Promoting safe and equitable police-youth interactions: Recommendations from young people and policing personnel

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Abstract

Given the frequency of harmful interactions between policing personnel and young people, especially Black young people, there is a need for policing personnel to learn how to promote safe and equitable interactions with young people. We conducted individual interviews with 35 Black YP (15-22 years) and focus group discussions with 50 police representing multiple ranks/roles. Results indicated that both young people and policing personnel view four policing practices as essential: respect, communication skills, empathy/understanding, and engaging young people in non-enforcement contexts. Young people wanted less use of force, more cultural sensitivity and anti-racism, and recognition of youth positive behavior. Some felt nothing could remediate youth-police ruptures. And police noted the importance of having a positive mindset in general and using developmentally appropriate language with young people. Though both groups had reservations overall, both envisioned a future where they could interact more positively. If these two diverse groups can see room for growth and possibility, we should support efforts to achieve safe and equitable relations between young people and policing personnel.

1. INTRODUCTION

Young people (YP) commonly interface with the police, due to their regular and extensive use of public spaces (often in peer groups) and widespread police presence and use of proactive policing strategies in US schools and communities. For instance, of the approximately 8 million arrests in 2020, 25% involved young people (YP) under age 25 (OJJDP, 2022). Beyond arrest, YP also experience direct and witnessed police interactions that do not necessarily involve an arrest or formal processing. Even in the absence of formal processing, such interactions can be distressing for youth (Jackson et al., 2022). Research suggests this may be especially true for Black YP who, upon being stopped, are three times as likely to experience officer aggression as White YP (Geller, 2021; Jackson et al., 2021), prompting scholars to conceptualize youth-police contact as a "racialized adverse childhood experience" (Jackson, 2021). Given these dynamics and statistics, is important that policing personnel are well equipped to facilitate positive interactions with YP in the community. Some police agencies and national organizations are working to standardize and promote youth-focused, developmentally-informed trainings (IACP, 2022). Even so, there is a paucity of training within most agencies specific to building positive relationships and working safely with YP (Thurau et al., 2013). In the current study, we collected data from YP (97% Black, 3% Latine) and policing personnel to elucidate recommendations for promoting safe and equitable police encounters.

1.A. Systemic Biases and Those Held by Policing Personnel and Black YP

Black boys and men comprise over 26% of juvenile arrests, yet represent only 17% of the United States population (CDC, 2023; OJJDP, 2022). Institutional anti-Black racism in policing (Needham et al., 2023), implicit racial bias (which is not unique to police (Eberhardt, 2020)), and a lack of training for policing personnel on influences of trauma exposure and systemic disadvantage are key drivers of racial inequities in the juvenile legal system (Spencer et al., 2016) and in youth mental and physical health (Jindal et al., 2022; McLeod et al., 2019).

Beyond systemic bias are biases that individuals hold – including both policing personnel and YP – which are cultivated through media, socialization, other societal influences, and personal experiences and often perpetuate automatic and often inaccurate associations of people with select stereotypes. For example, policing personnel might be predisposed to think that adolescents are disrespectful and entitled (Fix, Aaron, et al., 2023) and YP that police are rigid and compelled to act (Fix, Jackson, et al., 2023). Black YP, moreover, are more likely to view police officers as biased (Peck & Jennings, 2016), a perception that is supported by recent research on policing personnel's perceptions of YP in communities with a proportionally higher Black population (Fix, Aaron, et al., 2023). This is noteworthy given that perceptions and expectations influence behavior, as perceptions are impacted by unconscious and automatic processes (Tamir & Bigman, 2018). In fact, in urgent situations that require fast-paced decision making (such as crises to which police are responding), biases are more likely to drive behavior (Evans et al., 2015). Biases are also influenced by intersectional social identifiers such as ethnoracial and gender identity, and socioeconomic status (Priest et al., 2018).

