

## Chapter 4

# Policing Strategies and Approaches to Improving Community Relations: Black Citizens' Perceptions of Law Enforcement Efforts to Intentionally Strengthen Relationships

**Christopher Lee Bush**  
*Allen County Community College, USA*

### ABSTRACT

*This chapter addresses the voices of Black individuals and their communities urging police officers to be trustworthy and transparent, and urging them to be intentional in building relationships in the Black community. Qualified immunity, fraternal order of police, and law enforcement bill of rights discussions have emerged from recent incidents that add to the Black community's mistrust in the police. This chapter discusses how officers fail to recognize past and current issues where officers are unapologetic, and which, in turn, contributes to making it difficult to see police transparency and legitimacy. The chapter also addresses the partial education officers receive on Black culture and, more importantly, officers' lack of knowledge about cultural humility with self-reflection. Global positive social change and using a conceptual communication framework are the foundation for building and strengthening police relationships in the Black community to improve police strategies.*

### INTRODUCTION

Community policing became more prevalent in the 1970s, after law enforcement began to take another approach from what was known as the “professional” model. The shift began to progress with officers being more engaged with the local citizens during the 1980's throughout the 90s (Patterson, 1995). This phenomenon would later saturate throughout the country where cities and states would adopt the

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philosophy of implementing effective strategies to establish better relationships in communities while also addressing crimes (Cooley et. al, 2019). One demographic group that the early adoption of police community positively impacted was a community in Topeka, KS in the 1980's. Topeka police department utilized a strategy to engage with youth by disseminating Kansas City Chiefs football cards. This effective method installed by the Chief reflect to Peterson (1995) discussed about historical foundation of policing known as "beats" where Peel idea goal for implementing strategies where the officers would become known by the community and the community know the officers.

Ray (2014) stated that establishing relationships with youth at school and in the community extends beyond traditional policing. Police departments are at the forefront of becoming more engaged with bettering community policing. Efforts that officers are being encouraged to add with developing better strategies is establishing effective interventions with Black communities (Wahl, 2017) The phenomenon, that Topeka Police implemented over 30 years allowed the community and the police to work together to repair any lost communication along with plans to be in place. There are a several strategies that law enforcement can target a primary one emphasized by Higgins, et al, (2020) are police efforts to build relationships in the Black community. to solve problems before tensions escalated to the news.

Community policing goes beyond developing relationships with Blacks in their communities but ensures that law enforcement is improving public safety in areas where crimes may be high (Cooley et. al, 2019). Cooley et al (2019) stated that officers building relationships cannot just be the only focus, but officers maintain their skills to solving crimes. Two or more things can be done at once where all individuals engaged are benefiting where officers are addressing crime related issues and building relationships. Ray (2014) stated that having officers in dual roles in the schools and in the community can strengthen relationships. In addition, to the roles that officers was engaged with in the community patrolling developing relationships with youth and families, Topeka also had had officers engaged in school programs that also served the community where the school was located.

Members of the Black community in Topeka had confidence in the police and trusted that when they were engaged in incidents that involved work to protect the community, it was legitimate. The unfortunate efforts that is not present today is the Black community's eagerness to help police officers when they are seeking help. Being helpful was a testament to the community relationship that had been established and saturated the Black community, and schools (Ray, 2014).

All the ingredients' where police strategies were used for establishing a true relationship were in place 30 years ago in the capital city of Kansas, with the Topeka Police Department. The engaged efforts were a practice that Patterson (1995) stated that those who are practicing and implementing community policing need study their history to take on lessons from the past. The relationships between communities and police officers demonstrated a level of respect for each other when old principals from the early 80s and 90s was established. The Topeka Police department demonstrated efforts proved that in predominately black neighborhoods their strategies worked. These aspects of police work were not an emerging factor that divided the Black community and police relationships from evolving. The exact opposite has emerged after the 90s. The past 20 years community policing have been an area that police have worked on to increase their trust, transparency demonstrate their legitimacy (Wahl, 2017). Today, from across the nation since the awakening of incidents of police shooting in predominately Black communities, there has been a pushed for law enforcement and other disciplines to address the issue by implementing more profound police strategies that involve community policing, police awareness, education, and trainings to bridge the gap with Black communities Armstead (2019).

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