

**Teen Empowerment's Youth Police Dialogues Evaluation:
Final Report to the Fetzer Institute**

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Executive Summary

Teen Empowerment has developed and implemented a program of facilitating dialogues between inner-city teenagers from Rochester, NY and Rochester Police Officers in an attempt to improve community-wide youth-police relations. With the support of the Fetzer Institute, between August 2013 and September 2014, Teen Empowerment held two series of such dialogues as well as trainings at the Rochester Police Academy on youth and community relations. Researchers from the Center for Public Safety Initiatives observed and evaluated these efforts for the duration of this year.

These efforts are part of national and local movements to improve relationships between city community members and the police officers who patrol those areas. In theory, these dialogues between teenagers and police officers promote a mutual understanding, increase respect, and increase awareness of systemic issues that often place these groups in conflict. It is through dialogues that both youth and police officers can learn better and more respectful ways to interact in the community.

It can be difficult to facilitate dialogues so that they are supportive of effective community change. Teen Empowerment has many years of experience facilitating difficult community conversations and continually evolves their efforts to best reach these goals. They focus on building relationships among individual dialogue participants so that respect, empathy, and understanding can grow, while also addressing community issues and systemic systems that contribute to poor youth-police relations.

Overall, the evaluation for the Teen Empowerment Youth-Police Dialogue program found that both youth and officers in all groups learned important lessons from one another. Despite sometimes difficult group dynamics and strong feelings of hopelessness, participants were able to build relationships between one another, learn new perspectives, change behaviors to improve their street-level interactions with one another, and work towards understanding systemic issues that contribute to youth-police conflicts. Teen Empowerment showed that there is value in facilitating dialogues between youth and police both with new police officer recruits in the academy and with more seasoned police officers. Their work has resulted in continued support and engagement from the Rochester Police Department (RPD). Teen Empowerment has been invited to continue to work with officers, to contribute to the structure of the RPD's youth engagement programs, and to generally advocate for systemic changes in how police officers view and interact with young adults in Rochester.

Our evaluation suggests some key factors in efforts to heal relations between inner-city youth and police. A program such as Teen Empowerment's Youth Police Dialogues can serve as a model for others that wish to hold dialogues between community groups in conflict, especially if their conflicts have a long history embedded deeply in both groups' culture, as is true with inner-

city youth and police. We find it important for programs that intend to replicate these results to facilitate in ways that humanize and connect participants on personal levels. Such efforts should include fun and barrier-breaking activities as well as deep, personal questions. Facilitators should help participants examine issues at all applicable levels: in this case, at the individual, community, and systemic levels. As such, facilitators must foster an environment that is safe and comfortable for all participants to participate. We find it important for the participants' time and energy to be supported with compensation and departmental support to ensure commitment and value. It is also important for facilitators to pay close attention to the expectations of participants so that the structure of the dialogues aims to meet those expectations, if possible; it is all too easy for participants to think that more change will occur as a result of their efforts than may be possible.

This speaks to the importance of placing the dialogue sessions in a larger context of systemic, long-term change efforts. Participants should be reminded that their efforts contribute to larger community change and should be encouraged to devise and practice small, tangible ways they can use what they have learned in everyday life, outside of the dialogues. Further, participants should be encouraged to be role models for their peers and to begin to challenge stereotypes about one another. With that, and by continuing such dialogues and training over a long period of time so that more and more individuals participate, efforts to improve youth-police relations could be expected to gain potential, and improved relations can pervade our communities and law enforcement systems.

Learning from the two phases of dialogue series, Teen Empowerment has made the decision to shorten the dialogue series from four sessions to two sessions in order to better accommodate participants' schedule and institutional resources; they also theorized that most of the progress made in the dialogues occurred in the first two sessions. Our evaluation revealed evidence in support of this theory. There were strong indicators of changes in participants' attitudes revealed through the pre- and post-surveys from the police academy training after only a single-work-day training session. This shows that meaningful progress can be made in building relationships and changing perspectives in short time spans. In addition to continuing to run dialogue series, Teen Empowerment plans to organize a voluntary core group for participants who want to continue to work on youth-police relations in Rochester.

These important findings are described in detail in the full report below.

Overview

In recent years, growing attention has been focused on youth-police relations in cities around the country. This is due to the often-damaged and fragmented relationship between these groups. One organization working to remedy this problem is the Center for Teen Empowerment in Rochester, NY. Their work with youth in Rochester identified a strong need for communication and reconciliation between youth and police, so Teen Empowerment began holding dialogues between their youth organizers and officers from the Rochester Police Department in 2004. Since then, they have been addressing the issue of youth-police relations at the level of individuals, communities, and institutions.

In 2013, Teen Empowerment received funding from the Fetzer Institute to continue these dialogues and institutionalization efforts and to evaluate their impact. The intent of these dialogues – to work towards healing the fractured relationship between youth and police through dialogue, improved communication, and increased understanding – is in line with Fetzer’s mission “to foster awareness of the power of love and forgiveness.” The reconciliation that these dialogues foster between teenagers and police is the starting point for the two groups coming to an understanding and eventually for forgiveness and repair of harms.

This final report summarizes the Teen Empowerment Youth-Police Dialogue program from August 2013 to October 2014. This includes the results discussed in our two interim reports from December 2013 and May 2014 as well as new results from the recent training led by Teen Empowerment at the Rochester Police Academy in August 2014. We also discuss recent efforts to institutionalize youth training within the Rochester Police Department.

Brief Description of Teen Empowerment’s Structure

Teen Empowerment hires teenagers from the southwest quadrant of Rochester, NY to conduct youth and community organizing events in their neighborhoods. The teenagers, known as youth organizers, can range in age from 14 to 20 years old. The youth plan and lead initiatives for the duration of their employment, while the program’s staff members serve as facilitators. For the youth-police dialogues, the staff facilitators plan the sessions based on their prior experiences, but youth organizers contribute by helping set goals and articulating issues particularly important to them to address with officers.

The program uses the Teen Empowerment Model™ of facilitation to build strong relationships and promote meaningful conversation. This model was developed through Teen Empowerment’s many years of work with youth in Boston and Rochester. It uses activities known as **interactives** to encourage fun, challenging, and meaningful interaction among participants, sparking deep, personal conversation about the issues that affect youth. The focus is on building relationships in order to help participants deepen their awareness of issues on personal, community, and systemic levels.

Schedule of Program Activities

The Teen Empowerment Youth-Police Dialogue program ran from August 2013 to September 2014 with the support of a grant from the Fetzer Institute. The timeline below specifies the dates of program activities. The program was broken into three phases. Two four-session series of youth-police dialogues were held in Phases One and Two. In addition, Teen Empowerment visited the Rochester Police Academy in February 2014, which is also part of Phase Two. In Phase Three, the Teen Empowerment staff and youth organizers led a full-day training on youth- and community-police relations at the Rochester Police Academy. Staff also met with the Chief of Police and select command staff to discuss the further institutionalization of youth training among Rochester police officers.

Phase One Description

Teen Empowerment facilitators identified youth participants for Phase One in August and September 2013. On September 17, 2013, the first phase of the neighborhood-based youth-police dialogue series began in Teen Empowerment's Genesee Street office with eight preparatory pre-sessions for youth organizers only. The eight youth organizers engaged in a number of activities such as warm-up questions, role plays, and small group conversations. The goals of the youth preparation sessions were to set goals for the dialogues with officers and to help the youth process their feelings, experiences, and opinions regarding relations with police. The facilitators worked with the youth on learning to express themselves and be heard, instead of shutting down around officers.

Then the five officers who volunteered for the first phase also participated in a preparatory session where they engaged in similar interactives as the youth organizers. This preparatory session took place at the Gandhi Institute, whereas the youth organizers' prep sessions took place in the Teen Empowerment office. The officers were oriented to what they should expect in the dialogues and began to process some of their own opinions and experiences around youth-police relations.

Following the preparatory orientation sessions, the youth and police met for dialogues at the Gandhi Institute on October 3, October 8, October 10, and October 15, 2013. During this time, youth organizers continued to meet by themselves at Teen Empowerment on the weekdays they were not in dialogues with the police. These sessions served as debriefings for the youth in which their discussions supplemented the experiences from the dialogues with police.

After the dialogues were completed, evaluators from the Center for Public Safety Initiatives held separate focus groups and interviews with the youth and with the officers.

Timeline of Program Activities

Phase	Activities	Dates
Phase One	Hiring/identifying participants	August-September 2013
	Youth Preparation Sessions	September 17-October 2 , 2013
	Officer Preparation Session	October 1, 2013
	Youth/Police Dialogue Sessions (and youth reflection sessions)	October 3-15, 2013
	Officer focus group	October 17, 2013
	Youth focus group	October 21, 2013
	Facilitator focus group	November 7, 2013
Phase Two	Hiring Youth Organizers for Phase Two	September-October 2013
	First police academy visit	February 11, 2014
	Hiring/identifying officer participants	October-December 2013
	Youth Orientation/Preparation Sessions	December 2013 – March 2014
	Officer Preparation Session	March 20, 2014
	Youth/Police Dialogue Sessions (and youth reflection sessions)	March 25-April 3, 2014
	Officer focus group	April 8, 2014
	Youth focus group	April 15 & 24, 2014
	Facilitator focus group	August 8, 2014
Phase Three	Full-day Police Academy Training	August 6, 2014
	Meeting with Chief of Police	August 15, 2014

Phase Two Description

While the Phase One dialogues were nearing conclusion, Teen Empowerment began the process of hiring new Youth Organizers who would participate in Phase Two as well as other projects through Teen Empowerment. The youth for Phase Two were selected in early December 2013. Phase Two effectively spans December 2013 through April 2014.

Teen Empowerment held their first orientation session for youth organizers regarding Teen Empowerment in general at their Genesee Street office on December 12, 2013. The orientation sessions focused on the goals of Teen Empowerment and trained new youth organizers in hosting events, speaking out on issues important to them, bringing the community together to promote positive change, and work ethics. From December 2013 to March 2014, the youth focused on community events while they awaited responses from the Rochester Police Department.

On February 11, 2014, this new set of youth visited the Rochester Police Academy to hold a brief training session with recruits and have a casual lunch and conversation with them.

The youth preparatory sessions specifically for the youth-police dialogues began on March 4, 2014 at the Teen Empowerment office. The youth organizers continued these preparations until the dialogues were held. Teen Empowerment facilitators held a preparatory session with the officer volunteers on March 20, 2014, at the M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence.

The actual youth-police dialogues were held on March 25, March 27, April 1, and April 3, 2014 at the Gandhi Institute. In between the actual youth-police dialogue sessions, which were held on Tuesdays and Thursdays of two consecutive weeks, youth organizers met to debrief and give feedback on the sessions. The researchers attended all of these activities except the feedback sessions, as this was considered a more personal time for the youth to discuss the way they felt about how they were working together and an opportunity to give constructive criticism and praise to one another.

The focus group with the Phase Two officers was held on April 8, 2014 at the Gandhi Institute. A focus group with four of the youth organizers was held on April 15, 2014 at Teen Empowerment's office. The other three youth participated in a focus group on April 24, 2014. The Phase Two Youth Organizers completed the dialogues in April 2014 and completed their employment term with Teen Empowerment in June 2014.

Phase Three Description

Phase Three involved youth organizers who were not currently active with Teen Empowerment, as Phase Three occurred in Teen Empowerment's "off season" between school years. The group of youth organizers assisted facilitators in a full-day training for police recruits at the Rochester Police Academy in August 2014. The other goal complete in Phase Three was that Teen Empowerment facilitators met with the Rochester Chief of Police and select command staff to discuss the department's efforts to improve youth-police relations and train officers on youth and community issues. This concluded the Youth-Police Dialogue program for 2013-2014.

Teen Empowerment plans to continue facilitating and organizing dialogues for at least another year, with another set of dialogue sessions likely to occur in early 2015 with a new set of Youth Organizers and police officers.

Program Locations and Choice of Space

All sessions with the officers were held at the M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence – a local non-profit agency in the southwest quadrant of Rochester – because Teen Empowerment staff felt Teen Empowerment would, due to the tensions between youth and police, lose some credibility among the neighborhood's youth if the youth saw officers coming to the office. Additionally, they felt that the Gandhi Institute could serve as "neutral ground" for all participants, since the youth primarily work at the Teen Empowerment office. Whenever the Youth Organizers met without officers, they met at Teen Empowerment's office. Officers always met at the Gandhi Institute. The two Police Academy training sessions were held at Monroe County's Public Safety Training Institute just outside the City of Rochester.

Extenuating Circumstances & Other Teen Empowerment Activities

The second phase of Teen Empowerment's youth/police dialogues was planned to begin in February 2014 but was delayed due to the mayoral and police chief change in Rochester, which took effect January 1, 2014. A new chief, Michael J. Ciminelli, was designated in March 2014. This caused changes in personnel throughout the Rochester Police Department. As collaboration with the Rochester Police Department is crucial to recruiting officers to participate in the dialogues, Teen Empowerment's dialogues began later than expected, in April 2014.

Phase Two youth organizers participated in orientation sessions pertaining to their work with Teen Empowerment after they were hired in late November 2013. The orientation sessions consisted of answering warm-up questions and engaging in interactives. The purpose of these orientations is to have the youth examine the issues they face in their community and to decide which they will focus on for their year's work. At these orientation sessions, the youth organizers outline their strategy and a timeline for the year for how to address these issues.

As the youth organizers for Phase Two were hired to do many projects with Teen Empowerment, there were many more ancillary activities going on within Teen Empowerment than during Phase One. While setting up the second phase of youth-police dialogues, Teen Empowerment's facilitators and youth organizers conducted several community events. The goal of all of the youth organizers' work is to address the root causes of issues that impact youths' lives, particularly in the southwest neighborhood of Rochester. These issues, such as youth unemployment, poor educational opportunities, or youth violence, often put youth in more negative contact with police if they are not addressed. The youth organizers hold community events to think critically about and address these diverse issues. The youth-police dialogues are part of this overall effort to address the root causes of issues youth face.

Some of the non-dialogue activities that Teen Empowerment youth organizers facilitated or participated in included open mic events, a ten-year anniversary celebration for Teen Empowerment, a networking brunch with other youth groups, and organizing around the issue of the lack of employment opportunities for youth. In addition to hosting events, youth organizers were invited to attend events such as a march for education at the Governor's Office in Albany, NY. Four youth organizers met with local state assembly members and senators and advocated for more funding for Rochester schools.

Evaluation Methodology

As part of this project, Teen Empowerment worked with researchers at the Rochester Institute of Technology's Center for Public Safety Initiatives (CPSI) to evaluate the program. CPSI assigned two researchers to evaluate the effectiveness of the program as well as its implementation and organizational processes. Components of the evaluation included regular meetings between researchers and Teen Empowerment staff, surveys completed by all participants and facilitators, focus groups held after the dialogue series, one-on-one interviews conducted after the dialogues, observations of all youth-police dialogue activities, and session evaluation forms. The methodology behind each component is discussed below.

Components of the evaluation included pre- and post-dialogue surveys for youth and officer dialogue participants, session evaluations done at each dialogue session, and focus groups held separately with youth and officers. Also, a researcher observed all dialogues sessions, preparation sessions, and reflection sessions, as well as the other events in which Teen Empowerment participated. Surveys were also conducted at Teen Empowerment's visits to the police academy, and both Police Academy trainings were observed by evaluators. We describe the methodology behind each of these evaluation components next.

Staff and Researcher Meetings: Integrating Feedback

As with most program evaluations undertaken by the Center for Public Safety Initiatives, a feedback-oriented evaluation model was used in this Teen Empowerment Youth-Police Dialogue program. Researchers from CPSI regularly met with the staff at Teen Empowerment. Prior to conducting any evaluations, we met to discuss the program's structure and what Teen Empowerment staff would like to learn from the evaluation, as well as to determine the schedule and scope of the project. Then, researchers and staff worked together to develop evaluation instruments (surveys, session evaluation forms, and focus group questions). We also agreed to have a researcher from CPSI attend all applicable Youth-Police Dialogue Project activities in order to conduct field observations. The reason for this is discussed below.

Importantly, throughout this project, qualitative and quantitative data was collected and analyzed by the researchers and was relayed back to Teen Empowerment staff so that the program could be improved. While this is not a traditional evaluation set-up, CPSI's philosophy has been that programs deserve to receive updates and feedback on how their program is doing *while* they are still conducting the program so they can take steps to address concerns and improve the program. Researchers also get feedback from program staff about evaluating in the best possible ways. Thus, our evaluation process incorporates regular conversations with Teen Empowerment staff.

For instance, before beginning Phase Two, the researchers and Teen Empowerment staff met to discuss results and suggestions from the Phase One evaluation. Most of this amounted to brainstorming ways to improve the dialogue sessions.

Finally, the meetings between facilitators and evaluators served to keep the evaluators apprised of progress regarding the institutionalization of the youth-police dialogues and officer trainings. When appropriate, evaluators attended meetings between Teen Empowerment and Rochester Police Department personnel to observe and contribute evaluation findings.

Pre- and Post-Dialogue Surveys

There were four surveys developed to measure changes in attitude among program participants: the Youth Pre-Survey (Appendix A), Officer Pre-Survey (Appendix B), Youth Post-Survey (Appendix C), and Officer Post-Survey (Appendix D). We employed a pre/post-test model, meaning that participants took a survey before beginning the dialogues and a very similar one after going through the dialogues. This allows us to see if participants responded differently to the questions before and after the dialogues. Also, the surveys for the youth and for the police officers were slightly different in wording but asked essentially the same questions. Thus, we could also compare youth's and officers' responses. There were no changes made to these surveys from Phase One to Phase Two.

Academy Training Session Surveys

The dialogue surveys were revised slightly for use at the full-day police recruit training at the Rochester Police Academy. Participants took the pre-survey before any discussion or training began at the beginning of the day. They completed the post-survey at the very end of the day. The dialogue surveys developed for the officer dialogue participants were revised somewhat in language to be applicable to the police recruits participating in the academy training. Some questions were removed from the youth and recruit surveys, while some were added to specifically address the academy training.

Session Evaluation Forms

Teen Empowerment uses participant feedback forms at the end of each event they host. These are primarily open-ended questions about what worked and did not work at that session. Researchers and staff modified these session evaluations slightly for this project. All dialogue participants (youth and police) completed the same evaluation form at the end of each session, and researchers also added a session evaluation form for facilitators to complete after each session. These are included in Appendices E (participants' form) and F (facilitators' form).

Session Observations

An evaluator observed each youth-police-related activity and other Teen Empowerment activities when possible. A researcher attended and wrote reports on every youth preparatory session for the dialogues, the police preparatory session, all youth-police dialogues, and both police academy trainings. These observations were given first-hand and objective information to evaluators regarding what occurred during the sessions.

Due to Teen Empowerment's work being heavily and intrinsically participatory, the researcher observers were required to participate in the warm-up questions during the youth-police dialogue sessions and in most activities at the academy trainings. When appropriate, the researcher did not participate in activities and simply observed in order to provide more opportunity for the youth and police to converse. The facilitators explained this setup to the group at the first dialogue session, and the decision was understood and accepted by both the youth and officers. The dialogues proceeded with the researcher observing the interactives.

The researcher was able to observe the participants' demeanors, verbal and non-verbal responses, and interactions with other participants and facilitators. The participants seemed to be open and forthcoming about their feelings, so the researcher felt confident that her presence was accepted.

Focus Groups and Interviews

Another researcher from CPSI conducted focus groups after the dialogue series was completed. After each phase, the youth had their own focus group, and the officers had their own focus group. Focus groups were also held with facilitators after each phase of the program. These focus groups provided a platform through which qualitative information was collected from each group in isolation from other groups (i.e. officers could speak without the youth or Teen Empowerment staff there, and youth could speak without the officers or staff there). When a youth or officer participant was not available to participate in the focus group, individual interviews were conducted with them as well.

Recruiting Participants

Youth Organizers

The process for recruiting youth organizers normally includes a hiring process for youth. Usually, youth are hired for the duration of the academic year. They apply in September and continue employment until June. However, Phase One occurred prior to the normal hiring process, so the Teen Empowerment facilitators hired some of the youth organizers from the previous year and other youth they already knew to participate in just the youth-police dialogue series. Of the seven youth that participated in Phase One, four had participated in youth-police dialogues the previous year. Phase One started with eight youth, but one quit the project after the first week to secure other employment.

Phase Two youth dialogue participants went through the regular Teen Empowerment hiring process. In November and December 2013, eleven youth organizers between the ages 14 and 20 were selected by Teen Empowerment from 150 youth applicants. The selection process included an application, participation in interactives, answering warm-up questions, and an interview. The eleven youth selected had diverse backgrounds. Most were in high school, and several

planned to go to college. By the time the dialogues began in March 2014, only seven youth organizers were still participating in the program due to four having work problems, relocating, or for family reasons.

For the police academy training day in August 2014, which again occurred during the summer when Teen Empowerment does not usually have active youth organizers, facilitators brought some youth who had participated in youth-police dialogues before and two youth who were interested in working with Teen Empowerment in the future.

Police Officers

In regards to the recruitment of police officers for the dialogues, ongoing discussions had been occurring between Teen Empowerment staff and a sergeant at the Rochester Police Department to solicit participation from officers. The project focused on officers assigned to the west side of the city because Teen Empowerment is in the southwest quadrant. Officers were informed via e-mail about the program and self-elected to participate. Their time for the participation was compensated by the police department, as was the youth's time through Teen Empowerment.

Teen Empowerment was notified in October of the five officers who expressed an interest in participating in Phase One. Teen Empowerment was notified in March of the seven officers who expressed interest in participating in Phase Two. One Phase Two officer had participated in Phase One of the youth-police dialogues and expressed a strong desire to participate in Phase Two. Teen Empowerment does not usually allow an officer to participate in the dialogues more than once, but because different youth were participating and because of the low number of officer volunteers, an exception was made.

Descriptions and Observations of Dialogue Sessions

In this section, we describe the activities conducted during the dialogue sessions. This should serve as a contextual summary for the evaluation results to follow. We present the program chronologically while also describing the purpose behind the various interactives. Therefore, we begin by describing Phase One as it occurred, and then describe Phase Two. The police academy training sessions are discussed later in this report.

Phase One Dialogues

Preparation Sessions and Descriptions of Interactives

As previously stated, Teen Empowerment's facilitation model is built around using thought-provoking interactives, which are used in all of their sessions. In this section, we will describe the mechanisms and purposes of these activities as well as how the groups reacted to them at the preparatory sessions. Some of these were used at youth-police dialogue sessions as well.

Throughout this report, we bold the text the first time an interactive is introduced and described, for easier reference in finding those descriptions.

At one of their preparatory sessions, the youth participants engaged in an interactive called “**pair tag**.” During this activity, the participants are paired and required to stand across from each other. They then walk up to their partner and tap him or her on the shoulder three times while saying their name. They switch partners until each participant has partnered with everyone in the group. This interactive is meant to simply help people remember each other’s names.

Another interactive was called “**heads & tails**,” which encouraged participants to put themselves in another person’s shoes (i.e. that of police officers) with the goal of eliciting empathy.

The group also participated in an interactive called “**mirroring**.” During this interactive, the participants were paired and asked to mirror each other’s actions without being given a word prompt. After this activity, the group was asked to mirror each other from words given by the facilitator. The group collectively agreed that it was harder to mirror someone without being given a word to act out. Knowing what the other person was acting out made it significantly easier for the person to mirror their partners’ actions. Later, this interactive was used in a youth-police dialogue session. Words that were given were love, forgive, hurt, angry, respect, and trust. The majority of participants expressed difficulty in acting out some of the words.

Another interactive was called “**scenarios**,” in which each youth organizer was paired with another and given a scenario that had to be talked out. One scenario asked each pair of youth to pretend to be a veteran police officer and a rookie officer responding to a domestic violence call. The reason for this scenario was to show the youth how officers can be influenced by other officers. The veteran officer was giving advice to the rookie on how to handle the situation. The participants really got into their roles, and some wanted to play the police role more than others. One participant did not want to pretend to be the police at all, as she had numerous negative experiences with police. Most of the participants wanted to be the veteran officer. This activity was well-received by the participants because it gave them an opportunity, however staged, to be a police officer. They laughed and joked a lot after the interactive. The importance of role plays was stressed because, in the dialogues, such exercises will help to put both the youth and officers in each other’s shoes and hopefully inspire empathy and understanding between the two groups.

Another interactive youth organizers participated in was called “**Switch/Swatch**,” where participants were given a statement, then argued both in agreement and disagreement with the statement. This helped participants come to understand an issue beyond their own viewpoints and helped them relate to people who held different view from them by articulating views contrary to their own. Statements given included, “Marijuana should not be legalized” and, “Police are good.” One participant argued for the statement, and another argued against it. This process went on until each participant had a turn arguing each side. The participants seemed to enjoy this activity. There was a lot of laughing and conversation.

The interactive called “**negative versus positive**” required every youth organizer to sit in a chair facing each other. Each youth was assigned to take a positive or negative stance. Then, he/she was given a statement to argue that positive or negative view point. Some youth pointed out that this was similar to switch/swatch, and they liked the activity. They all confirmed that these types of activities were fun because it allowed them an opportunity to argue and to give their opinions on issues. One youth stated, “It was like being a lawyer.”

The interactive “**telephone all over**” started with a facilitator giving a participant a message (such as, “Violence in the southwest community is bad and will always be bad if people do not change it.”). Then, that person has to whisper the statement to another participant, and that person would whisper it to another person. This process would go on until every participant had heard the message from someone. By the time the message was relayed to the last person, it was distorted. The reason for the activity was to show participants how easily information can get misinterpreted when passing from one person to another.

The youth organizers also participated in an interactive called “**long distance bag toss.**” The participants were required to stand in a circle and throw a bean bag to someone while saying the person’s name. Each person would choose someone new. When the bag got back to the first person, the sequence would repeat. Initially, the youth were standing close to each other, but as the interactive continued, they were asked to move further away, which caused more difficulty in throwing and catching the bean bag. As the activity progressed, the facilitator also added more bean bags, which meant that each participant would have to catch them quicker. Before long, participants were dropping the bean bags or not catching them before they were thrown another one. Some participants were throwing the bean bags too hard, which sometimes prevented the intended person from catching them. The reason for this activity is to show that both youth and officers incur issues in life, and instead of dealing with them head on, they often pass them on to other people to solve or deal with, especially if there is a lot of chaos or things to pay attention to. It also helps participants learn each other’s names. This activity shows how easily simple tasks can get very complicated when people are distracted, stressed, or further from one another.

Another interactive the group participated in was called “**blind knot.**” During this activity, each participant was required to stand in a circle. The facilitator told each participant to hold a certain person’s hand. When this process was done, everyone was entangled with each other. The goal of this interactive is for everyone to figure out how to untangle the knot and end with a complete circle again. This activity is done to show youth and police that sometimes information and issues get distorted, and it takes everyone working together to figure things out.

The participants also engaged in an interactive called “**word storming.**” in which they listed things that came to mind when they heard a certain word. The word used was “criticism.” Many of the participants believed that this word is used in a bad way. As a matter of fact, one youth thought this word could not be used positively, and he argued that point vigorously. A couple of participants tried to explain that criticism can be used to help someone. In the end, the group

seemed to agree that criticism can be both negative and positive. The participants spent a lot of time on this discussion and seemed satisfied with the outcome. This activity can show the diversity of issues surrounding seemingly simple concepts as well as the diversity of interpretations of a given word.

During one preparation session, the youth engaged in “**feedback**,” where, each youth organizer was given a sheet of paper to write out feedback to give each other about themselves, as well as the facilitators. The participants could give feedback to one or more people. The participants really liked this activity, because it gave them an opportunity to tell each other how they feel about each other. They were all excited and volunteered to express their views. The youth were very respectful with what they said and how they presented it. The person who gave the feedback expressed sensitivity to the receiver, and the receiver showed appreciation. Some even agreed with what was said and promised to work on issues that were mentioned.

The youth also participated in an interactive called “**Brainstorm**” where they were asked to name issues youth face in Rochester. The participants were happy to volunteer responses, which included the following issues they felt youth face:

- Many youth interpret kindness as weakness.
- Many youth are followers, instigators, or “lost souls.”
- They face peer pressure.
- They struggle to find and maintain safe and affordable housing.
- They live in single-parent households.
- They lack educational and employment opportunities.
- Youth sometimes act or react without thinking; in other words, they act on impulse.
- Youth are like “crabs in a bucket.” This was described as when you are trying to accomplish positive things, you have negative people trying to pull you down, just like crabs in a bucket that are trying to get out while other crabs keep pulling them back in because they are trying to get out too. If this keeps happening, no one gets out of negative lifestyles because they keep getting pulled back into it.
- Youth often lack pride, faith, and hope.

At their preparatory session, the officers participated in an activity called “**concentric conversations**.” Officers sat across from each other, and were encouraged to indulge in meaningful, deep conversation regarding where they grew up and negative life experiences they have had. After each partner answered the question, the officers would move to a new partner and get asked a new question.