Taken together, systemic anti-Black bias is pervasive in the US, but especially relevant in the policing profession where use of force is socially acceptable and state sanctioned (Gaynor et al., 2021) and swift judgments are often the norm. In short, because bias can influence decision making in YP-police interactions (Mears et al., 2017), determining better practices to promote positive, safe, and equitable interactions is essential in such charged situations with potentially deadly consequences. As trained adults employed by and acting on behalf of the state in a professional capacity, the onus of maintaining safety during YP-police interactions should of course fall upon policing personnel. Still, the (typically) bidirectional and dyadic nature of such interactions indicates both parties must be informed and prepared to foster positive interactions.

Trainings for Policing Personnel on Interacting with YP

One strategy to improve interactions between YP and police is through developmentally-sensitive, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive trainings (Branson et al., 2017). Evidence suggests that only approximately 1% of basic training in police academies targets YP-related issues; moreover, this training rarely includes information on adolescent development, how to work with youth who have mental health problems, or how to take a trauma-informed approach (Bostic et al., 2014). Policing personnel are even less frequently trained in youth social learning and legal socialization, peer networks and influence, cultural norms and values that endorse the code of the street and violence, or police-initiated diversionary practices and alternatives to arrest (Thurau et al., 2013). Yet, without this training, many YP are at risk of harmful police encounters and being unnecessarily funneled into the legal system rather than diverted away from it.

Further, many police have limited training in structural racism and racial discrimination as contributors to racial inequities in the juvenile and criminal legal systems, and how punitive police responses to YP (e.g., arrest) typically fail to deter misbehavior or promote positive outcomes among YP. Accordingly, the gaps in interdisciplinary, comprehensive police training on adolescent development contributes to a serious

mismatch between YP's needs and police behaviors that too often results in both formal and informal policies and practices that escalate arrest rates for adolescents. Such a mismatch—if left unaddressed—can perpetuate contentious and even violent encounters between YP and police by undermining YP's trust in police and hindering police confidence and clarity of mind when interacting with YP.

1.C. Current Study

Our proposed study seeks to minimize adverse youth-police encounters by obtaining information that could inform core training principles and materials for police departments across the US. By unpacking YP-police conflict, this study targets mechanisms that could promote safer and more equitable police encounters with Black YP. We prioritized a major metropolitan police department that was actively implementing trainings specific to YP, and thus police-youth interactions were on the forefront of the minds of many personnel at the time of data collection. Study findings could be broadly applicable as cities nationwide work together to reimagine public safety. Our study had two research questions: (1) what do YP and policing personnel recommend for improving interactions and promoting safer and more equitable outcomes during and following police-youth encounters? (2) in what ways are recommendations provided by YP and policing personnel similar or different?

2. METHODS

2.A. Participants and Procedures

Individual interviews were conducted with 35 YP (ages 15-22). All but one (non-Black Latine) young person identified as Black. Participating YP identified primarily as adolescent boys/young men (66%); 34% identified as adolescent girls/young women. Many participants (71%) were age 18 or older. We matched participants and interviewers by ethnoracial and/or gender identity when possible. Interviews were conducted using semi-structured protocols and approximately 35-50 minutes.

Fifty policing personnel participated in 10 total focus groups, separated by role (e.g., detectives, patrol, supervisors). Sixteen participants identified as White men, 9 as Black women, 7 as Black men, 6 as White women, 6 as Latine men, and 1 as a Middle Eastern man. Four men did not share their ethnoracial identity. Three shared that they identified as members of the LGBTQ+ community. Focus group discussions were conducted using a semi-structured protocol; discussions lasted 60 minutes on average.

