



# Zeidler Center

Frank Zeidler Center for Public Discussion

*Bridging communities through conversation*

## Metcalfe Park Police & Resident Listening Circles Report

### Spring Series

#### Planning Committee members:

Demetria Williams, Jermaine Alexander, Zenia Alexander, Pr. Howard Moore, Officer Troy Carus, Officer Minisha Howard, BilliJo Saffold (Zeidler facilitator), Blanche Brown (Zeidler facilitator).

Thank you to Mercy Memorial for hosting these listening circles. We would also like to thank our partners: Safe and Sound, Milwaukee Police Department, Milwaukee DA's Office.

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## Executive Summary

The Frank Zeidler Center for Public Discussion believes that an important step in repairing relationships between law enforcement and communities of color in Milwaukee is to come together in safe spaces that provide the opportunity for facilitated, face-to-face communication to co-create resident-based solutions. The Zeidler Center's program, funded by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Racial Equity and Inclusion Grant, involves circles that are professionally facilitated by Zeidler Center facilitators, and co-designed by residents and police to fit the needs of the Metcalfe Park community.

Participants experience both structured and unstructured portions of dialogue. Through timed facilitation, this method allows participants to respectfully share their personal perspectives and learn the perspectives of others. These listening circles create a platform for greater mutual trust and understanding, essential for establishing a constructive, collaborative environment for change. The Zeidler Center's community partners play an essential role in encouraging continued resident, youth, and officer engagement. Our partners include Safe & Sound, Milwaukee District Attorney's Office, and the Milwaukee Police Department.

The Zeidler Center hosted dialogues on Saturday, March 12, 2016; Tuesday, April 12, 2016 and Thursday, May 12, 2016 at Mercy Memorial.

### **Fall dates for Metcalfe Park Police/Resident Listening Circles have been set:**

Tuesday September 27 (6p-8:30p)

Tuesday October 11 (6p-8:30p)

Tuesday November 15 (6p-8:30p)

Pre-registration is required. Metcalfe Park residents interested in attending one or more listening circles should call (414) 239-8555 or register at [www.zeidlercenter.org](http://www.zeidlercenter.org).

## Listening Circle 1

During the first listening circle session which focused on improving Police/Resident relationships, Zeidler Center facilitators asked all session participants the following questions:

1. "What is a key experience from your life that has shaped your views about the police and the community and how they interact?"
2. "Why is it important for you to improve relationships and build more trust between Metcalfe Park residents and the Milwaukee Police Department?"
3. "What motivates you to build/improve relations between the Milwaukee Police Department and Metcalfe Park? What's holding you back from making that progress?"

In response to the first question, participants highlighted **fear and negatives stereotypes**, both often **increased and shaped in part by the media**, as two factors that have shaped and influenced their experiences with police officers. Numerous participants mentioned their **childhood experiences, both negative and positive, as shaping moments** of the relationship between residents and police officers. Some underlined the **presence of police officer in participants' families** as an important shaping aspect of views on police, while others stressed having **changed their views on the police while growing up**. Participants shared both positive and negative key experiences with the police. While doing so, several participants stressed their **"mixed feelings" regarding the state of relations** between police and residents based on what they have lived or observed. Overall, participants' answers depicted an **image of the police that was more built around punitive actions** (lack of explanation, profiling and unfair treatment) **than supporting ones** (respect and support). For some participants, **working closely with police officers and/or residents consisted in the key experiences** that have shaped their views on police and resident relations. Most police officers participating mentioned having discovered a lot about the community when they started working in Metcalfe Park.

In response to the second question, a considerable number of participants highlighted the **need for trust in order for residents to lose both the fear of police and the fear of being labeled by others as a snitch**. Several participants mentioned that **trust** would enable police officers and residents to building relationships based on **effective communication** and vice versa, often paired it with **communication and respect**. In order to establish communication channels and increase interactions between officers and residents, participants underlined the **need for individuals to humanize the other and avoid broad generalizations**. One participant explained that *"because people don't trust the police, they try to take things into their own hands too much"*. Similarly, others participants stressed the need to consider the police as *"an important resource in the community"* and as such, **collaboration between police officers and residents** would bring great changes and improvements in Metcalfe Park. A great number of participants specifically focused on the **need for all to work together in order to fight crime**, as *"without trust the honesty stops and the crime escalates. We can't solve problems without trust"*.

In response to the third question, participants stressed **that being intentional about the changes that Metcalfe Park is undertaking is very important** in order to establish long-lasting results. Several participants reported being greatly motivated by their **desire to provide as well as receive**

**help.** A great number of participants mentioned their **desire to improve the level of safety and well-being** within the community. The safety of all within Metcalfe Park came across as critical to participants in terms of motivation and goal to accomplish. A focus on **improving the lives of local youth** is clear in the answers of several participants. Regarding what is holding people back, a few participants identified a in order to feel sure and secure about implementing their ideas while others mentioned the **need to deconstruct and overcome stereotypes** in order to achieve the vision they had developed for Metcalfe Park. Linked to the existence of negative stereotypes, several participants mentioned the **lack of trust** as a factor holding people back from establishing relationships. A considerable number of participants mentioned **different types of fear related to speaking with police** officers, both holding them back: the fear of not being heard and the fear of judgment and retaliation.

### Listening Circle 2

During the first listening circle session which focused on improving communication between police and residents, Zeidler Center facilitators asked all session participants the following questions:

1. *"Describe a time when you felt an action or something said was misunderstood by an officer or residents served by officers."*
2. *"What is one thing that you wish officers knew about residents and that residents knew about the officers and what their job entails?"*
3. *"What is your motivation to build improved communication between the Milwaukee Police Department and residents of Metcalfe Park and/or the greater community, and what holds you back from making that progress?"*

In response to the first question, only a few participants mentioned not having any kind of such experiences whereas most participants mentioned interactions that only involved either police or residents. A great part of situations reported by participants were **linked to police procedure and a perceived abuse of authority from some police officers**. All participants' experiences highlight a certain **level of incomprehension of police behavior**, as well as **feelings of injustice when treated unfairly**. Another aspect mentioned consisted in **feeling lied to by police** officers during an interaction. Both residents and police officers participating evoked situations in which they had to face **aggressive and disrespectful behaviors** and during which they felt misunderstood. **Excessive use of force** was mentioned by one participant while another participant's story focused on a **racist encounter** with a police officer. One participant raised the issue of some police officers' behaviors while off-duty.

In response to the second question, a great number of participants mentioned the **need to humanize the other** in order to be able to be open **to learn about different aspect of the lives**, struggles and challenges of others, focusing several times of the **need to see pass the uniform**. In order to do so, numerous participants stressed the **need to deconstruct already existing generalization and stereotypes both on police and residents** in order to treat all as individuals. Several youths mentioned feeling unfairly treated just because of their clothing style and called for more tolerance and respect from police officers. A general **call for communication and trust** was heard coming from both police officers and residents during the dialogue. **Communication amongst residents was mentioned as well as needing improvements**. Several participants mentioned the need for both more respect and **cultural sensitivity** as essential aspects of encounters with police officers to guarantee effective

communication and to avoid the escalation of tensions. One participant specifically illustrated the need for cultural sensitivity by mentioned the learned fear of police amongst African-American communities: *"I wish that police knew that blacks have been conditioned to fear police or authority since childhood. Blacks run from police because of fear. Police need to take minority sensitivity classes"*. Some participants called for a **better education of residents on police procedures** in order to avoid unpleasant encounters that could have easily been avoided. An important aspect mentioned as a **source of stress and tension consisted on the waiting time while calling the police department**. One police officer participant offered an explanation for the possible waiting time that some residents had to experiences, stating that *"[o]fficers work on high priorities, they will take a high priority call over a less threatening call"*. Several police officers participating reported wishing for residents to **better understand what their duties entailed and the consequent stress and pressure that officers face on a daily basis**. One resident participating echoed this call, explaining that *"Police are torn between high and low priorities, we need an understanding about what their job is like"*. In addition, one police officer underlined how much of themselves some put every day in their jobs yet how **little consideration** they usually get for what they do. In general, officers participating declared having learnt a lot from the community by working with residents.

In response to the third question, a great number of participants mentioned their **desire to create a better community**: *"I am in this for the long run, I want to help my community to be a better place to live"*. For a lot of participants, creating a better community is linked to **creating a safer Metcalfe Park**. The roots of violence have been understood in different ways depending on the participants, yet several solutions have been put forward, such as the **creation of community gardens, the organization of a block watch, the planning of neighborhood clean ups, and attempting to create jobs** in the community. Several participants expanded their desire to improve the community to a general desire to improve the world. A considerable number of participants identified the **existing mutual dependency between police and residents** as well as amongst residents, expressing their **desire for greater connection**. An important motivation consisted as well in focusing on establishing trust and instating a good image of the police, possibly using techniques such as the ones presented by one participant: *"Tone of voice can be good or bad. Both sides should strive for better communication. We can start by using better choices of words"*. For an important number of participants, **peer pressure in not collaborating with the police** is a considerable obstacle to the improvement of communication. **The threats associated with peer pressure and the consequent fear of retaliation** have been present in the stories of several participants. One police officer participating mentioned how this situation amongst residents makes the work of police officers harder in Metcalfe Park. One participant called for a **greater understanding and compassion on the police side** when it comes to fear of retaliation. Some participants mentioned as well the **current feelings of disconnections** they have considering the Metcalfe Park community: *"What is holding us back, we just don't get to know each other on a personal level"*. One participant highlighted the challenge that looking at the future is when police – resident relations are unstable: *"How can we plan for the future when the police look at us as the enemy?"*

### Listening Circle 3

Participant and facilitator feedback during the spring series allowed us to make the following insights and alterations in order to improve the program:

- The use of two structured go-arounds (two questions) instead of three to provide more in-depth discussion of key issues.

- The use of non-compound questions, to assist in understanding.
- The use of 5 minutes per person, rather than three, to provide enough time for deep sharing.

The third listening circles session that revolved around experience with/fear of authority was thus designed following this new format. During this listening circle session, Zeidler Center facilitators asked all session participants the following questions:

1. *"What personal experiences cause you to fear the authority of police or others in charge of governing our community?"*
2. *"In working to build better relations between police and residents, how do we begin to undo the negative early messages we were taught about police and residents?"*

If time permitted, Zeidler Center facilitators also asked participants the following connected conversation questions: *"How can we work together – residents and police – to improve our relationship with each other?"*

In response to the first question, instead of sharing an experiences that cause fear of the police or other individuals governing the community, a significant number of the participants responded that they **were not fearful**. Participants' responses show that **when directly asked to share experiences of fear, most participants felt more comfortable speaking about frustration** from being disrespected or unfairly treated. While some residents (mostly youth and teachers) shared frustrating encounters that they experienced with the educational system, most participants focused on feelings related to the police. Some participants attributed the **absence of fear to childhood experiences or influential experiences with family** members who belonged to the Law enforcement. Such personal influence is expressed even more directly when some participants stated it was **personal behavior choices** that influenced the absence of fearful experiences regarding the police. A common **concern regarded the disrespectful behavior** some residents felt police officers' displayed when interacting with their community, feeling that **police officers didn't listen to the community's need or testimonies**. Having **one's past record consistently brought up** and questioned was another source of frustration. Such attention is wearing for individuals because efforts to *"live a decent life"* go unnoticed. Participants shared moments when initially fear was experienced, but later dissipated. **Fear is able to be transformed** when better understanding and perceptions of another as a human being is achieved.

In response of the second question, a perceived barrier to undoing negative messages taught about police seem to be an **inability to foresee how such healing could occur**; there seemed to be a **lack of hope** expressed by some. One resident feels that there *"is too much distrust."* The pain caused from recent losses are also a barrier to imagining how relations could be fixed: *"I don't know how [we'd build better relations]. I just lost my buddy to the police shooting him."* **Distrust and negative perceptions** were repeated from multiple participants, yet many also shared possible ways to rebuild new relationships. Some stated that an essential way to build better relations is to **appreciate the common humanity** between police officers and individuals, and **foster opportunities for improved communication**. **Creating more opportunities to connect** was identified as a way to foster greater feelings of respect and shared humanity. Having *"officers walk the street and get to know the residents and the neighborhood"* is important. In addition to street time, some participants felt that **social events**

should be held to bring people together. Many cited that negative generalizations about police officers and residents must first be confronted and overcome. Community members and police officers stated that **correcting the perception that all officers are bad is essential**. One police officer felt that such negative generalizations about the police are one of the greatest barriers to improved relations and wishes that parents would *"not instill in children a fear of the police"* because it adds *"another perception and barrier to overcome when I am responding to a call"*.

In response to the connected conversation's question, participants restated the importance of **understanding the police policy & procedure**, as well as **the prevalence of the conditioned emotional response to the presence of Police** by many participants. In addition, participants echoed the difficulties faced by some in **letting go of negative stereotypes** and **attempt to view police presence in a positive way**.

### **Feedback participants & Captain**

The feedback for the Metcalfe Park Listening Circles was **overwhelmingly positive**, with participants using words such as *"Grateful"*, *"Surprised"*, *"Positive"*, *"Nice-Police"*, *"Thankful"*, *"Hope"*, and *"Trust"*. Several participants mentioned that the Listening circles were a **good start**, as *"a lot of officers are assigned to areas that they are not familiar with, they don't know how to deal with someone out of their area or culture, but this (dialogue) is a good start"*. Individual participants raised the idea of **organizing such dialogues in schools** – *"These dialogues should be taught in schools"* -, and of **inviting alderpeople to the upcoming ones** – *"Our alderman should attend these meeting"*.

Capt. Boston-Smith has **not received any negative reports** from the officers regarding the Metcalfe Park listening circles.

### **Next Steps**

This report will be sent to all partners, including Chief Flynn, Captain Boston-Smith from District 3 and alderpeople. Many participants discussed the desire for **opportunities to positively interact with police in non-crisis settings** and **understand police policy and procedure in more depth**. Residents repeatedly cited the following ideas that would allow police and residents to *"get to know each other"*: **block parties, bike repair clinics, and bringing back the baseball cards**.