The officers also participated in an activity call “**fishbowl**.” During this interactive, the officers were broken into two equal groups. One group would sit in an inner circle, and one on the outside (looking into the “fishbowl”). The officers in the center were asked by the facilitator to name issues they have with youth. Each officer took turns naming issues/problems they face

when dealing with youth while the facilitator wrote them down on a sketch board. Officers on the outside of the circle had to stay quiet and just listen. After the officers were finished with their list of issues/problems, the facilitator and officers selected the ones they felt were most important and discussed them. During this process, the facilitator would select a word, and ask the officer who said it why he/she felt that was an issue/problem. Then, the groups would switch and repeat this activity. As with the brainstorm activities, this helps participants explore the diversity of issues surrounding any given issue and the variety of opinions on an issue. It also allows group members to practice simply listening to one another without interjecting their own thoughts.

Youth Preparatory Session Discussions

During another youth preparation session, the facilitator assembled the youth organizers into groups of two, so they could discuss among themselves the most important issues between youth and police in Rochester. There were three groups of two youth organizers. Group 1 believed that officers' pride, lack or inaccuracy of communication with citizens, abuse of authority, and racism were the biggest issues youth face with police. Group 2 reported communication issues, location (explained as the feeling that if a white person was walking down the street in the city, the police would not bother him/her), and racial profiling as the biggest issues. Finally, Group 3 reported officers' rudeness, tough-guy attitudes, and discrimination as the biggest issues.

The youth organizers were given the opportunity to discuss the goals of their dialogues with the police. They were asked to describe things the police do that are unfair. One youth organizer said "profiling," which led to a discussion. Participants were asked to describe how they feel when they suspect they are being profiled. One female youth organizer stated she "felt like an animal, and the encounter created hate." Another youth organizer said he felt "degraded." Another youth organizer said profiling "invokes anger."

The youth also watched the movie July '64, which chronicles the riots that occurred in Rochester in 1964. After the movie, the facilitator asked participants for words to describe themselves in the past and words to describe themselves now. They were also asked to provide words to describe Rochester in the past and Rochester now. Some ways in which the youth described themselves in the past were: violent, gang member, and angry. One youth described himself now as more calm, less angry, and less violent. He is currently in school preparing to graduate. Another male youth organizer stated that he was a former gang member but has left that life behind. He is now a father and focusing on taking care of his girlfriend and children. One youth organizer described being angry all of the time in the past and being angry all of the time now. Responses to describe Rochester in the past were: inadequate housing for blacks, limited educational opportunities for blacks, limited employment opportunities for blacks, white flight, and white superiority. The youth felt all of these things still described Rochester now, except they felt violence was more prevalent now.

The group was then led into an activity called “**film storming**,” in which they were asked to describe issues/problems in the movie that are issues/problems today. This led to extended conversations about what is going on in Rochester today, especially in the Southwest neighborhood. The group talked about the racial make-up of the population in this area and how the University of Rochester is replacing long-term black residents with white college students and pushing those long-term residents to other areas in the city. They discussed the fact that in Rochester in 1964, white people were the dominant race in the Southwest area. One female participant stated, “White people want their city back.” The participants all acknowledged that this relocation of black Southwest residents could lead to increased violence in the city because the residents in those areas are not going to want a lot of newcomers.

During one preparation session, the youth organizers were asked, “What formulated your perception of the police? What do you think formulates police perceptions about youth?” The majority of the youth responded that family, friends, the media, music, and personal experience formulated their perception of the police. Most of the participants responded that the media and fellow officers’ opinions formulated police officers’ perception of youth. They specified that they meant “black” youth. They felt that police treat black and white youth differently.

Officer Preparatory Session Discussions

The Teen Empowerment facilitators held a preparatory session with the five police officers who volunteered for Phase One of the dialogues on October 1, 2013 in order to orient them to the dialogues they would be having with the youth.

During the officers’ preparation session, they were welcomed and thanked for their participation by the facilitators and then given an overview of Teen Empowerment. After the welcome, each participant was asked to state their name, where they work, how long they have been on the job, to rate the state of youth/police relations, and explain their rating. One officer reported working with the RPD for 25 years. He rated the state of youth/police relations as 2-3 because of disrespect from youth, which he believed results from the lack of adult/parent supervision. He further mentioned growing up in the area he currently patrols and enjoyed working in the area but has seen major changes. He talked about how youth have lost respect for adults and authority. The officers mostly agreed that youth/police relations were quite poor. Since this is similar to how youth felt, this shows that both groups at least recognize the problems between them.

The officers engaged in interactives as described above. Then the session ended with a verbal rating of the session and an explanation. Then, the officers were asked to fill out an evaluation form. On observance, it seemed as though the officers enjoyed participating in the session. When giving their verbal evaluation and rating of the session, each said they enjoyed the activities and looked forward to meeting and working with the youth.

Youth-Police Dialogue Sessions Discussions

During Phase One, there were four dialogue sessions held with the youth organizers and police officers at the Gandhi Institute in October 2013. The first youth-police dialogue session had seven youth in attendance and all five police officers. Some of the youth spoke of skepticism about whether or not the dialogues would make a difference and change officers' attitudes towards black youth in the city. They also voiced doubts about whether the officers really cared.

The youth and police engaged in many of the same interactives as the youth had in their preparation sessions. This helped to build relationships in the group and promote meaningful conversation around youth-police relations.

For example, during one of the youth-police dialogue sessions, the concentric conversations interactive was used again, pairing youth with officers and having them discuss where they grew up and negative life experiences they have had. Additionally, the participants were asked to tell about an authority figure that he/she respected, and also one that he/she does not respect. The majority of the youth named the police as an authority figure they do not respect. The observer noted that everyone seemed to take this exercise more seriously in the dialogues than in the preparatory sessions. Each participant was paying close attention to the person across from him or her as they spoke. Many of the participants later reflected that conversations like these, where they shared deeply about their personal experiences one-on-one, were the most important part of building relationships with other participants.

The majority of the participants (youth and officers) verbally gave the dialogue sessions high ratings when asked. The observer felt it was obvious that everyone enjoyed the sessions. There were many jokes, smiles, handshakes, and head nods in agreement to what was being said.

In one dialogue, the group was asked, "What were you thinking about this process before it began, and what do you think about it now?" A couple of youth "didn't think it would make a difference to the officers." A couple of officers expressed optimism that relations between youth and officers could improve. One officer was undecided, and two others did not have an opinion but were open to the possibility that things could change.

Facilitation and Organization

The facilitators did an excellent job facilitating the eight preparatory pre-sessions for youth organizers, the preparatory session for the police officers, and the four youth-police dialogues. For the most part, they kept the sessions running smoothly and on time.

The Teen Empowerment staff is experienced in facilitating youth-police dialogues, as well as working with youth. It was impressive to see how well they worked together. The facilitators were always on time. If one facilitator could not attend a session, the others would fill in

perfectly. They worked in harmony with each other, and it is a great blend of personalities and skills.

The facilitators sometimes struggled to get youth to get to the sessions on time, and thus some sessions were delayed. The facilitators stressed the importance of being on time to every session, as it is important to be punctual to their job. The youth are not just in the project to talk to the police; they are also learning skills for life and work.

The facilitators also did a great job when working with the youth individually. They treated the youth like family, and each facilitator seemed to serve a special role. For example, some of the male youth would seek advice from one facilitator on a father-like or brother-like level, possibly because they thought he could relate better to their issues as a black male. This facilitator is a straight shooter and always “kept it real” with them. The other primary facilitator was more like a brother or best friend. The youth would confide in him, but on a different level. The female facilitator was like the mother/sister figure of the facilitators. She gave advice on hairstyles, schools, and relationships. Effectively, when the youth came to Teen Empowerment, they were among family. For some, it was their home away from home and a safe haven. It is a place where they can go to get peace, safety, and advice while also getting a paycheck and valuable experience contributing to their community.

Phase Two Dialogues

Youth Orientation Sessions

Youth participated in several interactives during their orientation sessions. Their orientation sessions prepared them for their work with Teen Empowerment in general, while preparatory sessions (discussed below) prepared them for the youth-police dialogues in particular. One of the first interactives was “concentric conversations.” Since this was the first session for the youth after being hired, the facilitators felt this interactive was appropriate, as it helps participants get to know each other. Each youth sat across from a partner and talked about their community and their lives growing up.

The researcher tried to listen in on as many pairs as possible. Some youth talked about living in single parent households, and some talked about the inability to find employment due to the lack of opportunities in the community. A couple of youth talked about how the residents in the community do not help and support one another, while others talked about how gangs, drugs, and violence have destroyed neighborhoods that were once flourishing and safe. Many youth did not feel safe in their neighborhoods.

Another interactive youth organizers engaged in was “**magic ball.**” Participants are asked to act like they are holding a ball and were told they could do anything they wanted with this pretend

ball. For example, one could mold the ball's shape by stretching it and making a hula hoop. One youth pretended the ball was the shape of a potato bag. She got in it, and acted out being in a race. The reason for this interactive was to show youth organizers how people can take the same information or situation and make it into whatever they want it to be.

In the interactive called **“life maps,”** youth had to plot out their lives for the next fifteen years, including their educational, career, and family goals. They had to draw their paths with pictures of every step. Most of the youth organizers had goals and were excited to discuss them. This was fun for some, but others did not want to draw the pictures. When done, each youth organizer had to present their life map to the group. This helped them articulate their visions for their future and share those goals with one another.

In another session, the youth organizers engaged in an interactive called **“rolling Simon says.”** During this interactive, the leader either says “Simon says” or does not and then tells the group to do something. Participants are supposed to only perform the action if the command is precluded by “Simon says.” Each time a participant followed the instruction correctly, he/she took one step towards the leader. This process continued until each participant either made it to the leader or failed out. The reason for this interactive was to show youth that in an encounter with another person, such as a police officer, they may have to follow instructions carefully.

During another orientation session, the participants engaged in the **“yes game.”** The group stood in a circle, and the leader pointed to a person across the circle. That person must say “yes.” Then the first person moves and takes that person's place in the circle while the other person points to someone else, and so on. A person is out if he or she moves before receiving a “yes” from the person they pointed to. The reason for this interactive is to show the youth how important it is to listen, pay attention, and remember several details at once. It also demonstrates the importance of getting permission before taking an action.

Another interactive was called **“stuck in the mud,”** where the youth locked arms with each other and needed to get unhooked. This interactive showed the youth that sometimes people need assistance from others to get them out of a situation or to resolve a problem.

During another session, the Phase Two youth organizers also watched the documentary *July '64*, which described the riots in Rochester in 1964. After the movie, the facilitator asked participants to describe Rochester in the past and present. The youth responded with the following:

1964	2014
Violent	Violent
Gangs	Gangs
Racist	Racist
Lack of adequate housing	Lack of adequate housing
Depressed	Depressed
Dirty	Dirty
Lack of employment opportunities	Lack of employment opportunities
Lack of educational opportunities	Lack of educational opportunities
Uncaring police and politicians	Uncaring police and politicians
White flight	White flight
	Drugs
	Murders
	STDs
	Weapons

Clearly, the youth felt that some of the issues that sparked the riots in 1964 are still a concern fifty years later. The youth also attended a roundtable discussion of the film at a local high school. They were able to see the people interviewed in the documentary in person and hear their opinions regarding Rochester in 1964 and in the present.

During one session, the group participated in an interactive called **“storytelling.”** One person from the group had to start a story with one, two, or three words, and the other participants would add on to the story with the same number of words. This process continued until each participant had a turn. The last person would end the story. This interactive shows how stories can get collectively created and distorted.

Another interactive the youth engaged in was **“job tag.”** While standing in a circle, one person selects someone else and walks over to him or her while naming a job. The selected person names a job then selects another person, and so on. The interactive showed youth how confusing a situation can be when they must do and remember multiple tasks.

Youth Preparatory Sessions

Youth preparatory sessions specifically for the dialogues began in March 2014. In one preparatory session, the youth participated in the “brainstorm,” naming issues youth face with police. The participants were eager to give responses, which included:

- Stereotypes
- Intimidation
- Harassment
- Lack of communication
- Feeling like enemies
- Different backgrounds
- Abuse of authority/badge
- Fear
- Lack of understanding
- Foreigners (officers not from Rochester)
- Rudeness
- Unequal justice
- Media
- Weapons
- Lying
- Violence
- Accusations
- The “Blue Code of Silence” (police officers not reporting another officer’s errors, misconduct, or crimes)

As in Phase One, the youth also participated in the “heads and tails” and “blind knot” interactives.

Officer Orientation Session

On March 20, 2014, the Phase Two police officers’ orientation took place at the Gandhi Institute. There were five officers in attendance out of the seven volunteers. At the start of the session, one facilitator informed the group of the agenda. Then, the officers, facilitators, and researcher participated in the warm-up question, which asked how long they had been police officers and why they do the work they do. The participants had been on the police force for spans ranging from one and a half years to twenty-two years. All but one had been police for less than ten years. One participant was a sergeant.

The officers and facilitators then participated in an interactive called “**wind blows.**” During this interactive, the person in the center of the circle states, “The wind blows for anyone who...” and fills in a feature someone might have. These ranged from “The wind blows for anyone who is watching March Madness” to “anyone who has kids” or “anyone who is married.” Importantly, in this interactive, there is only enough seats for all but one person, so someone always get stuck standing. Facilitators use this to spark dialogue around how it feels to fight for a place to sit and how it feels to be left standing and put on the spot. This serves as a metaphor for society in which many people are competing for resources and opportunity. Many times, as they do, they bend or break rules to get by. This interactive also helps participants learn about each other. This interactive proved difficult for some officers because they could not quickly think of what to say. On observation, the officers seemed to enjoy the interactive. They laughed and joked with one another and called out suggestions for the officers who had trouble thinking of one.

Youth-Police Dialogue Sessions

On March 25, 2014, the youth organizers and police officers participated in the first Youth-Police Dialogue Session of Phase Two at the Gandhi Institute. There were seven youth organizers, seven police officers, two facilitators, and one researcher in attendance. Facilitators debated about whether to allow the two officers to participate who had not gone through the orientation, but they ultimately decided it was worth having as many participants as possible and a matching number of youth and police. The Teen Empowerment facilitators provided a one-hour orientation to the two officers who did not attend the orientation session just before this session began.

The dialogue session began with an explanation of the agenda. Youth and police then engaged in the “concentric conversations” interactive in which youth organizers and officers were paired. The mood in the room was serious. The topics were biographical, including where they grew up and negative life experiences they had.

Another interactive used was the “long distance bag toss,” as described above. On observation, youth and officers seemed to enjoy the interactive. Then, the group participated in the “blind knot” activity, showing that youth and police can work together to solve a problem.

At the second youth-police dialogue session, it seemed like everyone was happy to be there. Upon arrival, the researcher observed the teens laughing and joking with each other, and the officers were doing the same. The only concern was that the youth and officers were sitting with their peers groups. This concern was mentioned at the previous day’s debriefing session with the youth. The youth had decided to purposely sit between each officer, but it did not happen. However, during the first interactive, the facilitator did a great job of integrating the groups.

On April 1, 2014, youth organizers and officers met for the third youth-police dialogue. The group participated in the “mirroring” interactive. Several participants expressed difficulty in acting out some of their partners’ movements. For example, the officers had difficulty mirroring the youths’ dance moves. The youth enjoyed watching them and laughed at their attempts. The officers were good sports because they tried every move. It was encouraging watching officers come out of their comfort zone and enjoy themselves. They learned how important it was for them to let their guards down around the youth in order to build trust and good relationships.

It is important to note that two officers were absent from the third session due to work obligations. This affected the dialogues because there was an unequal number of youth and officers. Also, the participants were revisiting issues discussed previously and their impact on the youth and officers. On observation, this session seemed slower than the two previous sessions. Everyone seemed tired and distracted. It seemed as though everyone was just going through the motions. It is questionable whether this session was productive.

April 3, 2014 was the last youth-police dialogue session. Everyone seemed to be in better spirits than in the third dialogue session. The group participated in the interactive “wind blows.” This interactive was good for the group because it got them up and moving early in the session. One comment from the previous session’s evaluation was that participants felt they had been sitting and talking too long. The mood was lively. Nearly every participant had an opportunity to call a statement out to the others. The facilitators added on another thing for each person in the middle of the circle to do: state whether the word change, transformation, or leader stood out to him or her and why.

During this session, the group also watched the short video on the background of Teen Empowerment’s Youth-Police Unity Project (YPUP). YPUP ran from 2005 to 2010 with core groups of officers and youth. Their work culminated in a community-wide youth-police summit and an action plan for improving youth-police relations. After watching this video, the group wrote down what youth, individual police, the police department, and the community can all do to help improve to improve youth-police relations. Some responses included:

What Police Can Do:

- 1) Take time to have positive interactions.
- 2) Communicate.
- 3) Spend more time with youth during interactions.
- 4) Spend downtime on streets they patrol.
- 5) Give respect in order to receive respect.
- 6) Get familiar with their neighborhood of patrol.

What Youth Can Do:

- 1) Learn their rights.
- 2) Take responsibility for actions.
- 3) Be respectful to police.
- 4) Give respect in order to receive respect.

What the Rochester Police Department Can Do:

- 1) Continue youth outreach, but get new ideas from youth.
- 2) Start athletic program for youth and police.
- 3) Start an officer/youth mentor program.
- 4) Bring back the DARE program.

What the Community Can Do:

- 1) Organize.
- 2) Realize there is power in numbers when it comes to making changes.
- 3) Support the police instead of attacking them.
- 4) Promote community unity to police themselves better.

This concluded the dialogue series. After the session was over, several of the officers offered to drive the youth home or invited them to other activities, such as riding along in the police cars on shift. Largely, though, the youth declined these offers. The youth later expressed that they felt disconnected from the officers and that the offers were not genuine. Officers expressed interest in keeping in touch with Teen Empowerment and the youth.

Participant Session Evaluations

Teen Empowerment uses session evaluation forms at the end of each session to receive participants' feedback. These are primarily open-ended questions focused on what worked and did not work at that day's session. It also included an overall rating scale. All participants (youth and police) completed the same evaluation form at the end of each session. This form is included in Appendix E. These session evaluations were completed after each youth preparatory session, officer preparatory session, actual youth-police dialogue sessions, and youth debriefing sessions (held with just the youth between the days they met with the officers). We summarize some of the feedback obtained from participants in each Phase of the dialogues.

Phase One

For the most part, the consensus of the youth organizers in Phase One was that the facilitators did a great job facilitating the sessions. They enjoyed the interactives, and the majority of youth and officers rating every session as "great."

There were no distinguishable trends over time as to how participants felt at the Phase One dialogues, except that the last dialogue session felt rushed because many participants could not attend or had to leave early. Since most responses were quite short, we list what was said throughout the sessions below.

Participants listed the following interactives as working well:

- Feedback (at a youth preparatory session)
- Role play (at a youth preparatory session and at dialogue sessions)
- Long-distance bean bag toss (at a youth preparatory session)
- Concentric conversations (youth preparatory session)
- Human knot (at dialogue session)
- The "wind blows" at the last dialogue session (officer response)

Participants felt some other aspects of the sessions went well, such as:

- Establishing goals at the officer preparatory session
- How the facilitators engaged the group of officers at their preparatory session
- The group discussion at the officer preparatory session
- Open dialogues allowing everyone to feel comfortable talking

- Facilitators “kept it moving”
- The one-on-one conversations between youth and police
- A discussion among youth about discrimination in response to a comment made by an officer at the first dialogue session (at a youth debriefing session)
- Watching and discussing the movie “July ‘64” (at a youth preparatory session)
- Small group conversations between youth and police
- The youth facilitating parts of the dialogues
- The Teen Empowerment video shown in the last dialogue session
- “The discussion on what was accomplished” at the final dialogue session

Participants listed the following aspects they did not feel went well:

- Telephone all over (at a youth preparatory session)
- An officer named his/her own ability to do the interactives (at a dialogue session)
- Small groups did not have enough time (at a dialogue session)
- Groups got off topic or unfocused (at a dialogue session)
- Difficult to “hear others in small group” with too much background chatter

Participants felt that the following were the *most challenging* parts of the dialogue sessions:

- Role plays – particularly for youth who were assigned to “act like a police officer” at a youth preparatory session
- An officer found it difficult to listen to negative comments about police, “even if it’s true”
- “Lack of flexibility” in the sessions (officer response)
- “Keeping on task” (officer response)
- “Listening to criticism” (officer response)

Participants felt that having more time in the sessions or having less interactives could have made the sessions better. In contrast, some felt more interaction was needed. Some requested more time on question sheets. Also, some noted that preventing participants from being absent would make the sessions better.

Participants felt facilitators could make the sessions better by:

- Allow more time for discussion and for small group conversations (at dialogue sessions)
- “Allow individuals to speak freely” (officer response)
- “Provide water at dialogues” (officer response)
- “Let some interactives go longer” (officer response)
- “Keep us on point—write down questions for group to answer” (officer response)

Participants reported learning or being surprised by a few things during the sessions. An officer commented that “the youth often feel the same way as us.” Another officer learned about “all

the problems youth face.” An officer learned about “how bad the youth have it (or feel they have it).” A youth learned “the pros and cons of officers’ duties.”

Participants were asked at each session if they had a question or concern they were left with. At a preparation session, an officer was curious to know how the youth want the meetings to go. One youth at their preparation session expressed anxiety about meeting police officers at the first dialogue session. During the dialogues, one youth wondered whether “things are going to change” after the dialogues. Officers were left with questions about how they could improve the relationship between youth and police, how they could change the cycles that lead to these issues, and how they can best approach youth in the community.

For the most part, the officers gave the youth-police dialogue sessions high ratings. By their responses, it was evident they were committed to the dialogues, and trying to improve youth-police relations. They seemed interested in hearing what the youth had to say and expressed empathy for their situations. They also wanted the youth to understand police as individuals and their position as police officers. They acknowledged that youth and police officers face some of the same issues and problems on a daily basis. The officers complimented the facilitators’ ability to keep the group focused, create discussion, check in with them while they were in small groups, share the workload of facilitation, and kept to the program while keeping everyone involved.

Phase Two

Below we provide a day-to-day summary of the sessions in Phase Two related to the youth-police dialogues.

Youth Organizer Orientation and Preparatory Sessions

Overall, there are evaluation forms for five of the orientation and preparatory sessions held with the youth before beginning the dialogues with the police. These are from December 19, December 20, December 23, January 15, and an unknown date. We summarize youths’ thoughts across all of these.

All of these sessions were rated as either an 8 or 9 on average. Most of the time, the youth liked the discussions and certain activities like role plays and the human knot interactive. When they did one-time activities, like watching a movie or doing a walking tour of the community, they seemed to mostly enjoy these. They commented a lot that they wanted to see people discuss more and have more energy, which is similar to the biggest criticism of the youth-police dialogues. The youth commented how being late disrupted the group. Overall, the youth mentioned some ways to better facilitate group discussions (like raising your hand before you speak), but they seemed to consistently seek more discussion, conversation, time, and energy.

Officer Preparatory Session Evaluations

The evaluations for the officers' preparatory session were completed on March 20, 2014 by the five officers in attendance. Four reported enjoying the session. However, some officers felt there was "low energy, trouble coming up with answers." Another "would have liked more officers here." Another officer did not like the time restriction. In regards to any concerns or questions following the session, one officer commented, "I hope the youth are receptive." Another officer was concerned with how to reach the youth. Another officer wondered how he could help the community. When answering what they learned from the training session, one officer replied, "These are problems that need to be faced." Another officer replied, "We all have the same concerns." Another officer replied that he learned the history of youth-police dialogues.

Youth-Police Dialogue: March 25, 2014

There were seven youth and seven officers in attendance for the day's dialogues. They all agreed that the session was well organized, and the communication was good. Two youth felt that having more people would have made the session better. One felt that the energy did not work so well. One youth felt that more interactives would have made the session better. Two youth learned about the problems police officers face. Another youth learned the officer's perspective on youth-police relations, and another learned that police are not all bad. One youth learned how much officers wanted to see what youth face. No youth were left with any questions or concerns.

None of the officers suggested things that facilitators could have done better. In regards to something that did not work so well during the session, one officer mentioned a lack of time. When responding to the challenge of the day's session, one officer felt the challenging part was opening up about his/her personal life. Another found it challenging to be honest, and another found it challenging to listen to youths' problems. When asked about a question or concern they were left with, one officer asked, "What can I do as an individual to help?" Another officer was hopeful for continued honesty from all members.

Youth-Police Dialogue: March 27, 2014

There were seven youths and six officers in attendance for the second dialogue session. All agreed that the small group discussions worked well, but two youth felt there was not enough time. Two youth found discussing certain topics to be challenging. One youth responded that the most challenging part was opening up to police officers. Another youth felt that listening to everybody was challenging. One youth was surprised by the officer's views.

Two officers also felt that more time could have made the session better. One of those officers also was surprised to learn that some teens are afraid of authority. Some officers found it challenging to hear some of the things youth spoke about and felt uncomfortable speaking about

personal issues in front of group. One officer was challenged to keep his or her feelings in check. Two were surprised by how youth view the police. One officer was very surprised by the youths' view on intra-racial violence versus interracial violence (discussed in more detail in the focus group results below). Another officer noted that both youth and officers have questions that they are more comfortable asking one another in smaller groups. When asked about a question or concern officers had after the session, one officer asked, "Why, and how do we fix it?"

Youth-Police Dialogue: April 1, 2014

There were seven youth and six officers in attendance. All but one participant felt that the small groups worked well. Another youth felt there was a lecture atmosphere that did not work well. Another responded that the energy did not work well that day. One youth felt the facilitators did a great job speaking. When answering the question regarding what the facilitators could have done better, one youth responded that "more movement" would have made the session better. Two youth felt it was challenging to "stay up" and to "keep my mouth closed as to not offend others." One youth learned that "it's against the law [for police] to stop people for no reason."

Youth-Police Dialogue: April 3, 2014

There were seven youth and seven officers in attendance for the last dialogue. Some youth felt there were "good dialogues, communication, and ideas." One youth felt that they needed more time, and another felt the mood could have been better. One youth reported learning that things need to be changed. Some officers applauded the facilitators' good time management, planning, and ability to keep the group focused. Another officer commented that the facilitators "moved quickly today." One officer felt that more videos would have made the session better. One officer found that the most challenging part of the session was "opening up." One officer asked, "How do we continue?"

Summary of Session Evaluations

In all, it seems that participants in Phase One were a bit more energetic and engaged than those in Phase Two. Several Phase Two participants mentioned the "energy" or "vibe" being off, even during the preparation sessions prior to the dialogues. There were also more attendance issues in Phase Two, which participants noted in their evaluations. Nonetheless, participants felt that facilitators facilitated and organized the series well. Most youth and officers enjoyed the small group sessions and found it difficult to open up to one another about personal topics in front of the whole group. Many of the interactives were cited as helpful in sparking conversation and breaking down some of these barriers.

Survey Development

Overview and Methodology

Surveys were developed to assess changes in attitudes and beliefs among the youth and officer participants after going through the dialogues. These complement the strictly qualitative information obtained through session evaluations, focus groups, and observations by providing some more concrete and objective ways to measure participants' levels of awareness, empathy, respect, and understanding of one another.

Prior to the start of each of their respective preparatory sessions, the youth and officers were asked to complete the pre-survey developed by the Center for Public Safety Initiatives (CPSI). After going through the entire dialogue series, a post-survey was also conducted, which had similar questions to the pre-survey to assess changes in attitudes and beliefs. The youth in both phases completed their post-survey at one of their debriefing sessions at Teen Empowerment. The officers in both phases completed their post-surveys at the beginning of their focus groups. (One post-survey was completed via e-mail by the officer who was not able to attend the focus group.)

Survey Design and Goals

Youth and officers completed slightly different but comparable surveys. The language in some questions was modified slightly to be relevant to each group. Also, some questions were asked only of youth or only of officers if it was only relevant to them. The dialogue pre- and post-surveys are included in Appendices A-D. They included three types of questions:

- Agreement with Statement Prompts: The surveys mostly consisted of a list of statements, and the youth and police were asked to respond to each statement on an ordinal rating system with five options. Two sets of responses were used:
 - They rated how strongly they agreed with each statement prompt (5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree).
 - After a question about an event, they chose how frequently that event happened. (5 = Always, 4 = Most of the Time, 3 = Sometimes, 2 = Rarely, 1 = Never)
- Open-Ended Questions: youth and officers were asked several open-ended questions to obtain more detailed qualitative information on some matters.
- Adjective Checklists: Youth and police were asked to circle words in a pre-defined list which they thought described a given word or phrase. Youth were asked to circle words they felt described police, and officers were asked to circle words to describe youth in Rochester. Then, both were asked to circle words they felt described “justice.”

In designing the surveys, our goals were:

- to compare how participants' responses varied before and after going through the dialogues,
- to be able to compare the youth's and officers' responses, and
- to assess the strengths, weaknesses, and ways to improve the program, and

To these ends, we designed the surveys so the officers and youth were asked very similar questions, and both groups responded to many of the same questions on the post-survey as they did on the pre-survey. There were additional statement prompts on the post-surveys to ask participants to reflect on their experience. The open-ended questions were different on the pre- and post-surveys, as the ones asked on the pre-survey were no longer relevant after the dialogues. Adjective checklists were identical on the pre- and post-surveys.

