

Evaluating the Impact of Collaborative Art, Therapy and Training on Police Legitimacy: The Perceptions Held by Individuals with Substance Abuse Disorder and Police Officers

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Abstract: This qualitative pilot study was funded by a federal micro-grant to seek to fill a void in the literature on police legitimacy. The focus of this pilot study was to determine if collaborative art therapy and training can change the perceptions of police legitimacy held by individuals with substance use disorder (SUD) or the perceptions of the police toward individuals with SUD. Besides the collaborative activities, individuals with SUD and police officers were provided with therapy and/or training sessions during the period of collaboration.

The methodology for this study included the use of electronic survey instruments to evaluate any changes in perception. These instruments were administered anonymously before and after all therapy, training, and collaboration activities occurred. Each instrument contained open-ended questions relating to Police Legitimacy Scale (PLS) (Tankebe *et al.*, 2016) categories, as well as additional measures. Analysis included qualitative methods to provide context and identify themes for content analysis. Findings did not confirm change overall however, positive responses support police legitimacy, perceptual changes and relationship building. Recommendations are made for relationship building through increased interaction, excluding enforcement activities between individuals with SUD and the police using collaborative projects such as art therapy.

Keywords: Police legitimacy, substance use disorder, police, art therapy, collaborative art therapy.

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study was to determine if the perceptions held by individuals with substance use disorder (SUD) and police officers change following therapy, training, and working collaboratively on an art mural. The relationships between drugs users and the police remain understandably strained. Many police agencies develop policies and provide training (Formica *et al.*, 2018; Knopf, 2017) for officers to promote understanding and empathy for those suffering from addiction (Murphy & Russell, 2021). Most agencies supply officers with Naloxone/Narcan, a medical substance developed to counteract drug overdose and save lives (Lurigio, Andrus, & Scott, 2018).

Currently, a void exists in the literature regarding ways to improve relationships between individuals living with SUD and the police. Little research has been conducted to find out the perception of individuals suffering from addiction toward the police (i.e., police legitimacy) (Lincoln *et al.*, 1973, Greer *et al.*, 2022). Similarly, few studies examine the perception police have toward individuals living with SUD (Gnann, 2019; Green *et al.*, 2013; Murphy & Russell, 2020). Studies

conducted show moralized views held by the police on drug use and pessimism toward the deployment of life-saving measures for overdosing (Gnann, 2019; Green *et al.*, 2013; Murphy & Russell, 2020). With the lack of literature in this area, it is important to understand police legitimacy, SUD, and the perceptual problems that come with combining police and SUD. The sections that follow will provide more insight into these areas.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Police Legitimacy and Procedural Justice

Effective policing is contingent on public perception of legitimacy. The perception of legitimacy and the perception of procedural justice are inter-connected. Thus, there appears to be a correlation between these two (2) components, which ultimately impact effective policing. A quandary may exist because of the public's perception that police are the sole instrument of procedural justice, and at times, it appears the police are ultimately held accountable for all the inequities in the criminal justice system (Mazerolle *et al.*, 2013) which affects legitimacy; therefore, it is important to understand what police legitimacy and procedural justice are.

Police legitimacy refers to the belief that the police should be allowed to exercise their authority to enforce

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laws, resolve conflict, and preserve social order (Tyler & Fischer, 2014). Legitimacy has three (3) facets. If the police are to be viewed as legitimate, they must first obtain the trust and confidence of the public. Trust and confidence are built through the belief that police are honest, diligent in their duties and making a concerted effort to safeguard the community (Tyler & Fischer, 2014). The second facet involves the willingness of the public to respect and submit to the authority of the police (Tyler & Fischer, 2014). The final facet requires that any police actions taken be moral and appropriate to the circumstance (Tyler & Fischer, 2014).

The establishment of police legitimacy involves a number of components. One of the most important components is procedural justice. Procedural justice (i.e., procedural fairness) can be considered as a pathway to obtain legitimacy. Procedural justice has four (4) facets. First, procedural justice occurs when people have an opportunity to explain or express their point of view (Tyler & Fischer, 2014). For this to be acceptable, it must occur prior to the police's final determination regarding a police action. This concept applies to police action and public policy development (Tyler & Fischer, 2014). Second, people must believe that the police possess neutrality in decision making and that those decisions are based on legal principles. Transparent and open decision making is considered a desirable characteristic in policing and aids in that department being considered neutral and unbiased (Tyler & Fischer, 2014). Third, people are concerned with the treatment they receive from the police. Interpersonal treatment is consistently seen as a major detractor. People expect public servants whose salaries are paid with their tax dollars to treat them with respect and dignity. They also expect those public servants to preserve their constitutional rights (Tyler & Fischer, 2014). Finally, the character and integrity of the police is a chief concern. People respond favorably when dealing with police who they have deemed trustworthy, concerned, and empathic to their needs. Otherwise, people may not readily accept the authority of the police or the rule of law (Tyler & Fischer, 2014).