**Block Parties:** Steps for the organization of a block party in order misunderstandings about who should be the primary planners (residents or police):

- o Download a permit application via [milwaukee.gov](http://milwaukee.gov) or call 286-3329
- o Permits are only issued with approval of the alderperson
- o During summer hours of June, July and August, applications are not accepted any later than two weeks before scheduled event
- o Permit will be mailed, unless you specify that you will pick up your permit
- o There are no fees for a residential block party
- o Signatures of consent should be obtained from residents within the barricaded area to establish support for the event.
- o Informational fliers should be distributed one week prior to event in order to remind neighbors
- o Notification to be made to District personnel that they would like officers to stop by the block party and officers will attend.

**Bike Repair Clinic:** Metcalfe Park resident, Richard Clarke, was largely responsible for hosting a bike repair clinic that the police assisted with in the past. Capt. Banks has a number of officers he can assign to community projects and will be asked about the feasibility of re-launching this project.

- o There are two bike clinics in Milwaukee that provide bikes for kids: Boys and Girls club and Milwaukee Bicycle Collective
- o We cannot establish nor run a bike clinic but we can collaborate with these organizations

**Baseball Cards:** Many residents mentioned how much they enjoyed the program where police handed out baseball cards to youth. This program had received foundational support in the past that was cut.

- o Baseball cards come from Community service department at the academy.
- o Unsure why we no longer are provided them from the Brewers.
- o We could look into contacting the Bucks to see if they would provide cards but that would also go through Office of Community Outreach and Education, under Capt. Banks.

As requested by a great number of participants in both sessions, here is some information about police rules and procedure:

**Police Policy and Procedure:**

- o It was suggested that the Fall Listening Circles begin with short explanatory presentations by the officers on aspects of policy and procedure.
- o The Office of Community Outreach and Education facilitate programs to help citizens with greater knowledge of police policy and procedures, such as the Citizen Academy.
- o The Milwaukee Police Department Code of Conduct and Procedures can be viewed through the city website <http://city.milwaukee.gov/police#.V2B7krsrKUK>
- o Police policy and procedure information can also be obtained during each District's monthly Crime and Safety Meetings.
- o The Office of Community Outreach and Education officers go into schools to facilitate collaborative partnerships with the faculty, students, and officers.

**Questions about this report should be directed to:**

Dr. Katherine Wilson  
Executive Director, Frank Zeidler Center for Public Discussion  
631 N. 19<sup>th</sup> St., Milwaukee, WI 53212  
katherine@zeidlercenter.org, (414) 239-8555

## Listening Circle 1 – Analysis

**Topic:** Improving Police/Resident Relationships

**Round One Question:** *"What is a key experience from your life that has shaped your views about the police and the community and how they interact?"*

*"I joined the police to help people and sometimes I question whether I am able to do that. I still don't sleep well after a quadruple homicide I responded to. It's hard to erase those moments."*

*"One of my experiences with police officer was as a child. There was this beat officers that would take the time to stop and talk with us. Because he took time to build a relationship with us; trust was built."*

### 1.1 Fear, Negative Stereotypes and the Media as Influences on Experiences

Prior to considering the key experiences from participants that have shaped their views about the police and/or the community, it is important to notice the factors mentioned by some that tend to influence people's understanding and analysis of a given situation. First, a pre-existing and sometimes even unconscious fear of the police has shaped some participants' experiences with the police in general: *"Fear is a big factor. I don't feel safe taking to the police if they let my name be known in the community as the one who told on someone creating a crime"; "Many people don't come forward to assist us in solving crimes because they don't want to be labeled a snitch, and they fear retaliation"*.

Such fear can be linked with existing negative stereotypes around police officers that have rendered generalization around police behavior common, thus biasing to a certain extent individual police-residents encounters: *"I believe that the police do their job. But according to my peers the police are bad"; "I am always conscious because of what I have heard about the police"*. Such generalization is found as well when it comes to the creation of negative stereotypes around a specific group of people or community, as explained by one participant: *"My experience led me to a more negative view. I was with friends. Police pull up and assume I'm bad because of my ethnicity and age"*.

Considering the creation and propagation of generalizations and stereotypes on both police officers and communities of color, participants mentioned that they are generally greatly shaped and defined by what is seen in the Media: *"While I have no personal experience with police contact, the media has played a big part in how my views were shaped about the police and how they interacted with members of the black community. While I have no personal experience with police contact the media has played a big part in how my views were shaped about the police and how they interacted with members of the black community"*. As according to some, *"TV and the news show more bad than good"*, stereotypes on the police and communities of color tend to be more positive than negative.

### 1.2 The Importance of Childhood Experiences in Shaping Views

A few participants mentioned the presence of police officer in their families as an important shaping aspect of their views on the police: *"I never had any real personal experience with the police. But one day I was robbed and that is when I gained more personal knowledge and connection with the police. I*

*have police officers in my family”; “Growing up I watched people being arrested for things that they did and I would always ask what’s going on. I have police officers in my family”.*

A considerable number of participants reported that specific childhood experiences have greatly shaped their views on the police, either in a positive or a negative way depending on the interaction: *“One of my experiences with police officer was as a child. There was this beat officers that would take the time to stop and talk with us. Because he took time to build a relationship with us; trust was built”; “Prior to becoming a police officer I had a lot of experience with the police growing up”.* While shaping the views of participants, these experiences have been combined with other, more recent interactions or life events, leading to an evolution in views, as explained by this police officer participating: *“In my youth prior to becoming a police officer, I experienced mostly negative encounters with police while growing up in Chicago. I have been detained; I have been arrested on several occasions and booked. Even though my experiences were all negative I consider it ironic that I became a law enforcement officer. My negative experiences shaped how I view my profession currently: I want to conduct myself in a manner that garners trust and respect and I want to promote by my actions a sense of safety and wellbeing for the communities I serve in”.*

### **1.3 Direct interaction with Police that have shaped certain “expectations” of Police behavior**

The big majority of participants identified specific interactions they had with the police as key experiences that have shaped their views. While a few participants reported having had no interactions with the police - *“I haven’t had any experiences with the police”* -, numerous participants shared both positive and negative key experiences with the police. While doing so, several participants stressed their *“mixed feelings”* regarding the state of relations between police and residents based on what they have lived or observed - *“I have experienced and witnessed both negative and positive officer’s actions”*. In addition, one participant underlined that *“sometimes we forget our good experiences with cops and focus on the bad”*. Overall, participants’ answer depicted an image of the police that was more built around punitive than supporting actions.

#### **1.3.1 Positive Interactions: Respect and Support**

Several participants mentioned that their views were shaped by the positive interactions they had with police officers, either while needed help - *“A good experience was my son was robbed. An officer came to my house. He was polite, respectful, and he treated me with dignity”* -, or while being stopped by the police for an infraction - *“My interaction growing up in Waukesha was that I was often stopped by the police for speeding and moving traffic violations. There was never any negative interaction nor outcomes, only tickets and fines to pay. With that as a limited experience I always felt safe and took responsibility for my own actions, I knew I was wrong for speeding”*.

#### **1.3.2 Negative Interactions: Lack of Explanation, Profiling and Unfair Treatment**

While few participants mentioned observing police behavior that they described in general as forceful and difficult to understand in some situation - *“Police act more like an occupying army when they come into our community”; “When the Police Officers have come into the community they don’t answer questions”*, most participants focused on very specific incidents with the police.

The lack of explanation or legitimate reason for action/use of force regarding a given situation between a participant and police officers was stressed through several participants’ answers: *“I was*

*choked by officers when they stopped me. I was not doing anything wrong and when I started questioning I was thrown down on the ground arrested"; "I can remember when my mom got pulled over one time and the white police officer started threatening her. But I believe that all cops aren't like that".*

Participants highlighted interactions during which they were being profiled or unfairly treated as key experiences that have shaped their view on police and resident relationships: *"My experience led me to a more negative view. I was with friends. Police pull up and assumed I'm bad because of my ethnicity and age"; "I've been a victim of being taken advantage of because officers knew there was no male there".* One participant in particular expressed how being mistaken for a drug user/dealer by the police greatly shaped his views on the police: *"My initial encounter with police was negative. I was with my friends after school and hugged, embraced, and shook hands and proceeded to go home. I was stopped by an officer in front of my home and informed that he observed what appeared to be a "hand to hand" drug transaction. Later he told me I was free to go. I was 15 at the time and that is what helped shaped how I view the relationship with police and my community".*

#### **1.4 Professional Relationships**

For some participants, working closely with police officers and/or residents consisted in the key experiences that have shaped their views on police and resident relations. Most police officers participating mentioned having discovered a lot about the community when they started working in Metcalfe Park: *"When I got assigned to the beat patrol I recognized there were a lot of challenges. It taught me about the people in the community and directed me to learn what their real problems were and to find real resolutions to their problems".* One officer participating declared that working closely with residents enabled him to change his view of the community and on its relationship with the police: *"I walk the beat 12th – 27th Street, and Center to Walnut. I thought it would all be bad when I first became an officer at district 3 in 2001. I was surprised. It's been good. 99% of the people are good and only 1% are bad. The community gets along".*

A few participants shared that their profession enabled them to work closely both with the police and the residents, giving them the possibility to gain another perspective of the realities of Metcalfe Park. However, depending on the participant, working closely with officers has not led to the same conclusions. While one participant declared being now able to better and deeper understand the problems faced by residents and the day-to-day of police officers - *"I have been able to do ride along with police officers to different emergency situations and that changed my perspective. It made me think differently about how police react to situations. I have a better understanding of the pressures on the police and I also understand the community side" -*, another stated working closely with the police has change his views to the worse: *"In my youth I believed that police officers were mostly professional and honest and possessed integrity. Now, I see things differently: the blatant lying, inappropriate conduct and disrespect of the community that they are supposed to be serving. To me, it is appalling".*

**Round Two Question: "Why is it important for you to improve relationships and build more trust between Metcalfe Park residents and the Milwaukee Police Department?"**

*"Better relationship needed between the residents and Officers so the officers to know who they are protecting, and for the community to know their protectors".*

*"It is important to build trust between the police and the community because the police needs the community and the community needs the police."*

*"It is important to build good relationships with the police and community because we should work together to stop all the bad stuff."*

As one participant mentioned, *"trust and improved relationships are missing elements in Metcalfe Park"*, others focused not only on the importance of trust, but on how difficult it can be to try to get it back when it lost: *"Trust is the number one thing that is important to me. When trust is missing it is almost impossible to build it up and back again"; "Because once trust has been lost it is very hard to reestablish it".*

## **2.1 Communication, Interaction and Respect to Combat Fear and to Feel Safe**

A considerable number of participants highlighted the need for trust in order for residents to lose both the fear of police and the fear of being labeled by others as a snitch: *"I shouldn't fear those here to protect us as a community and as Americans"; "As a child I was taught to call the police to any [dangerous] [...]. Now residents are hesitant to contact the police out of fear and being labeled a snitch"; "There needs to be trust, if we can't call the police then we will get preyed upon".* One police officer participating deplored the fact that *"although most police will respond and answer your needs, I know people are afraid of the repercussions"*. Feeling safe and protected by the presence of police officers is at the core of participants' stories - *"I want to be able to feel protected. I don't want to feel I have no real chance of getting help" -*, yet for it to happen, participants stressed the need for trust to be established between residents and police officers: *"Without trust we won't feel safe"*.

Several participants mentioned that trust would enable police officers and residents to building relationships based on effective communication and vice versa: *"Trust is the critical element in building relationships"; "Communication is key in building better relationships between residents and officers"*. It proves to be difficult to separate trust from communication and respect when considering the improvement of police-resident relationships, as each one of these elements is vital to the community: *"Communication is important to earn trust and feel safe"; "Communication and personal experiences with the police help and maybe then interactions between some police and community won't be so disrespectful"*.

In order to establish communication channels and increase interactions between officers and residents, participants underlined the need for individual to humanize the other and avoid broad generalizations: *"When one person is doing bad stuff in the community the whole community does bad"; "It is important to show that all cops are not bad people and they are here to help us"*. Several police officers participating stressed the importance for community members "not [to] be blinded by the police being public servants, because they are not "'just police' and recognize that *"there is good and*

*bad in all professions. There are a few bad apples in all neighborhoods. Our profession is the same; there are a few bad officers. The important thing is to have those relationships with police”.*

## **2.2 Working Together to Solve Issues and to Fight Crime**

One participant explained that *“because people don’t trust the police, they try to take things into their own hands too much”*. Similarly, others participants stressed the need to consider the police as *“an important resource in the community”* and as such, collaboration between police officers and residents would bring great changes and improvements in Metcalfe Park. Yet in order to collaborate, trust needs to be establish as *“without trust between us we both are working against each other”*. Several participants called for police and residents to work together *“I want to build a relationship so we can work together”*, a point that one police officer participating made while describing what being a police officer meant: *“My desire is to behave in a courteous and professional manner so that if a resident or a household in Metcalfe Park have to phone police for an intervention my behavior does not make it hard for the next Police officer”*. One resident participant shared an experience that points at the need for efforts to be made by all in order for collaboration to take place: *“As a gesture of commitment I offered my home to beat officers to get water, use the restroom, etc., yet in four years only one officer has taken me up on the offer”*.

A great number of participants specifically focused on the need for all to work together in order to fight crime, as *“without trust the honesty stops and the crime escalates. We can’t solve problems without trust”*. Numerous participants called for all to realize that *“our common goal is to rid our communities of crime”*, as well as that *“without the community assistance, crime increases [thus] MPD needs the community help to improve the crime rate”*. Increasing police presence in the area was suggested by some as a way towards greater cooperation: *“More Police present would be helpful. We have the service of the MPD available but we really can’t see it”*.