We aimed to ask questions that would help us assess each participants' initial feelings about the state of youth-police relations in Rochester, which served as our baseline from which to compare the post-survey responses. Theoretically, we should see shifts in how participants felt about youth-police relations after the dialogues compared to the baseline. We asked participants about their personal feelings and experiences as well as how they thought the community or police force felt as a whole about youth-police relations. This helps us understand how participants see their own views in relation to those of others.

Statement Prompts

Our statement prompts were primarily concerned with measuring self-reported levels of trust, respect, safety (i.e. youth's willingness to approach an officer if in need), and willingness to work to improve relations between youth and police. Many questions intended to measure empathy (such as "I am aware of the challenges faced by youth/police in Rochester."), the strength of stereotypes (i.e. "Most police officers/youth want to help the community."), and the strength of peer group influences on participants (i.e. "If my friend was disrespecting a police officer/youth, I would encourage him or her to act differently.")

Also, four statement prompts assessed how frequently the participants and their peers had positive and negative interactions with youth or officers. These would, in theory, allow us to see if those who had direct bad experiences responded any differently from those who had no bad experiences or those whose peers had bad experiences. This could also help determine what influence social opinions played on youths' and police's feelings towards one another.

Adjective Checklists

Likewise, the adjective checklists were used to get a more nuanced view of how youth and police felt about each other and about justice. Responses to the checklist as a whole can be hard to interpret, such as if a youth circles both "uncaring" and "trustworthy" to describe an officer.

With this, though, they provide some insight into the complexity of feelings participants have. We theorized that youth and police would circle more words after the dialogues related to empathy and understanding (i.e. compassionate, vulnerable, stressed, and resilient). We thought we might see a decrease in “negative” words such as strangers, dangerous, and stupid.

The “justice” adjective checklist aimed to see how youth and police felt about the role of justice in their community and what role, if any, things like forgiveness, accountability, peace, healing and equality had compared to punishment, jail, blame, and arrest. We theorized that this could also help us see common ground between youth and police conceptions of justice. We could also see what differences the youth and police had in their definitions of justice.

Open-Ended Questions

Finally, the open-ended questions were used to give participants more freedom in their responses. We asked, for instance, for them to define respect, why they wanted to participate, what the most important and challenging moments in the dialogues were, and how they could see the project applying to the larger community. On the pre-surveys, we asked both groups what gave them the strength or ability to share their opinions with the other group and why they were willing to listen to the opinions and feelings of the other group. We hoped this would give us insight into their conception of the reconciliation and forgiveness process.

Phase One Survey Results

Next, we discuss survey results in Phase One, Phase Two, and then across both phases. Our analysis is structured this way because there are some strong differences between phases as per the surveys, raising the importance of discussing each phase in turn.

Sample Size

All of the youth and officers who participated in the dialogues completed both pre- and post-surveys, and all participants completed all questions. The surveys were completed anonymously and responses are reported in aggregate (except open-ended responses) to further preserve confidentiality. The pre-surveys were not matched to the post-surveys, but the groups were the same (except one youth found other employment after completing the pre-survey and thus did not participate in the youth-police dialogues nor in the post-survey.).

In total, we rendered eight respondents for the youth pre-survey and seven for the youth post-survey. All five officers took both the officer pre-survey and the officer post-survey. The distribution rendered, therefore, thirteen total pre-surveys and twelve post-surveys that were appropriate for analysis.

These sample sizes are very small, limiting our ability to generalize much from the data. Nonetheless, the results discussed below are promising, and our analytical capabilities are strengthened somewhat when we combine the Phase One and Phase Two participant responses later in this report.

Demographics

The officer participants consisted of three patrol officers, a Community Police Officer, and one sergeant. There were four male officers and one female. There were eight youth respondents for the pre-survey, with four males and four females. There were seven youth respondents to the post-survey, with four males and three females.

Youth Survey Results

Statement Prompts

First, we look at the participant's responses as to how often their personal interactions with police or youth have been positive or negative and how often their family/friends/colleagues had positive and negative interactions with police. The youth reported both positive and negative experiences occurring "most of the time" for both themselves and their family members, possibly indicating that their experiences with police vary much depending on the situation. Strangely enough, they reported that both they themselves and their family and friends had more positive *and* more negative experiences with police after the dialogues than before. This is very difficult to interpret, but it is possible that the youth had fewer experiences with police overall before the dialogue than after because going through the dialogues brought these experiences into the forefront of their memory. Thus, they could be expected to report a mix of positive and negative experiences with police after the dialogues.

Because there are no clear trends in how participants responded to these questions, we will not use this information to try to interpret further results. Perhaps with future data collection, trends will emerge that could inform us better.

Next, we look at how participants responded to the other statement prompts. We will focus only on changes in average responses that approached statistical significance. In general, there were some significant changes among officers but very few significant changes seen among the youth's responses.

The table below shows the pre-survey and post-survey levels of agreement youth reported for the statement prompts. For analysis, we coded the responses according to the 1 through 5 scale that participants used to choose their response. Thus, the higher the mean, the more the participants agreed with the prompting statement.

Phase One Youth Responses to Statement Prompts (n=7)

Statement Prompt	Pre-Mean	Post-Mean
I want to work with other youth to improve youth-police relations.	4.00	4.29
Youth and police can work together effectively to help the community.	4.00	4.43
I am excited about working with police officers to improve youth-police relations	3.38	N/A
I enjoyed working with police officers to improve youth-police relations.	N/A	4.43
Most police officers try to understand what youth are going through.	2.25	2.57
I trust the police.	2.38	2.14
When they respond to a scene or area, police officers handle the situation well.	2.13	2.00
In general, young people trust the police.	1.63	1.29
In general, I feel safe around police officers.	3.13	2.71
Youth in Rochester respect the police.	1.63	1.29
Most police officers want to help the community.	2.38	2.50
Most police officers trust young people.	2.00	1.86
The way I treat police influences how my peers act towards police officers.	2.75	3.00
I respect the police.	3.13	3.29
If I or someone I knew was in immediate danger of being hurt, I would approach a police officer for help.	3.75	4.14
Police officers respect youth in Rochester.	2.13	1.71
Relations between youth and police can be improved.	4.13	4.29
If my friend was disrespecting a police officer, I would encourage him or her to act differently.	4.00	4.00
I am aware of the challenges faced by police in Rochester.	N/A	2.71
I will try harder to establish better communication between myself and the police.	N/A	4.14
After participating in these dialogues, I have a better understanding of how police feel.	N/A	2.71
I will encourage other youth to participate in youth/police dialogues.	N/A	4.00

Note: (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

For almost all statements, the Phase One youth agreed more with each other after the dialogues than before. However, none of the changes in average response were statistically significant, even at a 0.200 significance level. Thus, any apparent differences as to how youth responded before and after the dialogues are quite likely due to random variation. This is probably due in part to the fact that there are so few youth participants (seven for Phase One), so statistical significance is difficult to achieve unless there are drastic changes in how participants respond.

Still, the shifts we see are interesting. The youth agreed that they wanted to work on improving youth-police relations, even agreeing somewhat more strongly after the dialogues than before. They very much agreed that they enjoyed working with the officers in these sessions. The youth were, however, seemingly quite pessimistic about police officers, even after the dialogues. They reported low levels of trust and respect and did not believe that officers handle situations well.

When a question did not ask about trust directly (such as “If I or someone I knew was in immediate danger of being hurt, I would approach a police officer for help”), the youth did seem to agree slightly more after the dialogues than before, which may indicate an increased level of trust that police could be helpful. The youth were hopeful (on average “agreed”) that relations between youth and police could be improved. They also agreed that they would encourage youth not to disrespect officers, but this was true both before and after the dialogues. They agreed they would work to establish better communication with police themselves and would encourage other youth to participate in the dialogues.

The youth participants disagreed, though, that they understood what police go through or how officers feel, so perhaps future dialogue sessions can try to focus on encouraging more expressive stories from the officers. When we discuss the focus group results later in this report, some light is shed on this issue by the Phase One youth.

Adjective Checklist Results

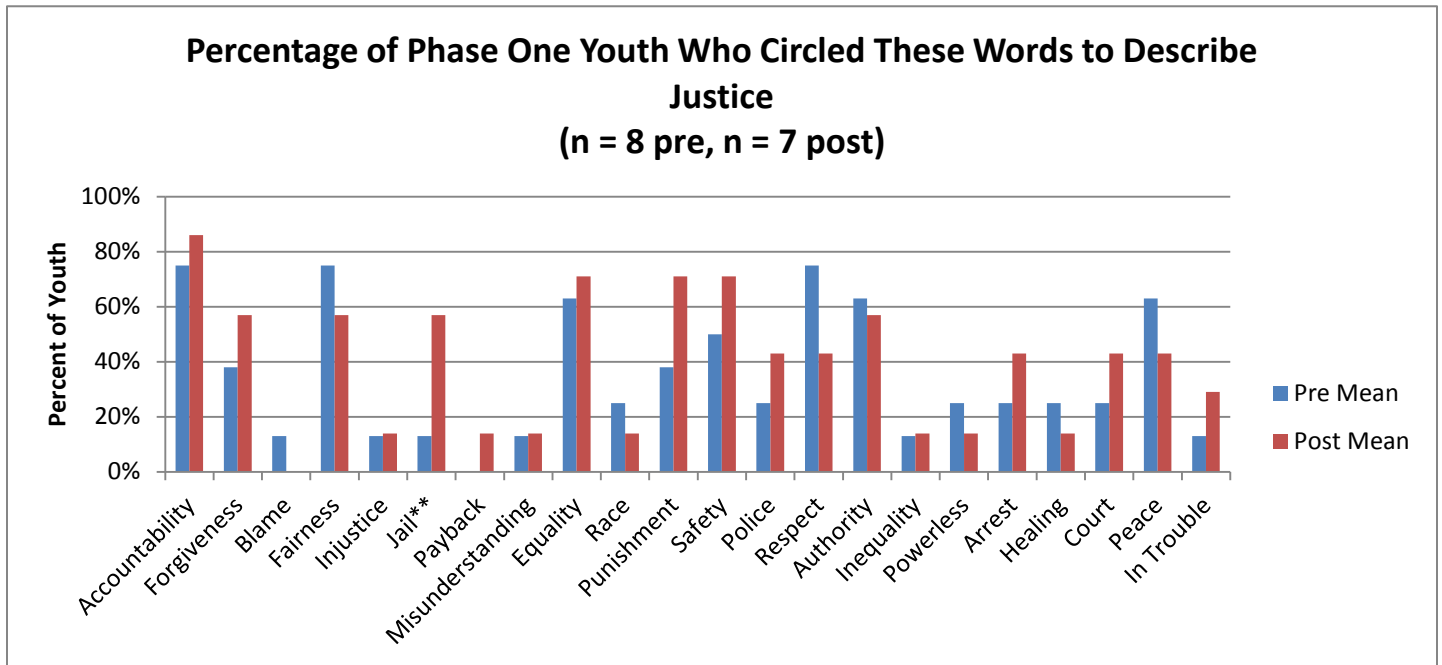
Some interesting results that came out of the youth surveys were the responses to describe officers on the adjective checklists. The youth circled more words on the post survey than they did on the pre-survey, perhaps indicating a broadening of their mindsets about police after going through the dialogues. However, there were no significant changes in how many youth circled any word. With our small number of respondents, none of our changes were significant at a 0.10 significance level.

Both before and after the dialogues, most of the youth chose the following words to describe police: unfriendly, mean, disrespectful, uncaring, rude, controlling, arrogant, and destructive. Clearly, this does not paint a very positive picture of how the youth felt towards police.

No youth, neither before nor after the dialogues, circled the following words to describe the police in their community, making them the least likely words to be chosen: friendly, dedicated, nice, compassionate, vulnerable, trustworthy, or neighbors.

The largest changes in how Phase One youth described police were that two more youth after the dialogues chose the words intelligent and helpful compared to before the dialogues ($p < 0.2$).

When asked to circle words to describe justice, all words were chosen by at least one youth on either the pre- or post-survey. The chart below shows the percentages of youth who circled each word before and after the dialogues. (We use percentages because the amount of youth taking the survey before the dialogues was different from the number after the dialogues.)



** = statistically significant below 0.100 level (less than 10% chance of being due to random variation)

The most-commonly chosen words were accountability, fairness, equality, respect, authority, punishment, safety, and peace. Four out of seven youths circled the word jail after the dialogues compared to only one youth who chose this word before the dialogues. This change in the amount of youth who circled “jail” is almost statistically significant (0.100 significance level) despite our small sample size. It is the only change that approaches significance in how the youth described justice before and after the dialogues.

Some other changes are of interest and could emerge as significant with a larger sample:

- Before the dialogues, 38% of the youth circled “forgiveness” to describe justice. After the dialogues, 57% circled this word.
- 38% of the youth circled “punishment” before the dialogues, and 71% circled it after.
- Three-quarters of youth chose “respect” to describe justice before the dialogues, while less than half circled it afterwards.

These results are mixed. Youth were more inclined to think of justice in terms of forgiveness and respect after the dialogues, but they also were more likely to think of punishment as part of justice.

Officer Survey Results

Phase One Officer Statement Prompt Responses

The officers, in comparison to youth, responded very neutrally to how often their professional interactions or their colleagues' interactions with youth were positive or negative. Again, this probably shows that they have a range of experiences with youth, depending on the situation.

The table below shows the average responses for the pre-survey and the post-survey officer responses. The average responses of the Phase One officers shifted in the hypothesized direction for almost all of the statement prompts. Only a few of these were significant, but these results are very promising. Note that the last four questions were only asked on the post-survey and thus cannot be compared to pre-dialogue responses.

The significant increases in agreement were to statements having to do with how police officers handle situations with youth. It seems that the officers learned more than anything else that they can work with youth to make youth-police relations better and that their personal acts as an officer can encourage their fellow officers to treat youth better. This latter lesson was the strongest change indicated through the survey statement prompts. This is encouraging; it shows that the officers potentially feel more empowered to set an example for other officers in the way that they work with youth.

An interesting shift occurred among Phase One officers in response to the statement, "When responding to a call or scene, police officers handle the situation to the best of their ability." The officers mostly agreed, on average, with this statement before the dialogues, but after the dialogues, they firmly disagreed (on average). The standard deviation also shows that the responses to this question were much more varied after the dialogues than before. This may be worth future exploration. It could indicate that the officers learned from the youth ways in which they could work better in the community. They may have also become more critical – or more openly critical – of common policing practice.

Phase One Officers' Responses to Statement Prompts

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Prompting Statement	Pre-Mean	Post-Mean	Direction of Change
I want to work with Rochester youth to improve youth-police relations.	4.20	4.60	None
I want to work with other Officers to improve relations with youth.	4.40	4.60	None
I trust youth in Rochester.	2.75	3.00	None
In general, Rochester police officers trust youth.	2.20	2.20	None
As a police officer, I try to understand what youth are going through.	3.80	3.80	None
In general, I feel safe and comfortable dealing with youth.*	3.60	4.00	Agreed more
Youth in Rochester respect the police.	2.00	2.20	None
Youth in Rochester trust the police.	2.00	2.20	None
I respect youth in Rochester.	3.60	3.60	None
Police officers respect the youth in Rochester.	2.60	2.80	None
Relations between youth and police can be improved.**	4.80	4.20	Agreed less
I go out of my way to help youth with their problems, even if it's not technically part of my job.	3.80	3.80	None
Youth and police can work together effectively to help the community.*	4.00	4.60	Agreed more
Most police officers want to help the community.	4.00	4.40	None
Youth in Rochester want to make their community better.*	2.40	3.00	Agreed more
When responding to a call or scene, police officers handle the situation to the best of their ability.**	3.80	2.00	Agreed less
If one of my fellow police officers were disrespecting a youth, I would encourage him/her to act differently.	3.80	4.00	None
The way I treat youth influences how my fellow officers treat youth.***	3.80	4.60	Agreed more
I am aware of the challenges faced by youth in Rochester	N/A	4.20	N/A
I will try harder to establish better communication between myself and youth.	N/A	4.40	N/A
After participating in the youth/police dialogues, I have a better understanding of how youth feel.	N/A	4.60	N/A
I will encourage other officers to participate in youth/police dialogues.	N/A	5.00	N/A

*statistically significant at 0.20 level (less than 20% chance of being due to random variation)

**statistically significant at 0.10 level (less than 10% chance of being due to random variation)

***statistically significant at 0.05 level (less than 5% chance of being due to random variation)

Interestingly, the officers agreed less after the dialogues that relations between youth and police could be improved. Perhaps they sensed the enormity of the problem after going through the dialogues. Further support for this explanation was provided in some of the discussions with the youth and officers discussed in the focus groups. This issue may require more attention in future dialogue sessions to try to leave participants with a stronger sense of hope that their work has impact.

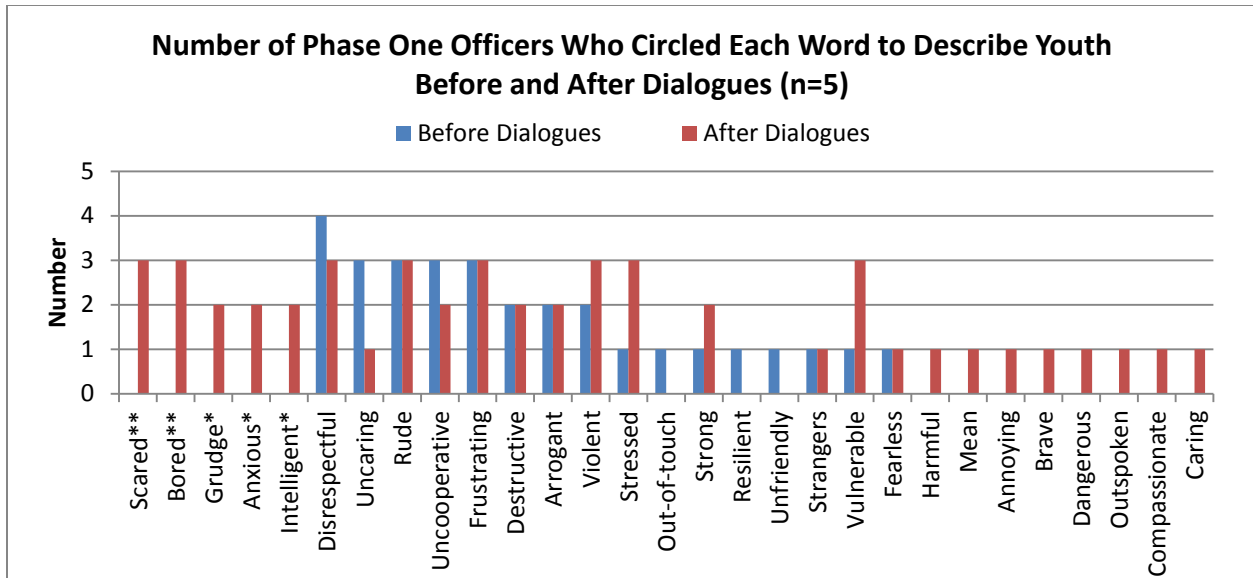
There were somewhat significant shifts in agreement for a few other statements. Officers agreed more that youth in Rochester want to make their community better, that youth and police can work together to help their community, and that the officers felt safe and comfortable dealing with youth. Though only significant at a 0.200 significance level, this shows that officers may have started to see youth as positive forces and indeed partners in their community and that their respect and trust for youth increased (though responses to direct questions about trusting and respecting youth did not change significantly).

Finally, all of the officers reported a desire to work with youth to improve youth-police relations from the beginning. This is expected, since these officers volunteered for this project. They also agreed that they would work with other officers to improve relations with youth. In fact, on the post-survey, all “strongly agreed” that they would encourage other officers to participate in youth/police dialogues.

For the questions only asked on the post-survey, responses showed that the officers felt more aware of the challenges faced by youth and agreed quite strongly that the dialogues gave them a better understanding of how youth feel. They also agreed that they would work to establish better communication between themselves and youth in their work.

Adjective Checklist Results

The officers’ words chosen to describe youth in Rochester were more homogenous than the youth’s and revealed some significant differences between the pre- and post-surveys. In other words, the officers circled fewer words to describe youth than youth circled to describe officers. The chart below shows the number of police officer participants who circled each word.



* = statistically significant below 0.200 level (less than 20% chance of being due to random variation)
 ** = statistically significant below 0.100 level (less than 10% chance of being due to random variation)

The most common words chosen to describe youth were disrespectful, uncaring, rude, uncooperative, and violent. No police officers circled the following words to describe youth, before or after the dialogues: courteous, friendly, respectable, intimidating, cooperative, respectful, weak, engaged, helpful, forgiving, dumb, neighbors, understanding.

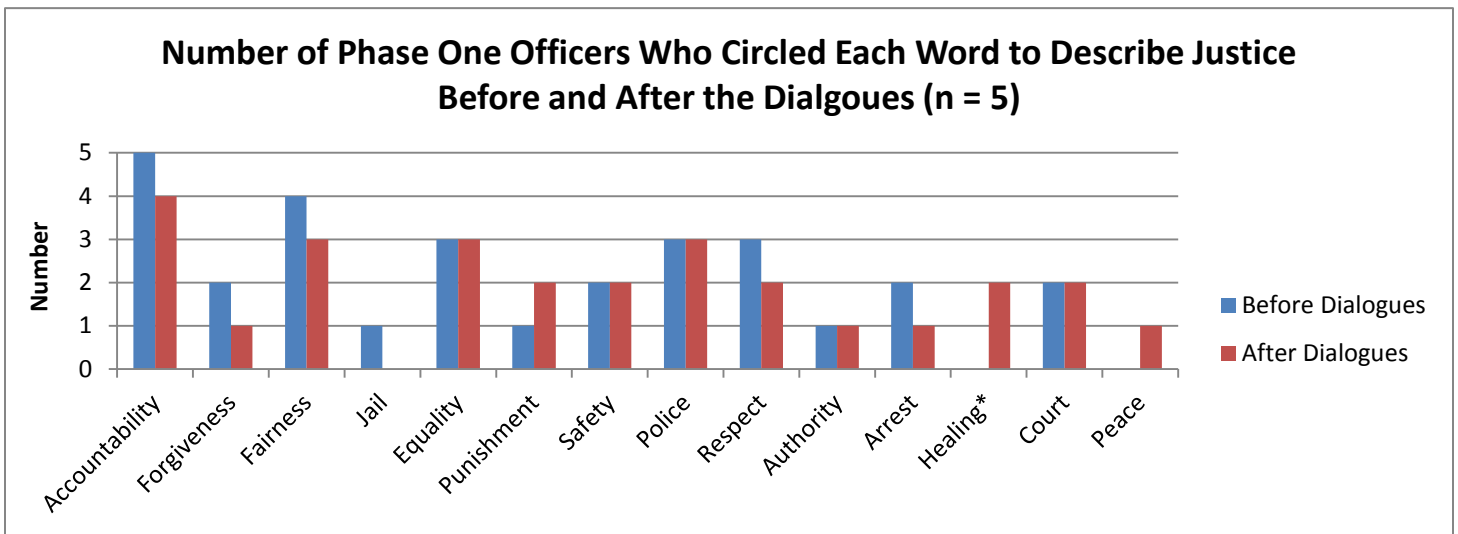
There was, however, a much greater variety of words circled by the officers after the dialogues than before. This in and of itself may indicate that the officers gained a more nuanced perspective of youth by participating in these dialogues. The most significant changes were that three out of the five officers circled the words “bored” and “scared” to describe youth after participating in the dialogues, while none had circled those words before the dialogues. This change was significant at a 0.10 significance level (so it has a less-than-10% chance of being due to random variation).

Also, at a 0.20 significance level, two out of five officers circled the words grudge, anxious, and intelligent to describe youth after participating in the dialogues, while none had circled those words before. While not statistically significant, two additional officers circled “stressed” and “vulnerable” after the dialogues than before, and two less circled “uncaring” after the dialogues than before.

Overall, it seems like officers empathized more with youth after the dialogues, though they still mostly felt that youth were disrespectful, rude, violent, and frustrating, just as they did prior to the dialogues. Their adjectives, though, described more of the emotions and predicaments that youth face after the dialogues, rather than simply focusing on youth’s actions with police.

The officers’ responses when describing justice were again much more homogenous than the youths’ responses. No police officers circled the following words to describe justice, neither before nor after the dialogues: blame, injustice, payback, misunderstanding, race, inequality, powerless, or in trouble. Some of these were also the least-commonly-circled words among the youth participants.

The most common words chosen by officers were accountability, fairness, equality, police, and respect. All of these, except “police,” were also the most common words circled by the Phase One youth. The only change in response among officers that approached statistical significance was that two out of five officers circled the word “healing” to describe justice after the dialogues, while this word was not circled before the dialogues by any officer. There were no other noticeable changes in how Phase One officers described justice.



* = statistically significant at 0.20 level (less than 20% chance of being due to random variation)

Comparing Youth and Officers’ Survey Responses

Next, we compare how youth and officers responded to similar statement prompts to get a sense of the commonalities and differences they face during the dialogues. The table on the next page shows data for only the prompting statements that were similar for the youth and officers. The more asterisks, the more statistically significant the difference was between the youth mean and the officer mean for the given statement. We discuss each significant difference below the table.

Comparing Pre-Means for Youth and Officers and Post-Means for Youth and Officers

* = 0.050 significance level
** = 0.010 significance level

Prompting Statement	Youth Pre-Dialogue Mean	Officer Pre-Dialogue Mean	Youth Post-Dialogue Mean	Officer Post-Dialogue Mean
Youth: I want to work with other youth to improve youth-police relations. Officers: I want to work with youth to improve youth-police relations.	4.00	4.20	4.29	4.60
Youth and police can work together effectively to help the community.	4.00	4.00	4.43	4.60
Youth: I trust the police. Officers: I trust youth in Rochester.	2.38	2.75	2.14	3.00
When they respond to a scene, call, or area, police officers handle the situation well.	2.13**	3.80**	2.00	2.00
Youth: Young people trust the police. Officers: In general, Rochester police officers trust youth.	1.63	2.20	1.29**	2.20**
Youth: In general, I feel safe around police officers. Officers: In general, I feel safe and comfortable dealing with youth.	3.13	3.60	2.71*	4.00*
Youth in Rochester respect the police.	1.63	2.00	1.29**	2.20**
Most officers want to help the community.	2.38**	4.00**	2.50**	4.40**
Youth: Most police officers trust young people. Officers: In general, Rochester police officers trust youth.	2.00	2.20	1.86	2.20
Youth: The way I treat police influences how my peers act towards police officers. Officers: The way I treat youth influences how my fellow officers treat youth.	2.75	3.80	3.00*	4.60*
Youth: I respect the police. Officers: I respect youth in Rochester.	3.13	3.60	3.29	3.60
Police Officers respect the youth in Rochester.	2.13	2.60	1.71*	2.80*
Relations between youth and police can be improved.	4.13	4.80	4.29	4.20
Youth: If my friend was disrespecting a police officer, I would encourage him or her to act differently. Officers: If one of my fellow officers were disrespecting a youth, I would encourage him or her to act differently.	4.00	3.80	4.00	4.00

Prompting Statement	Youth Pre-Dialogue Mean	Officer Pre-Dialogue Mean	Youth Post-Dialogue Mean	Officer Post-Dialogue Mean
Youth: I am aware of the challenges faced by officers in Rochester. Officers: I am aware of the challenges faced by youth in Rochester.	N/A	N/A	2.71**	4.20**
I will try harder to establish better communication between myself and youth/officers.	N/A	N/A	4.14	4.40
After participating in the youth-police dialogues, I have a better understanding of how youth/officers feel.	N/A	N/A	2.71*	4.60*
I will encourage other youth/officers to participate in the youth-police dialogues.	N/A	N/A	4.00*	5.00*

First, the youth’s responses were much more widely dispersed than the officers’. Before the dialogues, officers felt that officers as a whole handle responding to calls significantly better than youth thought they did. After the dialogues, this difference disappeared, and both groups thought that officers did not handle calls for service well.

The youth felt that their peers trust police much less than officers felt *their* peers (other officers) trust youth. This was seen both before and after the dialogues, though the difference was stronger after the dialogues. Both before and after the dialogues, the youth felt less safe around officers than the officers did around youth. This difference was stronger after the dialogues.

Both before and after the dialogues, the officers felt significantly more strongly than youth did that most police officers wanted to help the community.

Both groups agreed more after the dialogues that the way they treat the other group influenced how their peers would treat the other group. However, the officers agreed significantly more strongly with this statement after the dialogues than the youth did, while there was no significant difference between the youth’s and officers’ responses prior to the dialogues.

The youth felt less respected by police officers after the dialogues, while the officers agreed more that most police respect youth. Thus, the difference in how much they felt police as a whole respected youth were significantly different after the dialogues but not before.

The last four questions were only asked on the post-survey, taken after the dialogues. The officers felt significantly more aware of the youth’s issues than the youth felt they were aware of the officers’ issues. Similarly, the officers agreed more strongly that they understood how youth

felt than the youth understood how officers felt. This difference could, though, speak more towards the youths' general pessimism and overall lower agreement with statements than it does to any effect of the dialogues themselves. Finally, the officers reported being significantly more willing to encourage their peers to participate in these dialogues than the youth did, though both agreed they would encourage peers to participate.