2.B. Data Analysis

Transcripts from interviews and focus group discussions were coded in Dedoose using an inductive, grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1997). Team members who led interviews and focus groups met to develop and iteratively refine separate codebooks for YP and police. Memos were shared and discussed during these meetings. In our codebook development, we first used open coding to identify initial codes, which were related to recommendations for improving police-youth encounters. Second, we discussed codebook overlap and divergence for the two participant groups, deriving major themes and

subthemes and creating a codebook with agreed upon operational definitions. Third, we engaged in focused coding by applying developed codes as they appeared in individual interviews and focus group discussions. Our pair of formal coders worked with the same transcripts to determine interrater reliability (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Once interrater reliability above .85 was achieved, we independently coded transcripts; coding was reviewed by a project lead. Our team members came to this work with a diverse range of identifiers (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation) and experiences with policing institutions (e.g., arrest and incarceration); we also established trustworthiness by collaborating with police and YP in interpreting the findings and holding debriefing meetings to define codes, refine themes, and reflect on potential sources of bias. Using a reflexive process, we examined and challenged how our lived experiences, particularly our experiences with people working in policing, impacted our interpretation of the data considering our social identities.

As shown in Figure 1, we observed four overlapping major themes through discussions with YP and policing personnel: (1) Respect, (2) Communication Skills, (3) Empathize with and Understand YP, and (4) Engage YP. Apart from Respect, which was recognized by YP as needing to be mutual, all recommendations were specific to police behavior. Four additional themes emerged from YP's interview data: Less use of force with YP, Cultural sensitivity and anti-racism, See and promote the positive things YP do, and Nothing can be done. Focus groups with police evidenced two additional themes: Positive mindset overall and Language choice with YP. Table 1 provides key themes, definitions, and example quotes.

<INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE>

3. RESULTS

3.A. Emergent Themes for Both YP and Policing Personnel

3.A.i. Respect

Mutual respect was the most consistently named factor by YP as a fundamental cornerstone of positive interactions and relationships between YP and police. This theme, however, was far less prominent for policing personnel. Some YP offered examples of how policing personnel could engage in procedurally justice behaviors during encounters, describing the importance of police using respectful communication that demonstrates understanding and compassion for the young person's circumstances.

BG: Okay, say for instance, I'm a first time driver. I just bought me a car... But I want to do things the right way. I'm on my way to go get my permit... I have confirmation that I got my permit...and if I was to get pulled over and you... like, 'Hey, okay, you is on your way to go get your permit. I can just give you a warning, a citation or whatever. You just go about your day. Just don't let it happen again.'"

A barrier to mutual respect noted by several YP was the belief held by adults (including police) that YP must "earn respect."

CS: "I feel like they feel because we young, we don't [deserve] respect, like we got to earn respect before just getting it... If you're an adult, I'm going to give you respect, but if I don't get it back, it's over."

Indeed, during interactions with YP, the burden of responsibility to model appropriate behavior and set the tone is on the adult or professional. However, while respect was on the forefront of YP's minds, "disrespect" toward policing personnel by YP was mentioned in two focus groups of detectives and one group of patrol supervisors.

DT: "I more so avoid interacting with adolescents because of their response to situations, especially when we're involved, they tend to be more disrespectful at me, and trying to put up a fight rather than with adults, who get that we have a job to do."

3.A.ii. Communication Skills

KB: "I noticed my generation, they don't really trust the police much at all. So, I think when they do see a cop trying to be reasonable with them, it does change their perspective a bit on how they see or view the cops in general."

Effective police communication skills were viewed as key factors in improving police-community relations by both YP and policing personnel. In general, participants suggested police using patience, being approachable and less aggressive in their approach, and active listening can help build trust and ease tensions.

3.A.ii.a. Patience. YP stressed that difficulties police encounter on the job should not result in impatience or a dismissive attitude when interacting with citizens, regardless of their age or maturity level.

KP: "Patience meaning, I understand you work every day. You deal with a lot of suspects and everything like that, but that doesn't mean for you to have a bad day or an attitude that you could just talk to me any kind of way... you gotta be patient with me because you don't know what type of day I had going on myself... You can't just be jumping up there and thinking because you have a badge that, 'Yeah, I said get out!'... You can't do that bro. Patience."