There may exist differences of opinion between the perception police and people have regarding the actual level of police legitimacy present in society today. Police may feel they are completely legitimate in most aspects, while the people within the communities the police serve may not accept the same sentiment. Studies show that people who believe the police lack legitimacy will view most police actions (e.g., routine traffic stops, order maintenance) as unjust (Tyler &

Wakslak, 2004; Gau & Brunson, 2010). Some may view these actions as intrusive or an abuse of power. Conversely, the police may see these actions as standard operating procedures in law enforcement (Tyler, 2004). Any perceived lack of legitimacy and justice adversely affects a police officer's ability to effectively enforce the law and serve the community. The inability of the police to acknowledge the perspective of the public and empathize accordingly can impede the development of cooperative relationships leading to challenges within law enforcement. Often, volatile and adversarial relationships may lead to lowered perceptions of police legitimacy held by individuals with SUD, as well as less favorable perceptions held by the police toward individuals with SUD, hence the quandary.

Substance Use Disorder

Addiction can be defined as a chronic disorder in which the affected individual constantly seeks drugs (NIDA, 2018). National studies conducted within the United States and Australia view addiction as a disease (Lawrence *et al.*, 2013; Lock *et al.*, 2002; Meurk *et al.*, 2014). Consequently, the disease model of addiction has led to programs which divert drug offenders towards alternative treatment and away from the criminal justice system (Murphy, 2015). Others object to this opinion and view addiction as a choice or learned condition transmitted through one's environment (Baumeister & Vonasch, 2015; Foddy & Savulescu, 2010; Heyman, 2009, 2013; Lewis, 2017; Wilbanks, 1989). This argument seems relevant in considering social, biological, and psychological factors relating to addiction (Hall *et al.*, 2015; Hammer *et al.*, 2013; Wiens & Walker, 2015).

Addiction has also been examined from theoretical perspectives. Some researchers argue drug usage and subsequent addiction are the result of personal choice, as theorized by the application of the Rational Choice Theory (Akers, Sellers, & Jennings, 2017; Becker & Murphy, 1988). Others may view addiction as the result of a learning process, as illustrated by (Akers, 1992). Based upon these theoretical applications, drug use can be attributed to the individual or other persons who present the opportunity. With experts on both sides of this matter, it can easily be understood why such disagreement exists in society today. Today, the term substance use disorder (SUD) has become prevalent. Substance use disorder can be defined as an "alcohol and drug use disorder, active addiction, problem use, non-medical use, unhealthy use, risky use, harmful

use; person struggling with substance use, person with substance use disorder, person who suffers/suffered from addiction (PEA, 2023; NIDA, 2023)". SUD is a medical term employed to characterize a pattern of behavior involving (drug) use (JHM, 2023). Usage results in significant problems and distress within the individual's life and lifestyle. Issues stemming from SUD may include personal relationships, responsibility management and many potentially dangerous situations (JHM, 2023). SUD is documented as a medical brain disorder which involves persistent and chronic substance use of illegal substances (e.g., opioids, cocaine, marijuana, heroin, methamphetamine) or other common substances such as prescription medication, alcohol, and nicotine (JHM, 2023). Persons suffering from SUD have developed substance (drug) dependence (SD) which is the root of the problem. SD may include increased tolerance, withdrawn symptoms, and social isolation. Similarly, symptoms of SUD may include using larger quantities, failed attempts to quit, plotting to get the substance, cravings, continued use even after acknowledging harm, risky behaviors, increased tolerance and withdrawal symptoms (JHM, 2023).

Individuals develop SUD for any number of reasons. One pathway involves Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) (Choi, DiNitto, Marti, & Choi, 2017). ACEs are traumatic events experienced by the individual, which often include abuse and neglect. Individuals suffering from ACEs often have a higher risk of SUD later in life (Choi, DiNitto, Marti, & Choi, 2017). Once someone is identified with this disorder, the looming question becomes how best to treat it. Many types of therapy and treatment have been tried. One such alternative treatment option is Complementary and Alternative Medical (CAM) treatment. CAM treatments involve non-mainstream treatments that are used besides, or in place of, other conventional treatments. CAM treatment options may include art therapy, music therapy, hypnotherapy, acupuncture, and herbal remedies (Aletraris *et al.*, 2014; NIH, 2008). Little has been published on the use of CAM art therapy. However, art therapy has been used for SUD since the 1950s (Moore, 1983). Specifically, the American Art Therapy Association (AATA) acknowledged the role art therapy can play with SUD (AATA, 2014). Research suggests art therapy may have benefits for SUD patients, including decreasing denial (Cox & Price, 1990), providing a means for communication (Harms, 1973; Moore, 1983) and lessening shame (Johnson, 1990). With the SUD explained, it is important to understand

the factors driving perception for individuals with SUD and the police.

Perceptual Problems

The perceptual problems between individuals with SUD and the police are logical. Individuals with SUD may often engage in illegal activities to support their addiction. Most contact with the police may be through enforcement action (Murphy & Russell, 2021). This also affects the perception of the police who are responding to calls for service. Upon arrival, the police may not view the individuals with SUD as a person suffering or in crisis, but as an offender or criminal. Conversely, the individual with SUD may view the police as an enforcer sent to do nothing more than arrest and punish them with no understanding of the disorder or what has driven them to commit the illegal act.

