

**Paradigm Shifts Focus Group  
March 10, 2015  
Meeting Notes**

**Major Topic Areas Discussed:**

- Change the notion of punishment- work toward implementing a model of restorative justice, starting in the school system and incorporating the court systems. Focus on understanding the situation that has led to the actions/decisions an individual is making that do not work overall and focus on solutions to those root causes.
- Championing alternatives to violence programs could lead to a quick win
- Start to allow the language that young people are using to frame an issue and inform/lead discussions. Make better use of the voices of people who aren't being heard currently, especially young people (go to where they are instead of expecting them to come to meetings like these).
- Shift the notion that the solution is 'color blindness'
- Search for what has worked in other areas (mentioned was a recent podcast by Sharon maples who is taking a new tack in training for the Madison police department). Create a catalog of resources/success
- Collect baseline data to quantify and define the issues at hand. Note was made that we need to become clear about what data is being collected by law enforcement and the courts and not only make use of that data but think about what data we really need and can work toward having collected.
- Continuing on prior point, make sure we know what it is we need to know. Be sure to count all the data points- county as well as City, local village courts, etc.
- Understand how we can use a framework of structural racism to work with the existing system. In the short term, use that language/framework to educate, discuss, develop shared understanding of current practice.
- Support a community read of The New Jim Crow
- Create an action guide for white allies; develop an 'I will be there" pledge for community, committing to be part of the response to community need or threats. Consider a community –wide pledge.
- Ensure a larger focus on structural poverty
- Consider police/community relations in a broader context- including people living with low income and mental illness. Advocate for proper mental health treatment as an alternative to incarceration.

- Shift to accountability of law enforcement to meeting community expectations. Focus on law enforcement as a role and not as an identity.

**Long-Term Goals:**

- Understanding that increased policing and militarization of police services are not the solution. No one is discussing decreased policing and over policing. Too much contact between police and young people is part of the problem.
- Address the escalation of fear and weapons and the consequences of this potent mix, both on the part of law enforcement and community members.
- Shift police culture from protecting themselves to re-engaging and serving the community.
- Policing is a role (what one does) not an identity (who one is). What police do should be about keeping us safe and serving to increase the peace in our community (to protect and serve as peace officers and NOT to control surveillance and punish as quasi-military enforcers). The police officers are doing a job which ends when off duty. We all, not just police, have responsibilities to work in this role of service to the community. The more we all act in this role the less the pressure on one institution, the police, to do this and the less isolated and insular the police are.

**Next Action Steps:**

None stated.