Patrol and community officers voiced similar thoughts, PA: "The number one skill I could think of over the years is just basically being patient with them and just allowing them to speak and be heard."

Friendly, Calm Demeanor. Many YP recommended police adopt a friendly and approachable demeanor. They suggested that policing personnel should not be overly serious or aggressive but, rather (when

possible), create a comfortable atmosphere by using humor, offering a smile, and being welcoming. A friendly approach can help ease tension and build rapport (Sweeney, 2022).

DK: "...that's their job, lock people up and stop crime. But, if you can, be cool with the youth or younger people you stop. Like when the police sit on the corner... they see kids walking by, [they] could say, 'Good morning... how your day going?" Start a little conversation with them, but in a friendly way."

DM: "With a conversation, you don't want to scare somebody... throw out a little joke. 'Hey, this was wrong, but hey, come on now, you can do better than that. Come on.' Don't come off as serious, because when you come off as serious, that's when it becomes bad. That's when people get scared. But if you're more approachable, more friendly, 'Yeah, I'm happy.' 'Cool.' Smile."

Policing personnel also felt they benefited from engaging in friendlier, less charged interactions with YP.

AV: "Sometimes [friendliness] it helps you like, 'Oh, you're cool,' I mean I don't know how many fist bumps I got from the corner boys, and the young kids see that. But if I'm constantly coming around like, 'Ahh! [*threatening tone*]'...they start to know your name. You make a presence... [Youth] capture all that stuff... it goes into the memory bank, and it's kind of like it spreads to their friends... It's all about what you do."

3.A.ii.b. Listen. There was a consensus among YP and policing personnel that police asking clarifying questions and actively listening during interactions was essential.

ML: "Listen more to what we say... Actually pursue what we say and try to do our way for once. Try. You never know until you try... It's like they never try us out. They always put us down. I feel like if they listen to us, and we all come together... I feel like our city can be way better."

One young person noted how, while some interactions may not be resolved through conversation, it is important to start a dialogue before acting and becoming aggressive.

ME: "I would just say don't straight up get to the aggression part. Most cops be aggressive and don't know how to talk to people. I feel like all things are not meant to be talked about but some things you can resolve with the conversation... we was taught you get what you give."

Paralleling these notes, a detective described how their experiences as a parent have guided their professional behavior with YP.

AB: "When we're dealing with the youth, we should also be able to listen. I think a lot of times, just even I'm thinking about me as a mom or my child—I have to listen to him. It may sound crazy, or you want to

just jump right in and cut them off."

3.A.iii. *Empathize with and Understand YP*

Multiple YP argued that police should take time to understand community members' perspectives and experiences. One young person brought up how police reflecting upon relationships with their own children could help them engage in meaningful dialogue with YP. RU: "What would you do if your son was right there? That's what [police] need to start thinking about." And other YP wanted police to work toward truly empathizing with them.

JA: "I wish [police] knew everything we going through… what's going on at home, how hard we got to work, and stuff like that. Their whole perspective would change. Because if they walked a mile in our shoes, they'd be like, 'Oh, nah. I feel sorry for this person, because he really out here trying to help his family, and at the same time going to school, doing the right thing, and… he got to have these bad experiences with police officers.' It's already hard enough being a teen in [*City*], like people getting shot left and right. We can't even go outside and play no more."

Several adolescents emphasized the importance of police considering the challenges and hardships many young individuals face, ranging from individual and family mental health issues, to community issues like gun violence and lead poisoning crises, and societal issues like the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. And the YP's suggestions match research findings demonstrating that empathy improves interactions (Bove, 2019; Rumble et al., 2010).

ER: "Be more understanding, be more patient… some of these kids are in and out of the jail system. They have some rough lives at home… The lead crisis… mental illness, a lot of things are going on. And the pandemic is a huge one too… So just be understanding. Just know where you are. [*City*] has a lot going on already."