One Canadian study examined the attitudes of drug using youth toward police powers. This qualitative study involved interviews with thirty-eight (38) young people. Themes identified included: "1) skepticism and distrust toward authority; (2) paternalism and authority over drug use; (3) officer use of force; (4) viewing police as power-hungry; and (5) officers above the law" (Greer *et al.*, 2022, pg. 177). Overall, police authority has been described as limitless, abusive, unpredictable, lacking accountability, and unchained (Greer *et al.*, 2022).

Today, police across the United States frequently engage with individuals and families living with many issues germane to enforcement. These issues may include mental illness, homelessness, domestic violence, child abuse, human trafficking, as well as drug addiction. Drug addiction is often a catalyst for these and many illegitimate activities (Ekelund & Charlier, 2019). Substance use and addiction are the greatest contributors to adversarial contact with police and members of the community. Sixty-two percent (62%) of males and seventy-two percent (72%) of females become engaged with the criminal justice system because of substance use and addiction. Consistently, all forms of addiction either directly or indirectly lead to more suffering, mayhem, violence, and death than other issues (Bronson & Berzofsky 2017), which ultimately becomes a problem for the police to manage. Research has concluded that fifty-six percent (56%) of officers feel strongly that serious crimes are precipitated by drug use (Jorgensen, 2018). With the police being ill-prepared to address all needs,

this makes training about alternate enforcement strategies, community resources and treatment courts critical (Ekelund & Charlier, 2019). Community policing (CP) is one such alternative strategy. CP asserts that the public must be engaged in combating crime and disorder (Ekelund & Charlier, 2019). Problem-oriented policing is another strategy of community police, which emphasizes scanning, analysis, response, and assessment of issues or crime and disorder (Peak & Sousa, 2022). Poor or failed interactions between individuals with SUD and the police may cause perception issues and reduced legitimacy.

Therapy, Training and Collaborative Art

While police often receive training on drug recognition, officer safety, enforcement (Ekelund & Charlier, 2019) and the use of life-saving interventions such as Naloxone/Narcan (Tobin, 2005), only recently has a need been identified to provide police training on addiction, drug treatment or how to respond to individuals with SUD. The opioid epidemic has shown a need for greater engagement and understanding of community-based drug treatment as an alternative to the criminal justice system. Such remedies require community partnerships to work collaboratively with law enforcement (Ekelund & Charlier, 2019).

Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training is commonly afforded to police. CIT typically includes instruction on mental illness and de-escalation techniques. However, some common trends exist because SUD and mental illness each require prevention (non-crisis) and well as intervention (crisis) responses (CITI, 2007). Other trainings exist including the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA, 2000), the Center for Health and Justice at TASC (CHJ, 2018) and the National Drug Court Resource Center which address the Science of Addiction, Evidence Based Decision-Making, Medication-Assisted Treatment, Law Enforcement and Treatment Courts, respectively. These types of training are entirely useful, however, do not address matters of perception and understanding between individuals with SUD and the police.

PRESENT STUDY

The purpose of the present study is to provide an evaluation of a micro-grant. However, the data collected within this unique study was expected to be small but potentially generalizable. Therefore, this report was recast as a pilot study for publication to increase exposure. Pilot studies are considered smaller studies for testing research prior to conducting a larger

study (Lancaster, 2004; Kraemer, 2006) or wide scale implementation.

This grant was designed to bring together two agencies—Frankfort Police Department and Yes Arts. Within this grant, the central focus was to improve police awareness of individuals with SUDs and improve police legitimacy within this segment of society. The following research questions guided the study:

Is there a significant change in perception of police legitimacy following therapy, collaborative ART therapy, and interaction with police by individuals with SUD?

Is there a significant change in perception of drug addicted persons following training, collaborative ART therapy and interaction with individuals with SUD by the police?

Addressing these research questions will provide help in understanding the impact of this partnership. In addition, the results of this study will fill a gap in the existing literature of police legitimacy and the role of art therapy. The methodology of the study comes next, followed by the results, and finally the discussion and conclusions¹.

METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the survey instruments used, the data collection process, and discussion of the measures. The primary research question for this study focused on evaluating any change in the perception of police legitimacy held by individuals with SUD. However, a similar research question was developed for the police.

Because of the subject of the questions asked, it was essential that the data be collected in a way which preserved anonymity for fear of repercussions. To promote unfettered responses, unique identifiers (UIDs) were used to establish anonymity. Many studies suggest anonymous responses provide more accurate responses (Fidler and Kleinknecht, 1977; Fuller, 1974; Stone *et al.*, 1977; Tracy & Fox, 1981; Wiseman *et al.*, 1975). The authors of this study created UIDs for all participants rather than allowing self-generated identification codes by the participants (Kearney *et al.*,

¹A brief explanation of the micro-grant and the demography of Frankfort, KY can be found in Appendix A.