Despite these differences, there are some commonalities between the groups that are worth noting. Both groups wanted to work to improve youth-police relations, and both felt that youth and police could work together to help their community. Yet interestingly, there were statistically equivalent levels of distrust between the youth and police. (In other words, the youth reported distrusting the police just as much as the police reported distrusting the youth.) Likewise, both groups were neutral about respecting the other group as a whole when overtly asked, both before and after the dialogues. They both, however, agreed that youth-police relations could be improved, and they both agreed to work harder to establish better communication between the groups.

Phase One youth and officers expressed very similar ideas about justice on the adjective checklists. The major difference on both adjective checklists was that officers' responses were more homogenous than the youths'; in other words, the youth, as a group, had a wider range of opinions about justice and about officers. Both groups most commonly chose negative words to describe one another, but both made some progress in terms of describing each other in more empathic ways after the dialogues.

Phase Two Survey Results

Youth Survey Results

Youth Sample Size

The pre-surveys for the youth were completed on December 12, 2013 at the beginning of their second orientation session. All of the 11 original youth organizers completed a pre-survey and completed all questions. Because only seven youth organizers participated in the dialogues in March 2014, there were only seven post-survey responses. Unfortunately, due to the anonymity of the surveys, the researchers could not discard the responses on the pre-surveys for the youth who did not participate in the dialogues.

Youth Demographics

The eleven original youth participants consisted of six females and five males. One youth was Hispanic, while the rest were African-American. By the time the dialogues began, the Hispanic

youth left the program, leaving seven African-Americans. Four female youths and three male youths participated in the dialogues.

Youth Responses to Statement Prompts

The table below shows the levels of agreement youth reported for each statement prompt. There were a few statistically significant changes from the pre-survey to the post-survey. Youth agreed more after the dialogues that officers try to understand what youth are going through. They agreed more after the dialogues that young people in Rochester trust and respect the police. However, they were less inclined after the dialogues to want to work with other youth to improve youth-police relations or to believe that youth and police could work together to effectively help the community.

It seems as though the youth responded more positively to less direct questions, say, about how they think other youth feel, than they did to questions directly asking how they would act or think. This may be because they felt disconnected and standoffish with the officers in the dialogues (see the focus group section later in this report), but they still learned quite a bit about how officers go about their jobs. This may have changed some of their views in subtle ways.

Overall, the responses from youth were largely neutral to negative on the statement prompts. However, they agreed that they would encourage other youth to participate in these dialogue sessions. The youth seemed to be willing to encourage their peers to respect officers – a feeling which grew somewhat stronger on the post-survey. The youth also acknowledged that the way they treat the police in the presence of their friends could influence how their friends treat police.

Phase Two Youth Responses to Statement Prompts (n=6)

(A mean of 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Statement Prompt	Pre-Mean	Post-Mean	Direction of Change
I want to work with other youth to improve youth-police relations. *	3.91	3.43	Agreed less
Youth and police can work together effectively to help the community. *	4.18	3.57	Agreed less
I am excited about working with police officers to improve youth-police relations	3.64	N/A	N/A
I enjoyed working with police officers to improve youth-police relations.	N/A	3.29	N/A
Most police officers try to understand what youth are going through. **	2.27	2.86	Agreed more
I trust the police.	2.45	2.14	None
When they respond to a scene or area, police officers handle the situation well.	2.64	2.86	None
In general, young people trust the police. *	1.36	1.86	Agreed more
In general, I feel safe around police officers.	3.00	3.00	None
Youth in Rochester respect the police. *	1.55	2.00	Agreed more
Most police officers want to help the community.	2.91	2.86	None
Most police officers trust young people.	1.64	1.86	None
The way I treat police influences how my peers act towards police officers.	3.36	3.86	None
I respect the police.	3.27	3.43	None
If I or someone I knew was in immediate danger of being hurt, I would approach a police officer for help.	4.09	3.86	None
Police officers respect youth in Rochester.	2.18	2.00	None
Relations between youth and police can be improved.	3.91	4.00	None
If my friend was disrespecting a police officer, I would encourage him or her to act differently.	3.91	4.00	None
I am aware of the challenges faced by police in Rochester.	N/A	2.86	N/A
I will try harder to establish better communication between myself and the police.	N/A	2.71	N/A
After participating in these dialogues, I have a better understanding of how police feel.	N/A	2.43	N/A
I will encourage other youth to participate in youth/police dialogues.	N/A	4.00	N/A

* = statistically significant below 0.200 level (less than 20% chance of being due to random variation)

** = statistically significant below 0.100 level (less than 10% chance of being due to random variation)

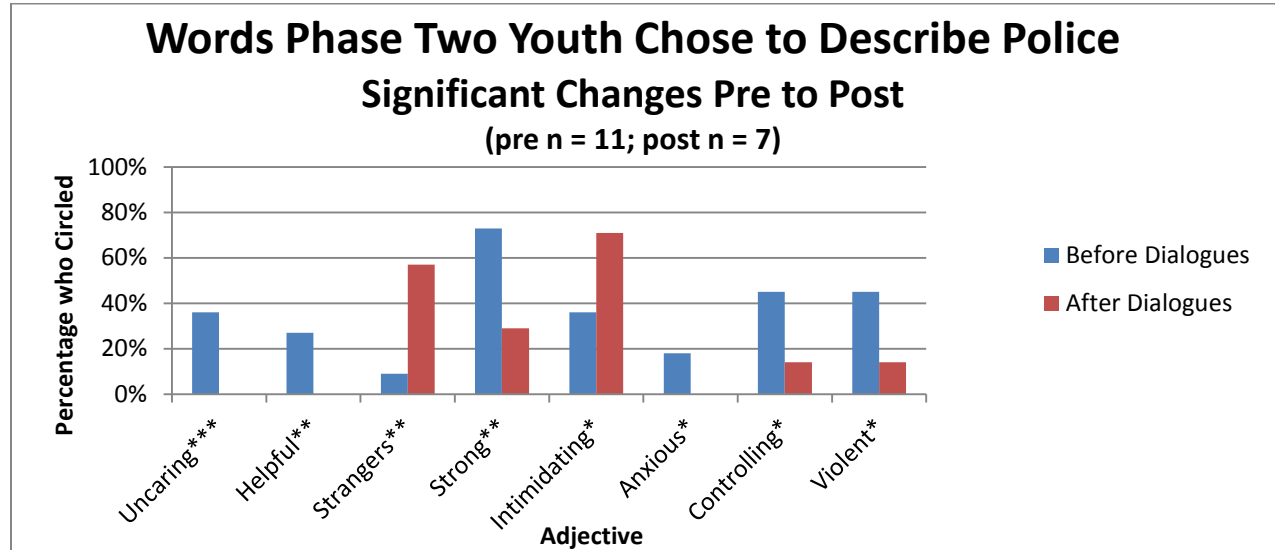
Youth Adjective Checklist Responses

On both surveys, Phase Two youth were asked to circle words to describe the police. No youth felt that police were respectable, compassionate, vulnerable, resilient, or understanding, neither before nor after the dialogues.

Figures 1 and 2 show the percentage of youth who circled each word to describe officers before and after the Phase Two dialogue series. Figure 1 shows the words that yielded significant changes from the pre- to post-survey. Significantly more youth thought that police were strangers and intimidating after the dialogues and less felt they were helpful. In contrast, significantly *less* youth felt police were uncaring, strong, anxious, controlling, and violent after going through the dialogues.

Figure 2 displays the words for which the percentage did not differ significantly before and after the dialogues. These words are displayed in order of the most commonly-chosen words on the pre-survey. While not statistically significant, more youth after the dialogues felt officers were out-of-touch, and more realized officers are stressed. The most common words chosen by Phase Two youth to describe police included disrespectful, rude, mean, strong, and intimidating.

Figure 1

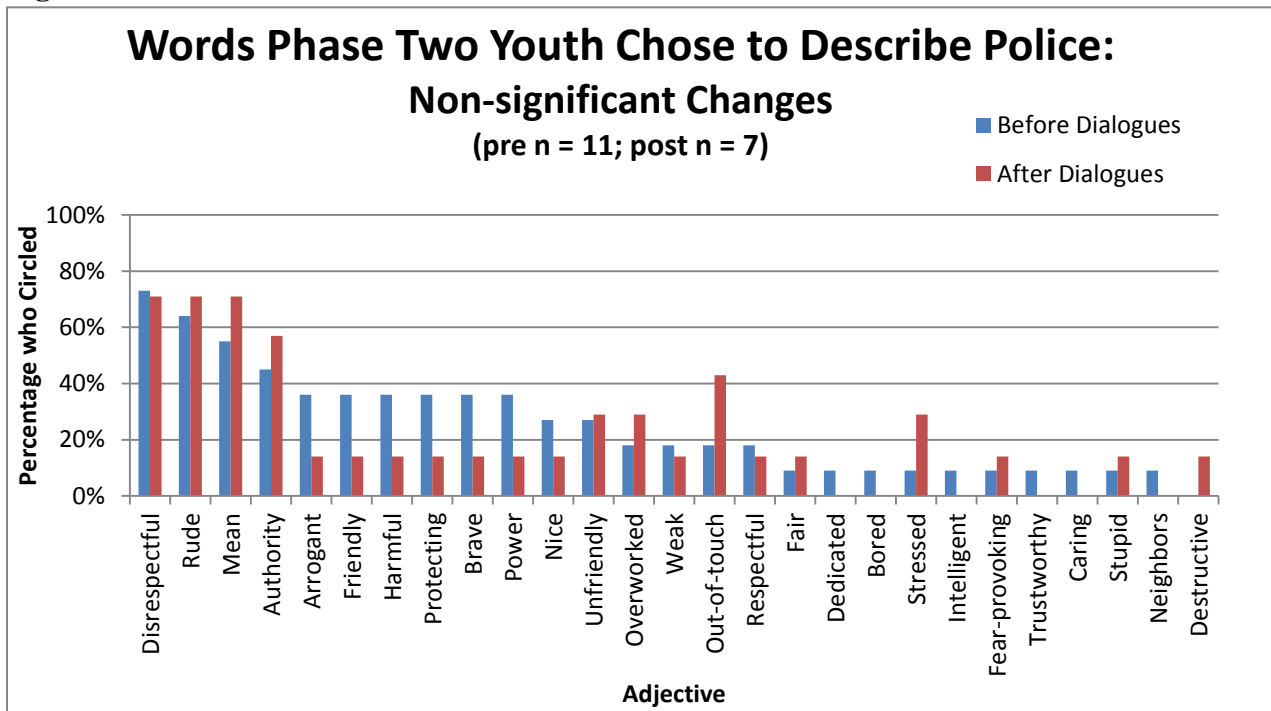


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*** = statistically significant below 0.050 level (less than 5% chance of being due to random variation)

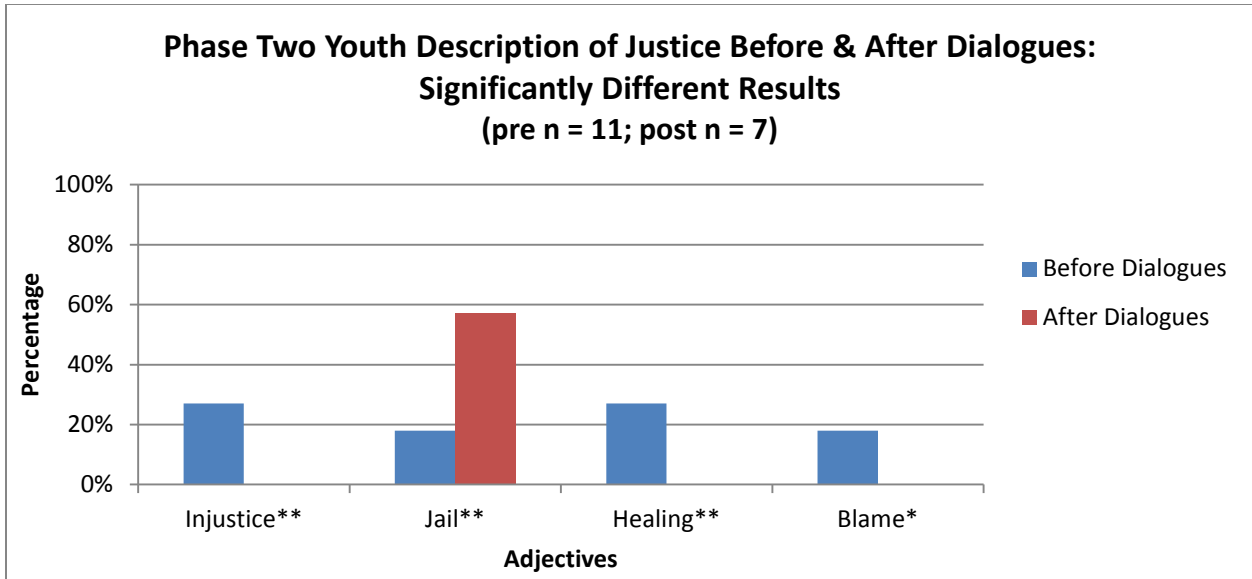
Figure 2



On the pre-survey, five words were not circled by any youth to describe police, but on the post survey, the number increased to 14 words. Thus, the youth chose a much smaller set of words to describe police after the dialogues, but this could be because four less youth took the post-survey than the pre-survey. Overall, the responses after the dialogues expressed a slightly more negative view of the police than the responses before the dialogues. It is not wise to attribute this to the dialogues themselves, though, because of the large change in the composition of the youth sample.

In regards to the word justice, all of the words were circled by at least one person on the pre- or post-survey. Figure 3 shows the words that resulted in statistically significant changes. While more youth circled “jail” to describe justice on the post-survey than on the pre-survey and less youth circled “healing,” less youth also chose injustice and blame. Therefore, results are mixed.

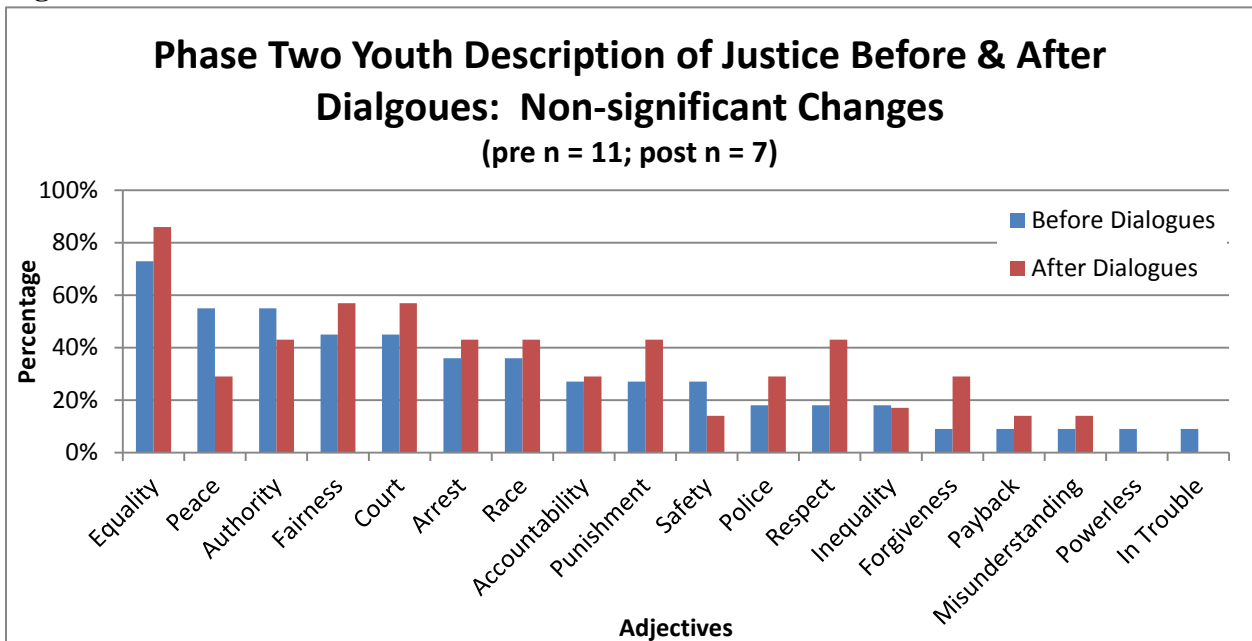
Figure 3



* = statistically significant below 0.200 level (less than 20% chance of being due to random variation)
 ** = statistically significant below 0.100 level (less than 10% chance of being due to random variation)

Figure 4 shows the other words circled by youth to describe justice, but the changes from pre- to post-survey were not statistically significant. They are listed in order of the most-circled words on the pre-survey. Equality was by far the most common word chosen by Phase Two youth to describe justice.

Figure 4



Officer Survey Results

Officer Sample Size

All seven Phase Two officer participants completed the pre-survey at their orientation session (whether at the scheduled orientation session or the one right before the first dialogue). Six of the officers completed the post-survey at the officers' focus group, but one did not attend. That officer also did not complete the post-survey through e-mail upon request. Thus, there are only six of the seven post-surveys available for analysis.

Officer Demographics

The officer participants consisted of six males and one female. One male and the one female officer were African-American, while the rest were Caucasian. It is important to note, since being from Rochester seemed important to the youth in addition to race, that the two African-American officers in the group were not originally from the Rochester area.

Officers' Responses to Statement Prompts

In terms of how they responded to the statement prompts, Phase Two officers were generally more positive than the youth. The table on the next page shows the average responses from the officers from before and after the dialogues. The only somewhat significant change in response from the pre-survey to the post-survey was that officers felt less inclined to want to work with other officers to improve relations with youth after going through the dialogues.

While the officers did not feel like youth trusted them or that officers *trusted* youth, they felt that police officers do at least somewhat *respect* youth. The officers definitively felt like they personally respected youth. They expressed continued desire to work with youth to improve relations, but they were not very inclined to encourage other officers to participate in the dialogues. They were neutral as to whether the dialogues helped them better understand how youth feel. Nonetheless, they were hopeful that they would continue to act in their jobs in respectful ways towards youth and that there was hope in improving youth-police relations.

Phase Two Officer Responses to Statement Prompts

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Question	Pre-Mean	Post-Mean	Direction of Change
I want to work with Rochester youth to improve youth-police relations.	4.71	4.50	None
I want to work with other Officers to improve relations with youth.*	4.71	4.33	Agreed less
I trust youth in Rochester.	2.71	2.83	None
In general, Rochester police officers trust youth.	2.43	2.50	None
As a police officer, I try to understand what youth are going through.	4.57	4.17	None
In general, I feel safe and comfortable dealing with youth.	3.57	3.83	None
Youth in Rochester respect the police.	1.83	2.33	None
Youth in Rochester trust the police.	2.00	2.50	None
I respect youth in Rochester.	4.00	4.00	None
Police officers respect the youth in Rochester.	3.29	3.33	None
Relations between youth and police can be improved.	4.14	4.33	None
I go out of my way to help youth with their problems, even if it's not technically part of my job.	4.14	3.83	None
Youth and police can work together effectively to help the community.	4.43	4.67	None
Most police officers want to help the community.	4.43	4.33	None
Youth in Rochester want to make their community better.	2.71	3.00	None
When responding to a call or scene, police officers handle the situation to the best of their ability.	4.43	4.00	None
If one of my fellow police officers were disrespecting a youth, I would encourage him/her to act differently.	4.14	4.33	None
The way I treat youth influences how my fellow officers treat youth.	4.00	4.00	None
I am aware of the challenges faced by youth in Rochester	N/A	3.33	N/A
I will try harder to establish better communication between myself and youth.	N/A	4.40	N/A
After participating in the youth/police dialogues, I have a better understanding of how youth feel.	N/A	3.00	N/A
I will encourage other officers to participate in youth/police dialogues.	N/A	2.83	N/A

* = statistically significant below 0.200 level (less than 20% chance of being due to random variation)

Statistically significant changes occurred as to how often officers had positive and negative interactions with youth. Apparently, officers had significantly more positive interactions with youth by the end of the dialogues, but also significantly more negative interactions. Interestingly, they reported that all other officers also had more positive and more negative experiences with youth. This could show that officers realized what constitutes a good and bad interaction and realized they had more of each, or that by going through these dialogues, they have now had more of all types of interactions with youth.

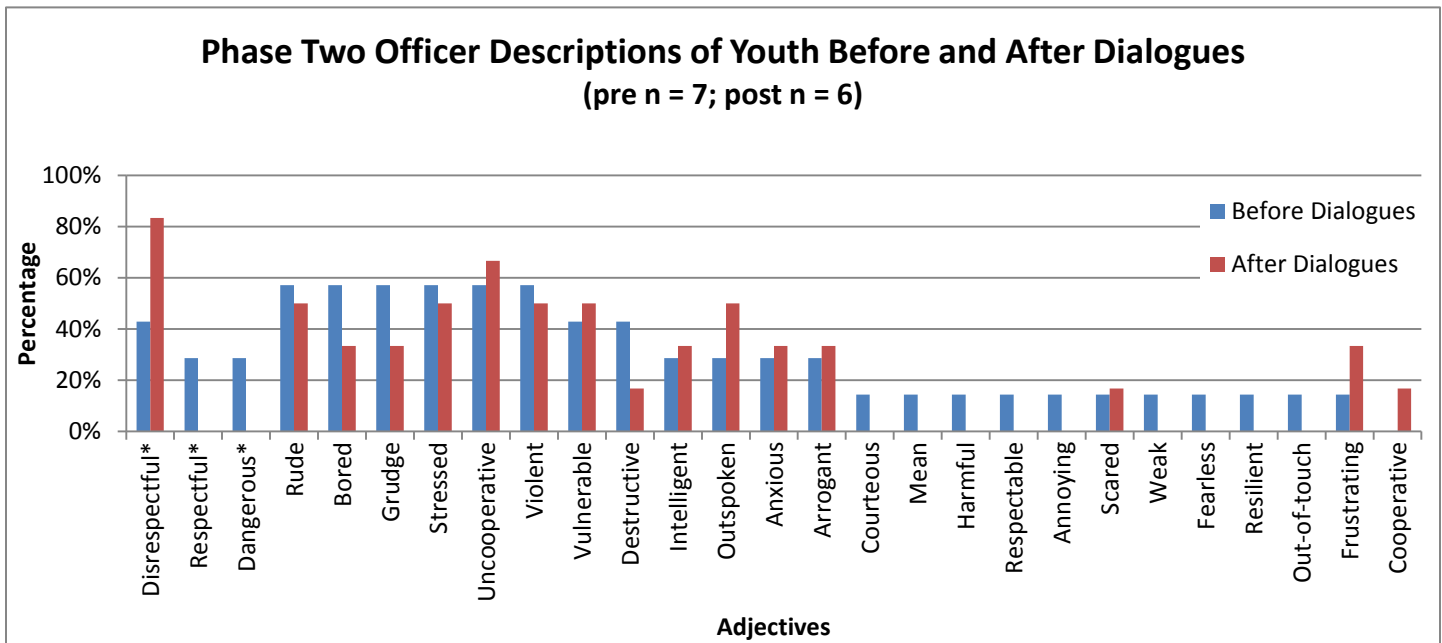
Officer Adjective Checklist Responses

On the surveys, the officers were asked to circle words to describe the youth in Rochester. There were many words that officers did not circle on either survey. No officers felt that youth were friendly, brave, engaged, helpful, compassionate, caring, forgiving, strong, neighbors, or understanding. On a more positive note, no officers felt youth were intimidating, uncaring, unfriendly, strangers, or dumb.

Figure 5 shows the percentage of officers who circled each other word before and after the dialogues. Significantly more of the officers felt that youth were disrespectful after the dialogues, while significantly less felt they were dangerous. Also, after the dialogues, slightly more officers found the youth to be uncooperative and outspoken. Fewer officers felt youth were bored, held grudges, or were destructive after they went through the dialogues, though these differences were not statistically significant and could be due to any other factor. It is important to note that both youths and officers think that the other lacks understanding.

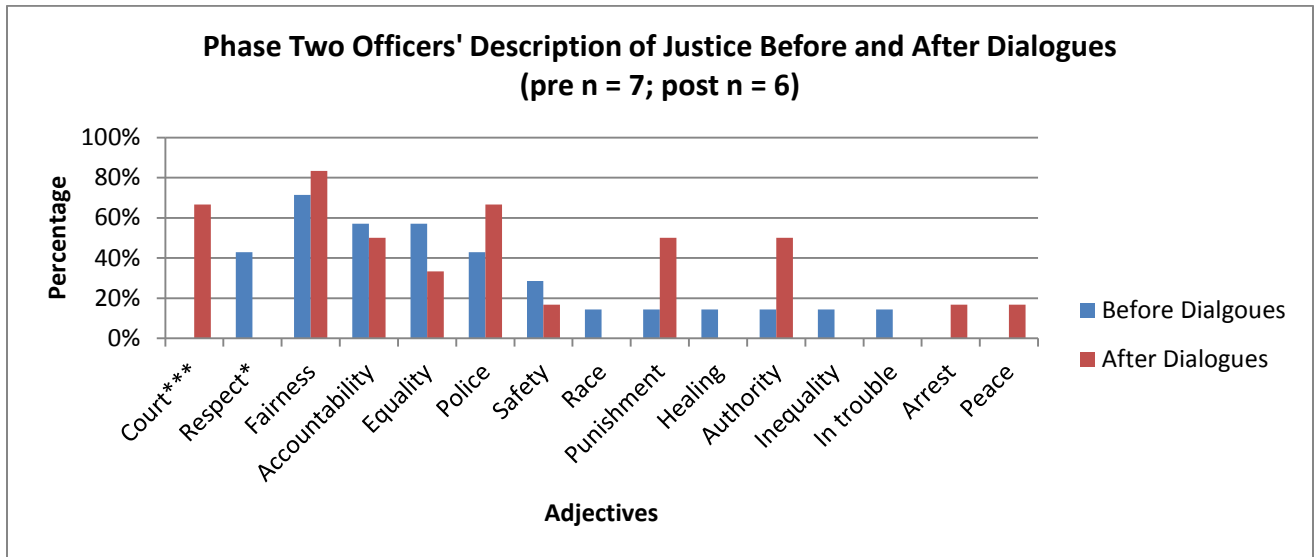
A much larger variety of words were circled by officers before the Phase Two dialogues than after, just like with the youth, but the composition of the officer group did not change from pre- to post-survey. Therefore, we can conjecture that the officers' gained a broader picture of youth than they had prior to participating in the dialogues.

Figure 5



In describing justice (Figure 6), no officers chose forgiveness, blame, injustice, jail, payback, misunderstanding, or powerless. Over half of officers described justice using the words fairness, accountability, and equality. The only statistically significant changes between the pre- and the post-survey were that no officers used the word “court” to describe justice before the dialogues, while two thirds of them chose it after the dialogues ($p < 0.05$). Also, less of the officers chose the word respect to describe justice after the dialogues. Though not statistically significant, more officers described justice using the words authority and punishment after the dialogues.

Figure 6



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*** = statistically significant below 0.050 level (less than 5% chance of being due to random variation)

Comparing Phase Two Youth and Officers

Officers circled far fewer words to describe youth on the pre-survey than youth circled to describe officers. On the pre-survey, no youth or officer circled the word compassionate to describe each other. Five out of 11 youths (46%) circled the word violent to describe officers. Four out of seven officers (57%) circled the word violent to describe youths. According to this, more officers consider youth violent than youth consider police violent. In addition, the most common words circled by both groups on the pre-survey were violent, bored, disrespectful, anxious, mean, strong, harmful, weak, stressed, anxious, and arrogant. On the post-survey, both groups commonly thought the other group was disrespectful and rude. Far fewer youth felt officers were violent, but the officers continued to describe youth as violent.

As in Phase One, the youth in Phase Two expressed a much more negative outlook in general than the officers did on the statement prompts. Much else remained the same as Phase One in terms of how differently the youth and police responded.

Open-Ended Survey Questions

The open-ended questions asked on the pre-surveys were different from those asked on the post-surveys. Whenever it made sense, youth and police were asked the same questions.

Prior Youth-Police Activities

When asked to describe prior participation in youth-police activities, five out of the eight youth in Phase One had prior participation in some type of youth-police activity, while the other three reported no prior participation. Two had participated in Teen Empowerment's Youth-Police Dialogues in prior years, and another youth had been involved in Teen Empowerment's youth-police symposium.

Four out of the five Phase One officers had done some type of activities with youth before. They included scuba demonstration events, Police Activity League events, speaking at city schools, mentoring or coaching students, criminal justice camp, and the police explorers program. Overall, it seems like the officers had primarily participated in activities with younger youth or with youth who were interested in criminal justice as a career. Those who had been involved with coaching or mentoring students did not specify how old those students were.

In Phase Two, three of the seven officers had never participated in any activities with youth in their job as officers. One had gone to an event at the Rochester School for the Deaf. Two had done Police Activities League (PAL) events, and one participated in Phase One of the Teen Empowerment Youth-Police Dialogues. For the most part, these officers had little personal contact with teenagers outside of their patrol.