3.A.iii.a. Avoid Assumptions and Stereotyping.

SN: "We're all not criminals. We're all not selling drugs. We're all not shooting people. We're just normal people trying to get through life. They don't really know how hard it is… We all have feelings… But it feel like [police] don't really understand that. They assume that you are bad inside."

YP want policing personnel to challenge assumptions they hold about Black people. They emphasized that assumptions can lead to unfair treatment and misunderstandings for Black YP in particular. They note that instead, police should take time to engage with YP, ask questions, and gather information before making judgments.

Several policing personnel demonstrated awareness of assumptions they make about Black YP. One individual described her own internal process of how expectations about YP's behaviors impact police reactions. Such recognition should be a goal of US policing trainings, given individual's susceptibility to racial bias (Eberhardt, 2020).

AB: "We don't know what [adolescents] deal with. You know they could've saw someone–their relative– get killed, or they could have been raped themselves or different things that make them freak out… sometimes it's deeper than what you know."

3.A.iv. *Engage YP in Non-Enforcement Contexts*

YP described wanting to see police be more active in non-enforcement contexts. They noted that a more visible and friendly police presence can foster positive relationships and help dispel negative stereotypes.

CC: "Something for the kids to do at the neighborhood center or the rental… [Once] they had horses come out and the kids could touch the horses or get on them. And they have grill, music, and everybody just having a good time with the police."

They also recommended police engage community members early in their life course. Others noted that when police make reasonable efforts to engage with them, it can positively influence their perception of law enforcement.

Police (especially those working patrol) were interested in having more opportunities to get to know YP in the community.

PS: "It would be helpful if we could interact with [youth] before we're being called to the locations. Because nine times out of 10 when we're interacting with them, it's not a positive engagement… Situations in which we interact with them initially sometimes can help overall."

3.A.iv.a. Events. YP thought community events could promote better police-young person relationships. Their suggestions encompassed a range of activities and approaches, such as picnics, barbecues, and gatherings where YP can engage with police in a non-threatening setting. Youth also recommended that police departments organize community seminars and pop-up events.

DW: "I feel like you need events out here where it's like, maybe the police want to challenge the civilians in [sports]… [or] water balloon fights. That's the type of thing kids be wanting to do in the city for real. Or even paintballing with the police. Laser tagging… I guess people here really be wanting to see if police can have fun too instead of always being serious… [And] police can really get a good understanding. They might see that same person again and might be able to help them out, just because of events. 'Oh

yeah, I know him. He a good kid.'"

A detective described participating and benefitting from a "program... where we do get to sit down with adolescents for the day, and hear about their experiences of police, and talk to them, one on one." [DT]. Encouraging police to be more involved in the community and actively participating in community outreach is seen as a way to establish better relationships.

<INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE>

3.B. YP Only

3.B.i. Less Use of Force

JA: "[I want police who] don't abuse they power, that's really genuine, for real. Like they come to your neighborhood. They help out. They protect and not trying to make people in fear."

Several YP expressed frustration and upset concerning with the use of excessive force by the police, particularly the use of firearms (e.g., DC: "Put the guns down...They shoot too many bullets"). Most participants with this perspective had experienced direct police violence. YP questioned the need for such violence and suggested alternative methods of dealing with confrontations. For instance, YP suggested that police should aim to de-escalate situations and not immediately resort to aggressive tactics or weapons. "Make me feel comfortable, knowing I'm going to be able to pull off and go home to my family. Come with a calm, collected, comfortable [stance]." [ML]

CS: "[Police] should give [YP] more of a talk then roughing them up with the handcuffs. They should talk them through what they doing and why they doing it. And make the kids understand instead of chasing them and scaring them away. They need to be more calm so everybody can remain calm.