**Round Three Question: "What motivates you to build/improve relations between the Milwaukee Police Department and Metcalfe Park? What's holding you back from making that progress?"**

**3.1 Desire to Provide & Receive Help, and to Improve Community Safety & Well-Being**

*"Safety and improved community and police interaction is my motivation. I believe that increase exposure and awareness to current policy and procedures will go a long way in bridging huge gaps in the relationship divide which currently exists".*

*"Child safety is my main motivation. It saddens me to see that a lot of the youth do not feel safe in their own environment."*

*"Peer pressure has a lot to do with why I hold back from dealing with the police. People may set your house on fire or shoot your house up!"*

Being intentional about the changes that Metcalfe Park is undertaking is very important in order to establish long-lasting results: *"When the community undergoes change, relationship-building must be intentional".* In addition, one participant stressed the need to consider the police as an integral part of the community and not as an external force: *"I think having a strong community is recognizing the police as a part of the community. We need to band together to improve our communities".*

Several participants reported being greatly motivated by their desire to provide as well as receive help: *"If I have a good relationship with the community, then I have a better chance of being helped by the community"; "I like to have confidence that I'm safe and/or will be helped".* One officer participating specified that the desire to providing the same level of care and support that other communities experience: *"Delivery of the same type of services that other communities experience".*

A great number of participants mentioned their desire to improve the level of safety and well-being within the community: *"I don't want to be afraid within my community"; "I grew up here seeing the positive and negative between the police and community. I have experienced the positive of police and community. I want to continue to fight for community and we shouldn't give up".* The safety of all within Metcalfe Park came across as critical to participants in terms of motivation and goal to accomplish: *"My motivation is safety of officers and residents... I also want to be a part of a shift and change in the level of security and neighborhood safety, I feel no sense of holding back from that desire".*

A focus on improving the lives of local youth is clear in the answers of several participants: *"Children's safety and sense of security is my main motivation. My desire is to allow my children to play outside and not be confined to the indoors, especially in the summer months. I want them to be able to experience and explore their neighborhood".*

**3.2 Factors Holding People Back: Lack of Resources, Stereotypes & Trust, and Fear**

Apart from one participant who reported that *"nothing is holding me back from being involved and committed. That is why I am here today",* all other participants shared having some difficulties implementing their vision for the neighborhood.

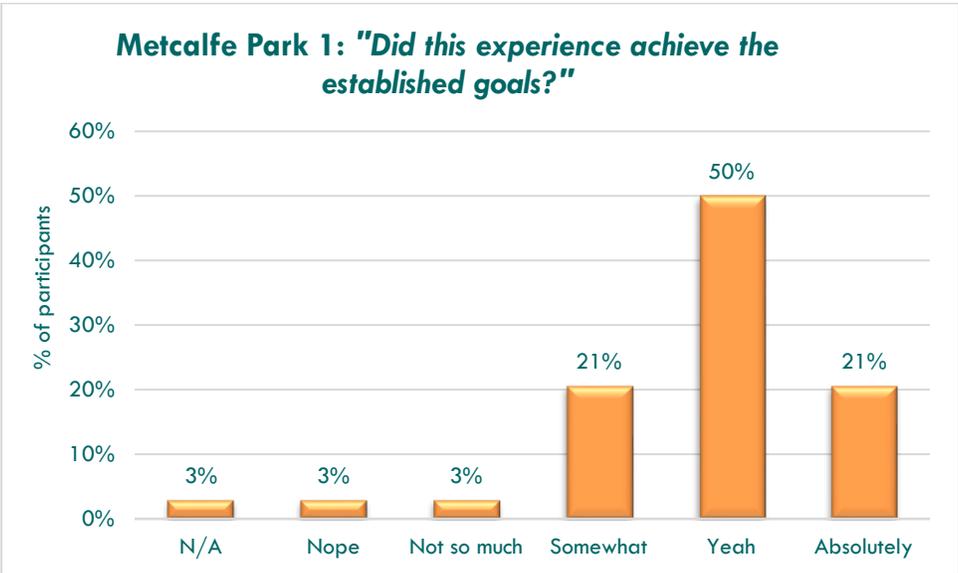
A few participants identified a certain lack of resources and/or experiences in order to feel sure and secure about implementing their ideas: *"As far as holding back: a lack of resources and experience."*

*They are necessary to develop a relationship with police*". One participant underlined the difficulties that a lot of working residents face when struggling between work hours and the will to improve Metcalfe Park: *"One thing that's holding me back from the progress of improving relationships is not having time to talk to people, get their views, and to see what is going on in my neighborhood"*.

Several participants mentioned the need to deconstruct and overcome stereotypes in order to achieve the vision they had developed for Metcalfe Park: *"MPD needs to improve their image. We have a new generation that live in fear of the police officers"*. The importance of the media in the definition of who police officers are and what they was mentioned as critical in the understanding of the police and the establishment of relationships: *"I think the media impacts how we feel about the police. The media is always sharing negative stories about the police"; "I watch the news a lot that influences my opinion about the police, I guess I really don't know how to feel about them"*. Linked to the existence of negative stereotypes, several participants mentioned the lack of trust as a factor holding people back from establishing relationships: *"As a resident – this is where I live. When I reported a crime taking place, the individual confront me. How did they know? My name is not treated with confidentiality"; "Is it safe to talk to any and everybody?"*

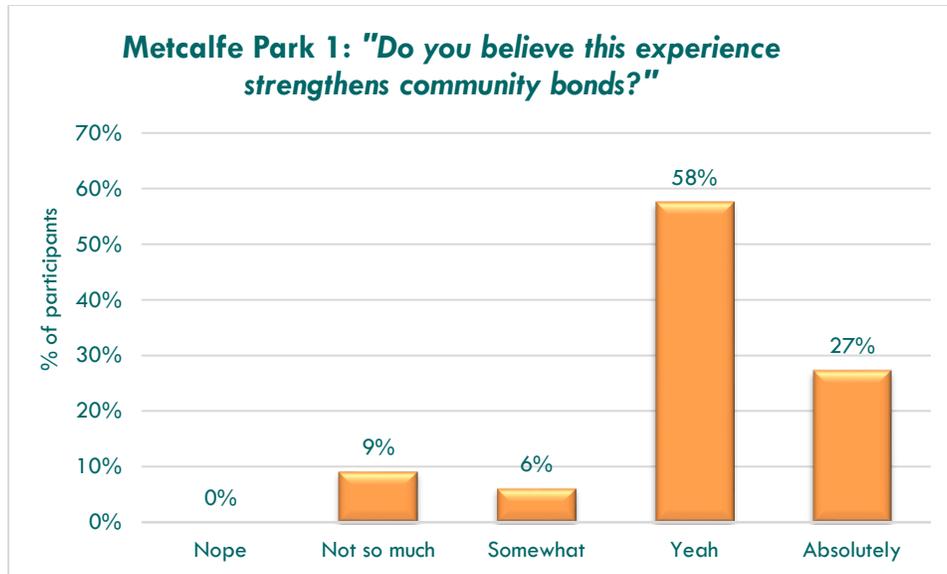
A considerable number of participants mentioned different types of fear related to speaking with police officers, both holding them back: the fear of not being heard and the fear of judgment and retaliation. First, the fear of not being heard has hindered the will for some participants, especially young participants, to speak up and share ideas about improving relationships: *"Just being a kid and believing that people don't listen"; "Realizing how many people won't listen and how many people have died"*. Second, the fear of being judged and then suffer relations has clearly stopped several participants from truly creating relationships with the police: *"I don't want to lose friends, because they don't like police"; "Peer pressure has a lot to do with why I hold back from dealing with the police. People may set your house on fire or shoot your house up!"*

**Feedback**



Why or why not?
-----------------

- A lot of sharing experiences and feelings
- Allowed conversations to occur
- Building trust one session at a time.
- Good communication
- Got to interact and ask questions we don't have another venue to ask
- I believe this is a start and it helps to break ground and bridge gap.
- I believe the goal of this group has been established I don't have a particular reason
- I feel this way because we were able to sit down and explain our thoughts and feelings
- I feel we had a very open talk with each other which helped our experience
- I have a different point of view or opinion of policemen
- I was able to get new perspective towards things i would've misinterpreted
- It changed my view on policemen
- It helped us see life through the eyes of persons/people we are in conflict with
- It was a good experience to get to know other people's point of view
- It was good to know how people felt about common situations
- It was nice to actually communicate with people with different ethnicities and ages.
- My goal was to talk and see what i need from cops
- Need to have more meeting (talk issue)
- Not everyone has the same mindset it's hard to achieve something when no one is willing to listen
- Not sure what the desired "goal" was but i think the discussion was productive
- The lines of communications are open and flowing
- The police officer that spoke to us cleared things up
- This is a learning tool for me
- We need more people here
- We talked about how the police and community interact with each other
- Yes, getting an insight view of what police and community think.



Why or why not?

- (Above)
- Allowed conversations to occur.
- Because I feel really good about really being able to sit down and talk about this.
- Because I got to meet 2 new cops who i can trust
- Because it forces us to listen more on talk less
- Breaks down barriers
- Everyone was able to voice their opinion and maybe get a new opinion
- I believe this group somewhat strengthens the community bond because it can change some perspectives
- I think that the group setting, stripes titles of "police" or "citizen" and it's just a group of people
- If everyone would participate from the community this could bring us to better results
- It gives perspectives from both sides
- It gives us a chance to talk to each other not about each other.
- It gives you a police officer and other people in the community to converse with
- It strengthens bonds because it addresses what we don't know about each other.
- It will eventually when it becomes regular
- It's the beginning of trust!!!!
- More police presence and opinions.
- There aren't many people who actually want to build the community they're used to the same thing
- We were actually able to establish trust in our group
- We're from similar worlds and situations which made it relatable
- Yes, it opens the lines of communication
- Yes, because it gives people an opportunity to talk about the things going on in our community
- Yes, because we allowed each other



- Allows conversations to occur.
- A lot of people who are scared of cops need this community
- Even if the problems don't directly affect you it's good to keep bonds between them.
- I believe this could open up perspectives of people to other points of view
- I feel this is good way to bring communication from all circles of life
- I might not...
- I think it greatly helps build better relationships
- I THINK THIS IS A NICE CHANGE AT PACE
- It feels nice to open up and express your feelings
- IT helped me view police differently
- It helps build better relationships with members of the law enforcement
- It's good for others to interact and see other people's opinions.
- Listening to youths' perspective in the community gave me tremendous new insight and realization how powerful the youth in our community can be and that they are agents of long-lasting and immediate change for good
- MOST AFFIRMATIVE
- PEOPLE CAN CHANGE THEIR OPINION ABOUT POLICE POINT OF NEW
- So, they can experience what I experience today and that is we need to build trust
- TEEN SENIORS AND MIDDLE AGE PEOPLE SHOULD BE A PART OF THIS EXPERIENCE
- There are people I know that need to hear from police officers what/how they feel
- This experience helps build a relationship with officers and residents.
- This is how we make change by spreading the word to others to make change
- TO BE ABLE TO VIEW AFTER SIDES
- Yes, because it more people come it could make a difference

What is the most important suggestion you have for upcoming dialogues and what specific issue would you like to discuss?

- Attempt to keep the same people so we can expand
- Black lives matter justice for black/ people of color listen to what kids have to say
- Continue after dialogues
- Discuss not logic issues.
- Discussing students after we're talked about the issues
- Have at least 2 teen 2 adults 2 police officers to have an effective discussion
- Have questions
- How do we get bad people to understand that being bad is not good for them or the community?
- How help kids whose families commit crimes avoid joining in crime activity
- I don't really know
- I suggest more questions because he flew through there really quickly 101.
- I'd like to see a discussion regarding how the people in your community impact you
- Idk
- Jobs, education
- Juvenile justice & offender reintegration at home & in community personalized engagement builds trust
- Maybe pose more pointed questions and not so many open-ended questions.
- More time to communicate feelings and thoughts.
- Take time to understand the officers. And in terms of topic: minority on minority crime/police
- To bring in more current events
- To get neighbors to work together
- Volunteer groups with police & community more events
- We should discuss relationships with youth and police
- Why blacks kill blacks

## Listening Circle 2 – Analysis

**Topic:** Improving Communication between Police and Residents

**Round One Question:** *"Describe a time when you felt an action or something said was misunderstood by an officer or residents served by officers."*

When considering moments during which one has felt misunderstood, only a few participants mentioned not having any kind of such experiences: *"I have a good communication relationship with the police in our area"*. Besides one participant reporting having had problem with both residents and the police, most participants mentioned interactions that only involved either police or residents.

### 1.1 Situations involving police procedure

A great part of situations reported by participants were linked to police procedure and a perceived abuse of authority from some police officers: *"I was getting into my car in the alley behind my house and detectives in vehicle approached me. I was very civil and polite. The police still continued to harass me, asking for my ID. They never told me their reason for stopping me. They took my I.D. and never returned it"*. All participants' experiences highlight a certain level of incomprehension of police behavior, as well as feelings of injustice when treated unfairly: *"I had an issue when I got arrested and an officer couldn't understand me because I have a speech impediment. I told him that I needed my medication because of seizures and the officer would not give me my medication which was confiscated when I was arrested"*, sometimes based on what was perceived as racial biased: *"Driving on Mitchell. The light was yellow, and I went through the light. I was pulled over asked for my license and so forth, which the officer ran and came back and told me that I couldn't drive. I called my white cousin. He came to drive the car. When he arrived the officers told him he could go ahead and drive my car. They never once even looked at his license"*. Another aspect mentioned consisted in feeling lied to by police officers during an interaction: *"I was walking down the street with an open container of beer in my hand. I was stopped by police, who told me that they were just giving me a warning, but I later received a ticket in the mail. It was insulting because he repeatedly told me that he was just giving me a warning, yet he mailed me a ticket"; "I was pulled over, supposedly for expired tags. I found out that I had a warrant for my arrest. Things progressed with the stop – even though I was pulled over for tags, which were not expired"*.