1984). This was done to promote candid responses and ensure access to the same participants at the conclusion of the study for pairing responses. UIDs were generated with Online UUID Generator and modified to end with the respective two-digit month and year (e.g., xxxxxxxx-07/2023) (OUG, 2023).

The qualitative analysis included content analysis to help understand the collected statements. Open-ended interview questions (Delve & Limpaecher, 2023) were used to draw reliable conclusions of change based on experiences and opinions. Through content analysis, all qualitative responses drawn were classified as positive, neutral, or negative. These classifications were made based upon the content (i.e., sentiments, attitudes, emotions, or language) used in statements provided by participants.

The goal of this study was to evaluate any change in perception held by individuals with SUD or the police. This SUD survey was largely based upon the Police Legitimacy Scale (PLS) (Tankebe *et al.*, 2016) to evaluate perceptions of legitimacy. Because of the small sample size, open-ended questions were used for each legitimacy category instead of a 4-point Likert-type scale suitable to quantitative analysis.

An anonymous pre and post collaboration survey was created and administered electronically to all participants mid-year 2023. Questions were developed to address each police legitimacy component under examination. Four (4) separate surveys were developed, a pre-collaboration and post-collaboration for each individual with SUD and the police. The survey instruments are presented in Appendix 1-4.

The survey for individuals with SUD began with demographic questions and a question directed at attitude toward illegal drug use. This was followed by open-ended questions relating to the Police Legitimacy Scale (PLS) (Tankebe *et al.*, 2016) categories: relationship with police, lawfulness, procedural fairness, distributive fairness, and police effectiveness. Each study concluded with a question pertaining to collaborative art therapy.

The police survey was shorter than the survey for individuals with SUD because it did not contain legitimacy questions. It also began with demographic questions and an open-ended question about attitude toward illegal drug use. An open-ended question relating to relationships with individuals with substance use disorders followed this. Each survey also included a question pertaining to collaborative art therapy.

Sample

We collected the data in Frankfort, Kentucky, from two (2) groups of participants provided by Yes Arts and the Frankfort Police Department. Yes Arts is a community-based 501(c)3 arts and human services organization in downtown Frankfort. Yes Arts seeks to disrupt the cycle of addiction by mobilizing the power of community. As a pathway to recovery, Yes Arts partnered with Franklin County (Kentucky) Drug Court (Drug Court) to assist offenders in moving toward recovery and away from the criminal justice system (YA, 2023). Nine (N=9) individuals with SUD were originally diverted from Drug Court to take part in this study.

The Frankfort Police Department (FPD) is a small metropolitan police agency that serves Frankfort in Kentucky. It is a full-service agency with approximately fifty (50) officers (FPD, 2023). This study began with ten (N=10) police officer volunteers from the FPD.

Participant Groups

Pre-collaboration data was collected during early 2023. Post-collaboration data was collected in late 2023. Participant responses were only used by individuals taking part in both the pre and post collaboration questioning. This resulted in the SUD participants dropping from nine to six (N=6). The remaining six (6) SUD participants contained five (5) females and one (1) male. Similarly, police participants also dropped from ten to six (N=6). The remaining police participants included one (1) female and five (5) males. No follow-up groups or questioning were conducted. All qualitative responses were collected and presented in their original context, except for correcting typographical errors and replacing acronyms used with applicable wording to enhance readability. The authors of this study coded the data provided for analysis. Personal identifiers collected in the data included gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, political affiliation, education, and ideology. This study received Institutional Review Board approval.

Data Analysis

The data analysis takes place in two steps--descriptive statistics and content analysis. Content analysis was used to determine change between the two (2) groups (i.e., individuals with SUD and FPD) and was evaluated at two (2) different points in time (i.e., pre-collaboration and post-collaboration).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics – SUD

Variable	Range	Mean	SD	N (Frequency)	Percent
GENDER					
Male		.167		1	16.7%
Transgender male					
Female		.833		5	83.3%
Transgender female					
Non-binary					
Prefer not to say					
SEXUAL ORIENTATION					
Asexual		.167		1	16.7%
Bisexual					
Gay					
Heterosexual		.833		5	83.3%
Lesbian					
Pansexual					
Queer					
Prefer not to say					
Age	19	37.5	8.216	6	
RACE					
Amer Indian/Alaskan					
Asian/Pacific Islander					
Black/African American					
Hispanic					
White/Caucasian		1.00		6	100%
Multiple Race/Ethnic					
Other					
POLITICAL AFFILIATION					
Republican					
Democrat		.167		1	16.7%
Independent		.333		2	33.3%
Prefer not to say		.500		3	50.0%
HIGHEST EDUCATION					
GED		.500		3	50.0%
High School Diploma		.500		3	50.0%
Associate Degree					
Bachelor's Degree					
Master's Degree					
Doctorate					
IDEOLOGY					
Conservative		.167		1	16.7%
Moderate		.333		2	33.3%
Liberal		.167		1	16.7%
Prefer not to say		.333		2	33.3%

(Table 1). Continued.