3.B.ii. Cultural Sensitivity and Anti-Racism

Although not explicitly mentioned, a suggestion to be culturally sensitive was implied by YP. Namely, YP wanted policing personnel to be aware of cultural differences and to be anti-racist. Said BG, "We need new [police], new better ones that actually care about specifically Black people." Others thought cultural sensitivity needed to extend to intersectional identifiers.

DC: "Stop talking to them like they're grown. They're still kids... I can understand [if an adolescent] put their hands on you, then that's when you protect yourself, but not shoot them. They need to learn that everybody got issues, even YP... [Police need to] learn how to treat a Black man."

See and Promote the Positive Things YP Do

Aligning with best practices for educators and caregivers and others who work with YP (Carr et al., 2002; Henderlong & Lepper, 2002), some YP noted that policing personnel, "need to listen to us and see the positive things that we do instead of just thinking that we just doing negative things or catching us when we are doing negative things" [TT]. Ultimately, 'catching' YP doing good is advised by YP and science alike (Carr et al., 2002; Henderlong & Lepper, 2002).

3.B.iii. Nothing

"Nothing. The police can't do nothing for us" [KY]. Some YP have been so traumatized and disheartened by their experiences with policing personnel that they presented with a sense of helplessness and hopelessness. They did not see a future with improved police-youth relations.

ME: "Police… already has an image. As a Black kid, I'll think if you trying to come lock me up, you're trying to hurt me. You're going to shoot me because of what been going around the world. What been going around on social media… that's the picture we're stuck on… I don't trust police officers."

MK: "I don't think [police] could do a better job… the YP already have it in their mind, 'Fuck the police. What they going to do for us? They going to send us to jail… Nothing else they going to do.'"

3.C. Police Only

3.C.i. Positive Mindset Overall

During discussions with policing personnel, they described wanting to serve as role models and highlighted the importance of adopting a positive mindset.

SR: "I realize that I have to have a positive attitude, even though some days I have bad days. But I have to make a conscious decision… what I do can possibly affect not just myself, but many others that I come in contact with. So you just gotta… understand your attitude and your actions will affect someone else, whether you know it or not… try to keep a positive attitude, even when I'm in a negative situation."

This Black female sergeant and others also mentioned the essential role of police morals and values for fostering effective community interactions (Blumberg et al., 2018; Cordner, 2014; Cordner, 2023).

3.C.ii. Language Choice with YP

Policing personnel emphasized the importance of police communication skills including vocabulary and semantics. They discussed developmental differences in what language could or should be used with YP, noting legal jargon might be unfamiliar to many civilians. Police further described language selection was essential to building trust and rapport with YP in the community.

DF: "Really, they might not understand the words, or they just don't have enough cognitive ability at that point in their development to understand what you're trying to say. A 17 year old might understand what the word "disorderly" means, whereas a 5 year old is not going to understand that… Making sure that the language that you use that you use is something that they can understand… Police, we tend to use certain jargon because it's part of (you know the 10-codes), the stuff that we use."

One sergeant noted some communications skills developed during trainings have promoted better interactions with YP saying, "It's almost like you have to be like skilled in motivational interviewing to get kids to open up sometimes trying to be really strategic in those conversations" [PP].

4. DISCUSSION

Existing research focuses on clarifying either YP or policing personnel's perspectives, not both simultaneously. Given the ongoing need to educate policing personnel about what to do to promote safe and equitable interactions with YP, we collected qualitative data from YP and policing personnel in the same city to ascertain recommendations about what might lessen the rift that exists between policing personnel and YP in the community.

In summary, our findings that both YP and policing personnel view (1) respect, (2) communication skills, (3) empathy/understanding, and (4) engaging YP in non-enforcement contexts as essential practices. YP also wanted less use of force, more cultural sensitivity and anti-racism, and recognition of YP positive behavior – though some felt nothing could remediate YP-police ruptures. Police also noted the importance of a positive mindset and use of developmentally appropriate language when interacting with YP. Though both groups had reservations, they generally envisioned a future where they could interact more positively.