One police officer participant mentioned the difficulty faced by some police officers when it comes to investigations and ID checks in a determined area: *"When a black male youth is stopped and subsequently released after a request for ID and warrant check, it may be because the black male youth is fitting a description of a suspect within the neighborhood where a robbery took place. If he does not vacate the immediate area inevitably he will be stopped again by another patrol."*

### 1.2 Aggressive, Disrespectful, and Disappointing behavior from Police and/or Residents

Both residents and police officers participating evoked situations in which they had to face aggressive and disrespectful behaviors and during which they felt misunderstood: *"A resident needed assistance. When we arrived on the scene, the resident started cursing and calling the police names because he didn't like police"*. Excessive use of force was mentioned by one participant when declaring that *"I am from Chicago originally. I was assaulted and beaten by CPD in a case of mistaken identity"*, while another participant's story focused on a racist encounter with a police officer: *"[o]nce an officer*

stopped me and asked for identification. I asked him why and he would not answer me. He told me to stand by his squad car. I complied and when he came back to me he started calling me the "N" word and demeaning me. I was very upset". Finally, one participant raised the issue of some police officers' behaviors while off-duty, mentioning that a police officer, on or off-duty will always remain police officer and should adhere to the Police code of behavior: "An officer who is a neighbor came to my nephew's party without being invited, and the next thing I know he was arguing with a person I know who he has had troubles with in the past...and the officer is the one who started the whole confrontation. He is still a representative of the police department, even when he is on his off time, and he needs to act like it. He had no business coming to a party at my house - a fun event – and starting some mess".

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**Round Two Question: "What is one thing that you wish officers knew about residents and that residents knew about the officers and what their job entails?"**

*"Officers work on high priorities, they will take a high priority call over a less threatening call. When they get around to answering an average call with a lesser priority, it might seem to the resident that it is not important to them because the police are not showing the concern you feel is required for your complaint."*

*'Sometimes I get mad and start yelling and need to calm down. Officers should do the same.'*

*"Regardless of how small the comment is, some people will react without thinking. Sometimes when I talk to youth in my area, I detect a sense of anger when you mention the word, police."*

### **2.1 Humanizing the Other to Deconstruct Generalizations & Negative Stereotypes**

A great number of participants mentioned the need to humanize the other in order to be able to be open to learn about different aspect of the lives, struggles and challenges of others: "We don't always get to see the human side of the police. We don't know if the police have kids, family or church. They are people like everybody else. We get a chance to see them in action professionally, but they have a home to go to and a personal life like anybody else". Another participant underlined the crucial need for all to see pass the uniform, as "when a cop takes off the uniform, they become a person like one of us".

In order to do so, numerous participants stressed the need to deconstruct already existing generalization and stereotypes both on police and residents in order to treat all as individuals: "All cops are not bad cops, all citizens are not bad citizens. All people are not the same"; "The racial profiling and stereotyping needs to stop". Several youths mentioned feeling unfairly treated just because of their clothing style and called for more tolerance and respect from police officers: "Police should not automatically assume that if you were a hoodie or out late with friends that we are engaging in negative behavior"; "Police have authority to enforce the law but not if I haven't broken the law. They shouldn't treat everyone like they are a criminal".

### **2.2 Desire for Communication, Trust, Respect and Cultural Sensitivity**

A general call for communication and trust was heard coming from both police officers and residents during the dialogue: "I think we should get to know each other better; that way, they [police officers] would listen to our concerns better"; "It is important to have contact with officers and communicate with them. This could help build trust and you would feel safe is sharing information with them". One participant summarized the current state of communication and trust between police and

residents: *"Sometimes residents jump to conclusions, and things go spiraling down from there. Cops don't know everyone and need to try to understand what the residents they are serving are going through".* Communication amongst residents was mentioned as well as needing improvements: *"There is no real communication amongst residents"; "I feel that most of our community has a good heart and good intentions, but we have a tendency to look at each other with suspicion and caution".*

Several participants mentioned the need for both more respect and cultural sensitivity as essential aspects of encounters with police officers: *"Officers should be more aware of what they're responding to, and the neighborhood. There are a lot of officers who respond to calls in the area who grew up elsewhere and are unaware of the various cultures. There are different cultures for different sides of town. There should be different responses in different parts of town".* According to several participants, establishing a mutual respect and a deep understanding of circumstantial elements of a situation is a work that needs to be undertaken by all in order to guarantee effective communication and to avoid the escalation of tensions: *"Police need to recognize that when they arrive in neighborhoods that they need to respect the people and talk to US. LEARN how to get along with US. They don't live in these neighborhoods, so they can't judge us, and vice versa".* One participant specifically illustrated the need for cultural sensitivity by mentioned the learned fear of police amongst African-American communities: *"I wish that police knew that blacks have been conditioned to fear police or authority since childhood. Blacks run from police because of fear. Police need to take minority sensitivity classes".*

### **2.3 Resident Education on Police Procedure and Hardships**

Some participants called for a better education of residents on police procedures in order to avoid unpleasant encounters that could have easily been avoided: *"I wish residents knew more about what is going on, and what officers are looking for, and why"; "Residents need to take police sensitivity classes about police and the work that they do".* An important aspect mentioned as a source of stress and tension consisted on the waiting time while calling the police department: *"The resident wants to know what took them so long to respond to their call and this causes frustration on both sides".* One police officer participant offered an explanation for the possible waiting time that some residents had to experiences, stating that *"[o]fficers work on high priorities, they will take a high priority call over a less threatening call. When they get around to answering an average call with a lesser priority, it might seem to the resident that it is not important to them because the police are not showing the concern you feel is required for your complaint".*

Several police officers participating reported wishing for residents to better understand what their duties entailed and the consequent stress and pressure that officers face on a daily basis: *"The community needs to realize that the officers deal with stress on a daily basis that may impair their judgment"; "Residents may not understand that there is a fatigue factor for officers that are not assigned a specific daily task and they may have to respond to up to 30 calls per shift".* One resident participating echoed this call, explaining that *"Police are torn between high and low priorities, we need an understanding about what their job is like".* In addition, one police officer underlined how much of themselves some put every day in their jobs yet how little consideration they usually get for what they do: *"The level of sacrifice that some officers make... I once arrested a sex offender with a gun who was hanging out with another sex offender, and neighbors got mad at me about it. I've been shot at. I don't get a lot of 'thank you -s'. I wish everybody knew how much some of us put into this job".*

**Round Three Question: "What is your motivation to build improved communication between the Milwaukee Police Department and residents of Metcalfe Park and/or the greater community, and what holds you back from making that progress?"**

*"The condition we are in – the environment we are in – this city is getting out of control and that pushes me to make it better."*

*"Communication is key. Tone of voice can be good or bad. Both sides should strive for better communication. We can start by using better choices of words."*

### **3.1 Motivations: A Better community, Mutual dependence and Connections**

While a couple of participants focused on the use of new technology by some police department across the USA or on their lack of motivation to work with the police, almost all participants focused on their desire to improve their community and the need to acknowledge the interdependency of residents and police together.

Regarding motivations to improve communication between Metcalfe residents, a great number of participants mentioned their desire to create a better community: *"I am in this for the long run, I want to help my community to be a better place to live"*. For a lot of participants, creating a better community is linked to creating a safer Metcalfe Park: *"I have peers have been shot or killed. I want to keep my generation alive. I want to speak out against violence - especially gun violence"*. The roots of violence have been understood in different ways depending on the participants, yet several solutions have been put forward, such as the creation of community gardens - *"I want to help people. In the black community, people are living below the poverty line. I want to help people grow gardens on many of the vacant lots in Metcalfe Park. This would stop so much hunger in neighborhoods that are poor and maybe lower crime in those neighborhood"* -, the organization of a block watch - *"I can lead the effort to form a 'block watch'"* -; the planning of neighborhood clean ups - *"I can and will start a regular neighborhood clean-up"*; and attempting to create jobs in the community - *"I am motivated by unemployment and how many young people who are jobless. I believe that crime is so high because of joblessness. People are broke"*. Several participants expanded their desire to improve the community to a general desire to improve the world: *"I'd like to leave this world a better place than when I came in"*; *"I want to see people doing good; not just doing bad"*.

A considerable number of participants identified the existing mutual dependency between police and residents as well as amongst residents, expressing their desire for greater connection: *"We all need each other and I want to have a good relationship with my neighbor to help us get through situations. The safer I feel around my neighbors, the more it will help us develop a relationship between cops"*. Some participants stressed the challenge that recognizing this dependency can be for some residents: *"We need to recognize how much we need each other. Sometimes information can help the police to do his job"*; *"Everybody doesn't agree or think the same way nowadays"*. An important motivation consisted as well in focusing on establishing trust and instating a good image of the police, *"I want to establish trust and a good image for police officers"*, possibly using techniques such as the ones presented by another participant: *"Tone of voice can be good or bad. Both sides should strive for better communication. We can start by using better choices of words"*.

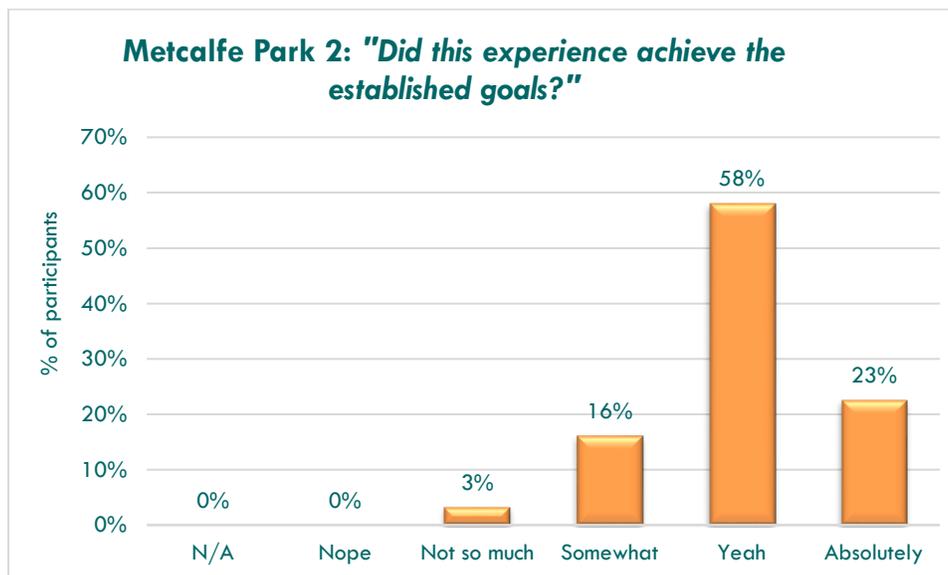
### **3.2 Peer Pressure, Retaliation and Disconnections as Hold Backs**

For an important number of participants, peer pressure in not collaborating with the police is a considerable obstacle to the improvement of communication: *"One thing that holds me back is peer pressure from family and friends. I am scared of being threatened because of speaking out. I am glad that"*

*we have police to keep the city safe". The threats associated with peer pressure and the consequent fear of retaliation have been present in the stories of several participants: "I don't like to get involved because of threats and peer pressure from neighbors"; "There are lots of things I see that I want to report, but I cannot report them and remain anonymous. There ends up being retaliation". One police officer participating mentioned how this situation amongst residents makes the work of police officers harder in Metcalfe Park: "No one speaks up for victims. When witnesses won't speak up when they know what happened, it makes it difficult to care for residents". One participant called for a greater understanding and compassion on the police side when it comes to fear of retaliation, suggesting that "Police need to have more compassion about threats to witnesses and form a task force to keep witnesses safe when they do come forward to solve a crime".*

Some participants mentioned as well the current feelings of disconnections they have considering the Metcalfe Park community: "What is holding us back, we just don't get to know each other on a personal level". One participant highlighted the challenge that looking at the future is when police – resident relations are unstable: "How can we plan for the future when the police look at us as the enemy?".

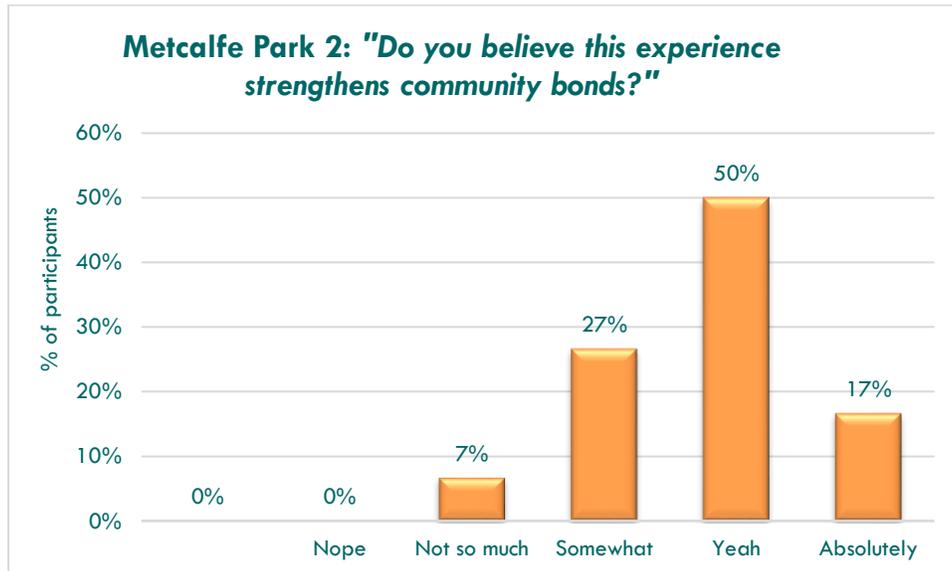
## Feedback forms



## Why or why not?

- Because I got to base my opinion
- Each person had their time to speak and share thoughts
- Good open discussions
- Had time to open my give/receive feedback from police to residence

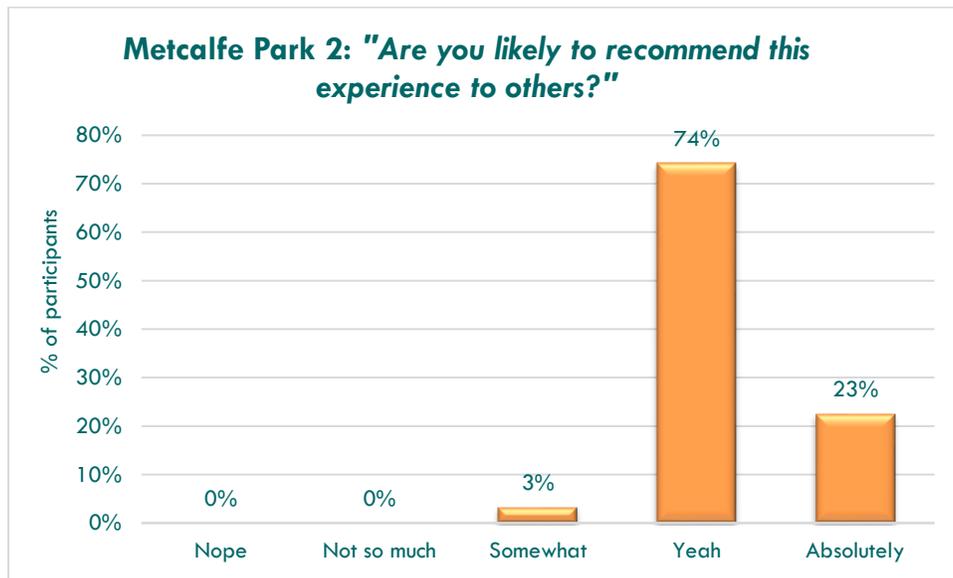
- Instructions were basically followed
- It was great to recognize people's feelings regarding the current situations in the area.
- It's a start.
- Not enough real fact for community
- Open dialogue about perceptions of police, and residents.
- We need police helicopters, we talked a lot.
- We talked about all the things i wanted to talk about.
- We talked about why police do what they is for a reason
- We were able to discuss and get out personal feelings/experiences out
- Yes b/c everyone gave their opinion & officers were here to give a better understanding.
- Yes.
- Yes, by being able to start open communication with officers
- Yes, it did, because I can go out to my community and speak for myself.



