

AGENDA

- Review & critique recent incidents
- Community impact
- Public education
- Discuss dispatch protocol ideas
- To send or not to send?
- Officer response protocols
- Policy implications & examples

THE WHY

- Growing awareness over “suspicious persons” calls
- We run the risk of becoming the face of that “bias”
- Potential major implications for innocent citizens who are being called on, officers who are responding, the agency, and the larger community
- How to be responsive to citizen concerns, yet not validate people’s racial and ethnic biases at the expense of innocent others
- How to set the appropriate expectations

EXAMPLES

- **NOTES**

- List a couple examples to review and discuss (**Gary, any suggestions on which national examples we should highlight? – how about start with Starbucks, jump to two that just occurred – will send links, one in Charlotte NC and one in Connecticut, then invite examples from attendees**)
- Ask for local examples attendees may have. This can help to engage class and learn from their specific local examples.
- Demonstrates that this does not only happen with viral video incidents
- Can show good and bad agency responses

IMPACT

- Erodes trust
- Validates the negative narrative of police
- Incites anger and/or fear
- Perpetuates difficult interactions
- Severe consequences for all involved

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Value statement
- Guide employee decision-making regarding
 - When and how to dispatch officers to respond to a call
 - How to properly inform officer of any potential concerns regarding a bias-based call
 - How officers conduct themselves when engaging subjects
 - How officers respond to bias-based calls

DISPATCH

- Is call based on perceived race, ethnicity, immigration status...
- Additional circumstances or facts
- Attempt to gather specific behaviors
 - “Can you describe the behavior?”
 - “What about it is suspicious?”
- If no enforcement presence is needed
 - Advise caller to call back if something else occurs
 - Provide caller with examples of “suspicious behavior”
 - Citizen follow up

TO SEND OR NOT TO SEND?

- IF caller continues request
 - Officer dispatched
 - Officer should be told the context of the call and that it might be bias based
 - Supervisor evaluation and possible follow up
 - Public education opportunity
 - Internal policy
 - Impacts bias-based calls have on the community

OFFICER RESPONSE

- Investigate whether the caller's understanding was accurate
- Observe and decide
- If based on perceived race, ethnicity, immigration status...
 - File report stating so
 - Communicate to supervisor for caller follow-up