Variable	Range	Mean	SD	N (Frequency)	Percent
EMPLOYMENT STATUS					
Unemployed		.333		2	33.3%
Employed		.667		4	66.7%
YEARSUD	25	18.8	8.954	6	
TREATMENT	16	6.86	5.269	6	
ARRESTSDRUGS	7	6.50	3.209	6	
ARRESTSOTHERS	15	7.67	5.610	6	
USERSTATUS					
Yes					
No		1.00		6	100%

RESULTS

Step 1: Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 contains the descriptive statistics results for individuals with SUD. The sample was 83.3% female and 16.7% male. The average age was 37.5 years of age. Sexual orientation consisted of 83.3% Heterosexual or Straight and 16.7% Asexual. The sample was 100% Caucasian. Political Affiliation included 16.7% Democrat, 33.3% Independent and 50% of participants Prefer Not to Say. Political Ideology was 16.7% Conservative, 33.3% Moderate, 16.7% Liberal and 33.3% Preferred Not to Say. Fifty percent (50% of participants had a GED or High School Diploma and 33.3% were unemployed while 66.7% were employed. The duration of illicit drug use, treatment and arrest was as follows: the mean duration for participants suffering with substance use disorder was 18.83 years and the mean number of times the participant took part in treatment was 6.86. The mean number of times arrested for drug-related offenses was 6.50 and 7.67 for all other arrests.

Table 2 contains descriptive statistics collected from police participants. The sample was 83.3% male and 16.7% female. The average age was 39.67 years of age. Sexual orientation consisted of 100% Heterosexual or Straight. The sample was 66.7% Caucasian, 16.7% Black or African American and 16.7% Multiple Race/Ethnicity. Political Affiliation included 50% Democrat, 16.7% Independent, 16.7% Republican and 16.7% of participants Prefer Not to Say. Political Ideology was 33.3% Conservative, 33.3% Moderate and 33.3% Preferred Not to Say. Fifty percent (50% of participants had a High School Diploma and 50% had a bachelor's degree. The

following ranks participated, Chief, Lieutenant, and Officer. The mean tenure for police participants was 10.00 while the tenure with FPD was 10.50. The mean number of drug arrests was 75.83.

Content Analysis - SUD

The summary below contains responses to the aforementioned categories. Each is presented in their exact context as provided by the individual with SUD.

Relationship

Pre-collaboration qualitative responses for RELATION WITH THE POLICE were mixed. Some responses were positive, including "Mainly the police in Franklin County seem pretty nice if you are respectful, they do their job and that's the end of it. I see the police officers in uniform, and I am always feeling uneasy. I get nervous regardless that I'm clean.", "In my opinion when individuals are using drugs, they are more likely to cooperate or feel comfortable being around them." and "Police are people too, when they're not in uniform.". Pre-collaboration negative responses included, "I don't feel uncomfortable around them.", "I always get uneasy feelings around police just because I have never really had a good encounter with them, and I think most of them are on a power trip and once you're in the system, I feel like they profile you as once a drug addict always a drug addict.", "I have almost never had a good experience with the police. I feel most of them are judgmental and have bad attitudes." and "Always out to get someone, thinks they're better than anyone because they have a badge on."

Post-collaboration qualitative responses were consistent with pre-collaboration. Some stated, "Even

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics - Police

Variable	Mean	SD	N (Frequency)	Percent
GENDER				
Male	.833		5	83.3%
Transgender male				
Female	.167		1	16.7%
Transgender female				
Non-binary				
Prefer not to say				
SEXUAL ORIENTATION				
Asexual				
Bisexual				
Gay				
Heterosexual	1.00		6	100.0%
Lesbian				
Pansexual				
Queer				
Prefer not to say				
Age	39.67	7.607	6	
RACE				
Amer Indian/Alaskan				
Asian/Pacific Islander				
Black/African American	.167		1	16.7%
Hispanic				
White/Caucasian	.667		4	66.7%
Multiple Race/Ethnic	.167		1	16.7%
Other				
POLITICAL AFFILIATION				
Republican	.167		1	16.7%
Democrat	.500		3	50.0%
Independent	.167		1	16.7%
Prefer not to say	.167		1	16.7%
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION				
GED				
High School Diploma	.500		3	50.0%
Associate Degree				
Bachelor's Degree	.500		3	50.0%
Master's Degree				
Doctorate				
IDEOLOGY				
Conservative	.333		2	33.3%
Moderate	.333		2	33.3%
Liberal				
Prefer not to say	.333		2	33.3%
YEARSASOFC	10.00	9.94	6	
YEARSWFPD	10.50	9.71	6	
1015DRUGS	75.83	74.86	6	

though I painted with the police officer I do feel as if there is a line between friendship and business when it comes to an officer of the law.” and “Some police officers are caring and willing to help but most of them are just enforcers doing their job, but some have it out for drug users and just want to lock them up.” Others stated, “My relationship is stronger now.” and “After working with law enforcement on this project, my opinion has changed drastically.”