Why or why not?

- Because we now understand background and underlying issues of police and residents
- Cause people will sometime listen
- Communications builds community relations.
- Community is a strong word - for this session we are talking about ourselves and not the community.
- Get above we the neighbor have
- Gives people a chance to interact and come together
- I feel more comfortable speaking with police
- It gives a chance for both sides to talk
- It's good to sit down and talk to others.

- Shows equality
- Some people already have bias's that can't be changed
- Teaching and talking always help
- Yes b/c it gave the police officers a opportunity to near what people it community
- Yes, I know I can trust some cops
- Yes, because we need more people who want to help this city get better.
- Yes, builds trust from policemen to citizens
- You hear different view points



**Why or why not?**

- Because they need to know
- Each one teach one.
- Everyone should experience this at least once
- Great experience with community members
- I would because others need to hear what we have to say to help our city.
- If more people come out, there will be more sparks in conversations
- Individuals have to be open and i feel this session was not that open
- It is a really good experience to have and people in the community should really try it.
- It's a time to bond
- It's fun to hear everyone's own experiences
- Its gives a chance for all voices to be heard
- Its needed
- So, more people will feel comfortable and have better relationships with the police
- To get others involved to join the conversation.
- Very good experience

- We need to keep an open dialogue and constant communication
- 

What is the most important suggestion you have for upcoming dialogues and what specific issue would you like to discuss?

- I don't know to be honest
- Communication, background knowledge, perceptions of others
- Continue to have officers/MPD involved in order to better serve the community
- Everyone needs to speak up and do more in the community.
- Family structures related to community
- Functions for youth and officers to do in the community
- Future for my kids - and youth
- How to fix things
- How to start up organize & get literature on starting neighborhood watch groups
- I don't know right now
- I need to think on this - especially for this area.
- Idk
- If we don't talk together and help each other. We are going to die as fools w/in our self.
- More questions for us
- My most important suggestion would be to keep the groups to about 3/4/5 people at the most.
- None
- None.
- Police presence
- Police suggestion the job that he do on duty.
- Talk about how the police and residents would feel in certain situation and topics
- The most important discuss is that people need to open their month more if they want to be heard.
- What type of events should be held in the community and when?
- Would like to get friends and family here!

## Listening Circle 3 – Analysis

**Topic:** Experience with/Fear of Authority

**Round One Question:** *"What personal experiences cause you to fear the authority of police or others in charge of governing our community?"*

*"I haven't had any experiences that taught me to fear. I was taught to respect authority. I feared my parents more than I feared police."*

*"Even when I am just being questioned, they bring up what is already on my record. I have changed and trying to live a decent life, but I am not given credit, it seems that I am always being judged on my past rather than the issue at hand."*

As mentioned in the executive summary, instead of sharing an experiences that cause fear of the police or other individuals governing the community, a significant number of the participants responded that they were *not* fearful. Following will be two types of response from participants that explained why fear was not something felt, but first there are two other types of reaction that should be noted. Some respondents' answers didn't share an experience that expressed any emotional reaction, such as: *"I have never had any encounter with the police other than then saying hi and telling me to stay out of trouble"* or *"A friend of mine had a cop stop his car and did a search, they found drugs and took them but my friend was not arrested, the cop just wanted the drugs."* Alternatively, some residents (mostly youth and teachers) shared frustrating encounters that they experienced with the educational system: *"schools going private isn't fair," "the security guard [not doing] a thorough search of [students],"* and *"if authority is going to take action on what occurred between two [students], both sides should be heard."*

### 1.1 No Fear of Authority attributed to Family Influence and Own Behavior

Some participants attributed the absence of fear to childhood experiences or influential experiences with family, such as: *"I do not fear the police, I have been taught by my mother, to respect the authority of the police"* or *"I haven't had any experiences that taught me to fear. I was taught to respect authority. I feared my parents more than I feared police."* Another participant explained that when growing up with *"my father was a Law enforcement officer until his retirement and [my] uncles were cops also. So it never occurred to me to demonstrate or react in a fearful manner, even in my youth."*

Such personal influence is expressed even more directly when some participants stated it was personal behavior choices that influenced the absence of fearful experiences regarding the police. These participants seemed to respond that fear of the police is not experienced if one does the right thing, and therefore does not have negative interactions with the police. One participant explained not being *"fearful of the Police"* because *"in 2005 I was arrested and spent time for dealing drugs, so that is why I say I brought the negative to me, there is a reason for me view the situation in a fair manner. I have no reason to fear them I actually welcome their presence in the community"* and another explained *"I am not afraid of Police Officers because I have never personally had any contact directly [arrested or even detained with] any Law Enforcement official(s) so I have no direct encounters to speak of or direct contact."* One individual stated that they are not afraid because it is their desire to be a police officer or firefighter *"to save people's lives like Superman."*

## 1.2. Other Emotions and Concerns: Feeling Unheard, Frustrated and Stuck in the Past

A common concern regarded the disrespectful behavior some residents felt police officers' displayed when interacting with their community. One participant witnessed *"behavior of some what I consider very bad cops which gives me a reason to be concerned,"* and another one explained that initially fear is not felt but when *"I see [police officers] doing what they do i.e. being disrespectful and not treating the Black Men and Women in this neighborhood with respect, I do become upset and fearful."*

More specifically, some individuals expressed concern when police officers didn't listen to the community's need or testimonies: *"I've had my share of bad experiences, [such as], the lack of belief [police] have in residents. The law is here to protect, no matter how many times a person calls. I may have experienced the cry wolf syndrome, so they quit coming, and I was made to feel that I had to take matters into my own hands. The police did not listen to me..."* and *"When dealing with police, everyone is not heard, they don't know who you are, and everyone does not have a perfect experience..."* Such responses indicate that community members may have an open perception of police officers that has become damaged after repeated concerning experiences.

Having one's past record consistently brought up and questioned was another source of frustration. Such attention is wearing for individuals because efforts to *"live a decent life"* go unnoticed: *"Even when I am just being questioned, they bring up what is already on my record. I have changed and trying to live a decent life, but I am not given credit, it seems that I am always being judged on my past rather than the issue at hand."* Such responses show that when asked to share experiences of fear, some people felt more comfortable speaking about frustration from being disrespected or unfairly treated.

## 1.3 Fear Initially Felt and Later Transformed

The final type of negative emotional experiences shared were moments when initially fear was experienced, but later dissipated. The fear went away once, as one resident explained, it was recognized that police officers *"are human, but have to do their job. They react to how we approach them. I overcame my fear by seeing how they react when I speak. I see them as humans who have feelings and go through things."* Another resident explained that seeing siblings *"...get arrested... scared me. When I was older I found out that they had done something bad, so then I understood why they were arrested. fear went away once they understood."* These responses support answers shared in the next question (how to improve relations). It seems that fear is able to be transformed when better understanding and perceptions of another as a human being is achieved.

**Round Two Question: "In working to build better relations between police and residents, how do we begin to undo the negative early messages we were taught about police and residents?"**

*"[...] Officers can be your friend if you respect them. We have to uphold respect for the law."*

*"Officers are human, and one of us. We oughta have respect for them, and them for us."*

*"It is hard to communicate with the police, there is too much distrust."*

## **2.1 Barriers and Difficulties**

A perceived barrier to undoing negative messages taught about police seem to be an inability to foresee how such healing between these groups could occur; there seemed to be a lack of hope expressed by some. One resident feels that there *"is too much distrust."* It was stated that after multiple bad experiences *"it is hard for me now to view or see anything positive that [the police] offer or attempt to offer."* The pain caused from recent losses are also a barrier to imagining how relations could be fixed: *"I don't know how [we'd build better relations]. I just lost my buddy to the police shooting him."*

## **2.2 Common Humanity, Better Relationships, Communication**

Distrust and negative perceptions were repeated from multiple participants, yet many also shared possible ways to rebuild new relationships. Some stated that an essential way to build better relations is to appreciate the common humanity between police officers and individuals, and foster opportunities for improved communication. This was an observation shared by both officers and residents. One officer stated that *"When I go home I wear what everyone else is wearing. I'm no better than anyone else."* And a community member stated that others shouldn't *"...look at 'em because they have a suit on... they are human, too. Respect goes both ways. It's just about respect..."*

These responses recognize that part of the challenge is the distance formed as officers' complete their duty. Creating more opportunities to connect was identified as a way to foster greater feelings of respect and shared humanity. One participant felt that *"There is not enough communication between police and residents. There is no time to get to know each other"* and the fact that *"a lot of officers are assigned to areas that they are not familiar with; they don't know how to deal with someone out of their area or culture."* Having *"officers walk the street and get to know the residents and the neighborhood"* is important. In addition to street time, some participants felt that social events should be held to bring people together: *"the police should plan a gathering to meet the residents so we can get to know each other"* or *"pull together and have a block party."* Thus, it seems collaborating to organize such social activities could be an effective way to build better relations between police and residents and would have support from the community.

## **2.3 Avoid Police Generalizations**

While improved communication and fostering a sense of shared humanity seem to be recognized as necessary in order to build stronger relations, many cited that negative generalizations about police officers and residents must first be confronted and overcome. Community members and police officers stated that correcting the perception that all officers are bad is essential.

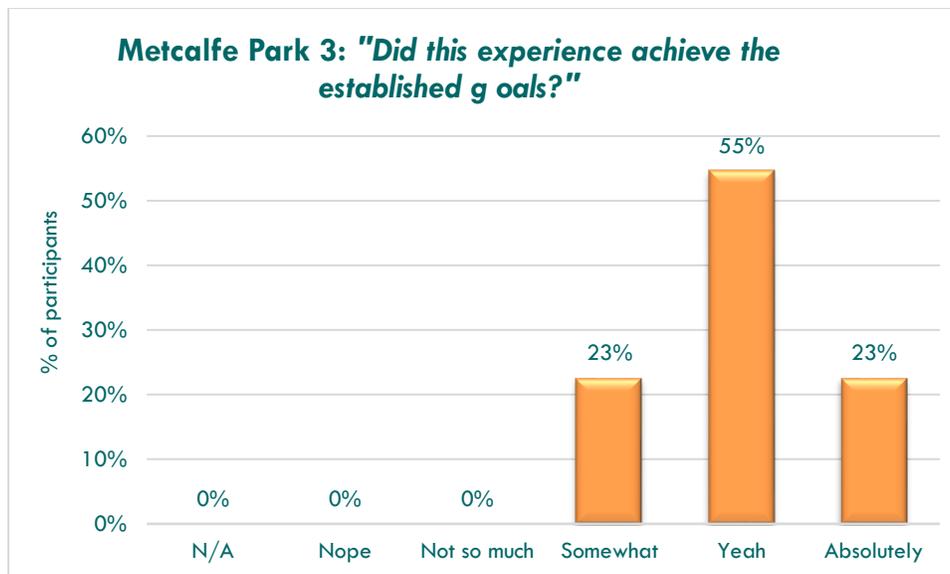
As stated in the first question, one residents shared that *"it makes me angry when I am always judged on my past history... I have changed and trying to live a decent life, but I am not given credit, it seems that I am always being judged on my past rather than the issue at hand."* Additionally, community members and police officers stated that correcting the perception that all officers are bad is essential. One community members stated that *"I tell my little cousins that there are good cops and there are bad cops"* and others explained that *"when people have seen disrespect in the past they can't assume that it'll be bad each time. Other officers do try, and bad ones do improve."*

One police officer felt that such negative generalizations about the police are one of the greatest barriers to improved relations and wishes that parents would *"not instill in children a fear of the police"* because it adds *"another perception and barrier to overcome when I am responding to a call, I really wish some of the positives that police are involved in are conveyed to the children and youth through the parent(s) or guardians."* Providing opportunities to communicate and build relationships seem essential to support accurate perceptions of each party to develop and that previously established, negative perceptions can be undone.