OFFICER TRAINING

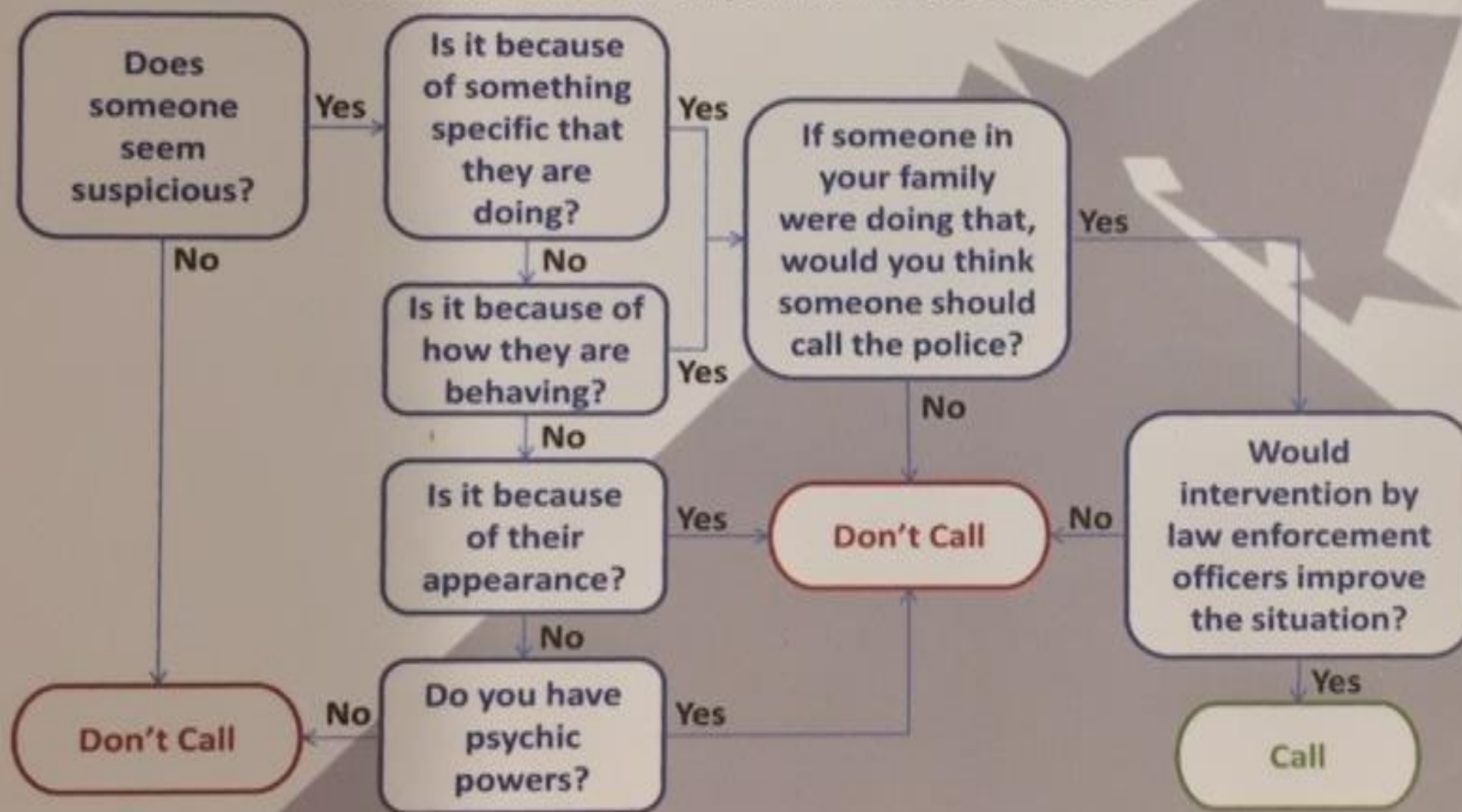
- Bias-free training
- Implicit & Explicit bias training
- Procedural Justice
 - Listen
 - Explain
 - Equal Treatment
 - Dignity

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Setting Expectations

Before Calling the Police

A Handy Guide for Objective Threat Evaluation



Emergencies: 911

UCI Police Dispatch: 824-5223

ICHA: 824-2424

WHEN TO CALL 911

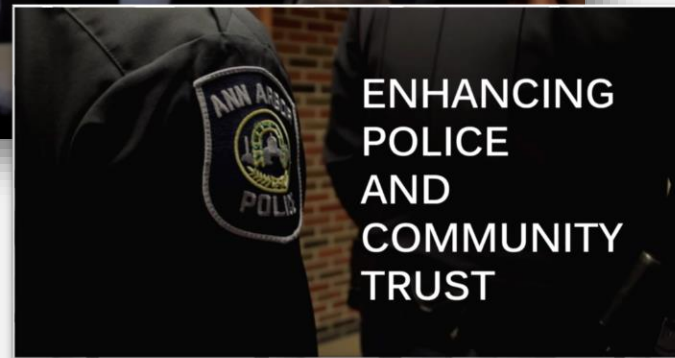
- There are many reasons to call 911 including:
 - If the situation requires an ambulance or the fire department to respond immediately
 - To report a situation that requires a police officer at the scene (for example: assaults, burglaries, kidnapping, domestic disputes, auto theft, accidents in which there are injuries / or it is unknown whether injuries have occurred, etc.).
 - To report a crime that is in progress
 - To report suspicious criminal activity that you witness (for example: sounds of shots fired, cries for help, sounds of glass breaking or if you see an unfamiliar person carrying items from a house).

COURAGEOUS SPACES

Dialogue around issues of race, racism, and policing



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HANDOUTS

- **NOTES**
 - Example Policy (Philadelphia)
 - Articles
 - When race triggers a call to campus police
 - 911 operators need better training, too
 - A better solution for Starbucks
 - Training