Lawfulness

For the category **LAWFULNESS OF THE POLICE**. Some responses in favor of the police were, “In my personal opinion officers respect most people’s rights. Some of them like to pressure you into telling them where the drugs come from, but they are doing their job to keep the kids in the community safe. I do agree with the law to a degree. Do I care to be around the law? Absolutely not.” and “I feel like the police want what we all do, that’s safety in our communities.” Response(s) to the contrary included, “They are on the same people constantly even if they have changed their life.” and “They treated me differently when I was in active addiction.”

Post-collaboration positive respondents noted, “They care” and “Police officers are people too just doing their job.” Others presented a neutral stance stating, “I do not know any officers on a personal level, so I do not know what their morals are.”, “In my opinion, some officers want to help as other officers just want to lock up drug addicts.” and “Some good some bad.”

Procedural Fairness

The pre-collaboration responses for **PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS OF THE POLICE** were either neutral or negative. Some of the negative responses noted, “No, I do not think all law officers follow the handbook or go by protocol.” and “When I got arrested, they weren’t interested in what I had to say. I was just one more arrest for them.”

The post-collaboration responses were mostly positive. Responses included, “They want to understand.”, “That’s their job is to enforce the law and that’s what they do.” and “I agree the police try to be fair and respectful and make fact-based decisions.”

Distributive Fairness

All the pre-collaboration responses for **DISTRIBUTIVE FAIRNESS** were negative regarding

fair treatment by the police. SUD Participants felt, “Cops don’t treat everyone the same if you fit their profile of what they think you are then that’s how they treat you.”, “I do think officers are not completely fair when they arrest people. Most are rude and judgmental.”, “People with records, in my opinion, they do treat differently than those without.”, “They (i.e., police) treat different people differently. They’re not consistent with how they treat others.” and the police “Always treat everyone different”.

Post-collaboration responses remained mostly negative, showing no change. Some of the post responses were, “I disagree with the fact that all police officers treat every citizen the same.”, “In my opinion it depends on who you are as to how you get treated.” and “They treat everyone differently.”

Police Effectiveness

Those speaking positively stated, “My neighborhood has always been a safe place for me and my family.”, “I feel absolutely safe in my community.”, “I feel safe in my neighborhood and that’s not due to the police. We don’t have a high crime rate in our neighborhood as far as I know.” Negative responses noted that, “Everyone, well almost everyone is on the dope meth I think it is an extremely dangerous and nasty drugs and you can get it out on the streets anytime you want it day or night.”, “I see cops all the time in my community, but crime and theft is still high.” and “This world is a scary place now-a-days.”

Post-collaborative responses were also mixed. Some of the positive statements included, “I walk every night.”, “I live in a safe respectful neighborhood.” and “They do try, I think.” Negative responses were, “Apparently our neighborhood has gotten worse with people stealing from people’s homes in the middle of the night.” and “I can’t really say my community, the crime rate has went down. We have had several shootings near my residence in the past few years and I am always seeing blue lights almost every day. Every day I have seen at least one vehicle stopped by an officer of the law.”

Combined Police Legitimacy Score

Prior to completing the collaborative project, overall perceptions of police legitimacy (i.e., **COMBINED POLICE LEGITIMACY**) held by individuals with substance use disorder ranged from mixed to negative. Some of the positive responses were, “Well, I used to

hate the law. But if you don't break the law, you don't have to deal with the police.”, “Today I'm not breaking the law in any way, so to me I don't have any issue with the police. I know they have a job to do.”, “Since I've gotten sober, my feelings and attitude have changed some. I feel like I'm a part of the community today and not a criminal. Getting sober has changed everything for me and my life for the better.” to “They are ok I guess.”

Post-collaboration responses were all positive. Some of those responses were, “...One officer had brought his daughter, and I was shocked he allowed his child to paint with me a former addict... The overall experience I found it was very good I could go into a room with a police officer and tell my story and maybe they see that I'm not a bad person I just made some bad decisions because I wasn't mature enough and didn't have the proper tools to understand my disease.”, “I see them as people now”, “Yes perception has changed, but for the better.”, “They're just people doing a job and trying to make our community safe.”, “I feel being around the police in this art program helped me feel a lot more comfortable.”, “Some of the police officers do want to help people in recovery and want to change the community.” and “There was one officer that treated my husband that attended a group very poorly when he saw him one night at a car wash.”

Attitude Towards Drug Use

For the category ATTITUDE TOWARDS DRUG USE, all of the responses were against legalization and recognized that drug use leads to personal problems and misbehavior. Some of these responses were, “if all illegal drugs were decriminalized it would cause a lot of problems in my opinion.”, “In my opinion drinking and drugging will lead to negative behavior. Relationships with family friends', coworkers', and bosses will slowly get distant. Drugs will also affect your physical and mental health in negative ways. Also, will hurt you financially. In my opinion drugs makes life worse in every way even your personal appearance will deteriorate from using.”, “Drugs do cause people to do things they normally wouldn't do.”, “Drug use causes multiple problems in every aspect of a person's life.” and “From my experience I only got arrested when I was in active addiction. I do think there is a severe drug problem in our community. I don't think illegal drugs should be legalized.”