Our study had several limitations. First, data were collected within a single city, from a single police department, and from Black cisgender YP. Second, voices of other important groups on this topic, including caregivers and youth workers, are lacking, reflecting another opportunity for future research. Finally, this study was limited to qualitative cross-sectional data only; follow-up research should also collect longitudinal data from YP and policing personnel.

It is critical to listen to YP (and community members in general) and police concerning improved police-community interactions and recommendations for related police training. Our study findings align with other research, suggesting that youth perceptions can change–and mutual understanding and respect can ensue–when there are opportunities to engage in honest, open dialogue with police (Freiburger, 2019; Williams & Crifasi, 2020). Accordingly, our study offers data that can inform larger data collection efforts (including quantitative data collection) on youth and police perspectives on these interactions, as well as police training and practices specific to working with youth, focusing on the experiences of Black YP and emphasizing police-initiated diversion (Wilson et al., 2018). Furthermore, if relations between YP and

policing personnel are improved through new trainings, policies, and practices, we may observe a substantial reduction in both hostile police encounters and police violence (Slocum & Wiley, 2018).

Declarations

Acknowledgments:

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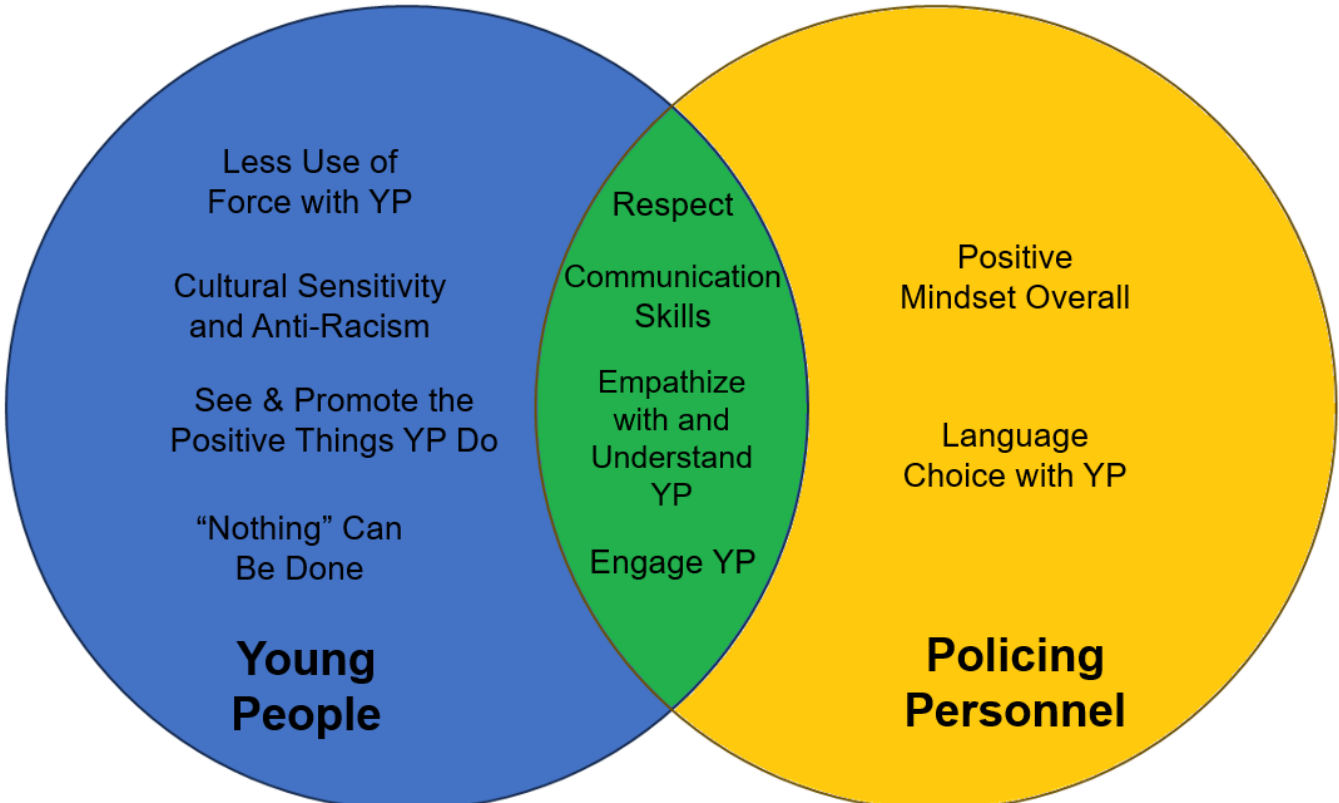
Table