**Connected Conversation – "How can we work together – residents and police – to improve our relationship with each other?"**

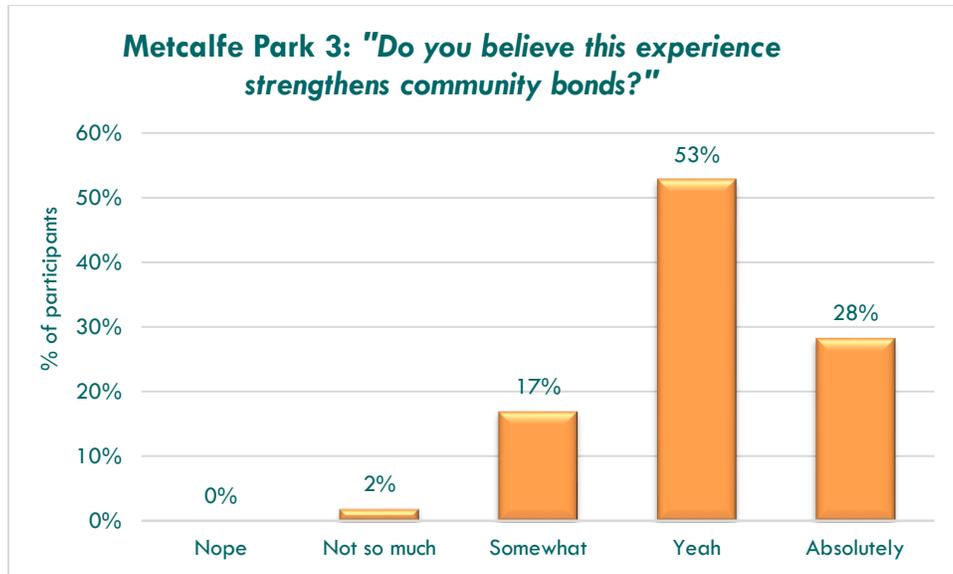
In response to the connected conversation's question, participants restated the importance of understanding the police policy & procedure, as well as the prevalence of the conditioned emotional response to the presence of Police by many participants. In addition, participants echoed the difficulties faced by some n letting go of negative stereotypes and attempt to view police presence in a positive way.

**Feedback Forms**



**Why or why not?**

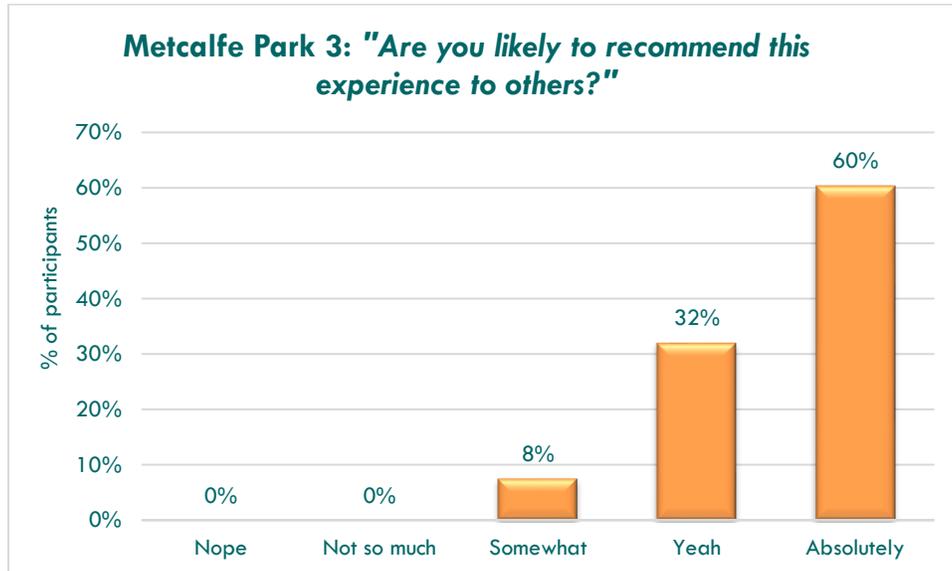
- Because we need to come together the kids are our future
  - Because I put stuff in y'all's head
  - Because people be out here shooting people for no reason.
  - Because we need help
  - Because we still have a way to go to get stronger.
  - Everyone shared good things
  - Everyone spoke their hearts
  - Experience did achieve the goals because it's good to sit down and yak about everyone's experiences so we can all learn
  - Feel as if it was a good organization.
  - Get to know people more
  - Got a lot accomplished
  - I did because i want a change
  - I get to learn more about police and just having a conversation with them
  - I got a perspective of a community known cop
  - It gave a good opportunity to express our experiences with police and a opportunity to hear how they feel about it.
  - It was a great experience. Us talking and listening was very effective.
  - It's personifies police and neighboring relations
  - One or two meeting won't change anything. We need more of community to speak up.
  - Open communities with everyone listening and respecting each other's thoughts.
  - People didn't talk that much
  - People were able to openly express themselves which was good to know
  - We talked about the different experiences that each one of us has and how we all probably have something in common
  - Yes b/c we clarified any questions we had
  - Yes, because I learned something new
  - Yes, cause people out here need help with their anger - i saw people thrown on the ground
  - Yes, it did i thought me had to be a better person
  - Yes, because i actually got to express myself to people that care and put my input on how to make the community better.
-



Why or why not?

- By people coming together it strengthen community bonds
- All different age group
- Be happen all or friend
- Because it can't happen in o
- Because it changes all people's aspects of life and how they then
- Because it helps us gain trust in the community, people, & officers
- Because of the communication and the dialogue
- Because people from around comes and have a open honest discussion
- Because that what makes it all worth coming to as a community.
- Cause you can ask questions and just talk.
- Communication
- Everybody has to come together and talk.
- It gives the community an insight on how cops think/ feel
- It not all bad police are but here you have good one here
- It was a good listening / speaking engagement
- It's extremely helpful hearing their side of the story
- More and more people are starting to believe the things that's really right
- Not everybody will go about how they went and still go do what they do
- People put people bon down. People run from police
- Police and community can understand more
- Sharing experiences forms closer bonds
- Some people will set down in talk to the police some people won't.
- The more people to attend the more the word will be spread to the people that it most.
- The opportunity to make a change
- Yes then gust need to sit down and talk with the police

- Yes, b/c we get to know each other's opinions
- Yes, because use get people to speak for themselves
- Young and older people come together and express their views.



Why or why not?

- Because we need to come as one
- Feel like they need to know
- Helps the community to think about police and meet them.
- I feel like the community should be given a chance to make a change.
- I love this it makes me feel like my voice was heard
- It helps say your issues out loud
- It helps the relationship between cops and the community
- It motivates me to express myself
- It works
- It's a helpful experience
- I've enjoyed learning from others perspectives.
- Keep move on about this that you will know about the neighborhood
- My community a better place
- N/a
- People need to know!
- This strengthen the neighborhood
- To meet nice police officers. I brought someone who was scared, but now he likes it.
- To understand how police officers are not that bad.
- Very great experience
- Want others to speak also

- We need to come together.
- Yeah because other people need to know about the community
- Yes b/c it was an eye-opening experience
- Yes, because this is a great experience
- Yes, because to get other people involved in it.

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What is the most important suggestion you have for upcoming dialogues and what specific issue would you like to discuss?

- I like more help from my people.
- A suggestion would be to change the session questions up so we aren't always asked the same thing.
- About the police
- Better our committee
- Change yourself
- Communication the crime rate
- Community bond
- Each one, teach one, it starts with the parents and authority figures to get the young and old together to talk.
- For the police to be more communication with the neighborhoods
- Go to these meetings
- How people think that the community will change with the meetings
- How we could be a better help
- I like to speak with the youth.
- Jobs for teen
- Just keep having them
- Justice
- Justice for community stop racial profiling. Not anyone is a drug dealer
- More people speak out on their views
- Neighborhoods better communicating with each other & police
- None
- None
- Not sure, I liked it 100%
- Officers and the community come together
- Police and community coming together more
- Police harassment police pat down
- Police patrolling through the area every 10 mins of to keep everybody safe
- Politicians
- Positive outlook
- Talk about police
- Talk about police
- Talk more about hood

- Talk more about us not so much police
- Talk about police
- That we have a few more questions government related
- The most important about how should we change the negativity
- We've discussed it.

---

Please feel free to share any additional comments suggestions reflections or stories here or on the reverse

- Have block party the more people
- I feel like people should not fear the police
- I love sharing my thoughts i once was nervous to talk but I felt comfortable like this is my personal family with different beliefs and experiences
- No thanks
- None
- None
- None
- Police
- Positive, enjoyable experience. Builds good relations
- There are in our life why keep talking them up
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes

## Annexes

### Listening Circle 1 – Participants' Answers

**Round One Question:** *"What is a key experience from your life that has shaped your views about the police and the community and how they interact?"*

#### 1.1 Fear, Negative Stereotypes and the Media as Influences on Experiences

- Fear is a big factor. When I call the police station and tell them who is doing what crime, somehow they find out who it was
- I believe that the police do their job. But according to my peers the police are bad.
- While I have no personal experience with police contact the media has played a big part in how my views were shaped about the police and how they interacted with members of the black community.
- TV and the news show more bad than good.

#### 1.2 The Importance of Childhood Experiences in Shaping Views

- One of my experiences with police officer was as a child. There was this beat officers that would take the time to stop and talk with us. Because he took time to build a relationship with us; trust was built.
- Prior to becoming a police officer I had a lot of experience with the police growing up.
- I live in the Metcalfe Park area. Growing up I watched people being arrested for things that they did and I would always ask what's going on. I have police officers in my family.
- Growing up I use to hang out on the block and knew that some of my friends were going to jail. I never had any real personal experience with the police. But one day I was robbed and that is when I gained more personal knowledge and connection with the police. I have police officers in my family.
- In my youth prior to becoming a police officer, I experienced mostly negative encounters with police while growing up in Chicago. I have been detained; I have been arrested on several occasions and booked. Even though my experiences were all negative I consider it ironic that I became a law enforcement officer. My negative experiences shaped how I view my profession currently: I want to conduct myself in a manner that garners trust and respect and I want to promote by my actions a sense of safety and wellbeing for the communities I serve in.
- As a youth, after getting my driver's license I was often stopped by the police for mostly challenges with the condition of the vehicle which I was operating. I took responsibility for all the stops because I knew the car(s) I drove were not up to pair. I never in my youth experienced any negative or racist treatment by police.
- It's simple: lifestyle, perspective, and attitude!

#### 1.3 Direct interaction with Police that have shaped certain "expectations" of Police behaviour

##### 1.3.1 Positive Interactions: Respect and Support

- I have mixed feelings, I have experienced and witnessed both negative and positive officer's actions. As a resident of Metcalf Park, as a community activist and organizer I have seen over the years changes in leadership, policy and procedure that directly and negatively impacted the community that I live in.
- A good experience was my son was robbed. An officer came to my house. He was polite, respectful, and he treated me with dignity.
- I have good experiences with police.
- Sometimes we forget our good experiences with cops and focus on the bad.
- I believe that the police do their job. But according to my peers the police are bad.
- My interaction growing up in Waukesha was that I was often stopped by the police for speeding and moving traffic violations. There was never any negative interaction nor outcomes, only tickets and fines to pay. With that as a limited experience I always felt safe and took responsibility for my own actions, I knew I was wrong for speeding.
- I haven't had any experiences with the police.
- I have no bad experiences.

### **1.3.2 Negative Interactions: Lack of Communication, Disproportionate Use of Force**

- I have lived in this community for some years and seen very little interaction between residents and Police. When the Police Officers have come into the community they don't answer questions.
- Police act more like an occupying army when they come into our community.
- My initial encounter with police was indeed a negative one, I was with my friends after school and hugged, embraced, and shook hands and proceeded to go home. I was stopped by an officer in front of my home and informed that he observed what appeared to be a "hand to hand" drug transaction. Later he told me I was free to go. I was 15 at the time and that is what helped shaped how I view the relationship with police and my community.
- I was choked by officers when they stopped me. I was not doing anything wrong and when I started questioning I was thrown down on the ground arrested.
- My experience led me to a more negative view. I was with friends. Police pull up and assume I'm bad because of my ethnicity and age.
- I've been a victim of being taken advantage of because officers knew there was no male there. (sexism)
- I can remember when a police officer claimed he smelled marijuana coming from my brother's car as he was sitting in it. But I know that my brother was not into that. It was really weird.
- I am always conscious because of what I have heard about the police. I can remember when my mom got pulled over one time and the white police officer started threatening her. But I believe that all cops aren't like that.

### **1.4 Professional Relationships**

- When I got assigned to the beat patrol I recognized there were a lot of challenges. It taught me about the people in the community and directed me to learn what their real problems were and to find real resolutions to their problems.
- I was a prosecuting attorney working with at risk youth. Currently I work as an Advocate for Domestic Violence. I had no close connections with police until recently while working in

District 7. I have been able to do ride along with police officers to different emergency situations and that changed my perspective. It made me think differently about how police react to situations. I have a better understanding of the pressures on the police and I also understand the community side.

- I walk the beat 12th – 27th Street, and Center to Walnut. I thought it would all be bad when I first became an officer at district 3 in 2001. I was surprised. It's been good. 99% of the people are good and only 1% are bad. The community gets along.
- We need to watch because we need to do our jobs. Many people don't come forward to assist us in solving crimes because they don't want to be labeled a snitch, and they fear retaliation.
- I joined the police to help people and sometimes I question whether I am able to do that. I still don't sleep well after a quadruple homicide I responded to. It's hard to erase those moments.
- I am a public defender, I hold police to a high moral and ethical standard. In my youth I believed that police officers were mostly professional and honest and possessed integrity. Now, I see things differently - the blatant lying, inappropriate conduct and disrespect of the community that they are supposed to be serving. To me, it is appalling.

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**Round Two Question: "Why is it important for you to improve relationships and build more trust between Metcalfe Park residents and the Milwaukee Police Department?"**

- Trust is the number one thing that is important to me. When trust is missing it is almost impossible to build it up and back again.
- The trust needs to be there both ways.
- Trust and improved relationships are missing elements in Metcalfe Park. Because once trust has been lost it is very hard to reestablish it.