Similarly, eight out of the eleven original youth in Phase Two had never participated in youth-police activities. Two youth participated in a Police/Youth Summit a few years ago, which was the culmination of another series of dialogues that Teen Empowerment held. Another youth participated in a Peace March, and one participated in a focus group that talked about violence.

Overall, the officer participants had very little prior contact with youth in general or teenagers in particular outside their regular jobs. Most of the youth in Phase One had already participated in youth-police dialogues, while very few of the youth in Phase Two had done such an activity. This may help explain why there were more significant changes among Phase Two youth in our survey results than there were for Phase One youth: Phase One youth perhaps had already learned many of the lessons, affecting their pre-survey responses.

Why participate?

When asked why they wanted to participate in the program, both officers and youth shared a desire to get to know each other and to work together to improve the community. They wanted to break down stereotypes.

In Phase One, some officers wanted to “dispel myths” and teach the youth why officers do what they do, and one youth mentioned specifically being interested in learning about officers’ actions. The youth wanted to teach the officers about themselves and why they feel the way they do about police, and the police reported being interested in learning this as well. They all wanted to improve communication and the working relationship between the youth and police, citing the dialogues as an opportunity to communicate in ways that are not normally available to them. One youth specifically said that they want to “have a different perspective of police.”

In Phase Two, one officer wanted to participate “so I can connect with youth in my area, and thus I would become better at my job.” Another officer responded, “I want to show some of Rochester’s youth that not all police officers fit the stereotype they are often labeled as.” One more officer stated, “My interactions with youth mainly consist of domestic issues. I hope to speak with youth about other issues they have with police, and how our relationship can be improved.”

A youth in Phase Two wanted to participate because, “I feel as if youth and police have a negative relationship, and that neither youth respect police and visa-versa. I would like to see that changed.” Another youth responded, “Because I had a bad altercation with a police officer before, and I think a lot of the police out there don’t respect youth.” Another youth stated, “I want the police to do their jobs, and teens to stop acting up.”

Defining Respect

It was found that both the police officers and youth had similar responses when asked to define the word respect on their pre-surveys. For example, the majority of respondents for both groups in both phases said that respect is treating someone the way you would like to be treated. A youth in Phase One felt that respect is earned rather than simply given. An officer in Phase One wrote that, “Respect varies, depending on age/gender, but always with kindness and dignity.” Similarly, one youth in Phase Two defined respect as “a mutual feeling shown between people who may not share the same views, but agree to disagree.”

Willingness to Share

When asked about their willingness to share their experiences with the other group, both groups in Phase One expressed a desire to improve or change youth-police relations and to understand each other. Many participants, whether youth or officers, simply stated that their experiences and their awareness of the tension between youth and police made them willing and able to participate. Some of the youth recognized that they were willing to participate because they “don’t get along well with police” and wanted to see that change. They stressed the importance of all participants being open-minded and honest if any progress was to be made.

Several Phase One participants expressed a righteous or moral stance, saying they were able to participate by “being bold, and standing up for what’s right” (a youth). In contrast, another youth said they were willing to participate because it was “my job.” The officers often expressed duty, stating that, “Police play [an] important role in shaping the relationship of police/youth. I feel it is important to improve it.” Another said, “I believe it will help youth understand that all police are not just a badge.”

In Phase Two, one officer responded, “If my experience in any area is able to help anyone, or I can learn from others, I am open to it.” Another officer felt “this would give me the ability to be open with the kids, and them with me.” A youth participant in Phase Two felt that “everyone needs to know about how youth feel about police.” Another youth was “tired of them same outcome when I don’t speak.” Another expressed a desire to change the community in which he or she lived as to “how we approach the police.” One youth was willing to share his or her thoughts “because I had bad and good experiences with police. I know there are some police officers that are nice out there.”

Why Participants Were Willing to Listen

When asked why they are willing to listen to the opinions of police officers, the Phase One youth had varying responses. Most said they wanted a better relationship with officers or thought they could learn from the officers and in turn help others work with officers better. Some youth said that they were not willing to listen to the officers, while others said they were willing to listen simply “because it matters.” Similarly, youth in Phase Two were willing to listen to police to gain a better understanding of police. One youth stated that “maybe other people’s opinions are also valuable” and that “if more people talk, more people listen.” One youth wanted to see if the officers would tell the truth about how they feel about youth. Insightfully, another youth was willing to listen “because we are all people, and there are always three sides to a story: mine, the police, and the truth.”

When asked why they were willing to listen to the opinions and feelings of youth, the Phase One officers expressed wanting to achieve better understanding and better relationships with youth, in addition to increasing youth cooperation with police. They felt that they could learn from the youth and could in turn do their jobs better. One put it well: “If you can’t understand where others are coming from, you can’t help them.” Five of the seven Phase Two officers also reported a desire for understanding youth better.

On the post-survey, only the youth were asked this question again. When asked why they had been willing to listen to officers’ opinions in the dialogues, three Phase One youth cited a desire to get a better mutual understanding, as indicated before. One youth wanted to give the officers a chance to speak their minds. Another youth commented, “[Because] we all are similar in one

way or another. Our feelings about officers can be changed [because] of the conversations, interactions, dialogues. Relationships are built, respect is gained, and solutions/problems in your life or community can be decreased.” Another youth was willing to listen, “To get them to see how I work, and what I do around the community, and let it be known to improve.” One youth in Phase Two found he or she was willing to listen “to compare who has a harder walk through life.” Another wanted to know what motivated the officers. It seems that the youth had a lot more to say in response to this question after the dialogues than before.

Most Important Lesson from These Dialogues

On the post survey, respondents were asked what the most important aspect of these dialogues had been for them. Phase One youth replied that they have a better understanding of police, they had a chance to voice their opinions, and they realize that police are human just like them. In other words, they saw a different side of the police. One youth was simply glad to see “that we met with police and got along with them with no problems.” One youth stated that the most important thing was that “there is a possibility and an opportunity that we as a community can improve in police relationships.” Finally, one wrote, “The most important thing I got out of the police dialogue was that police are always under peer pressure, and that they have somewhat hard lives, like us youth do. And, they respect us more than we thought police did.”

The Phase Two youth gained insight into how police think about youth and broke down some stereotypes. One youth learned “how some of the police were kind and respectful, and how they were cool and friendly at times.” Another learned from the officers “how they felt youth treated them.”

The Phase One police officers felt the most important result was that the dialogues gave them the opportunity to learn from youth. They were able to understand better what they go through and “why youth see police the way they do.” Another officer felt it was most useful to learn how much the youth wanted “officers to be more understanding and explanative with them.” Phase Two officers learned powerful lessons, such as realizing that the “majority of youth actually care about their community” and that many “youth worry about similar issues that I worry about.” One connected a lot of what they learned to the powerful preconceived notions created by the media. An officer learned that police are “fighting an uphill battle” in working to change perceptions.

Challenges

When asked on the post survey about challenges they faced participating in the dialogues, two youth in Phase One responded that there was nothing difficult. Another commented that their dislike for officers made it difficult to fully participate. One youth suggested having more events

with both youth and officers such as neighborhood block parties. In Phase Two, challenges the youth faced included not feeling like “the whole truth was being told.” Others were challenged by “the officers’ reaction to certain questions and attitude” and “knowing that they didn’t care about us, and how we feel” because “they were too laid back.” Finally, one youth found it difficult to connect with the police.

The Phase One officers responded to this question with suggestions to stay on topic and allocate more time for certain discussions. In addition, one officer questioned the effect the dialogues could have on youth and officers outside of the group. The same officer suggested having longer sessions with more straightforward questions rather than multiple questions for each task. The officers further suggested possibly walking in the neighborhood with the youth organizers, so that their efforts to heal relations could be seen by other youth, “which would hopefully help transfer the effects of their improved relationship to youth and police outside the group.” They acknowledged, though, that this might put the youth in difficult situations with their peers. Finally, one officer expressed frustration and powerlessness in their ability to help the youth: “It’s difficult to hear how some of them have had it and/or have it, and it’s challenging because most of it is not something I can directly impact.” Some officers agreed with this sentiment in Phase Two. Another Phase Two officer responded that “getting youth/officers to open up and be honest was difficult.”

What Participants Learned

The surveys asked participants what they had learned from going through the dialogues. In the Phase One group, two youth learned that officers have some of the same struggles and issues as they do. Two youth acknowledged that officers have policies and rules to follow and face getting in trouble too. They learned how police get their calls and information. Another youth acknowledged that not every officer is “out to get you, and that some do care about the community and love to be involved with programs like Teen Empowerment to... get opinions from youth like us.” Another youth was happy to hear about the officers’ volunteer work and that the officers listened to what the youth had to say about their community. The youth in Phase Two reported learning that police are very stressed and that both youth and police can be victims. Youth learned why officers react the ways they do.

Officers in both phases reported learning that the youth really care about improving youth-police relations, their personal situations, and their community. One Phase One officer described this:

“Prior to the project, I have only come across mostly youth that convey an attitude that they do not care about life, and do not care about the community. It was nice to meet with youth that I could tell cared about their lives, and cared about the community they live in. I also learned a lot about the frustrations they have faced as they grew up and that they face on a day to day basis.”

Another officer acknowledged that, “There are a lot of good kids in the community who get swept up in the negative behaviors of a few.” Another officer commented that, “These kids are articulate, smart, and have to deal with lots of shit to just get through the day.” Another learned that “most of the youth... do not want any interaction [with police] whatsoever.” He understood but felt that “the barrier to effective communication needs to be broken.” Another officer learned that “race plays a larger role in police/youth relationships than I thought.” More critically, one officer learned that “the youth are struggling to define themselves and their futures. The youth are misinformed.” Another stated, “That deep down, they are afraid, and looking for guidance.”

Expanding the Project within Law Enforcement

Officers were asked how they saw this project expanding with the police department. One suggested billboards and advertising. Another thought it should be held “in a larger setting” and “include more students to get more points of view.” One officer wrote, “I think officers should be required to meet with the community, including youth, on a more regular basis, possibly setting up a few hours a week for officers to respond to community events, in addition to rotating officers, youth, and other community members to improve relations. I wish more youth had a similar attitude that the youth involved in this project had.” One officer stated, “The more people on each side get involved, the bigger the impact. That said, both sides have to really want it.” Another acknowledged that more knowledge and understanding will be gained with more dialogues, which will lead to greater compassion. Some suggested making the groups bigger and then following-up after the project ends. Another officer believed that more police departments besides the City of Rochester should be involved with these groups, since many city kids are moving or traveling into suburbs, and cops there “don’t have a clue” what they go through.

Contrasting the Dialogue Phases

There were some important differences between Phase One and Phase Two of this Youth-Police Dialogue program.

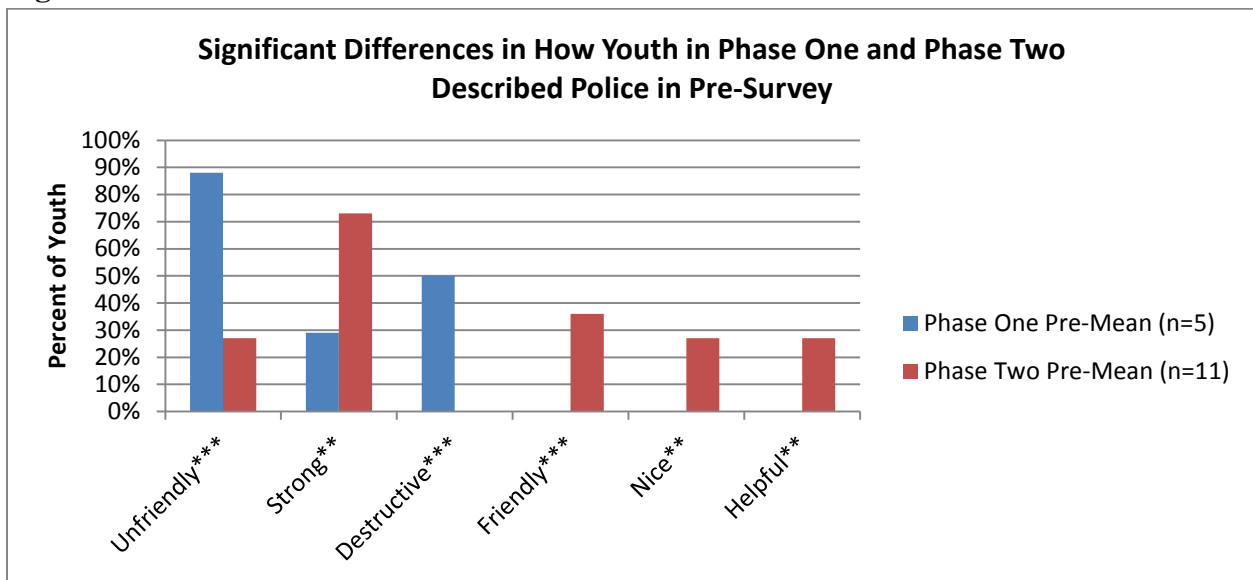
First, youth were recruited to participate in different ways and for different purposes. Phase One youth were brought in specifically for the youth-police dialogues. Many of them had participated in dialogue activities before, and many of them also had prior negative experiences with police. Phase Two youth, on the other hand, were hired by Teen Empowerment to organize around a range of issues affecting youth, with the youth-police dialogues being just a part of their work. They did not have as many strong feelings about police as the Phase One youth did, and they were also juggling many other responsibilities with Teen Empowerment at the time that they were participating in the dialogues.

Also, facilitators felt it was detrimental to the second phase of dialogues for two of the officers to have missed the preparation sessions. They felt this created some tension and defensiveness, even though they tried to address it. There were more attendance issues in general among the officers in the second phase, which seemed to affect the group dynamics heavily. It is likely that these factors added to some of the other issues that were relevant as discussed above, only exacerbating the poor “vibe” of the second phase.

The survey results revealed that both the youth and officers in Phase Two started out with more positive outlook on one another than did the participants in Phase One. This, for the youth, was only evident in how they responded to the adjective checklists. We conducted significance tests to compare pre-survey average responses between Phase One and Phase Two respondents.

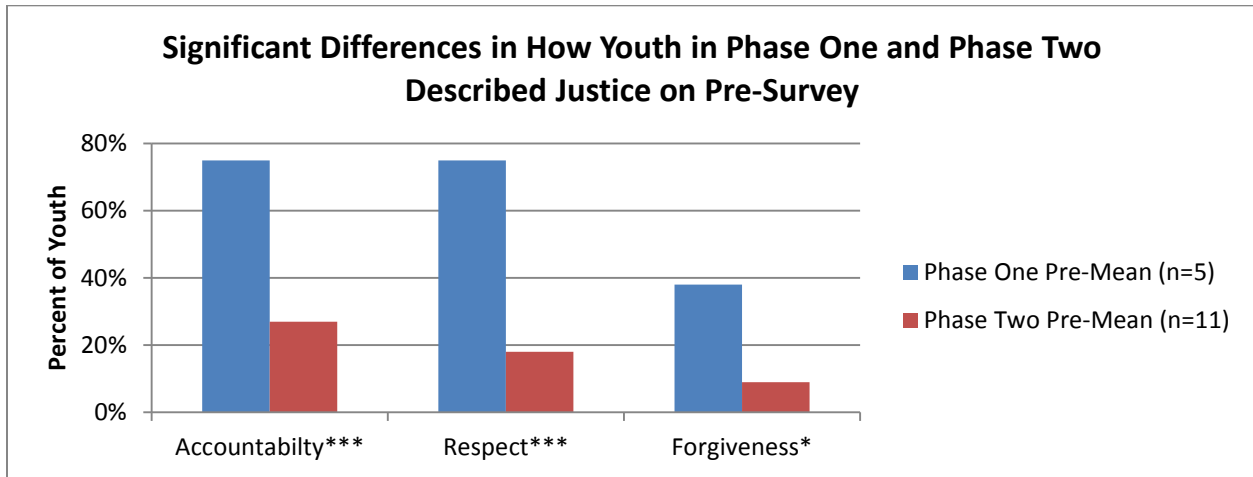
Figure 7 shows the significant differences in how youth in each phase described officers. Phase Two youth were significantly more likely to describe police in positive terms, such as strong, friendly, nice, and helpful. They were less likely to choose negative words compared to Phase One youth, such as unfriendly and destructive.

Figure 7



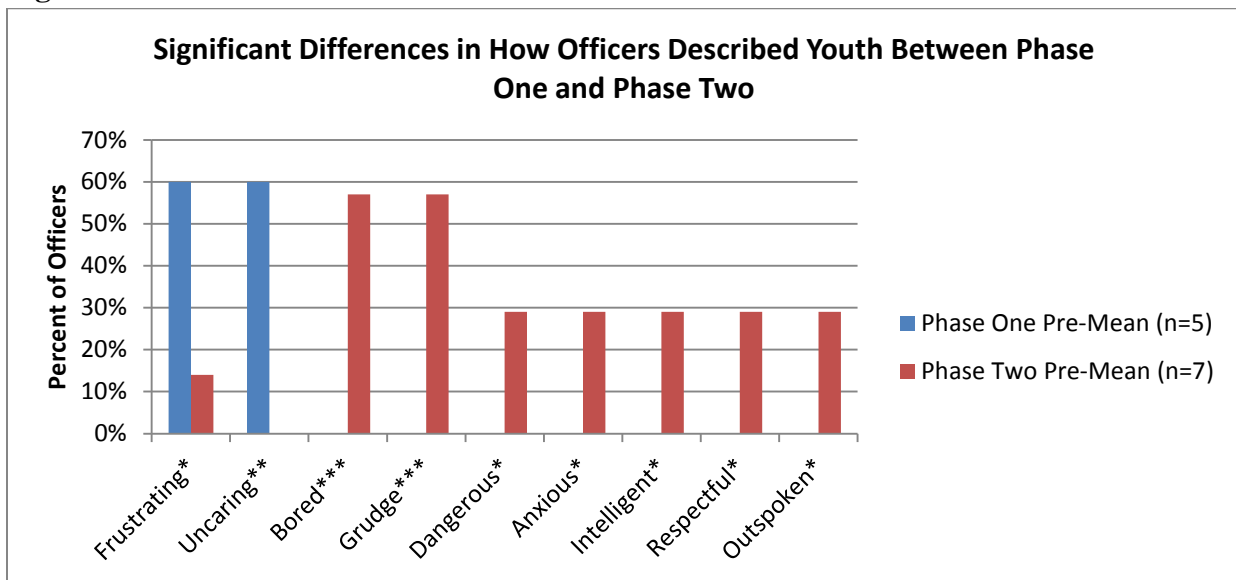
Then, Figure 8 displays the differences in how the two groups of youth described justice. Phase Two youth were significantly less likely than Phase One youth to describe justice in terms of accountability, respect, and forgiveness. In a way, this makes Phase Two youth seem more pessimistic about justice than Phase One youth. However, perhaps this indicates that Phase One youth feel more strongly that justice should be held to ideals that it does not currently meet, while Phase Two youth may have a more “realistic” notion of what justice currently means in our society. Phase Two youth may also agree more with the role that police currently play in our society as a result.

Figure 8



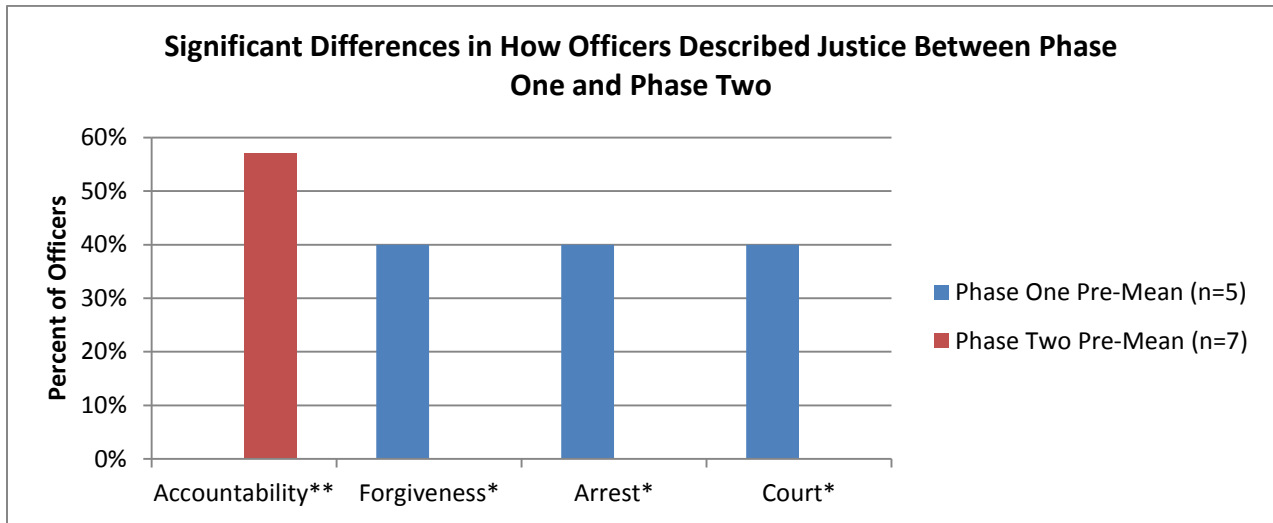
Similarly, we have a few reasons to believe from the pre-survey results that the officers in Phase Two were also more positive in outlook than their colleagues in Phase One. As can be seen below, Phase Two officers were significantly more likely to describe youth on the pre-survey using empathic or positive words such as bored, anxious, intelligent, respectful, and outspoken. They were significantly less likely to describe youth as frustrating or uncaring. However, the Phase Two officers were also more likely to choose two negative words (grudge and dangerous) to describe youth. Overall, though, their sentiment towards youth seems to have started out more positive than their colleagues in Phase One.

Figure 9



The Phase Two officers were significantly more likely to describe justice in terms of accountability and less likely to choose the words “arrest” and “court” to describe justice. In contrast to this relatively positive outlook, they were less likely than Phase One officers to describe justice as similar to forgiveness.

Figure 10



Finally, the table below shows how the officers in Phase One and Phase Two differed from one another in how they responded to the statement prompts. (There were no significant differences in how youth in Phase One and Phase Two responded to their statement prompts.)

Again, this gives us an indication that Phase Two officers had a more positive outlook to begin with than Phase One officers. The average scores shaded in gray indicate the phase group that had the more positive outlook. For three out of the four prompts for which there were significant differences between the phases, Phase Two responses were more positive.

Officer Pre-Survey Statement Prompt Significant Differences between Phase One & Phase Two

Statement Prompt	Phase One Pre-Mean (n=5)	Phase Two Pre-Mean (n=7)	Significance
I want to work with Rochester youth to improve youth-police relations.	4.2	4.71	0.092
As a police officer, I try to understand what youth are going through.	3.8	4.57	0.025
Relations between youth and police can be improved.	4.8	4.14	0.093
When responding to a call or scene, police officers handle the situation to the best of their ability.	3.8	4.43	0.058

Qualitative Differences between Phase One and Two Participants

In contrast to the survey results, the Teen Empowerment facilitators found it much more difficult to work with the Phase Two participants. All participants (facilitators, youth, and police) felt the “vibe” was off in the second phase, which precluded the development of strong relationships and open conversation. While facilitators worked hard to address this, it remained an issue in the dialogue sessions. Evaluators also found that the Phase Two officers in the focus group were a bit more negative in outlook than their Phase One counterparts; they expressed some expectations that the dialogues would be more confrontational than they were (perhaps even wishing they were so). Youth in their focus group also mentioned some moments in which some officers in Phase Two showed they strongly subscribed to stereotypes about inner-city teenagers. Facilitators found it difficult to get the Phase Two participants to open up, and some officers participants seemed somewhat less invested in the process than their Phase One colleagues (evidenced by showing up late or missing sessions).

There are several potential ways to view this apparent discrepancy between survey findings and qualitative findings. As the survey was developed by the CPSI team and was not in any way validated, it may not be a reliable measure of how respondents really feel. We attempted to ask a variety of questions (some more overt and others more subtle) to not rely on any one response, but nonetheless, it is possible that respondents’ indicated responses were different from their subconscious feelings. It is common for people to respond to questions in a way that they think they “should” reply to be socially acceptable, and this may have been true here. Alternatively, Phase One officer may have been more aware of the issue of youth-police relations than Phase Two officers, and therefore they might have been more cognizant of their feelings about youth. If officers had not spent a lot of time thinking about these issues, they would be expected to assume everything was more positive about youth-police relations than is actually true. This could be what happened in Phase Two, though much more research would have to show if this is true.

Finally, there is a degree of selection bias that probably influenced these results. Officers in both phases were recruited in the same way – with a department-wide e-mail soliciting interest in the program. Since Phase One officers were the first group responding to this solicitation, we can infer that they were more eager and excited to participate and learn from the youth. Therefore, they would have been more engaged in the dialogue sessions, which is what facilitators observed.

Implications

These differences in the Phase One and Phase Two youth may have had important implications for the dialogues and evaluation results. While there were no significant changes as to how youth in Phase One responded to survey statement prompts, most of their attitudes and beliefs

shifted in the positive, more empathic ways we envisioned. From talking with the youth, it seemed, in a way, that Phase One youth had more initial resentment towards police than youth in Phase Two did. However, some Phase One youth had also already experienced youth-police dialogues before, perhaps explaining why their attitudes did not change very much. Nonetheless, they had more to “forgive” and learn, it seems, than youth in Phase Two. They seemed to have a more positive experience overall than youth in Phase Two did, largely due to the better “vibe” of the group and perhaps because they were solely focusing on youth-police relations.

These differences between phase groups are important to consider in facilitating these dialogues. Facilitators worked hard to accommodate the different personality and interest levels as well as circumstantial factors of participants in both phases, and this undoubtedly contributed to the overall program’s success. One should not assume that a single dialogue curriculum would be appropriate for any group of participants.

Combining Survey Results across Dialogue Phases

When we first constructed the surveys and knew that we had very small sample size groups of youth and officers, we hoped that we could combine the survey results from the first and second phases to strengthen some of our conclusions. However, as we have discussed above, the groups of youth and officers seemed different from their peers across the phases, with Phase Two being more positive in outlook than Phase One participants. As a result, when we combine the survey results across the phases, very few significant changes are revealed.

Youth Combined Survey Results

When combining all youth surveys, there were no significant changes in how youth participants responded to the statement prompts. On the adjective checklists, the only significant change was that youth were more likely to describe police as strangers ($p < .05$) after the dialogues. The youth, combined, were also more likely to describe justice in terms of jail ($p < .05$). In contrast, they were less likely to describe justice in terms of blame ($p < .10$).

Officer Combined Survey Results

When combining the officers’ surveys across Phase One and Phase Two, the only statement prompt to which they responded significantly differently after the dialogues was that they agreed significantly less that officers handle calls well ($p < 0.07$). They, on average, went from agreeing with this statement to fully, on average, disagreeing with it. They seemed to learn from the youth what handling a call really means and how often police do not actually interact well with the community.

As for the adjective checklists, officers were significantly more likely to use the word “court” to describe justice after the dialogues ($p < .07$). There were no significant changes in how they described youth when combined across both phases, despite there being quite a few significant changes when the phases’ surveys are taken alone.

Survey Results Discussion

Despite losing all or most of our significant results when we combine the survey results across the phases, valuable information was obtained through the surveys when we examine responses to individual prompts and questions. We found that youth and officers share a mutual distrust and disrespect of one another, but, for the most part, this decreased slightly after they went through the dialogues. They gained an understanding of youth-police relations and how they all serve as role models for their peers. They expressed hope that youth-police relations really could improve. They also learned to see each other in more empathic and understanding ways. The results were consistently stronger for police officer participants. This may be because the youth come into the dialogues with much more negative perceptions and long histories of negative experiences, and it takes them more time, effort, and experience to learn to trust the officers. In open-ended questions, participants listed many lessons they learned that were very powerful, largely centered around gaining mutual understanding, learning how they affect one another, and acknowledging that they can work together to help the community.

Focus Group Results

After each phase of the dialogues, focus groups and/or interviews were held with all participants with only their peers: officers alone, youth alone, and facilitators alone. This allowed participants to share their thoughts about the program with evaluators in a different way than we may have obtained if the facilitators had conducted a reflection session. If participants could not attend the focus group, individual interviews were scheduled to get their input. Results of the focus groups are summarized below by theme.

Overview

Across both phases, the consensus was that the officers were very pleased with the dialogues. They offered some suggestions and were confident that these dialogues could help heal youth-police relations if expanded to include more youth and police over time. As indicated by some of our survey results, the Phase Two officers were slightly less satisfied with the process, attributing much of that to the energy or “vibe” being “off” in the group sessions. Nonetheless, all participants were glad to have participated.

The youth felt the dialogues were, overall, a positive experience. However, there was a noticeable difference between the youth and the officers. The youth seemed much more hopeless about the dialogues being beneficial for themselves and for their community. This was particularly true among Phase One youth. A few of them strongly questioned whether the officers were sincere, open, and honest. The youth seemed to see the goal of the dialogues as an unachievable ideal, since they would go back to their everyday lives and still face the same issues with other police officers. Phase Two youth were less overtly hopeless but in some ways just disinterested. Much of this, again, seemed to be attributed to the “vibe” being off in the second phase. Nonetheless, both youth and officers seemed to learn a great deal from each other and were able to apply some lessons to their lives.