Table 1. *Key Themes from Study Codebook, Their Definitions, and Example Quotes*

Code	Description	Example Quote
Young People and Policing Personnel		
Respect	Mutual respect between young people and policing personnel, characterized by police language and behavior.	"I feel like respect is the biggest disconnect between people and the police. I feel like it's a respect thing." [RA]
Communication Skills	Ability for policing personnel to demonstrate patience, a friendly and calm demeanor, and active listening during interactions with young people.	"Be more patient... Be more understanding with kids when they have issues, when they're mad, sad or something's going on." [ER]
Empathize with and Understand Young People	Policing personnel must be familiar with and empathize with difficulties experienced by young people. And challenge assumptions about and avoid stereotyping young people.	"I feel like a police does a lot of assumptions... don't always think because I'm on a corner that I'm selling drugs... You don't know nothing unless you talk to an individual." [KY]
Engage Young People	Policing personnel should take time to connect with young people outside of enforcement contexts and situations.	"Building trust. I think everybody needs to come down just have to a talk." [SN] "Go to the schools more." [KY]
Young People		
Less Use of Force with Young People	Policing personnel are advised by young people to use diversion and non-violent methods with young people.	"They could just be more friendly, be more out in the community, more welcoming, less violent, less aggressive." [KA]
Cultural Sensitivity and Anti-Racism	Young people wanted policing personnel to adopt practices that address anti-Black racism; this theme also includes the need for many social issues to be addressed without reliance on policing institutions.	"Stop talking to them like they're grown. They're still kids.... They need to learn that everybody got issues, even young people... [They also need to] learn how to treat a Black man." [DC]
See and Promote the Positive Things Young People Do	Young people expressed a desire for their strengths to be seen as well or better than their weaknesses and problems.	"They actually need to listen to us and see the positive things that we do... try to uplift us." [TT]
Nothing Can Be Done	Young people noted that there might be no capacity for trust and policing personnel.	"It's like, the young people already have it in their mind, 'Fuck the police. What they going to do for us? They going to send us to jail. That's about it.'" [MK]
Policing Personnel		
Positive Mindset Overall	Policing personnel believed that starting the day with a positive mindset was essential to their success on the job.	"I'm a glass half full type of person... it's not anything that the job teaches you (to remain positive, that has to

		come from upbringing and from your home)... I don't bring [my problems] into work." [RR]
Language Choice with Young People	Specialized communication skills for young people, like developmentally appropriate language and motivational interviewing techniques.	"I try not to tell them what to do. I try to lead them to believe that they're making an active choice or a decision." [RR]

Figures

Figure 1. Recommendations for Safe & Equitable Policing Practices*

Less Use of
Force with YP

Cultural Sensitivity
and Anti-Racism

See & Promote the
Positive Things YP Do

"Nothing" Can
Be Done

**Young
People**

Respect

Communication
Skills

Empathize
with and
Understand
YP

Engage YP

Positive
Mindset Overall

Language
Choice with YP

**Policing
Personnel**

*YP = young people. Apart from Respect, which was recognized by young people as needing to be mutual, all recommendations are specific to policing personnel.

Figure 1

Please see notes within the figure