**2.1 Communication, Interaction and Respect to Combat Fear and to Feel Safe**

**Trust to Fight Fear, Feel Safe and Protected**

- Community and trust is important. I shouldn't fear those here to protect us as a community and as Americans.
- Without trust we won't feel safe.
- I don't always need your name. If you don't want to talk to me in the field when I'm knocking at your door or talking to you on the street, call me at the district and give me the info.
- There needs to be trust, if we can't call the police then we will get preyed upon.
- We have more peace when we have trust.
- As a child I was taught to call the police to any situation that called for intervention or mine or others safety was involved. Now residents are hesitant to contact the police out of fear and being labeled a snitch. Effective communication is lacking in all areas of police and community interaction.
- I want to be able to feel protected. I don't want to feel I have no real chance of getting help. I want to feel like I am protected.
- Better relationship needed between the residents and Officers so the officers to know who they are protecting, and for the community to know their protectors.

- The desire to feel safe and secure are why I feel it is important to improve relations with the police.

### **Creating a Healthy Community by Communicating and Interacting with Each Other**

- Trust is the critical element in building relationships.
- Effective communication is lacking in all areas of police and community interaction.
- Communication is key in building better relationships between residents and officers.
- Communication is important to earn trust and feel safe.
- We need to see better relationship between the residents and the MPD. In the past the residents wanted to get to know the officers. Today that is not the same.
- There are a lot of challenges within certain communities and the chain of command can make it harder.
- The people you live around are who you are going to be around.
- When there is no communication between the police and the community a whole bunch of stuff happens. Communication and personal experience with the police helps and maybe then interactions between the police and the community won't be so disrespectful.
- It is important for communities to have a better understanding of the police to improve the community as a whole. When one person is doing bad stuff in the community the whole community does bad.
- It is important to show that all cops are not bad people and they are here to help us.
- All professions have good and bad members. Each person is different and has their own point of view.
- There is good and bad in all professions. There are a few bad apples in all neighborhoods. Our profession is the same; there are a few bad officers. The important thing is to have those relationships with police. Most police will respond and answer your needs. I know people are afraid of the repercussions.
- The community should not be blinded by the police being public servants, because they are not "just" police.

### **2.2 Working Together to Solve Issues and to Fight Crime**

- The police is an important resource in the community.
- Police are a good resource in the community.
- Without trust between us we both are working against each other.
- It is important to build trust between the police and the community because the police needs the community and the community needs the police.
- Because people don't trust the police, they try to take things into their own hands too much.
- If I don't trust I can make the situation more difficult.
- Some people don't want to trust police/don't want to call for anything, but I am comfortable calling for help. I wish more people trusted more.
- My desire is to behave in a courteous and professional manner so that if a resident or a household in Metcalf Park have to phone police for an intervention my behavior does not make it hard for the next Police officer.
- As a gesture of commitment I offered my home to beat officers to get water, use the restroom, etc., yet in four years only one officer has taken me up on the offer. I fix bikes for all the young folks in the area and often invite officers to come and sit on the porch to interact none has

taken me up on that offer, that is a perfect opportunity to get to know the children and have a positive effect of the view of the police . . . yet no officer has taken me up on that either.

- I want to build a relationship so we can work together.
- Common goal is to rid our communities of crime. Non-information from the residents hurt that effort. We need to build trust between the residents and MPD.
- Our community does change over time and so does the crime, without the community assistance crime increases. MPD needs the community help to improve the crime rate
- MPD needs the community help to improve the crime rate.
- It is important to build good relationships with the police and community because we should work together to stop all the bad stuff.
- It's important, because crime can happen anywhere, crime impacts us all!
- We have more peace when we have trust.
- Without trust the honesty stops and the crime escalates. We can't solve problems without trust.
- Because of the saturation of crime and increased police contact trust is eroding quicker that it appears to be built up. Because a lot of the residents of most communities are unaware of police procedure and do not study law and are not aware of their rights, it is becoming a challenge to establish trust and connection with the residence of Metcalf Park.
- More Police present would be helpful. We have the service of the MPD available but we really can't see it.
- Our communities are not just a place for the officers to drive through.
- When we have community events we would like to see more police present.

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**Round Three Question: "What motivates you to build/improve relations between the Milwaukee Police Department and Metcalfe Park? What's holding you back from making that progress?"**

**3.1 Desire to Provide & Receive Help, and to Improve community Safety & Well-Being**

- I try to help people even if they don't like me.
- If I have a good relationship with the community, then I have a better chance of being helped by the community.
- It's good to know you can have someone who will help you.
- I like to have confidence that I'm safe and/or will be helped.
- Delivery of the same type of services that other communities experience.
- After my brother died in a hit and run accident. The police officer who informed us of his death has checked in with us every year. That inspires me to keep positive relationships with the police.
- I would like for people to know about good communities.
- I don't want to be afraid within my community.
- I look at how communities are suffering.
- Grew up here seeing the positive and negative between the police and community. I have experienced the positive of police and community. Want to continue to fight for community and we shouldn't give up.

- I think having a strong community is recognizing the police as a part of the community. We need to band together to improve our communities.
- When the community undergoes change, relationship-building must be intentional.
- Finding the balance and common ground because both sides are alright. That's what motivates me.
- Safety and improved community and police interaction is my motivation. I believe that increase exposure and awareness to current policy and procedures will go a long way in bridging huge gaps in the relationship divide which currently exists.
- My motivation is safety of officers and residents... I want to leave home and come back from my 8 hour shift. I also want to be a part of a shift and change in the level of security and neighborhood safety, I feel no sense of holding back from that desire.
- Children's safety and sense of security is my main motivation. My desire is to allow my children to play outside and not be confined to the indoors, especially in the summer months. I want them to be able to experience and explore their neighborhood.
- Child safety is my main motivation. It saddens me to see that a lot of the youth do not feel safe in their own environment.
- I am family-oriented and love people.

### **3.2 Factors Holding People Back: Lack of Resources, Stereotypes & Trust, and Fear**

#### **Lack of Resources and experiences**

- Nothing is holding me back from being involved and committed. That is why I am here today.
- One thing that's holding me back from the progress of improving relationships is not having time to talk to people, get their views, and to see what is going on in my neighborhood.
- It's important that officers are assigned to a certain area. They can make personal contacts and build relationships. Hopefully you will see I'm a nice officer and I answered your needs.
- As far as holding back: a lack of resources and experience. They are necessary to develop a relationship with police.

#### **Overcoming Stereotypes and Lack of Trust**

- MPD needs to improve their image. We have a new generation that live in fear of the police officers.
- There is pressure sometimes from the community (perhaps because of how I look) that I am not part of the community. So there can be a balancing between my job and the community.
- I think the media impacts how we feel about the police. The media is always sharing negative stories about the police.
- I watch the news a lot that influences my opinion about the police, I guess I really don't know how to feel about them.
- My hold back is that I don't know how to get that connection and trust between myself and the police.
- As a resident – this is where I live. When I reported a crime taking place, the individual confronted me. How did they know? My name is not treated with confidentiality.
- Is it safe to talk to any and everybody?

#### **Fear of Not Being Heard & Fear of Judgement & Retaliation**

- Just being a kid and believing that people don't listen.
- Realizing how many people won't listen and how many people have died.
- Somewhere the line of communication has been lost.
- When I'm not there who will protect my mother, but it's hard due to my experiences, which make it hard to trust and talk to officers.
- In the communities the residents know more than we know. The problem is fear of retaliation.
- Because of the fear of the unknown and the level of understanding within communities.
- I don't want to lose friends, because they don't like police.
- Peer pressure has a lot to do with why I hold back from dealing with the police. People may set your house on fire or shoot your house up!

## Listening Circles 2 – Participants' Answers

**Round One Question:** *"Describe a time when you felt an action or something said was misunderstood by an officer or residents served by officers."*

- I never had any problems with the police.
- I had not had any issues with police or residents.
- I have a good communication relationship with the police in our area.
- I was born in the South. Since I moved to Milwaukee over 40 years ago I have had issues with both residents and police.

### 1.1 Situations involving police procedure

- When Black male youth are stopped and subsequently released after a request for ID and warrant check. It may be because the Black Male Youth is fitting a description of a suspect within the neighborhood where a robbery took place. In addition, if he does not vacate the immediate area inevitably he will be stopped again by another patrol.
- I was getting into my car in the alley behind my house and detectives in vehicle approached me. I was very civil and polite. The police still continued to harass me, asking for my ID. They never told me their reason for stopping me. They took my I.D. and never returned it.
- I had an issue when I got arrested and an officer couldn't understand me because I have a speech impediment. I told him that I needed my medication because of seizures and the officer would not give me my medication which was confiscated when I was arrested.
- I was pulled over, supposedly for expired tags. I found out that I had a warrant for my arrest. Things progressed with the stop – even though I was pulled over for tags, which were not expired.
- Driving on Mitchell. The light was yellow, and I went through the light. I was pulled over asked for my license and so forth, which the officer ran and came back and told me that I couldn't drive. I called my white cousin. He came to drive the car. When he arrived the officers told him he could go ahead and drive my car. They never once even LOOKED at his license.
- I was walking down the street with an open container of beer in my hand. I was stopped by police, who told me that they were just giving me a warning, but I later received a ticket in the mail. It was insulting because he repeatedly told me that he was just giving me a warning, yet he mailed me a ticket.

### 1.2 Aggressive, Disrespectful, and Disappointing behavior from police officers and/or Residents

- A resident needed assistance. When we arrived on the scene, the resident started cursing and calling the police names because he didn't like police.
- Once an officer stopped me and asked for identification. I asked him why and he would not answer me. He told me to stand by his squad car. I complied and when he came back to me he started calling me the "N" word and demeaning me. I was very upset.
- I am from Chicago originally. I was assaulted and beaten by CPD in a case of mistaken identity.
- I had to decide whether or not to file charges with DA with an officer. The officer could not understand why the DA would not file charges in this case, but there must be certain criteria met in order to file.
- I was riding on a bus going on a field trip, and someone through a rock at the bus and it came through a window and I was hit on the face with a cut under my eye. The police was called and they came to the bus but nothing was done or said about my eye. The policeman came on very

strong, speaking more like a chastiser rather than asking what happened. It was difficult to communicate with the police.

- It was my nephew's birthday party. The officer lives across the street from me. He wasn't even invited to the party, yet he took it upon himself to attend. It seems that he always chooses to attend gatherings at my house when he sees that a certain person that he has issues with comes to parties at my house. So he came to my nephew's party, and the next thing I know he was arguing with this person...and the officer is the one who started the whole confrontation. He is still a representative of the police department, even when he is on his off time, and he needs to act like it. He had no business coming to a party at my house - a fun event – and starting some mess.
- The police don't get my character (loud, funny, outspoken).
- I was leaving my parole officer's office last year and was stopped several times for what appeared to be no reason at the time.

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**Round Two Question:** *“What is one thing that you wish officers knew about residents and that residents knew about the officers and what their job entails?”*

## **2.1 Humanizing the Other to Deconstruct Generalizations & Negative Stereotypes**

### **Humanization of Officers and Residents**

- We don't always get to see the human side of the police. We don't know if the police have kids, family or church. They are people like everybody else. We get a chance to see them in action professionally, but they have a home to go to and a personal life like anybody else.
- I have no bad feelings against the police because I need them to have my back.
- When a cop takes off the uniform, they become a person like one of us.
- Officers can't know much about us just driving around our neighborhoods. They need to be out walking, getting to know the residents like in the old days.
- I wish that police officers lived in the neighborhoods that they work in. That way they can get to know the residents from a personal level or perspective and when they need information they won't seem like outsiders coming in to clean up a crime. Instead, they will be neighbors with a stake in keeping the neighborhood safe.

### **Deconstruct generalization and stereotypes**

- All cops are not bad cops, all citizens are not bad citizens. All people are not the same.
- The racial profiling and stereotyping needs to stop.
- Police should not automatically assume that if you were a hoodie or out late with friends that we are engaging in negative behavior.
- All colored persons are not bad; all police or not bad.
- Police have authority to enforce the law but not if I haven't broken the law. They shouldn't treat everyone like they are a criminal.
- Regardless of how small it is, some people will react without thinking. Sometimes when I talk to youth in my area, I detect a sense of anger when you mention the word, police.
- I've heard family and friends say that I should be afraid of the police. I have also heard other people say that police are helpful and they will help you if you call them.

## **2.2 Desire for Communication, Trust, Respect and Cultural Sensitivity**

### **Communication and trust**

- Sometimes residents jump to conclusions, and things go spiraling down from there. Cops don't know everyone and need to try to understand what the residents they are serving are going through.
- It is important to have contact with officers and communicate with them. This could help build trust and you would feel safe is sharing information with them.
- The police need a better way of communicating with residents to let them know and feel that their concern is important.
- I feel that most of our community has a good heart and good intentions, but we have a tendency to look at each other with suspicion and caution.
- There is no real communication amongst residents.
- I think we should get to know each other better; that way, they would listen to our concerns better.
- I want police to have a more familiar relationship with the community they serve.
- Police officers should make an extra effort to know residents and vice versa.

### **Desire for Respect; Cultural Sensitivity**

- Officers should be more aware of what they're responding to, and the neighborhood. There are a lot of officers who respond to calls in the area who grew up elsewhere and are unaware of the various cultures. There are different cultures for different sides of town. There should be different responses in different parts of town.
- Sometimes I get mad and start yelling and need to calm down. Officers should do the same.
- Police need to recognize that when they arrive in neighborhoods that they need to respect the people and talk to US. LEARN how to get along with US. They don't live in these neighborhoods, so they can't judge us, and vice versa.
- I wish that police knew that blacks have been conditioned to fear police or authority since childhood. Blacks run from police because of fear. Police need to take minority sensitivity classes.
- Police officers need to treat residents with respect and vice versa. We come from different cultures but we all are from the same planet. Respect has to be given not earned. If everyone would talk to people with respect, we wouldn't have so much violence and murder.