Finally, focus groups were held with the Teen Empowerment facilitators. They were able to provide us insight into some of the finer workings and historical aspects of the youth-police dialogues, as well as a larger perspective on how the program fit into the community and how it was organized across both phases. They also had unique insight into the participants, having worked with them over time.

Getting Involved

We first asked how the officers had gotten involved and what they expected. All officers had volunteered via e-mail. One officer was interested because he wanted to be more involved in the community; he was new to working in the area and to working days, so he encounters youth much more and wants to work to improve things. The officers were surprised to learn that many of their fellow officers had participated in prior youth-police dialogues with Teen Empowerment, but they had never heard them mention it. Some officers in Phase Two had heard from the Phase One officers that it was a good experience because it gave them time to talk with youth without being in a crisis situation. The officers felt the dialogues would help them sharpen their skills for talking with youth.

Factors the Enabled or Encouraged Participation

Because Teen Empowerment has been facilitating and coordinating youth-police dialogues for several years now, we asked what their sense was as to why youth and police are willing to reach out to each other and participate in these sessions. They initially said, “Because things are so bad” between youth and police, people feel compelled to do something about it. They felt that from the youth’s perspective, there is always a bit of curiosity because they do not know any police officers personally and probably have never talked to one in a neutral setting. They may be curious because it is “out of the norm.”

Also, the facilitators recognized the importance of monetarily compensating the participants. They felt that if this was taken out of the equation, they would not have been able to get the kind

of youth in the room as they did (i.e. youth that have had police contacts). For officers, being compensated and supported by the department led to increased commitment and honesty.

The facilitators thought the opportunity to log community service hours might encourage some officers to participate because it might help them for promotion. Also, the officers were glad to participate because talking at the Gandhi Institute was much safer and less stressful than being on the street. It also gave them time to reflect and work in a different way from normal.

Once the dialogues start, the facilitators notice a sense of caring develops among the individuals in the room. They develop human connections, evidenced most acutely by how much the officers wanted to keep in touch with the youth after the dialogues were over.

Officers' Expectations

The officers were not surprised by the conversations or what they learned from the youth, as they were already aware of youths' issues and concerns. One officer expected a little more interaction. Several officers "expected different kids – kids who hate the police. I thought there were going to be yelling matches." The Phase One officers somewhat expected to be working with younger "youth," rather than "teenagers."

Comfort and Safety

All participants, including those who were interviewed one-on-one, stated they felt comfortable speaking their mind in the group and felt that others did as well. Youth and facilitators were concerned because one of the officers was a sergeant, but the officers expressed no hesitation about fully and honestly participating. Some youth, as discussed below, occasionally felt guarded, but for the most part still spoke their minds.

Ratings of the Dialogue Series

We asked the focus groups to rate the dialogue series as a whole. All officers gave it at least a seven out of ten. They seemed to learn much from the dialogues and were very glad to have participated.

The youth, on the other hand, gave more neutral ratings. The youth were satisfied with the dialogues themselves and thought they were essential in order for officers who do not live in the city to understand youth and improve relationships, but they felt pessimistic about the possibility of any true change in the community. One youth felt that no matter how good the dialogues were, "crime rates are still going to go up and police brutality is still going to exist."

The one youth who gave the highest rating – a seven – said “it was cool” but expressed a concern regarding how honest conversation could be among the officers if their sergeant is also in the room. Another youth expressed concern that the officers who were present were not the ones they see on the streets. Some youth felt that if they needed to get out of a situation, the officers probably would not or could not do anything for them. For those reasons, the one who gave it the lowest rating in Phase One felt it was a waste of time, though hoped it was not.

The overarching theme expressed by the youth in Phase Two was that the dialogues lacked energy and were somewhat awkward. They said the “vibe” was not great. They felt that the conversations lacked depth. One youth said, “To me, it was just a meeting with police. It wasn’t what it was meant for. It didn’t get to the truth.” The youth described this as a lack of enthusiasm or motivation on the part of the officers that resulted in a lack of enthusiasm for the youth as well. Another said there was a “big separation between the teens and officers.” They barely greeted each other, and she “got the sense they didn’t like us.” They felt that the officers did little mingling with the youth, though some youth acknowledged that they did little mingling among the officers too.

The youth felt that the first two sessions were easier and better because the topics were not as deep. However, during the third and fourth sessions, a youth reported that the officers seemed uncomfortable and took offense to some topics such as racism. They found it difficult to engage in more personal or deep conversation.

The Phase Two officers agreed that the energy was not great, but they agreed that some powerful moments were created in small group discussions that allowed more time for each person to speak. One officer gave a lower rating because they felt the youth should have been the ones “who constantly have guns” or those creating problems in the community.

Memorable Experiences

The participants and facilitators were all asked what their most powerful or memorable experience was from these dialogues. The youth in Phase One agreed that it was powerful to see everyone be honest and share their feelings. Several youth thought it was powerful just to have civil conversations with police and to see “how things were on the other side of the fence.”

One youth, who had participated in the dialogues last year, thought the most powerful moment was when one of the officers from last year’s group came back to visit during one of the sessions. The youth was glad to “see a change in him.” She said that moment “makes you think that maybe the dialogue between police and youth can change things.” The facilitators acknowledged this as a particularly powerful moment as well and confirmed that it was not planned in any way.

One youth's most powerful experience was watching officers come out of their shells. She felt at some point they stopped justifying and defending themselves in the dialogues and were more themselves, recognizing and acknowledging some of the wrong that had been done by other officers to the youth in the past.

Some of the officers in Phase One felt that the most valuable thing was to just hang out with the youth and have everyone treat each other as humans. A discussion about role models "hit home" for another officer. He was pained to hear that the youth have very few or no role models. Despite the poor energy levels reportedly in Phase Two, all of the Phase Two participants identified memorable learning experiences in the dialogues. The youth felt that their most memorable moments from the dialogues occurred when they got to speak in smaller groups with the officers. One youth remembered discussing what the officers were like as teenagers and realizing that their lives had actually been similar. Another youth was surprised by how defensive the officers got when speaking about problems youth have with police. One youth was struck by the officers "showing they had feelings." In contrast, two youth were struck by how "robotic" the officers were in responding to questions.

The officers in Phase Two were most struck by particular comments from the youth. One remembered a youth saying that a goal he or she had in the next two years was to stay alive. It hurt the officer to hear this, expressing that, "Kids that age shouldn't worry about things like that." Another officer remembered a youth's story about having a bullet go right over her head one night while she was sleeping and just missed her. The surprising part about this for the officer was that it did not seem to bother the youth, "almost like this was expected." Clearly, the officers learned deeply about the struggles the youth face every day.

The officers also learned how much work needs to be done to improve perceptions around violence. They referenced a youth's comment that it is "not a big deal for a black person to shoot another black person, but if a black person shoots a white person, it is a big deal." To the officers, it should always be "a big deal" if someone gets shot. The officers felt there is little police can do to address violence if this is how the community feels towards intra-racial violence. They acknowledged that the officers can try to reach out, but they are facing generations of learned experiences. Facilitators, however, recognized more accurately what the youth meant, having had this discussion with youth before. To them, the youth was expressing that it seems like society devalues black people's lives in favor of the lives of white people; facilitators understood that the youth did not mean that youth devalue black people's lives. This is just one example of how it can be difficult for program participants to accurately articulate the complexity of their opinions.

For the facilitators observing this process as a whole, they were pleased to see that in their own time, "everyone found their place" in the dialogues and were able to open up and participate fully. They also sensed reaching a "middle point" in the dialogues where they realized that everyone was on board and excited about the sessions. The facilitators also enjoyed witnessing

the first dialogue sessions in each phase because there was, as always, a lot of tension in the room, and they got to watch it slowly break down.

Changing Contexts

The officers felt a major benefit to participating in the dialogues was to let the youth see them differently from normal, since the nature of the officers' job is to run into people only when they are in bad situations. They felt this was very important for the youth and officers to find common ground and develop relationships outside the context of a conflict. This gave them a true chance to see the youths' perspectives and listen to their issues without chaos or danger.

The youth also benefited from the change in context by being able to truly express themselves to officers, with whom they normally must be on the defensive.

Benefits to Officers

The facilitators recognized that most officers know things are bad, but it was important for them to really see the impact and recognize that they are part of the impact – in either good or bad ways depending on their choices. They felt that for deep change to occur, we need to reach a tipping point where most officers and youth recognize that they can choose to make things better.

The officers felt it helped them learn how youth think and what they struggle with. They benefitted by learning to relate to youth, as the “issues they have are the same as [or similar to] the issues we had in high school.” The officers felt having “prolonged exposure” to a small group of youth was beneficial, as, on the job, they usually encounter youth in large groups.

Nonetheless, the youth perceived very little benefit to the officers. The youth felt that the officers “weren't really putting effort into changing or understanding.” Another youth remembered an officer saying that cops still have to do their job. The youth felt this meant that nothing is going to change. One youth did acknowledge that the dialogues improved relationships with some officers, but they were not “that kind of officer” that needed to change.

The youth felt that those who shared personal perspectives, showing motivation and honesty, made the youth feel comfortable. The youth were truly not sure if the officers had learned anything from the youth, even though the officers all identified many lessons they learned. This speaks to the hopelessness and distrust that many of the youth carry.

Benefits to Youth

The youth largely denied benefitting from the dialogues, but upon closer questioning revealed some benefits. One stated, “Sometimes I just didn't look at police like they were human” but changed their mind when the officers opened up about their personal lives. Several youth felt

just knowing a few officers personally was a benefit. Several youth felt it was beneficial to learn what an officer's job is really like and what precautions they have to take to do their job safely. They benefited from just feeling comfortable talking with police. Some felt that these insights could help them get out of bad situations with police because they know how to talk to them better now that they understand what they are thinking. They also felt they "got more clarity" on why police interact with youth the way they do on the street. They realized that officers are often frustrated and empathized with this feeling.

Another youth felt the dialogues taught her how to de-escalate situations. It taught her patience to listen to the officers when it was their turn to speak and helped to clarify differences in how police and youth saw certain issues. Some youth thought these dialogues could help officers see ways to truly help the community, fix the root causes of issues, and give people the opportunity to contribute positively to their communities.

Some Phase Two youth already had few interactions with police, so they felt there was not much to learn or change. They already treated them with respect and tried to get out of the situation as quickly as possible when they are confronted by police.

The officers seemed disappointed in the degree of attitude shift among the youth. They felt most youth left with the same attitude they had when they started. For some youth, "no matter what we said, it would never change how they felt about us." This assessment is somewhat supported by the youth's responses, as the youth were quick to interpret officers' words and actions in line with their preconceptions. For youth that did make small progress, the officers acknowledged that "it's just going to take one bad interaction [with police] for all that to be reversed."

Having worked with many of the youth for a long time, the facilitators felt that, for some of the youth, the simple fact that they successfully participated in the dialogues benefitted them. Some were very resistant to even being in the same room as police officers at the beginning. They got to see a different perspective and challenge themselves.

Worlds Apart

The youth clearly felt disconnected from the officers based on residency and race. The youth further pointed out that the officers grew up with father figures and possibilities for jobs, while the youth have to sell drugs to pay for food and never had anyone tell them to do the right thing. The youth felt a large benefit to the officers was just hearing about youth's lives, lifestyles, and situations, though they felt the officers could never truly understand unless they lived in the city and had the same skin color. They hoped that hearing it would at least make them better officers.

The youth also expressed frustration because there are different rules on the streets than there are in the dialogues. "If you try to get your point across [on the street], you just got yourself a charge – disorderly conduct."

Some youth recognized that officers deal with many issues, such as the potential for being injured or killed, but the youth felt the officers can never relate to the youth because they can go home and get away from it, while the youth cannot. In their focus group, the officers expressed empathy for the youth and acknowledged how important it is for officers to be able to go home at the end of their work shifts. They recognized that the youth did not have this option and saw how much that must affect the youth. This seemed to help them better understand the youth and their pessimism about the dialogues and community change.

The facilitators recognized how hard it is for the youth when the inevitable reality of youth-police relations in Rochester comes back. If they had a great interaction at the session and then were mistreated by another officer, it rekindles the hopeless feelings about the reality of their relationship. In a neutral place like at Teen Empowerment, they can have commonality with officers, but back in the normal community setting, they each still have their jobs and roles.

Healing Relationships and Trying to Relate

The officers in the first phase discussed how in the first session or two, they felt guarded, fully aware of the negativity with which police are received in the community. One officer said, “As much as they’re guarded from us, we’re guarded from them,” referencing that police have to look out for their safety when in the community. They felt they should, at first, wear their uniforms and maintain distance and caution in the conversations. The officers said that by the second or third session, this dividing line was gone. It was quickly obvious that group members were there to come to an understanding with one another. They felt comfortable coming to the sessions without their uniforms, and all members of the group were greeting each other upon arrival. By the last session, officers were giving out business cards and asking how they could follow up with the youth to know how they were doing. One youth described Teen Empowerment as a “comfortable place – don’t have to watch your back, just come here and relax.” This shows that youth and officers felt similarly about the atmosphere of the dialogue being conducive to building relationships.

The facilitators felt that asking one particular discussion really helped the youth and participants relate to one another. They were asked to share an issue that they were currently dealing with. Participants really spoke about their personal lives, allowing for feelings of relatedness. They felt this somewhat indirect but personal question worked far better than very direct, topic-focused questions, such as “How do youth and police treat each other in Rochester?” for developing relatedness.

Youth Learning About Officers' Experiences

The youth in Phase One admitted they had not before considered what kind of issues the officers went through; they knew their job was stressful, but never thought about how it affected them. Officers often work nights, lose sleep, have kids and bills to worry about, and struggle with alcoholism, high rates of divorce, and proneness to suicide. The youth identified several things they learned about officers' jobs. One acknowledged the amount of trauma officers face. One learned about officers' frustration with "ignorant civilians." For example, showing up to the same house over and over again yet the people calling do not take other initiatives to solve their problems. Another youth realized how frustrating it is for police to face people who "are just born to not like the police," even if they have never had a bad interaction. The youth felt that most officers are here to help and acknowledged there are always two sides of the stories about bad police experiences.

In the end, though, the youth felt that none of these were excuses for mistreating people. When they deal with police, the youth are expected to "check our attitude," be polite and calm to avoid going to jail; they wondered why officers are not expected to do the same thing.

Similarly, the youth were displeased to hear officers "make excuses for the things they do." The youth felt that officers were somewhat disconnected from the reality of their jobs. An officer allegedly said that counseling and social work is not a part of their jobs, but to the youth, this is a very important part of their job.

Officers Learning About What Youth Struggle With

The officers were able to develop relationships with the youth by learning about issues they did not know were so critical in youth's lives. Some were shocked to hear that some of the youth's biggest frustrations are not having enough food, how frustrated they are with their poor educational options if they go to school, and how difficult it is for them to find a job. The officers were able to empathize and were glad to see the youth cared about their own futures and about their community, just as the officers do.

Ability to Generalize Outside the Group

Officers felt the youth participating in this group were the "exception" and not like the majority of youth they deal with every day. Youth also felt like the officers were the exception among officers. Both groups felt the "norm" of each group would not participate in a dialogue session like this. As such, many of the youth were concerned that the cops who were in the room were not the ones that needed to be in the room; these were the cops who volunteered and who "don't do wrong." They felt that, "There's nothing really to accomplish here" except making them aware of what is going on when encountering police. Officers agreed that police with more punitive policing styles would probably benefit more from these dialogues.

Changes in Behavior

When asked how the dialogues benefitted them or their work, the officers discussed small changes they have made in how they approach their jobs. They emphasized that there is little room for substantial changes in their work, as they have protocol and must handle situations with safety as the priority. They all agreed that they have always approached people first with respect and courtesy. Their behavior after that depends on the circumstances and on the actions of the individuals involved. They also acknowledged that they get a large number of calls, such that officers do not have much time to really talk with the people they encounter.

That said, the dialogues have helped them to approach situations “with a bit more understanding.” The officers felt that they now give the people they encounter more benefit of the doubt and react less quickly. Even if the results were the same, one officer learned that the youth really just wanted the officers to listen and try to understand the situation more fully. The dialogues strengthened their understanding that the individuals they approach are not at their best and that disrespectful actions can sometimes at least explained by the circumstances.

Also, some officers identified specific changes in behavior or mentality that they think are the result of these dialogues and what they learned from the youth. One stated that his way of working with youth has shifted so much that his partner asked him, “What’s with you?” and he replied, “Teen Empowerment.” Another officer said that he has seen some of the youth outside of the dialogues, and they have waved to each other.

The officers also learned from the youth how important it is for them as officers to seize opportunities to make bad situations better for the people involved. One officer revealed a powerful story. The officer had stopped a car and had to arrest both the driver and passenger because they had active warrants. They were the mother and father of three children sitting in the back of the car. He remembered the youth in the dialogues saying how they had childhood memories of police taking their parents away. He stated that once the parents were secured, he made a particular effort to go back to the car and talk with the kids to try to make the situation a little better for them. He reflected that officers “wear two hats,” one that is primarily concerned with safety and securing a situation, and the other which deals compassionately with people.

The officers realized that they should be more aware of the potential traumatic effects of their actions on everyone witnessing them. They mentioned that if they come to a house where there are children and they have to deal with the adults, they can ask the children to go in a different room so they do not see or hear what goes on.

Some of the youth also felt limited in how much they could change their behaviors towards police. They felt that police have a position of authority and use it to treat them unequally, so they must deal with police as if the police are lying. They felt that even if you give a police

officer respect, you do not receive it back. Nonetheless, one youth felt he would give an officer respect because it would help get out of the situation or be treated less harshly. One youth described a situation where he used what he learned from the officers. He was approached by police on two separate occasions. Rather than getting defensive, he just walked away calmly and spoke nicely to them, de-escalating the situation.

One officer realized a new tool for working with youth. He or she noticed that the youth in this group acted differently from how they act on the street. They felt that when youth are in big groups, they are often trying to impress their friends, and they tend to be rude and disrespectful. In this group, though, they “come as individuals.” The officer felt it was good to remember this on the job. Even if youth are being disrespectful, they “are not really like this” on their own. They found they could work better with youth if they were separated from the group.

Making More Effective Officers

The youth felt that, in theory, going through similar dialogue sessions could help make officers more effective by teaching communication skills and by helping them “loosen up.” The youth felt that officers should get trained in situations like these with youth.

When asked what makes an effective officer, the officers spoke much about respect, caring, and communication. The officers felt they were most effective when they could make personal connections with youth. They felt that doing just a little bit more in their job, like getting out of the car just to walk the streets and talk to people, made them more aware of their community and in turn made them safer and more effective. Another officer felt efficacy came from starting all encounters with respect and then “letting them dictate how it goes.” He felt these dialogues helped “humanize everything” and understand better where people are coming from. Another felt that communication was crucial to being an effective officer, and these dialogues were a clear way to learn to communicate better with youth.

Peer and Other Social Pressure

The facilitators had insights into how much peer pressure affects both groups. It is not simply a teenage phenomenon; it is entrenched in other systems, like police departments, as well.

Facilitators tried to discuss this topic with the group, but it “seemed to get to a stalemate.” Both groups did learn that their loyalty to their respective group means a lot, which often supersedes a lot of rational thinking. The facilitators felt this might even be stronger among officers than it is among the youth. As an officer, if you’re considered a “rat,” you have to wonder whether your fellow officers will come quite as quickly to save you. Thus, many accept the status quo. This is very in-tune with the paramilitary-like training officers receive, as opposed to communicative

and community-based training they may need. Facilitators and researchers learned that officers deal with this by trying to find people within their ranks who are like-minded to work with.

The facilitators remarked how much this sounds like what youth do, especially because it is quite literally about surviving. They found it difficult to see where change can occur when going up against these kinds of odds, with their very safety occasionally at risk. There are codes of conduct within both social groups that are very entrenched in their identities. The youth were also surprised to find how strong an influence peer pressure is for officers and could relate on those terms.

The facilitators felt that there needs to be a paradigm shift in the social mentality of both groups and within the community for change to really take place. Among officers, there is a sense that they are overwhelmed with the group protection mentality, which prevents them from calling each other out for wrongdoing, even if that means occasionally compromising on ideals. The same is true among youth, and this thwarts much of the beginnings of true change.

The officers noted that participating in these dialogues can often been seen by other officers as “weak” or “uncool.” One officer expressed that the dialogues would help him speak more freely with other officers about having a community-oriented policing style. He felt he could speak from his experience at the dialogues to reinforce that it is not acceptable to treat people with disrespect. He hoped to speak up more against police wrongdoing.

Challenges Faced

The officers did not find it difficult to discuss youth-police relations with youth. They did, however, find some of the interactives challenging because they had to let their guards down and be out of their element. They were impressed that the youth could interpolate metaphors from the interactives. They described feeling uncomfortable in some of the “corny” or “silly” interactives, but they felt their honest participation was important and so pushed themselves to set the tone for the group. They thought the youth could see them as more than just a uniform if they were willing to have fun with them. Other officers only mentioned struggling to fit the dialogues into their schedules.

Also, in Phase Two, officers mentioned struggling with the “low energy” in the room. The youth overwhelmingly agreed that the most difficult thing to deal with in the second phase was “the vibe” and trying to get the officers to open up. One youth said it was difficult for her to try to understand how the officers because they were so quiet.

One youth found it challenging to get the group dynamics to work if participants were late or did not show up, attributing this to some of the days that were more “off.” No Phase Two participants stated they felt challenged by the conversations or interactives, despite the alleged lack of discussion.

One youth in Phase One felt the hardest part was explaining himself and opening up to strangers. The biggest challenge for the youth in general seemed to be the enormity of the youth-police relationship issue. They acknowledged that everyone in the group was trying to benefit their community, but they ultimately felt that in order to really accomplish anything, they had to heal generations of racism “dating back to slavery and up to modern police brutality.” It would take time and a lot of work. The officers recognized this challenge as well.

Though this was not stated by participants, the way the youth interpreted the officers’ words and actions seemed to pose a strong challenge to success of the dialogues as a whole. The youth were very quick to interpret the officers’ actions and words in line with their preconceived notions. For instance, if officers agreed with one another or gave short answers, the youth interpreted this as them trying to hide something from the youth and being dishonest. From the researcher’s perspective, this was probably because the officers were a much more homogenous group and actually just agreed with each other more than the youth did. The officers also acknowledged that they are often more matter-of-fact than the youth. Another youth felt the hardest part was believing what the officers said. The youth were often convinced that the officers had “played” them and “spoon-fed” them lies. One youth in the first phase said that he or she had “really believed everything [the officers] were saying,” until the other youth revealed that it was all, supposedly, a lie. “Knowing that I really got played [was the hardest part].”

That said, some youth did think the officers were genuine, citing their attendance, punctuality, and interest in the youth’s futures as evidence that they were truly dedicated to working towards change, listening to the community, and improving youth-police relations. Perhaps when preparing officers for these sessions, it is important to inform them how important their actions, depth of responses, and uniqueness of responses are in helping the youth to trust them.

Topics that Needed More Discussion

The police officers in Phase Two wished they could have spent more time challenging “the history of perceptions” about police and helping the youth think critically about how those perceptions developed.

As for the youth, racism was the major topic they felt was neglected. According to them, when it was brought up, there was “awkwardness in the room.” They felt that “the whole vibe in the room changed.” In contrast, the officers were pleased that the tension and anger were not so high as to prevent useful conversation around these issues. Overall, though, the officers said racial issues were brought up less than they had expected. They felt the youth “see blue more than they see black or white,” and felt the feelings of disrespect came more from the officers’ uniforms and position of authority than from perceived or real racism. They felt that racial tensions were discussed and therefore diminished after the first or second session. The youth, though, basically said they stopped trying to talk about it because the officers were so resistant.

Youth in Phase One also felt that they needed to discuss with the officers how youth feel in situations with authority – specifically, how they feel they do not have the right to say anything and how officers abuse their badge. The youth did not seem nearly as satisfied with the topics of race, discrimination, profiling, and authority as the officers thought they were. Perhaps the youth did not think it was worth their energy to challenge the officers’ thoughts on these issues due to time constraints and the enormity of the history and emotions involved.

Larger Community Effects

The consensus among all participants was that if anything was going to change, the program needed to expand to more youth and more officers. In order to work with the larger community, the officers suggested working with slightly younger youth so that they have these discussions “before a mindset has been created.” The officers felt it would be much harder to do these dialogues with adults, as adults’ mentalities towards police are much more entrenched. They felt any adults involved would have to have the same mentality and openness to participate as the youth did. They felt kids should have more positive exposures to police by seeing them at school and activities. They also thought that more had to be done about the perceptions of police in the community.

The youth said that they could only do so much to reach out to their peers; in the end, individual youth are going to feel differently based on their experiences. The youth hoped that things would change as a result of the dialogues but did not expect it to. All participants and facilitators felt that more organizations besides Teen Empowerment need to work on these issues in order for change to really happen. They were all confident that if the program could be expanded, it would have an effect on the larger community; they were just wary to think it could be expanded.

Improving the “Vibe”

To the Phase Two participants, we asked specifically how they thought the “vibe” could be improved. The youth clarified that the “vibe” was inferred when the officers did not have much to say and because they did not reveal much about their personal lives or “go deep” into issues. This made the youth standoffish with the officers; they were in turn uncomfortable sharing themselves.

One youth felt having a bigger group would make it more likely to have at least one person in the group with a lot of energy who can get the rest of the group to open up. “You need someone there to give that spark.” Having a bigger group could also make for more discussion, as more people offer their opinions. Along those lines, another youth suggested having “more of a variety of people,” including a variety of youth from other programs. Many of these suggestions were made by officers as well.

Forgiveness and Reconciliation

The researchers and Teen Empowerment staff conjectured that these dialogues would serve, for some participants, as a forgiveness or reconciliation process. The researchers found it problematic to ask directly about these themes, so we tried to interpret participants' responses to other questions through this lens.

The participants did not explicitly experience any particular feelings of reconciliation, as they had not had any negative experiences with any of the other participants in the dialogues. Also, the officers expressed that it is senseless for them to hold grudges, as the nature of their jobs is for people to lie to them, be mad at them, and essentially "play their role in the game." They respected the youth who took responsibility for their actions. They speculated that maybe the youth had a desire to forgive the police more than the officers had a need to forgive the youth. The officers guessed that most of the participants in the group had already dealt with their pasts and so forgiveness was not the priority; it was more about discussing things and trying to move on from them. Essentially, officers feel little need to reconcile, as they expect to have conflicts with people every day and do not take it personally.

Some youth might have found reconciliation in knowing why officers had stopped or "targeted" them in the past or otherwise behaved as they do, though they did not frame this as reconciliation. They only stated that they found it to be useful knowledge, but we can conjecture that it helped them heal some past wounds.

The consensus among facilitators was that in order to achieve any sense of long-term reconciliation or forgiveness among youth and police, participants need to see actual change in their everyday lives. They said that it would help to do more dialogues, but it is not within Teen Empowerment's organizational mission or capacity to focus all of their energy on this one issue. That is precisely why they are hoping to "institutionalize" the process by getting youth-oriented training into the police department. The facilitators felt that with a limited number of sessions and time, it was difficult for individuals to bring up particular histories from which they needed to heal. There are select moments when people have better feelings about youth-police relations, but the sum over time often leaves a lot of hurt remaining.

Respect and Trust

The officers felt it was part of their job to treat everyone they encountered with respect. They definitely respected the youth in the room more after the dialogues than before, but they did not necessarily generalize this feeling to the community as a whole.

The youth, as discussed above, had mixed feelings about whether or not they trusted the officers. They seemed to respect them, recognizing that these particular officers were good people who wanted to help the community. As discussed above, they did not entirely believe what they said, though, probably due to long histories of distrusting police.

When is Best for Officers to Participate?

The officers believed that trainings such as this should occur in the police academy because it would set the tone for new officers to approach youth and the community in respectful, attentive ways. However, they acknowledged that such training should continue throughout officers' careers. An officer suggested that the youth-police dialogues get integrated into the end of each officer's probation term, such that they complete an in-service at 18 or 24 months into their career. This in-service would take the form of 4-8 dialogues led by Teen Empowerment. They suggested that it be part of the plan from the beginning when officers sign up for service so people expect it as normal. This seems like a good compromise between teaching officers early and letting them gain experience first.

Most Important Lessons to Convey to Others

We finished the focus group by asking participants what the most important lesson from these dialogues that they would convey to other youth and officers. Immediately, one officer stated that officers needed to learn to "shut up and listen. Everyone wants to be heard. Be quiet and listen to someone else." Other officers felt their colleagues needed to "keep an open mind about your interactions with youth." Another wanted to convey "how much negative interaction impacts the kids. It takes so many more positive interactions to get someone back once have a negative interaction."

Other officers felt young officers would benefit from hearing what youth experience. They also felt that some of the interactives used could be helpful in breaking down tensions between the two groups. One officer wanted the youth to explain how much they just wanted to be heard by officers and just to know that they are listened to.