The post-collaboration qualitative responses were consistent with pre-collaboration. Some of the

comments included: “Someone who is on drugs is more likely to commit crimes to get drugs or the money for drugs.” and “I think illegal drug use is the root problem for all the issues listed above.”

Last, SUD participants agreed that Collaborative ART Therapy (Achieving Recovery Together (ART)) can provide an effective means for improving relationships with the police. There was no change over the duration of this study.

Content Analysis - Police

As the evaluation of the police participants was not a primary focus of this study, associated qualitative responses were summative. Results were provided for each category of questioning (i.e., RELATIONSHIP WITH THE POLICE, ATTITUDE TOWARD ILLEGAL DRUG USE and COMBINE RELATIONSHIP/ATTITUDE SCORE). Each category remained constant, providing confirmation of the harm caused by legalization and need for treatment, support, and relationship building. For brevity, some post-collaboration COMBINE RELATIONSHIP/ATTITUDE SCORE qualitative responses have been provided.

Some of the post-collaboration open-ended responses for COMBINE RELATIONSHIP/ATTITUDE SCORE were, “I wasn't as uneasy about the interactions as I had previously thought I would be.”, “Seeing the interaction between our officers and participants definitely generated a sense of trust and support. It created a safe space for conversations without fear of negative interaction. From both perspectives, it allowed each side to see each other as individuals with similarities.”, “Being part of this program was more impactful than I ever imagined it would be. To see the normal interactions between officers and those battling substance abuse disorder was uplifting.” and “When this program began, I wasn't skeptical, I just didn't know what to expect. After multiple training sessions, and getting to know the participants, it made me want to help them even more. It's easy to “judge” someone who suffers from substance abuse... But when you hear their stories, and get to know them, you find out quickly that if it were that easy from them to give up, then it wouldn't be a problem...”

Like the SUDs, the police participants agreed that increased interaction through Collaborative ART Therapy (Achieving Recovery Together (ART)) can provide an effective means for improving relationships

with individuals with substance-abuse disorder. This remained consistent post-collaboration.

LIMITATIONS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study contained some limitations regarding non-random participant selection and did not contain a control group or random assignment. For this reason, it is important to note the police participants volunteered to take part in this study and therefore may have been subjected to self-selection bias. And the SUD participants were assigned by the Drug Court based on non-disclosed criteria. The FPD chief and assistant chief attended most sessions and events. While Drug Court supervisors did not attend any. This being said, both groups of participants were free to provide anonymous and candid responses based upon their experiences with no fear of reprisal.

While the qualitative police legitimacy evaluation did not present significant evidence of change because of this collaborative project, qualitative responses did provide a basis for optimism in the areas of potential for relationship building and overall opinions held by participants in the project. One participant stated, "...Hope you have many more projects for us to work with the police officers or even people that I wouldn't even imagine giving me a second look, a second thought, a second chance at turning my life around." Further, the willingness of police to engage in studies such as this is an example of "goodwill" (Ekelund & Charlier, 2019). The category RELATIONSHIP WITH POLICE remained mixed pre- and post-collaboration. The LAWFULNESS OF THE POLICE qualitative responses contained positive but mostly neutral responses consistent in pre-collaboration response confirming no change. The PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS OF THE POLICE qualitative responses shows some change based upon the largely positive responses to the open-ended questions. DISTRIBUTIVE FAIRNESS qualitative responses were negative pre- and post-collaboration. Qualitative responses to POLICE EFFECTIVENESS were mixed both pre- and post-collaboration. Therefore, after examining each police legitimacy category individually it was expected the perceptions had not changed after completing the Collaborative Art Therapy (Achieving Recovery Together (ART) project. All the qualitative responses toward overall perceptions of police legitimacy post-collaboration were positive. More specifically, positive change was noted in RELATIONSHIP WITH THE POLICE based on the responses provided. Based

upon these findings, it can be argued that relationship building through heightening the level of trust and respect (Tyler & Fischer, 2014) provides a pivotal component of any move towards legitimacy in policing.

As for the police participants, pre-collaboration qualitative responses to the category RELATIONSHIP WITH THE POLICE contained mixed opinions. However, the post-collaboration response showed some softening and while no significant change was determined for overall attitude (i.e., COMBINE RELATIONSHIP/ATTITUDE SCORE), all qualitative responses were positive. Last, responses to the ability of ART to improve perceptions of police legitimacy questions provide a basis for additional projects of this kind.

Recommendations include reevaluation of all participants to determine if any delay effects may have occurred because of the project. Projects of this kind can be replicated at different times with different participants. The replication of this study may benefit from a longer project of larger scale. Diversification of the pool of participants would also prove useful in analysis. The current sample was predominately white and female.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to determine if collaborative ART therapy positively impacts perceptions of police legitimacy in individuals suffering from substance use disorder. Based on the results, it can be concluded that change was not documented by the results of this study. However, other positive effects were noted which have the potential to impact legitimacy and relationship building moving forward. Consequently, this project can be viewed as effective for the participants involved.

