



By: Chief Eric Jones, Stockton Police Department

Over the years in law enforcement, we have often heard about the latest type of policing with new titles and new catch phrases. But policing is not about the flavor of the month. It is about real and sustainable efforts to make differences within our communities. It is about the principles upon which policing was founded, now research validated, that serve as a compass for the profession.

Principled policing: an investment in the future of policing in Stockton.

In 2012, the Stockton Police Department began concerted efforts to reach out to the community after huge staffing cuts, skyrocketing violent crime, and emergence from municipal bankruptcy. It became soon apparent that there was a need to have a wider and deeper meaning that could permeate the entire police department.

We've always known community policing is about relationships, but we now know that we can reduce crime while increasing police-community trust. When it comes to community, our profession has regularly used terms such as community policing, relationship-based policing, community-oriented policing, problem-solving policing, problem-oriented-policing, police-partnerships, and impartial policing. Our profession has also referred to training strategies such as Procedural Justice and Police Legitimacy training, and Implicit-Bias training. Those are all mouthfuls of words yet they are tied together by four simple principles.

Principled Policing is an organizational theory.

Since early 2015, Stockton has referred to this overall philosophy that translates into organizational structure, culture, and strategies, as Principled Policing. Principled policing is not just a strategy, but is an actual organizational theory. This is because the manner we police matters; the road to police legitimacy in the eyes of the public is procedural justice. It is not just why we police, but how we police.

Law enforcement should be based on the principles of which it was founded. A principle is a fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of belief. Historians note that the principles of law enforcement date back to Sir Robert Peel in 1829. Peel noted that the legitimacy of policing in the eyes of the public is based upon a general consensus of support that follows from their integrity, and accountability. The principles of policing are about protecting the constitutional rights of everyone with fair and impartial treatment. We must safeguard the community by living our oath of respecting and protecting the constitutional rights of everyone with the badge as a symbol of public faith.

It takes more than "checking the box" to make Principled Policing work.

As can be seen, some of these principles are completely unchanged with time. But research now shows us how to better apply these principles for lasting results. We have partnered with the Oakland Police Department and the

California Partnership for Safe Communities because we're convinced that just training alone is not enough. Working together, we're developing an ongoing and comprehensive training policy, and are incorporating the principles into our crime fighting tactics and strategies, in our policies and procedures, and into our performance management and crime analysis functions. We're also working on local criminal justice system changes, overall service delivery models, and specific crime-fighting strategies. Additionally, we are acknowledging and coming to terms with the historical perspectives minority groups and immigrant communities have on policing.

Two over-used terms in law enforcement are "transparency" and "culture change." Both are important, but they are the end of something and not the beginning. Transparency comes *after* an organization has been consistent and forthcoming with information, and after openness to change has been developed. Culture change comes *after* an organizational transformation.

Principled policing is helping Stockton PD reshape crime fighting.

An example of Principled Policing in action is the evidence-based violent crime reduction strategy known as Ceasefire, which incorporates community involvement and increases their trust in the police. Ceasefire does not rely upon blanket enforcement of an entire neighborhood. Instead, it uses strategic and data-driven enforcement and respectful communication directed at those most prone to committing or being the victim of violent crime.

We're also using Principled Policing to transform our code enforcement work into a working partnership with neighborhood leaders and residents aimed at community revitalization. As an organization, we're engaging in community surveys, public forums, Courageous Conversation sessions led by the Community Advisory Board, and police chief listening tours that take place in living rooms across the city.

Principled Policing is not the same as Customer Service.

At SPD, the Principled Policing training has been very popular with our officers, reminding them why they swore their oath and helping them with wellness and stress issues. Early on, the Stockton and Oakland Police Departments partnered to train all personnel in this curriculum which has four tenets: giving others a voice, neutrality in

decision making, respectful treatment, and trustworthiness. It is not just about being polite, and this training goes far beyond customer service and cultural sensitivity trainings; it takes issues like race relations head-on and discusses how we can all combat cynicism – all without coming off as corrective or judgmental.

Looking Forward:

The Stockton Police Department's Principled Policing philosophy and strategies have led to the co-chairing of a training committee on these topics for the State Attorney General, and to Stockton's selection as one of six pilot sites for the U.S. Department of Justice's National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, working with researchers from Yale University, Stanford University, U.C.L.A., and the John Jay College of Criminal Justice. This research examines best practices in law enforcement and what we can learn from each other. It is being committed to evaluating research and making changes as needed to support a continual path for excellence.

What is Principled Policing?

- Safeguarding the Community
- Living Our Oath
- Respecting & Protecting Rights
- The Badge as a Symbol of Public Faith
- Reducing Crime while Increasing Trust ■

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