The youth felt that police need to learn that not all youth are bad. "Some youth have the right state of mind and are doing what they're supposed to be doing." Simply having youth be open about their activities and goals would convey this. The youth also felt officers need to know about the problems youth face every day, particularly about school, stress, and poverty. The youth only interact with officers when things are bad, and, combined with their stress levels, this creates tension right from the start.

The youth hoped that other youth would learn that officers have emotions too. Youth need to know that officers are doing their job. Perhaps youth would not take officers' behaviors so personally if they understood this and police protocol better. One youth felt that kids need to know that not all officers are the same. Finally, another youth felt that both police and youth need to learn to give respect to get it. The officers felt the most important lessons for youth to learn were why officers do what they do and that not all officers are the same.

Facilitation

The youth and the officers all felt comfortable with how the groups were facilitated and that things were kept moving. The youth and facilitators specifically felt the consistency of the sessions (i.e. having dialogues twice per week for two weeks) helped to build relationships and foster better dialogue. The facilitators noted that having frequent sessions helped participants remember what was discussed and get to the point quicker at each session. Facilitators also found it helpful to have all four dialogue sessions fully planned out as a cohesive unit prior to beginning any of them.

Some of the youth facilitated parts of the dialogues, and they thought they did quite well (as did the officers). The officers were pleasantly surprised that the youth facilitated some sessions and applauded both the youth and Teen Empowerment for having the youth practice speaking in public. The youth who facilitated suggested that if you are going to facilitate, you need to know how each interactive is going to ultimately help relations between youth and police. They felt that facilitators need to have an open mind to anyone's point of view and to also have their own thoughts well organized.

Recruiting More Officers

The Officers strongly felt it was imperative to let Officers volunteer to sign up for future dialogues. "Cops are stubborn people to begin with," they said, and if you let people volunteer, they will be more invested and more interested.

The officers recommended using a department-wide e-mail again to recruit new Officers. In addition, they recommended that Teen Empowerment also come in to roll calls to explain the program because many officers do not read their e-mails. They said that they would all be willing to encourage their colleagues to volunteer their time.

Expanding the Program in Size and Context

Officers and youth both expressed an interest in participating in more dialogue sessions with different participants. They felt this would allow them to personally get to know more of the officers and/or youth in their community.

One officer felt it would definitely be helpful to do such dialogues with adults, possibly holding events or forums at community agencies so that people could come and just talk with police and get to know them. He suggested that maybe the patrol officers could be required to go to a certain number of events in a given time frame.

One youth thought that if someone had a bad experience with an officer, they could really benefit from going through a dialogue like this to heal the wounds. The parties involved could discuss

what went wrong, what could have gone differently, and how to handle future situations better. She felt it was more about being heard – for both the youth and the officer – than it was about seeking any type of penalty or revenge.

The facilitators strongly felt that a lot more youth-police initiatives need to occur, especially with teenagers, beyond what Teen Empowerment has tried to do. They felt that youth-police activities are usually run from a police perspective and that more needs to occur from the youth's perspective. There needs to be more activities that get officers to think critically, challenge their conceptions, and get out of their comfort zones (by having the young people lead the groups, for instance). Many of the programs in which youth interact with police are also for youth who are considering being a police officer; they are not looking to change how police act in the community as much as they want to do what police already do.

Suggestions for Improvement

One overarching suggestion from Phase One youth and officers was that the questions be a bit more focused and that participants be given more time for everyone to fully speak their minds and explore a topic. They reported that the participants certainly were not lacking words and that conversation flowed freely, so allowing time to fully dive into an issue should take priority. In particular, they felt that brainstorming interactives and multi-part small-group questions often ended somewhat unsatisfactorily. Sometimes a person would not get a chance to speak, or they just would not touch on certain parts of the question at all. The youth also want to have more discussions around race, profiling, and authority. Participants felt they simply needed more time overall to develop stronger relationships.

A few officers suggested doing other activities with the youth, such as a sport, to “take a break from the issues and just have fun.” They felt this could improve relationships before discussing serious issues, helping participants feel comfortable opening up to one another.

The officers liked the room in which the sessions were held but found it got loud when everyone was talking in small groups. They felt the small groups worked best when they went into separate rooms in the building because they could hear better and had less distraction.

Also, many of the officers were very interested in following up with the youth in a few months. They suggested having a check-in, pizza party, or some event so everyone could see what was new in each other's lives. The officers discussed a desire to greet and acknowledge youth when they see them on the street, but they recognized the need to use caution when doing so to avoid causing problems for youth from others in the neighborhood.

Some youth suggested posing deeper questions that really got into their personal lives or more controversial questions such as, “How do you feel about African-Americans?” They felt this would foster better connections between youth and police by forcing them to share deep

emotions and strong opinions. The youth felt these issues could not be solved without asking these tough questions.

Facilitators felt that they needed to strike a better balance between breaking into small groups and having people do multiple activities around the room. They thought that they might need more facilitation and guidance for the small groups so that people do not get off-track or stuck with nothing to say. They felt varying the activities (small vs. large group) and organizing them better would help.

One thing the facilitators thought they should try to prevent in the future was having a sergeant in the group. It could limit some of the officers from speaking their minds.

The facilitators recognized how important it was to help participants learn how to use the skills and insights they gained in the dialogues in their everyday lives. In the last couple of sessions, they had some discussions as to how to implement what they learned. Facilitators felt that both officers and youth need to have constant training, reminders, or practice because we all forget things so easily and are so heavily influenced by other circumstances. The youth and police go back to places after the dialogues where people are not communicating and working out issues in civil ways, so they do not get to constantly practice that mentality. Teen Empowerment hoped to work with future participants more on everyday applications of their discussions.

Organizational Achievements and Things to Keep Doing

The facilitators felt that programmatically, having the preparation sessions with the officers was a very good idea. They also felt the youth preparation sessions got very strong and were useful. These helped participants know what to expect before engaging in full dialogue. In fact, facilitators attributed some of the tension in Phase Two to allowing officers to participate who had not gone through the preparation session.

The facilitators also noted the importance of the police department administration giving officers the time to participate in these dialogues. They felt it made the officers more committed. They also feel that support for the program is growing within the police department, so they should have an easier time recruiting new officers in the future.

The facilitators strongly felt that having the researcher present at every session was beneficial to the organizational structure. The researcher was able to witness what usually goes on “behind the scenes” at Teen Empowerment. She was also able to watch people’s perspectives change. Finally, she was able to remind the facilitators and coordinators of the program about the evaluative aspects of the program to improve follow-through with data collection. It provided the researchers thorough insight into the dialogues and the process as a whole, which will, in the future, greatly assist in any potential replications of the program.

Facilitators felt it was a major benefit for them to have the four dialogue sessions fully planned out before any of the sessions happened. Also, the high frequency and shorter duration of the dialogues helped participants to remember what had been discussed at prior sessions and build off each one.

We asked facilitators what was different about the Phase One group that made the dialogue process work better than in years past. For one, the youth were older. Almost all of them had been locked up at some point in their lives, and all had issues with police. This gave them plenty to talk about. For the officers, they were more consistent and reliable than prior groups. They were more responsive to scheduling demands and changes.

Special Considerations When Working On Such Tense Conflicts

The facilitators felt that it was important for both parties to be truly willing to participate. They have to have buy-in, investment, and compensation for participants. They felt having all the preparation sessions with youth really helped because the discussions there translated exactly into how the sessions went with officers and gave them time to process it all. Also, youth need to see consistency and action from officers, often more so than officers need to see that from youth.

What Sustains You to Keep Doing This Work?

The Teen Empowerment staff said that, in a way, the fact that youth-police relations are so poor is what keeps them committed to this work. They feel they need to do something and that something is bound to happen as a result, even if it is slow or small changes. If they could help conditions exist such that less damage occurs, they can also meanwhile make more systemic and substantial changes over time.

Witnessing the moments in the dialogues when they knew that people were focused, sharing, and stepping up made the facilitators realize it was all worth it. They felt they helped to provide one of the only places where youth can have an honest conversation with officers about what has happened to them, and this was a valuable experience to keep alive.

Police Academy Training Session

On February 11, 2014, Teen Empowerment visited Rochester's Public Safety Training Facility. The purpose was to introduce the youth to the new class of police recruits for agencies across the county, who were in their second day of training. Ten current youth organizers, a former youth organizer, two staff members, one youth advocate, and the CPSI researcher spent approximately two hours engaging in interactives and speaking with the prospective officers while enjoying pizza provided by Teen Empowerment. This was the first time Teen Empowerment had been to

the training center. It was one of the major steps in institutionalization of Teen Empowerment trainings for Rochester Police Officers. The youth were excited and nervous because they did not know what to expect.

When the group arrived at the training center, they were led to a classroom and welcomed by 25 recruits, who ranged in age from 20 to 34 years old. Thirteen of the twenty five recruits were Caucasian males (52%), and six (24%) were African-American males. This class is the most racially diverse police academy class in Rochester's history, with 40% minority recruits. Prior to 2012, minority representation had been well below 25%.

Indeed, when the youth organizers – who were all African-American or Hispanic – walked into the room, they were glad to see that many recruits were of racial minority groups. During their time at the Training Center, the youth organizers, former youth organizer, facilitators, and youth advocate engaged in two interactives with the police recruits. The CPSI researcher participated in one interactive and then observed participants in the other.

During the “**stand and move**” interactive, participants were expected to respond to questions by either standing and completing a motion or staying seated. For example, the former youth organizer who was leading the interactive asked everyone who ever had problems with the police to stand up. Almost half of the participants stood up. It was surprising to the youth that some of white recruits stood up. The youth leading the group also asked everyone who had brushed their teeth that morning to stand up and make a motion like they were brushing their teeth. Everyone stood up for that question. The youth organizer explained that this was to show all the participants that youth and police do some of the same things and have some of the same experiences. He asked the recruits to remember this when interacting with any person, especially youth. The former youth organizer recalled participating in Phase One's youth-police dialogues, in which he had the opportunity to listen to some of the issues the officers faced. He learned that youth and officers share some of the same issues. He asked the recruits to recognize that all human beings go through similar problems.

As the youth was addressing the recruits, the researcher observed some of them nodding their heads in agreement. As this youth talked, he had the recruits' full attention. He spoke intelligently and eloquently. It was evident that the recruits could relate to what he was saying. He was telling future officers how he and other youth feel when they are mistreated and disrespected by the police. He stated, “All we want is to be treated with respect, whether we're right or wrong.” It was a proud moment for this young man. He was chosen to speak to the recruits because of his passion for change in his community, his past negative experiences with police, and the life changes he has made as a result of his involvement with Teen Empowerment.

The second interactive the group engaged in at the policy training academy was “**concentric conversations**.” Each youth was paired with two recruits. They discussed where they grew up,

the most influential person in their lives, and where they attended school. This helped everyone to get to know each other. The researcher noted that each participant listened attentively to the person that was speaking. It seemed as though everyone was interested in what others had to say. Finally, participants shared a pizza lunch. Some of the youth mingled with the recruits. It was refreshing to see youth and police recruits engaging in casual, cordial conversation, and the youth reported really enjoying some of their conversations.

Training Center Participant Evaluations

At the end of the training session, the youth and recruits were asked to complete an evaluation developed by Teen Empowerment. The consensus of the recruit evaluations was that they enjoyed the one-on-one talks with the youth but felt more time was needed. Some recruits acknowledged that youth and police have things in common and admitted that youth-police relationships need improvement. The consensus of the youth evaluations was that they enjoyed the one-on-one talks with the recruits, and one youth remarked, “Not all police are bad.”

Both groups gave high ratings. More specifically, one recruit liked the organization of the session. Another liked “finding common ground between youth and police.” Another recruit liked that “we talked about real issues,” and, similarly, another liked “the intelligence and stories of the youth.” One recruit liked “hearing the opinions of the youth, and what they want to see from the police.” Another recruit felt it was a “good learning/eye opening experience.” For the most part, all the recruits responded positively about the training session. They enjoyed talking and interacting with the youth.

Police Academy Full-Day Training

Description and Observations

Teen Empowerment was allotted a full work day to facilitate a training for the same class of police recruits at the Public Safety Training Institute on August 5, 2014. They brought back some of the youth organizers who had attended the prior session, but some youth had not been to the academy. In all, there were two Teen Empowerment facilitators, six youth organizers, twenty one recruits, and one supervisor present.

The day began with youth and recruits completing pre-surveys, which were slightly modified versions of the dialogue youth and officer pre-surveys. Then, a Teen Empowerment facilitator went over the agenda and encouraged recruits to think about their philosophy of policing and understand the communities they will be entering. He discussed the history of the Youth-Police Unity Project and the recent dialogues, focusing on the aim to build relationships.

The facilitator challenged the recruits to acknowledge that they will be inheriting the history of an institution and a community when they put on the police uniform. That uniform, because of history and current status of police-community relations, creates dividing lines between police and community residents. He challenged the recruits to go over and above their regular job duties and the expectations of their colleagues to break down the natural divides. He pointed out that, indeed, the youth organizers and recruits in the room had clustered with their peer groups, showing how easy it is to fall into natural divisions, as well as how easy it is to simply choose to sit next to someone new.

One of the youth organizers led an interactive called “**name/chant/motion.**” They went around the room and each person had to say their name while making some kind of motion. Everyone else in the room would repeat their name and the motion three times. This is designed to help participants move around and learn each other’s names, but it also shows how the behaviors we choose to do represent who we are without even using our names. Many times, there are social scripts that dictate motions or behaviors in youth/police interactions that can tell us a lot about what the individuals are feeling.

Then, another youth organizers ran the **wind blows** interactive, as described early in this report. They discussed at the end how it feels for everyone to be fighting for a seat, the opportunity to sit. Participants almost all broke or bent the rules of the game when they got desperate and scared that they would not have a seat. The facilitators pointed out that many youth do not feel valued, and they feel singled out by police for their age and race. Knowing this context, everyone in the room had the opportunity to make the “wind blow” and change directions of the situations they are involved in.

The group then participated in concentric circles, with one youth matched with about two recruits. The researcher and facilitators all participated in this to even out the numbers. From the groups able to be observed, the researcher learned that many of the youth grew up in Rochester or other nearby cities. They discussed how they had been learning about communication in the academy and how they want to participate in positive community events as police. The recruits openly greeted the youth. Some remembered the youth from the prior training session.

Facilitators then led the fishbowl interactive with the youth in the center, listing and then discussing the issues youth face in Rochester. Some issues listed included police, drugs, gangs, sex, money, lack of jobs, image, lack of trust, peer pressure, social media, lack of mentors, poverty, race, lack of opportunities, education, criminal justice, anger, pride, stigma, broken home, and miscommunication. The facilitators asked the youth to elaborate on some of these while the recruits listened to their discussions. They discussed how it is hard to break away from a stereotype or label once you have been labelled. One youth discussed how hard he has tried in his life to not dress like a stereotypical black man to avoid stigma and mistreatment, yet he still

experiences it. Facilitators connected many of their discussions about personal struggles to institutional systems that perpetuate such struggles, such as how government and policing policies can perpetuate cycles of poverty.

Then, recruits listed issues that officers face in the community and in their personal lives while the youth organizers listened. Some issues included media, trust, privacy, cameras, safety, negative perceptions, time, family, lawsuits, retaliation, apathy, violence, alcoholism, politics, sleep deprivation, health risks, suicide, and comradery. They were fully aware that officers struggle to find time in their work to really engage people. They discussed how the media plays a huge role in what police do in today's world and how that can hinder decision-making. One recruit described officer as such: the community may think that cops do not care, while cops may think that the community does not care about issues such as violence and drug use. This perception of apathy feeds itself, from the recruit's perspective. The recruits seemed well-informed about the socioeconomic struggles facing Rochester's residents and how they will have to interface with the community, but they were concerned and perhaps overwhelmed by the enormity of it.

Facilitators pointed out that there are a lot of similarities between the issues youth and officers face, especially in terms of how stress affects their decision-making. This exercise allowed participants time to glimpse the world of what each other deals with. Youth and police both carry a lot of issues into their interactions, including trauma that never quite gets dealt with.

The full group of recruits and youth organizers then did a **word-storm** about Rochester (just listing words that came to mind when they thought of Rochester). Again, participants were asked to expand on some of these: fear, division, and history. Facilitators discussed the importance of understanding what you are inheriting when you become a police officer.

After lunch, the group broke into three groups to do the long distance bag toss interactive. Everyone enjoyed this interactive, but it did get chaotic. They discussed why it did not work and how they could improve the bag toss process. They could slow down how fast they throw the bags, communicate, and focus on just one person at a time. Once they integrated these skills and patterns, fewer bags got dropped the second time. The metaphor is that in the community, police need to understand situations when they come in to problem sites. People have issues thrown at them all the time; if it does not slow down, it get unmanageable, and they have to react.

Then, a facilitator read a passage from a book in which a police officer explains how he went from being a well-intentioned recruit to becoming all the stereotypes he never he imaged he would be. This was powerful for the recruits. This passage served as an introduction to the movie *July '64*, which chronicles the riots in Rochester in 1964. The intention was for recruits to keep this passage in mind so that they could understand how police may get put in situations in which they act in ways they never expected.

After the movie, groups discussed whether something like the 1964 riots could happen today in 2014. Most groups concluded that it could, as many of the same issues remain, but it would look quite different in method. Recruits discussed ways they could improve youth-police relations. Some included improving their communication skills and explaining themselves more, getting out of the car and walking around, being understanding when kids are not doing something wrong, and simply show up to events and get to know the community.

Finally, facilitators showed the short video created about the Youth Police Unity Project. They encouraged recruits to lobby within the Rochester Police Department to support opportunities to engage with youth.

In a final evaluation, participants described the day's training as humbling, appreciative, fun, unorthodox, surprising, organized, and useful. At the end, they completed post-surveys.

Police Academy Training Survey Results

The academy surveys were very similar to the dialogue surveys, so we will not re-explain the methodology here. Some of the language was changed to suit the recruits and training instead of dialogue sessions, and the surveys were shortened slightly. Also, youth and recruits were asked to complete adjective checklists not only about each other but also about their own peer group to ascertain how their feelings were similar about youth and officers.

Youth Survey Results

The six youth organizers who participated in the police academy training tended to disagree or feel neutral towards the statement prompts, except that they agreed that youth-police relations needed to and could be improved. On the pre-survey only, they, on average, only marginally agreed that they tried to communicate well with police (average=3.5 on a 5 point scale).

The table below shows that for most statement prompts, the youth organizers' agreement did not change significantly after going through the dialogues. However, there were a few significant changes, shown in bold. Youth were significantly more likely to trust and respect police after the dialogues. They were more hopeful that youth and police could work together to help the community. They agreed more that police want to help the community and that they try to understand what youth are going through. They also felt significantly more respected by police after going through the dialogues. These results are encouraging; the youth seemed to have a very positive experience at the police academy training.

Youth Organizer Statement Prompt Responses for Police Academy Training

	Pre-Mean (n=5)	Post-Mean (n=6)	Direction of Change	Sig.
I want to work with other youth to improve youth-police relations.	3.80	4.17		
Youth and police can work together effectively to help the community.	3.80	4.50	Agreed more	0.129
I am excited about working with police officers to improve youth-police relations.	3.40	3.67		
Most police officers try to understand what youth are going through.	2.20	3.33	Agreed more	0.022
I trust the police.	2.60	3.33	Agreed more	0.048
When they respond to a scene or area, police officers handle the situation well.	3.00	3.00		
In general, young people trust the police.	1.60	2.17		
In general, I feel safe around police officers.	3.00	3.17		
Youth in Rochester respect the police.	1.80	2.50		
Most police officers want to help the community.	2.80	3.67	Agreed more	0.177
Relations between youth and police need to be improved.	4.40	4.17		
Most police officers trust young people.	2.17	2.57		
The way I treat police influences how my peers act towards police officers.	2.83	3.29		
I respect the police.	3.00	3.57	Agreed more	0.14
If I or someone I knew was in immediate danger of being hurt, I would approach a police officer for help if I saw one in the area.	3.83	4.00		
Police officers respect the youth in Rochester.	2.33	3.14	Agreed more	0.062
Relations between youth and police can be improved.	4.50	4.43		
If my friend was disrespecting a police officer, I would encourage him or her to act differently.	3.83	3.86		

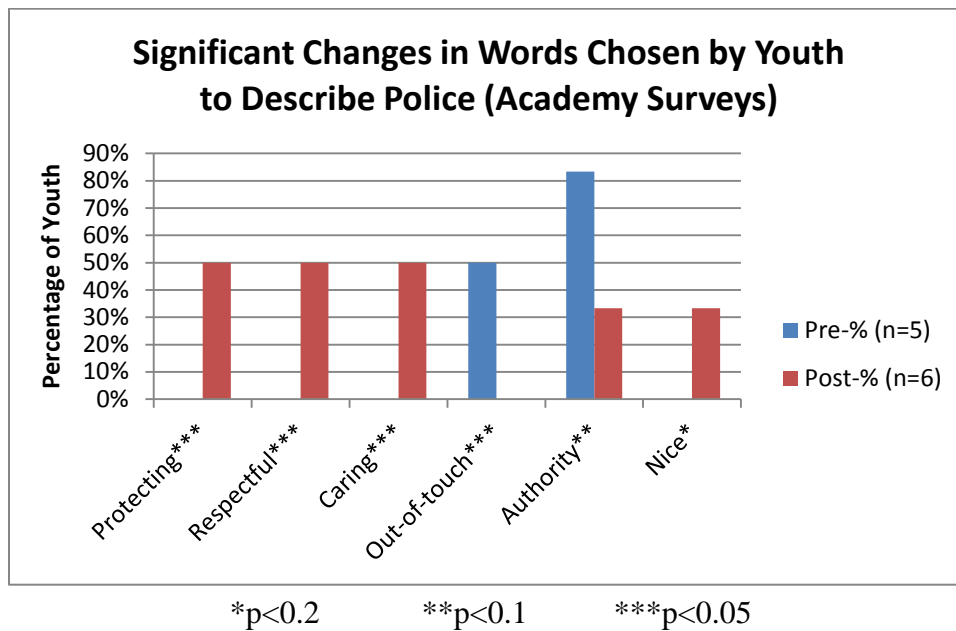
On the post-survey only, youth organizers were asked how much they agreed with several additional statements. The results are shown in the table. They agreed that they understood police better and felt more comfortable interacting with police. They felt like they got their point across to the officers at the training. They became more aware of the challenges police face. They were more reluctant to agree that they would take action by working on their communication skills with police or that they would encourage other youth to participate, but they still, on average, agreed that they would.

Youth Academy Training Post-Survey-Only Responses (n=6)

	Post-Survey Mean
I understand police officers better.	4.00
I feel like the TE Youth Organizers got their point across.	4.33
I feel more comfortable now interacting with police officers.	4.00
I am aware of the challenges faced by police in Rochester.	3.83
I will try harder to establish better communication between myself and the police.	3.57
After participating in the youth/police dialogues, I have a better understanding of how police feel.	3.86
I will encourage other youth to participate in youth/police dialogues.	3.71

The words the youth most commonly chose to describe officers, both before and after the dialogues, included authority, mean, brave, and power. Though not significant, less youth chose to describe officers as disrespectful and strong after the dialogues. More youth described officers as respectable after the dialogues. None of the youth described police as trustworthy or fair, and none chose to describe police as uncaring, unfriendly, or stupid.

Below we display the significant changes in how youth described officer between the pre- and post-surveys. They were significantly more likely to choose some positive words (protecting, respectful, caring, and nice) and significantly less likely to choose negative words out-of-touch and authority.



When asked to choose words to describe youth in Rochester, the youth organizers were most likely to choose friendly, rude, disrespectful, stressed, and violent. The youth were least likely to describe youth as courteous or as neighbors. Youth were unlikely to describe other youth as forgiving, fearless, intelligent, engaged, cooperative, or intimidating either.

Recruit Survey Results

Some of the youth had professional experience working with inner-city youth, but others had none. The recruits, on average, agreed with most statement prompts, except that they felt youth do not respect or trust the police. The recruits' responses changed significantly after going through the full-day training session for six of the statement prompts, which are bolded in the table below.

The recruits were significantly more likely to agree after the training that youth wanted to make their community better. While they agreed less that they thought youth and police could effectively work together to help the community, they still, on average, agreed with this statement.

All the other significant changes were regarding ways they committed to acting as a police officer. They were very significantly more likely to agree that they go out of their way to help youth with their problems and that they could serve as a role model for their colleagues as to how they treat youth. They were more likely to agree that they would encourage officers to treat youth differently if a colleague was mistreating youth. They also stated that they were more likely to seek opportunities to work with youth as an officer.

Recruit Survey Statement Prompt Responses (Academy Surveys)

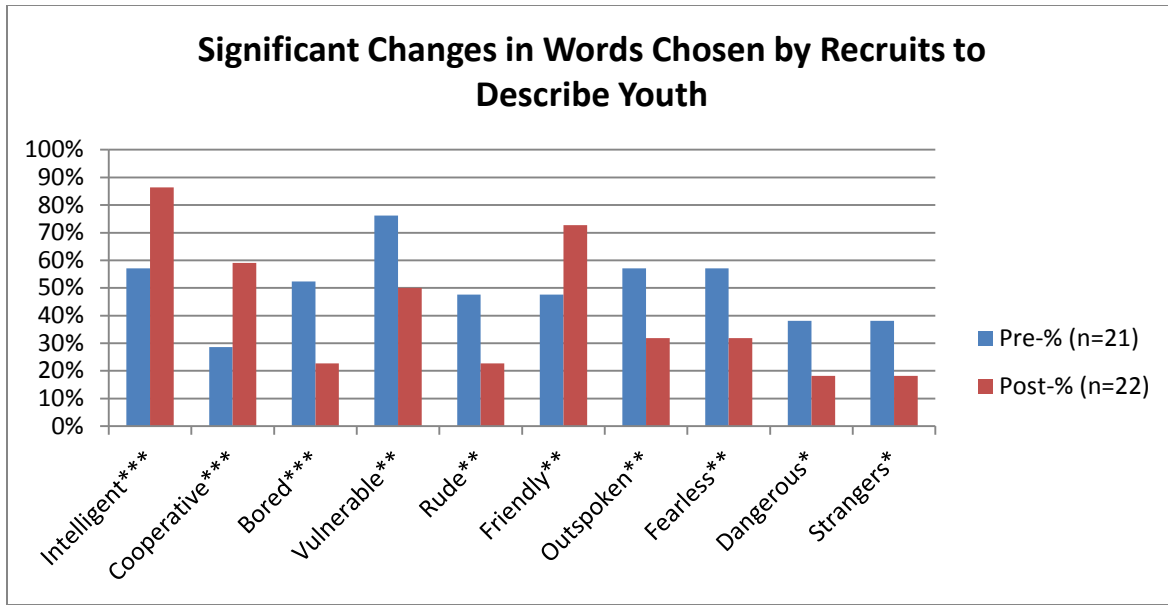
	Pre Mean (n=21)	Post-mean (n=22)	Direction of Change	Sig.
I go out of my way to help youth with their problems, even if it's not technically part of my job.	3.95	4.64	Agreed more	0.0
Youth and police can work together effectively to help the community.	4.52	4.23	Agreed less	0.14
Youth in Rochester want to make their community better.	4.05	4.43	Agreed more	.059
If one of my fellow police officers were disrespecting a youth, I would encourage him/her to act differently.	4.24	4.68	Agreed more	.078
The way I treat youth influences how my colleagues treat youth.	3.81	4.45	Agreed more	.015
I will seek opportunities to work with youth as an officer.	4.24	4.55	Agreed more	.149
I want to work with Rochester youth to improve youth-police relations.	4.52	4.55		
I want to work with other Officers to improve relations with youth.	4.38	4.50		
I trust youth in Rochester.	3.67	3.64		
In general, Rochester police officers trust youth.	3.38	3.43		
As a police officer, I will try to understand what youth are going through.	4.33	4.50		
In general, I feel safe and comfortable dealing with youth.	3.81	3.91		
Youth in Rochester respect the police.	2.90	2.95		
Youth in Rochester trust the police.	2.71	2.86		
I respect youth in Rochester	4.14	4.24		
Relations between youth and police need to be improved.	4.55	4.59		
Police officers respect the youth in Rochester.	3.38	3.64		
Relations between youth and police can be improved.	4.67	4.50		
Most police officers want to help the community.	4.43	4.59		

The table below displays the average level of agreement for statement prompts that only appeared on either the pre- or post-surveys. The recruits felt, on the pre-survey, that officers usually handle calls well. They also agreed that they would try to establish good communication with youth. After the training session, they felt they better understood the issues that youth face, how they felt, and the societal reasons why youth may have police contact. They also fairly strongly agreed that they would try harder to establish better communication with youth.