## **2.3 Resident Education on Police Procedure and Hardships**

### **Procedure**

- I wish residents knew more about what is going on, and what officers are looking for, and why.
- Officers work on high priorities, they will take a high priority call over a less threatening call. When they get around to answering an average call with a lesser priority, it might seem to the resident that it is not important to them because the police are not showing the concern you feel is required for your complaint.
- The resident wants to know what took them so long to respond to their call and this causes frustration on both sides.
- Residents need to take police sensitivity classes about police and the work that they do.

### **Hardships of Law Enforcement Profession**

- The community needs to realize that the officers deal with stress on a daily basis that may impair their judgment.

- The level of sacrifice that some officers make. I once arrested a sex offender with a gun who was hanging out with another sex offender, and neighbors got mad at me about it. I've been shot at. I don't get a lot of "thank you"s. I wish everybody knew how much some of us put into this job.
- The community needs to realize that the officers deal with stress on a daily basis that may impair their judgment.
- Residents may not understand that there is a fatigue factor for officers that are not assigned a specific daily task and they may have to respond to up to 30 calls per shift.
- Police are torn between high and low priorities, we need an understanding about what their job is like.

**Round Three Question: What is your motivation to build improved communication between the Milwaukee Police Department and residents of Metcalfe Park and/or the greater community, and what holds you back from making that progress?**

### **3.1 Motivations**

- There is not too much that motivates me to deal with police officers.

### **Desire to Create a Better Community**

- I have peers have been shot or killed. I want to keep my generation alive. I want to speak out against violence - especially gun violence
- I'd like to leave this world a better place than when I came in.
- I want to see people doing good; not just doing bad.
- The condition we are in – the environment we are in – this city is getting out of control and that pushes me to make it better.
- My motivation is that I want to see change.
- I am in this for the long run, I want to help my community to be a better place to live. The cops on bikes are the ones who could stop and talk so we can make things better.
- I want to be able to walk down the street in the summertime and not be harassed. It's frustrating seeing the same stuff day in and day out when dealing with the police department.
- I just want everyone to get along. We must work on this bad reputation image we have of one another.
- Everyone deserves to live a peaceful life and enjoy their life.
- I am motivated by seeing teens getting shot or killed in drive-byes. I don't like to see young people dying.
- I want to help people. In the black community, people are living below the poverty line. I want to help people grow gardens on many of the vacant lots in Metcalfe Park. This would stop so much hunger in neighborhoods that are poor and maybe lower crime in those neighborhood.
- I can get to know my neighbors much better
- I can lead the effort to form a "block watch"
- I can and will start a regular neighborhood clean up
- I can help mediate disputes on my block and be a "go to person as a problem solver"
- I can increase my level of listening and my ability to effectively communicate
- Our youth is my motivation.

- You don't damage the area where you want to live.
- If we don't get better relationships with the police, it is going to get worse and worse.
- I am motivated by unemployment and how many young people who are jobless. I believe that crime is so high because of joblessness. People are broke.

### **Mutual Dependence; Desire for Connection**

- We all need each other and I want to have a good relationship with my neighbor to help us get through situations. The safer I feel around my neighbors, the more it will help us develop a relationship between cops. Everybody doesn't agree or think the same way nowadays.
- We need to build trust because we have to depend on everybody.
- We need to recognize how much we need each other. Sometimes information can help the police to do his job.
- There needs to be communication.
- Communication is key. Tone of voice can be good or bad. Both sides should strive for better communication. We can start by using better choices of words.
- I want to establish trust and a good image for police officers
- In the state of California, police use helicopters to locate and apprehend criminals. I hope that Milwaukee will soon follow suit and use helicopters to locate criminal. This way there won't be so many car chases that end in innocent people being killed.
- I would like to raise money to buy drones and other hi-tech equipment to help police solve crime.

### **3.2 Peer Pressure, Retaliation and Disconnections as Hold Backs**

#### **peer pressure and retaliation**

- One thing that holds me back is peer pressure from family and friends. I am scared of being threatened because of speaking out. I am glad that we have police to keep the city safe.
- There are lots of things I see that I want to report, but I cannot report them and remain anonymous. There ends up being retaliation.
- I don't like to get involved because of threats and peer pressure from neighbors. Police need to have more compassion about threats to witnesses and form a task force to keep witnesses safe when they do come forward to solve a crime.
- People need to speak out and stop being afraid to help victims of crime.
- The things I've seen keep me from making those connections.
- People's attitudes hold me back from trying to make that connection.
- No one speaks up for victims. When witnesses won't speak up when they know what happened, it makes it difficult to care for residents
- Social media holds me back. The stuff that's going on in the news and stuff – it's too dangerous.

#### **Disconnection from Each Other**

- What is holding us back, we just don't get to know each other on a personal level.
- How can we plan for the future when the police look at us as the enemy?
- It is the younger crowd. They are out at night intimidating and robbing residents. They take what they want. They need jobs.
- Some people spend their lives doing nothing.

## Listening Circle 3 – Participants' Answers

**Round 1 Question:** "What personal experiences cause you to fear the authority of police or others in charge of governing our community?"

- I have nothing good to say
- I have never had any encounter with the police other than then saying hi and telling me to stay out of trouble.
- A friend of mine had a cop stop his car and did a search, they found drugs and took them but my friend was not arrested, the cop just wanted the drugs.
- I do not fear the Police. I used to be a booster, my favorite place to steal was "The Bay Shore Mall" the security and the Police in that area would follow and stop me routinely because of the past encounters with mall security and them calling the police. They knew me by my first name. The last time I had contact with the police was over 10 years ago, with the exception of a domestic violence call with my "Baby Daddy" even then I did not end up going to jail because I had a warrant but the officer that responded to the call just told me to get it cleared up and off the books.
- I think that schools going private isn't fair. I have a problem against the gov't system.
- I got a 3-day suspension from school because a girl hit me in the face. She was an AP student and cheerleader. No one asked me for my side of the story, and I thought that was not right. I believe if authority is going to take action on what occurred between two people, both sides should be heard. This incident did not take place on the school campus. The other person got only a principal's discussion. The principal was known as a tyrant person.
- The security guard does not do a thorough search of the student. I fear because a thorough check in not performed, something could happen to me.

### **1.1 No Fear of Authority attributed to Family Influence and Own Behavior**

- [Youth Participant] I do not fear the police, I have been taught by my mother, to respect the authority of the police.
- [PO] I have never been afraid of the Police, I grew up in Police culture my father was a Law enforcement officer until his retirement and I had uncles who were cops also. So it never occurred to me to demonstrate or react in a fearful manner, even in my youth.
- I haven't had any experiences that taught me to fear. I was taught to respect authority. I feared my parents more than I feared police.
- When I was young I went to the grocery store with my mom. I saw a bag of Skittles I wanted, and since my mother wouldn't buy them for me, I stole them. When we got home, my mom saw them. She took me to the police station. They put me behind bars to let me know how it feels, and they talked to me about my actions. I learned my lesson, and ever since then I've been staying in school, playing ball, and doing what I'm supposed to do.
- I am not afraid of Police Officers because I have never personally had any contact directly [arrested or even detained] any Law Enforcement official(s) so I have no direct encounters to speak of or direct contact.

- I too am not fearful of The Police. In 2005 I was arrested and spent time for dealing drugs, so that is why I say I brought the negative to me, there is a reason for me view the situation in a fair manner. I have no reason to fear them I actually welcome their presence in the community.
- [Youth Participant] When I was younger I would get into trouble in my neighborhood by hanging out with my friends; now that I am a little older I am no longer a “follower” I choose not to get into situations that can lead to me either being arrested or stopped by the cops.
- Police are fine if you don’t get yourself in any trouble. I just pray.
- I’m not afraid. I wanted to be a police officer or firefighter to save people’s lives like Superman.

### **1.2. Other Emotions and Concerns: Feeling Unheard, Frustrated and Stuck in the Past**

- I have though witness the behavior of some what I consider very bad cops which gives me a reason to be concerned.
- I have no fear but when I see them doing what they do i.e. being disrespectful and not treating the Black Men and Women in this neighborhood with respect, I do become upset and fearful.
- I experienced an incident when the officer didn’t ask any questions. He put me in cuffs and into his squad. He told me that he heard I did something and I was under arrest. I told him what he heard is untrue. I was taken into custody, booked and put into a cell. The arresting officer was rude and unpleasant, but the booking officer was nice, and explained things to me. This incident makes me think that officers in the community don’t want to hear what residents have to say. They should listen to our side of the story.
- When dealing with police, everyone is not heard, they don’t know who you are, and everyone does not have a perfect experience. There is a lack of respect when speaking with the police regarding a particular situation.
- I’ve had my share of bad experiences. For example, the lack of belief they have in residents. The law is here to protect, no matter how many times a person calls. I may have experienced the cry wolf syndrome, so they quit coming, and I was made to feel that I had to take matters into my own hands. The police did not listen to me. I felt led to take the actions I took as a result. Yet, and still, we still need law enforcement officers.
- I do not fear police actually. I feel that they are not there when you need them.
- I feel like they are always trying to look for anything to put us in jail. Example: I saw an accident while walking down the street. I went to offer a statement as an eyewitness and the Officer ran a warrant check on me.
- I feel like Officers continue to focus on people with backgrounds too much. My past is my past.
- I don’t feel all police are bad. It makes me angry when I am always judged on my past history. Even when I am just being questioned, they bring up what is already on my record. I have changed and trying to live a decent life, but I am not given credit, it seems that I am always being judged on my past rather than the issue at hand. I would like to see everyone getting along with each other with mutual respect.

### **1.3 Fear Initially Felt and Later Transformed**

- When I was younger I saw my two brothers get arrested, and it scared me. When I was older I found out that they had done something bad, so then I understood why they were arrested.
- I used to be afraid of officers. Now when I see them I wave. They wave back with a smile. That makes me feel safe and understand that they are human, but have to do their job. They react to how we approach them. I overcame my fear by seeing how they react when I speak. I see them as humans who have feelings and go through things.

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**Round 2 Question: “In working to build better relations between police and residents, how do we begin to undo the negative early messages we were taught about police and residents?”**

**2.1 Barriers and Difficulties**

- I do not see a real way to build relations, because of what the Chief says police have to do.
- It is hard to communicate with the police, there is too much distrust.
- I do not know how. I just lost my buddy to the police shooting him.
- In my family the negative out-weighs the positive regarding interaction with the Police and authorities. Through stories, experiences by other family members telling us when I was a child and into my teen years about their treatment at the hands of Police officers, it is hard for me now to view or see anything positive that they offer or attempt to offer.
- We can't build a relationship because I am already tagged as a violent person. They treat me like nothing because they know my background.

**2.2 Common Humanity, Better Relationships, Communication**

- Officers walk the street and get to know the residents and the neighborhood so it'll be safer. We also need more helicopters to catch people at night.
- The communication and respect level could be better. If we as neighbors could come together and share our experience and work to make things better [conditions would improve]. Officers can be your friend if you respect them. We have to uphold respect for the law.
- It will take a long time to fix a lot of disconnect. Two patrolmen for a large area is not enough. There is not enough communication between police and residents. There is no time to get to know each other.
- I believe when there is a will, there is a way. Someday the police should plan a gathering to meet with the residents so we can get to know each other.
- Every shoe does not fit every person. We could pull together and have a block party. We need police support, but we also need to know their policies and procedures.
- A lot of officers are assigned to areas that they are not familiar with, they don't know how to deal with someone out of their area or culture, but this (dialogue) is a start.
- We need to understand that we are all humans. We all have our home views. We have to give respect on both sides [both residents and police].
- Officers are human, and one of us. We oughta have respect for them, and them for us. We need to talk to them with respect. Don't look at 'em because they have a suit on because they are human, too. Respect goes both ways. It's just about respect. Officers today treat us more with respect than in years past, and now we can be more respectful, too.
- Try to be on one goal: to make all of our living situations better. Mistakes will be made, and we have to understand that as a process of working to make things better. My uniform is just a costume. When I go home I wear what everyone else is wearing. I'm no better than anyone else.

**2.3 Avoid Police Generalizations**

- In my opinion and it has been my experience that there are indeed some good officers and some bad. I have witnessed in my life mostly the bad from them when they are called to a situation whether it has been in my home or in my neighborhood, here in Milwaukee and in Chicago where I am from.

- I tell my little cousins that there are good cops and there are bad cops.
- For me not all officers are bad. Like I said previously, I have had negative experiences with the authorities, but; I brought those on myself, so again, I am now grateful that they regularly patrol and respond to things occurring in this community
- Remove the negative influences. When people have seen disrespect in the past they can't assume that it'll be bad each time. Other officers do try, and bad ones do improve.
- In my opinion I wish the parents would not instill in their children and the youth a fear for the Police. It makes my job difficult because that is another perception and barrier to overcome when I am responding to a call, I really wish some of the positives that Police are involved in are conveyed to the children and youth through the parent(s) or guardians.

**Connected Conversation & Parting Word** - *"How can we work together – residents and police – to improve our relationship with each other?"*

- Officer Discretion
- Police Policy and Procedure
- Condition Emotional Response to the presence of Police
- Finding ways to view the Police as a positive presence. . . it is hard.
- Disgruntled officers coming to work and passing their personal attitudes on to the residents.
- I wish we both could come together and get to know each other.
- Residents should speak out when they see something wrong.
- Grateful
- Surprised
- Positive
- Nice-Police
- Thankful
- Hope
- Trust
- Stay strong
- Keep an open mind
- Remain in your character
- Officers should be appreciated
- Stay true to yourself
- Promote self-respect and respect for each other

## Feedback

- I believe that these discussion sessions are a good start.
- A lot of officers are assigned to areas that they are not familiar with, they don't know how to deal with someone out of their area or culture, but this (dialogue) is a start.
- These dialogues should be taught in schools.
- Our alderman should attend these meeting.