While small, this pilot study may be considered generalizable and may be applicable in other settings with participants in need of relationship building. As noted in the recommendations and discussion sections, larger scale projects over a longer duration may yield the statistical significance desired. As noted, this study may be the first of its kind and it is recommended for replication and implementation elsewhere.

FUNDING

Federal grant funding was provided for neutral third-party evaluation of programming. A peer-review journal publication was completed based upon the findings.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Author 1 declares that he has no conflict of interest. However, he retired from the Kentucky State Police as a Major on July 31, 2018. The data for this research was collected exclusively by the authors. Author 1 was contracted to complete an independent Third-Party Evaluation of this federal micro-grant funded study. Author 2 declares that he has no conflict of interest.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Kentucky State University approved this research.

APPENDIX

Appendix A

Micro-Grant

The present study was initiated through a federal micro-grant awarded to the Frankfort Police Department (FPD) and partnering agency Yes Arts to promote police legitimacy and community policing (CP). The objective of the grant was to promote collaborating with community resources to build relationships with, and aid, individuals affected by opioids and SUD. Once awarded the grant, FPD began working collaboratively with Yes Arts and the Franklin County Drug Court regarding programming and identification of participants. Per the grant requirements, an independent third-party evaluation was to be conducted. FPD contacted the author, an employee of Kentucky State University, to oversee data collection, analysis, and evaluation. The primary objective of this study was to improve perceptions of trust and legitimacy held by individuals with SUD and to improve the empathy and understanding by the police.

Demography

Frankfort is the capital city of Kentucky with an approximate population of 28,391. The demography is 73.3% White, 13.8% Black or African American, 6.4% Two or more races, 3.65% Other race, 2.7% Asian, 0.2% Native American and 0% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (USC, 2023). The average household income is \$51,731, which is over 20% percent lower than the national level and has a poverty rate of 16.3%.

Frankfort is within Franklin County and is the county seat. Franklin County Kentucky ranks 47th of the 120 counties in Kentucky for the opioid dispensing rate (i.e., 48.7 per 100 people) which is 12.5% higher than the

national average (HH, 2023). For adults, the misuse of opioids in 2021 was 4.06% for Kentucky. The national average during this time was 3.44% and the highest was 4.94% among other states (SAMHSA, 2021). In 2021, the opioid use disorder percentage for Kentucky was 3.64%, which was the highest among all states. The enforcement rates average was 2.09% for opioid-related offenses, which was high in Frankfort as related to population. In 2021, there were 1100 drug arrests, 121 overdoses and 34 opioid-related fatalities. The drug using demographic is between the ages of 22 and 54 (HH, 2023, SAMHSA, 2021). Clearly, Frankfort is an ideal location for initiatives such as therapy, training, and collaboration art projects.

Therapy, Training and Collaborative Art

For this study, both SUD participants and the police took part in collaborative weekly activities. Collaborative activities included meetings, meals, workspace sets, art mural preparation and reflection time. Separate therapy was provided to individuals with SUD and separate training was provided to the police.

SUD therapy included Family Thrive (FT) therapy and weekly sessions. FT therapy is provided under the umbrella of Kentucky Strengthening Families Initiative provided by the Kentucky Department of Public Health. FT therapy emphasized the development of strength-based, family-driven approaches to teaching protective factors for implementation in personal lives. There were approximately twenty-four (24) - ninety (90) minute weekly therapy sessions offered by the Yes Arts. Police participants were provided the option to take part in the last session to gain a perspective of the benefit gain by SUD participants. Other events included a car wash fundraiser, which included all participants and allowed Drug Court judges to engage.

The police training provided for this study occurred over five (5) sessions each 2 hours in duration. The content covered during each session included Implicit Bias, Micro Messaging, Micro Aggressions and Coded Language, Emotional Intelligence, Cultural Humility and Recovery and Working with Diverse Youth and ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences). A local professor taught all police training sessions. SUD participants were permitted to take part in the last session with police participants to gain perspective. SUD participants also engaged in one (1) training session touching upon similar subject matter. Police participants also took part in four (4) Art Therapy group sessions administered by the Yes Arts Executive Director, a Peer Support Specialist, and Art Therapist.

More specific information regarding therapy and training sessions may be obtained from the Yes Arts or the Frankfort Police Department.

Four (4) mural sessions resulted in the completion of seven (7) large murals. All activities culminated in a public event for the unveiling and ribbon cutting for the art murals on October 19, 2023. This project was called Collaborative Art Therapy (Achieving Recovery Together (ART) and served as the culmination of this community policing project. The Executive Director of Yes Arts who led this project is a graduate of Ringling College of Art and Design with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Photography and Digital Imaging.

Appendix 1

SUD Pre-Collaboration Survey.

Appendix 2

SUD Post-Collaboration Survey.

Appendix 3

POLICE Pre-Collaboration Survey.

Appendix 4

POLICE Post-Collaboration Survey

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