Recruit Responses to Pre- or Post-Survey-Only Statement Prompts

	Pre Mean (n=21)	Post-mean (n=22)
When responding to a call or scene, police officers handle the situation to the best of their ability.	4.24	N/A
I will try to establish good communication with youth.	4.62	N/A
This training today helped me understand the bigger reasons why youth might come into contact with police.	N/A	4.59
This training helped me better understand the issues urban youth face.	N/A	4.55
I am aware of the challenges faced by youth in Rochester.	N/A	4.45
I will try harder to establish better communication between myself and youth.	N/A	4.64
After participating in the youth/police dialogues, I have a better understanding of how youth feel.	N/A	4.55

On the adjective checklists, recruits were asked to choose words to describe youth in Rochester. The most common words they chose were scared, stressed, resilient, strong, disrespectful, and respectable. They were least likely to describe youth as weak, uncaring, annoying, and mean. Compared to the pre-survey, recruits after the dialogues chose certain words at statistically significantly different rates. These results are shown in the figure below. They were significantly more likely to describe youth as intelligent, cooperative, and friendly after going through the training. They were significantly less likely to describe youth as bored, vulnerable, rude, outspoken, fearless, dangerous, and strangers after going through the dialogues. Overall, these changes reflect that recruits gained a more favorable and empathic opinion of youth after going through the training.



Open-Ended Questions

Several open-ended questions were asked on the pre- and post-surveys. We discuss each question in turn, comparing the pre-training and post-training responses as well as comparing responses between youth and recruits.

Prior Youth-Police Activities

Only four of the recruits had ever participated in a youth-police-like activity besides the Teen Empowerment academy visits. Two of the six youth were new to Teen Empowerment’s youth-police activities; the other four had participated in the prior dialogues.

What Youth Hope to Accomplish

As the youth organizers were helping to facilitate the training, we asked them on the pre-survey what they hoped to accomplish. They wanted to gain common ground and understanding with the police, including understanding how police feel. They hoped to gain respect for one another and learn new things about police. One youth hoped to make connections between the youth and police.

Why Youth are Willing to Share and Listen

Youth organizers expressed a strong desire to improve the relationship between youth and police, so they wanted to share their opinions. They wanted to listen to the recruits to get a better understanding “of what cops go through” to “make it easier to move forward.” They recognized that the police play a big role in the community and wanted to understand their perspectives. One youth was willing to share because “There is a need for youth/police building stronger relationships for the bettering of this community and I don't just want to be saying that at the end of the day. I want to help.”

Problems to Address

Youth and recruits were both asked what they felt were the biggest problems to address in order to improve youth-police relations. To see if this answer changed after going through the training, they were all asked on the pre- and post-surveys.

Before the dialogues, recruits most often cited a strong need for youth and police to have more opportunities for positive interactions. They wanted more opportunities to speak to one another and build relationships. One suggested sports could be an avenue for this. Four recruits identified trust as a major issue to address. They found it important to understand each other's' perspectives and misconceptions about one another. Only one recruit specifically mentioned respect being an issue. Others mentioned the “stop snitching” code, and another mentioned pride as an issue. Only one recruit listed the “history of mistrust and abuse on both sides and a culture of violence and apathy.”

Recruit responses were much shorter on the post-survey, but communication specifically became the prevalent theme after the dialogues, as compared to being focused on having opportunities for positive interactions. Several recruits wanted education and training in the area of youth-police relations. Two mentioned finding the time to have these positive interactions. Three recruits thought trust was a major issue that needed to be addressed. One mentioned respect.

On the pre-survey, youth mostly thought that respect was the major issue to address; four of the five youth who answered the question mentioned it. One youth mentioned cooperation, and another thought “power and authority boundaries” were major issues in addition to respect. One youth named “neighborhood setting and poverty” as major issues to address.

Youth responses were more varied on the post-survey. Still, four of the six youth listed respect as a major issue. One youth listed the “us versus them” mentality between youth and police as something that had to be addressed. Two youth listed communication skills, and another listed race and neighborhoods.

Most Important Result

We asked youth and recruits on the post-survey to describe the most important result of the training. Four recruits skipped the question. Of the other 22 recruits who did answer, nine thought watching the *July '64* documentary was the most important thing they got out of the dialogues; most of them had no idea that the riots happened and how it affected Rochester. One recruit thought it was important that they learned that youth are afraid. Another identified the stressors on urban youth as an important learning outcome. Several recruits thought the most important outcome was for them to learn the perspectives of the youth as well as their struggles. One recruit was “surprised to know how high poverty is in Rochester.” One recruit listed “the intelligence and drive of the youth presenters” as the most important take-away from the training, and another was surprised by “how much our youth care about police and youth relations.”

One of the youth left this question blank. The youth found it important that they learned “the recruits’ perspectives on the city” and that “some/most of the officers were cool.” Some youth were glad to have made connections with officers. One learned that officers agree with youth that “communication is key” in youth-police relations. Another youth was surprised to learn about the “background of the officers.” Many of the youth were surprised by how much they had in common.

What Youth Learned

We also asked youth specifically what they learned from the training. They learned about the police perspective and “how the police felt about being cops.” One youth learned “how government plays a big role in the community.”

Difficulties

Most youth and recruits said that nothing was difficult about the training. The only other response from youth was that the length of the day was difficult for them to stay focused. Only eight recruits listed something that was difficult for them. Two of them found it hard to keep an open mind to youth-police issues. One found it challenging to open up, and another found the public speaking difficult. One officer found it hard to open up with the youth specifically because they were in a “large group of classmates.” One recruit struggled because he or she “didn’t think race was the reason most issues arose. I think too many people fall on race as being the issue.” Finally, a recruit found it challenging to relate because “I am not from the City.”

Academy Training Summary

Our observations and survey results from the police academy training day all indicate that the training was very successful. Facilitators also received very positive feedback from the recruits and their training organizers. The Rochester Police Department intends to continue to set a day aside during every police academy for Teen Empowerment to replicate this training.

There were many significant changes in how youth and recruits responded to the surveys after going through the trainings. The recruits seemed to learn much about their role as police and the history of Rochester and police-community relations. They learned how important communication and positive interaction were to their success as police officers. The youth emphasized respect as a central issue and were happy to learn the perspectives of police officers. Many youth made connections with the recruits, which surprised them. Even though they were still somewhat skeptical, the youth did learn to respect and trust officers more and learned that many have good intentions.

RPD Institutionalization Meeting with the Chief of Police

On August 15, 2014, three Teen Empowerment staff members, a CPSI researcher, and the director of CPSI met with the Chief of the Rochester Police Department to discuss the progress of institutionalizing youth training within the RPD. Some RPD command staff were also involved in the meeting, including the officer in charge of School Resource Officers, the Deputy Chief of Administration, and a lieutenant in the Professional Development Section who coordinates the police academy.

Teen Empowerment reviewed the history of the Youth-Police Unity Project and the collaborative action plan that was developed as a result of that work. They described the recent dialogues and academy trainings that had occurred. The group reviewed the progress that has been made since the collaborative action plan was first agreed upon. Many of them fit with what the department has been already changing, such as shifting to a neighborhood-based patrols. The Chief said that he “firmly believed” in promoting interaction between officers and youth, as he felt this “makes the best progress.” He described some of the department’s efforts to work towards promoting positive police-community interactions. Many of these efforts aim to connect officers to members of the community so they can be reintroduced to people and neighborhoods.

The RPD is switching from a west/east division to a quadrant-based system on March 30, 2015. As part of that reorganization, the Chief is planning to have an officer in each quadrant designated as a youth coordinator. This person would have specific job duties around connecting youth to services and serving as a contact for coordinating youth initiatives in each quadrant. Teen Empowerment was glad to learn of this position, though they expressed concern that it will not be a full-time position in each quadrant, perhaps meaning it is not a high priority. Nonetheless, this is a major step for the RPD in its efforts to institutionalize community and

youth relations within their own ranks. Further, Teen Empowerment was asked to play an advisory role in the development and structuring of this position in March and April 2015. Teen Empowerment offered to help train these officers to help them become experts on youth issues and resources.

Teen Empowerment discussed with the RPD officers that any initiatives that aim to truly address youth-police relations need to be partnerships between community groups like Teen Empowerment and the RPD. Further, there must be firm institutional support, across the police department, so that all types of officers can be involved. They discussed the ongoing youth-police dialogues as a way for more officers to become involved with youth.

Finally, Teen Empowerment and the RPD discussed potential police department funding that could support the continuation of the youth-police dialogues. This project is still in application stages, but all involved in the meeting were hopeful funding could be secured. All of the RPD officers seemed engaged and committed to these types of efforts to improve relations between Rochester Police Officers and the community.

Next Steps and Program Changes

Teen Empowerment staff members are continuously pursuing institutionalization of these dialogues so they are a more regular occurrence within the police department. As mentioned above, they are applying for some funds through the Rochester Police Department in order to support the continued dialogue and officer training work.

Teen Empowerment plans to continue conducting youth-police dialogue series for at least another year. They are hoping to hold another set of dialogues in early 2015 with the new group of youth organizers hired for the 2014-2015 school year. They plan to modify the structure so that there are two dialogue sessions between the youth and police. This structure will allow for the most important work of the dialogues to occur quickly, allow more officers to participate, and put less pressure on the RPD and on individual officers to find time and resources to commit to the project.

For youth and officers who have been through the dialogues and want to continue working more deeply on youth-police issues, Teen Empowerment plans to offer to facilitate and form a core group of participants to meet on a regular basis to continue and expand this work. They plan to offer participation in this group to the officers who have been through the dialogues discussed in this report. That group can then work together to develop action steps on addressing issues related to youth-police relations.

Facilitators plan to integrate other lessons from this Youth-Police Dialogue Program into future dialogue sessions. For example, they plan to recruit officers by sending a department-wide e-

mail, and then they will follow this up with a brief presentation at the RPD's roll call in order to tell officers about the program in person. They will focus the sessions on building relationships through deep, personal conversation, as this seemed to make the most progress among participants.

Also, Teen Empowerment will continue to conduct trainings on youth and community issues at the Rochester Police Academy, as well as remaining open to other potential training opportunities for RPD officers.

Finally, Teen Empowerment staff will offer their expertise on youth and community issues and on youth-police relations in particular to assist the RPD in designing the youth-focused officer position in each quadrant. This is a productive way for Teen Empowerment to assist the RPD in institutionalizing its commitment to improving youth-police relations.

Recommendations

Many suggestions were made by youth and officer participants, as detailed above. In summary, there are a few recommendations that could improve the dialogue sessions. First, as a point of research and organization, the researchers found it would have been helpful to have the pre- and post-surveys assigned to participants via an identification number. More accurate statistical testing could be done, and participants that took the pre-survey but not the post-survey could have been excluded from analysis.

All participants in both Phase One and Phase Two felt that more sessions were needed. In addition, several participants felt that non-dialogue activities could have helped the group bond. Thus, we recommend considering integrating or at least offering some group activities such as sports or community volunteering to youth and officer dialogue participants. This can be less of a commitment than participation in the core group but still serve as a way to maintain or develop bonds between officers and youth.

Finally, an important observation from the researchers is that some participants seemed to have certain expectations about the program which were not satisfactorily met. For example, youth and officers both expected the "bad guys" from the other group to be participating. When they realized that the officers and youth were not the ones creating the most problems in the community, both groups were dismayed.

The youth also seemed to expect the dialogues to achieve much more transformation and deeper healing than may be feasible in a few sessions with volunteer officers. The youth were somewhat disappointed in the progress made. The researchers recommend addressing these expectations during the preparation sessions with both youth and officers. It seems that with a

small number of dialogues, the primary outcome is that the youth and officers get to know one another as individual human beings, learn to empathize with each other, and learn about their day-to-day lives and the institutional structures that affect them all. These are all powerful lessons, but the youth were disappointed that the officers (and the youth) did not have extremely transformative experiences. We recommend framing the dialogue series as a chance to learn from one another as the first step in larger community change work, rather than framing the dialogues as a way to deeply confront youth-police issues and change one another's opinions.

Similarly, participants seemed to be most deeply moved when people in the group shared personal stories. It seemed particularly necessary for the youth to hear the officers open up on personal matters in order to trust the officers and find them genuine. It was also important, as evidenced in Phase Two, for the officers to attend all the sessions in order to maintain the youths' trust. This should perhaps be discussed with officers during their recruitment and preparatory session, encouraging them to fully share themselves with the youth.

Discussion & Conclusion

Our survey results, focus group outcomes, and interview outcomes all point to positive results from the Youth-Police Dialogues. There were evident shifts in some measures on the surveys showing that participants gained empathy, understanding, and respect. Focus groups revealed some tangible changes in behavior among both officers and youth that show they gained new perspectives as well as new skills for how to work together effectively. Participants seemed to learn much from each other. The officers benefited from hearing about youth's challenges, and youth benefited by learning about what police really do and think. All participants were able to see more clearly the complexity of youth-police relations, including the systemic issues and structures that affect them.

Compared to the Phase One's dialogues, the Phase Two dialogues suffered from low energy in the group, and the youth and police officers did not form as close relationships as they had expected. The youth expected the officers to open up more about their personal lives and to give deeper responses, and the officers wanted to have more time with the youth. Nonetheless, valuable lessons were learned by youth as to how police work in the community and that police have real-life issues too, which helped "humanize" the police to the youth. The officers learned from youth about the issues they deal with and the depth of the conflict in youth-police relations. The participants were somewhat pessimistic – just like Phase One's participants – about truly changing youth-police relations across the community. However, all expressed a desire to continue working on the issue.

Experiencing such different dialogue groups taught the Teen Empowerment facilitators several lessons about how to structure the program to best fit the group dynamics and how to better recruit participants most likely to benefit from the program.

Further, the introduction session and training session held at the police academy were very successful. Surveys indicated significant changes in how participants viewed one another after going through the training, and recruits were poised to begin their careers as officers with a unique outlook on youth and community issues.

While reported levels of trust and respect did not change much for any participants except for police academy training participants, we see evidence of healing in other ways among all participants. Participants certainly came to respect the other participants more, though they found it difficult to generalize those feelings to youth or officers as a whole. They also empathized more with each other, and this empathic feeling was more easily extended to non-participant youth and officers than respect was. Participants seemed to be encouraged by a true desire to improve the state of youth-police relations in Rochester, as it would make their lives, jobs, and community healthier and happier.

Reconciliation between youth and police will take time and energy from everyone in the community. As evidenced by this report, youth-police dialogues can be a powerful factor in healing the broken relationship between these two groups. The dialogues seem to be beneficial to all participants in building communication in a constructive and collaborative manner, even between groups who experience much tension between them.

Appendix A: Youth Pre-Survey

Script to Use When Handing Out Youth Pre-Survey

Part of us doing the Youth-Police Unity Project involves research questions that can help us see what participants learned and if the project was successful overall. Throughout your participation in this project, we will ask that you complete surveys to help with this goal. The surveys are voluntary, and you can choose to skip questions if you wish. However we strongly encourage you to complete the survey fully and thoughtfully. This will help us show our community how you feel, what you've learned, and how to do projects like this in other communities. The results of the survey will also be fed back to us so that we can make improvements based on your thoughts and suggestions.

We're giving you some time now to answer this first survey. The surveys are anonymous, so please never write your name on the surveys. Your name or identity will never be attached to your answers. Please complete both sides of this page, and return it to me.

Teen Empowerment/RPD Youth-Police Dialogues
YOUTH Pre-Survey

RATE HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS (CIRCLE A NUMBER)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I want to work with other youth to improve youth-police relations.	5	4	3	2	1
Youth and police can work together effectively to help the community.	5	4	3	2	1
I am excited about working with police officers to improve youth-police relations.	5	4	3	2	1
Most police officers try to understand what youth are going through.	5	4	3	2	1
I trust the police.	5	4	3	2	1
When they respond to a scene or area, police officers handle the situation well.	5	4	3	2	1
In general, young people trust the police.	5	4	3	2	1
In general, I feel safe around police officers.	5	4	3	2	1
Youth in Rochester respect the police.	5	4	3	2	1
Most police officers want to help the community.	5	4	3	2	1
Most police officers trust young people.	5	4	3	2	1
The way I treat police officers influences how my peers act towards police officers.	5	4	3	2	1
I respect the police.	5	4	3	2	1
If I or someone I knew was in immediate danger of being hurt, I would approach a police officer for help if I saw one in the area.	5	4	3	2	1
Police officers respect the youth in Rochester.	5	4	3	2	1
Relations between youth and police can be improved.	5	4	3	2	1
If my friend was disrespecting a police officer, I would encourage him or her to act differently.	5	4	3	2	1

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- 1. Describe “respect” and what it means to you.**

- 2. Why do you want to participate in the TE’s Youth-Police Dialogues? This could be what you want to share, learn, or accomplish, what you find interesting about it, etc.**

**Teen Empowerment/RPD Youth-Police Dialogues
YOUTH Pre-Survey**

CIRCLE A NUMBER TO ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
How often have your personal interactions with police officers been positive?	5	4	3	2	1
How often have your personal interactions with police officers been negative?	5	4	3	2	1
How often have your friends or family members had positive interactions with police?	5	4	3	2	1
How often have your friends or family members had negative interactions with police?	5	4	3	2	1

Circle the words that you think describe police officers in your community.

Fair Authority Mean Friendly Dedicated Harmful Protecting Respectable Nice
 Intimidating Anxious Bored Brave Disrespectful Uncaring Stressed Intelligent
 Respectful Fear-provoking Unfriendly Rude Compassionate Controlling Arrogant
 Helpful Vulnerable Destructive Overworked Trustworthy Power Strangers Caring
 Weak Strong Resilient Stupid Neighbors Out-of-touch Violent Understanding

Circle the words below that you think describe “justice.”

Accountability Forgiveness Blame Fairness Injustice Jail Payback Misunderstanding
 Equality Race Punishment Safety Police Respect Authority Inequality
 Powerless Arrest Healing Court Peace In trouble

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. What makes you willing or able to share your opinions and feelings in this process?

2. Why are you willing to listen to the opinions and feelings of police officers?

3. Please describe any youth-police activity you have participated in before (including if you’ve participated in TE’s youth-police dialogues before):

Appendix B: Officer Pre-Survey

Script to Use When Handing Out Officer Pre-Survey

Part of us doing the Youth-Police Unity Project involves research questions that can help us see what participants learned and if the project was successful overall. Throughout your participation in this project, we will ask that you complete surveys to help with this goal. The surveys are voluntary, and you can choose to skip questions if you wish. However we strongly encourage you to complete the survey fully and thoughtfully. This will help us make this program better, show, what you've learned, and how to do projects like this in other communities.

We're giving you some time now to answer this first survey. The surveys are anonymous, so please never write your name on the surveys. Your name or identity will never be attached to your answers. Please complete both sides of this page, and return it to me.

**Teen Empowerment Youth-Police Dialogues
OFFICER Pre-Survey**

RATE HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS (CIRCLE A NUMBER)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I want to work with Rochester youth to improve youth-police relations.	5	4	3	2	1
I want to work with other Officers to improve relations with youth.	5	4	3	2	1
I trust youth in Rochester.	5	4	3	2	1
In general, Rochester police officers trust youth.	5	4	3	2	1
As a police officer, I try to understand what youth are going through.	5	4	3	2	1
In general, I feel safe and comfortable dealing with youth.	5	4	3	2	1
Youth in Rochester respect the police.	5	4	3	2	1
Youth in Rochester trust the police.	5	4	3	2	1
I respect youth in Rochester.	5	4	3	2	1
Police officers respect the youth in Rochester.	5	4	3	2	1
Relations between youth and police can be improved.	5	4	3	2	1
I go out of my way to help youth with their problems, even if it's not technically part of my job.	5	4	3	2	1
Youth and police can work together effectively to help the community.	5	4	3	2	1
Most police officers want to help the community.	5	4	3	2	1
Youth in Rochester want to make their community better.	5	4	3	2	1
When responding to a call or scene, police officers handle the situation to the best of their ability.	5	4	3	2	1
If one of my fellow officers were disrespecting a youth, I would encourage him/her to act differently.	5	4	3	2	1
The way I treat youth influences how my fellow officers treat youth.	5	4	3	2	1

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- 1. Describe “respect” and what it means to you.**

- 2. Why do you want to participate in the TE’s Youth-Police Dialogues? This could be what you want to share, learn, or accomplish, what you find interesting about it, etc.**

**Teen Empowerment Youth-Police Dialogues
OFFICER Pre-Survey**

CIRCLE A NUMBER TO ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
How often have your own professional interactions with youth in Rochester been positive?	5	4	3	2	1
How often have your own professional interactions with youth in Rochester been negative?	5	4	3	2	1
To your knowledge, how often have your fellow officers had positive interactions with youth in Rochester?	5	4	3	2	1
To your knowledge, how often have your fellow officers had negative interactions with youth in Rochester?	5	4	3	2	1

Circle the words that you think describe youth in Rochester.

Courteous Mean Friendly Rude Harmful Bored Respectable Annoying Grudge
 Intimidating Anxious Cooperative Brave Disrespectful Uncaring Stressed Intelligent
 Respectful Dangerous Unfriendly Outspoken Scared Strangers Arrogant Weak Engaged
 Helpful Vulnerable Destructive Fearless Compassionate Caring Uncooperative Forgiving
 Strong Resilient Dumb Neighbors Out-of-touch Violent Understanding Frustrating

Circle the words below that you think describe “justice.”

Accountability Forgiveness Blame Fairness Injustice Jail Payback Misunderstanding
 Equality Race Punishment Safety Police Respect Authority Inequality
 Powerless Arrest Healing Court Peace In trouble

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. What makes you willing or able to share your opinions and feelings in this process?
2. Why are you willing to listen to the opinions and feelings of youth and other police officers about youth-police relations?
3. Please describe any youth-police activity you have participated in before (including if you’ve participated in TE’s youth-police dialogues before):

Appendix C: Youth Post-Survey

Teen Empowerment/RPD Youth-Police Dialogues

YOUTH Post-Survey

RATE HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS (CIRCLE A NUMBER)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I want to work with other youth to improve youth-police relations.	5	4	3	2	1
Youth and police can work together effectively to help the community.	5	4	3	2	1
I enjoyed working with police officers to improve youth-police relations.	5	4	3	2	1
Most police officers try to understand what youth are going through.	5	4	3	2	1
I trust the police.	5	4	3	2	1
When they respond to a scene or area, police officers handle the situation well.	5	4	3	2	1
In general, young people trust the police.	5	4	3	2	1
In general, I feel safe around police officers.	5	4	3	2	1
Youth in Rochester respect the police.	5	4	3	2	1
Most police officers want to help the community.	5	4	3	2	1
Most police officers trust young people.	5	4	3	2	1
The way I treat police officers influences how my peers act towards police officers.	5	4	3	2	1
I respect the police.	5	4	3	2	1
If I or someone I knew was in immediate danger of being hurt, I would approach a police officer for help, if I saw one in the area.	5	4	3	2	1
Police officers respect the youth in Rochester.	5	4	3	2	1
Relations between youth and police can be improved.	5	4	3	2	1
If my friend was disrespecting a police officer, I would encourage him or her to act differently.	5	4	3	2	1
I am aware of the challenges faced by police in Rochester.	5	4	3	2	1
I will try harder to establish better communication between myself and the police.	5	4	3	2	1
After participating in the youth/police dialogues, I have a better understanding of how police feel.	5	4	3	2	1
I will encourage other youth to participate in youth/police dialogues.	5	4	3	2	1

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

1. What was the most important thing that you got out of your participation in youth/police dialogues?

**Teen Empowerment/RPD Youth-Police Dialogues
YOUTH Post-Survey**

CIRCLE A NUMBER TO ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
How often have your personal interactions with police officers been positive?	5	4	3	2	1
How often have your personal interactions with police officers been negative?	5	4	3	2	1
How often have your friends or family members had positive interactions with police?	5	4	3	2	1
How often have your friends or family members had negative interactions with police?	5	4	3	2	1

Circle the words that you think describe police officers in your community.

Fair Authority Mean Friendly Dedicated Harmful Protecting Respectable Nice
 Intimidating Anxious Bored Brave Disrespectful Uncaring Stressed Intelligent
 Respectful Fear-provoking Unfriendly Rude Compassionate Controlling Arrogant
 Helpful Vulnerable Destructive Overworked Trustworthy Power Strangers Caring
 Weak Strong Resilient Stupid Neighbors Out-of-touch Violent Understanding

Circle the words below that you think describe “justice.”

Accountability Forgiveness Blame Fairness Injustice Jail Payback Misunderstanding
 Equality Race Punishment Safety Police Respect Authority Inequality
 Powerless Arrest Healing Court Peace In trouble

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

1. Describe something new you learned from the police officers participating in the project:

2. Why were you willing to listen to the opinions and feelings of police officers?

3. What was difficult or challenging about the project, and how do you think it can be improved?

4. Please describe any youth-police activity you have participated in before (*including if you've ever participated in TE's youth-police dialogues*).

Appendix D: Officer Post-Survey

Teen Empowerment Youth-Police Dialogues OFFICER Post-Survey

RATE HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS (CIRCLE A NUMBER)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I want to work with youth to improve youth-police relations.	5	4	3	2	1
I want to work with other officers to improve relations with youth.	5	4	3	2	1
I trust youth in Rochester.	5	4	3	2	1
In general, Rochester police officers trust youth.	5	4	3	2	1
As a police officer, I try to understand what youth are going through.	5	4	3	2	1
In general, I feel safe and comfortable dealing with youth.	5	4	3	2	1
I believe youth in Rochester respect the police.	5	4	3	2	1
I believe youth in Rochester trust the police.	5	4	3	2	1
I respect youth in Rochester.	5	4	3	2	1
Police officers respect the youth in Rochester.	5	4	3	2	1
I believe relations between youth and police can be improved.	5	4	3	2	1
I go out of my way to help youth with their problems, even if it's not technically part of my job.	5	4	3	2	1
Youth and police can work together effectively to help the community.	5	4	3	2	1
Most police officers want to help the community.	5	4	3	2	1
Youth in Rochester want to make their community better.	5	4	3	2	1
If one of my fellow officers were disrespecting a youth, I would encourage him/her to act differently.	5	4	3	2	1
The way I treat youth influences how my fellow officers treat youth	5	4	3	2	1
I am aware of the challenges faced by youth in Rochester.	5	4	3	2	1
I will try harder to establish better communication between myself and youth.	5	4	3	2	1
After participating in the youth/police dialogues, I have a better understanding of how youth feel.	5	4	3	2	1
I will encourage other officers to participate in youth/police dialogues.	5	4	3	2	1

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

1. What was the most important thing that you got out of your participation in the dialogues?

2. What was difficult or challenging about the dialogues, and how do you think it can be improved?

**Teen Empowerment Youth-Police Dialogues
OFFICER Post-Survey**

CIRCLE A NUMBER TO ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
How often have your own professional interactions with youth in Rochester been positive?	5	4	3	2	1
How often have your own professional interactions with youth in Rochester been negative?	5	4	3	2	1
To your knowledge, how often have your fellow officers had positive interactions with youth in Rochester?	5	4	3	2	1
To your knowledge, how often have your fellow officers had negative interactions with youth in Rochester?	5	4	3	2	1

Circle the words that you think describe youth in Rochester.

Courteous Mean Friendly Rude Harmful Bored Respectable Annoying Grudge
 Intimidating Anxious Cooperative Brave Disrespectful Uncaring Stressed Intelligent
 Respectful Dangerous Unfriendly Outspoken Scared Strangers Arrogant Weak Engaged
 Helpful Vulnerable Destructive Fearless Compassionate Caring Uncooperative Forgiving
 Strong Resilient Dumb Neighbors Out-of-touch Violent Understanding Frustrating

Circle the words below that you think describe “justice.”

Accountability Forgiveness Blame Fairness Injustice Jail Payback Misunderstanding
 Equality Race Punishment Safety Police Respect Authority Inequality
 Powerless Arrest Healing Court Peace In trouble

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

- Describe something new you learned from the youth participating in the project:
- Do you think this project could have a broader impact on law enforcement agencies? If so, how?
(Please include any specific ideas you have for how this project can be expanded)
- Please describe any youth-police activity you have participated in before (including if you’ve participated in TE’s youth-police dialogues before):
- Additional Comments:

Appendix E: Youth-Police Dialogue Sessions Evaluation

Date: _____

Something that worked well:

Something that did not work so well:

Something the facilitator(s) did well:

Something the facilitator(s) could have done better:

Something else I think would have made the session better is:

A challenging part of today's session for me was:

Something that I learned or that surprised me was:

A question or concern I am left with is:

On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate this session? (*Circle a number*)

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
Great Good Fair Poor

Thank you!!

Appendix F: TE YP Dialogues Facilitators Session Evaluation

Date of session: _____

Something that worked well and/or the facilitator(s) did well at today's session:

Something that did not work so well and what could have made it better:

Did anything occur in today's session that reminded you of why you do this work?

What was difficult about today's session for you (including any internal obstacles you faced)

Where did you think you were successful in your facilitation of today's session? How do you think you could improve your facilitation of today's session?

If you could change one thing about your facilitation of today's session, what would it be?

Something that I learned or that surprised me was:

A question or concern I am left with is:

On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate this session? (*Circle a number*)

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
Great Good Fair Poor

Thank you!!

Appendix G: Youth Focus Group Questions

Questions for youth, 4/11/14 at 4pm, Teen Empowerment:

- 1. Let's go around the group and say how long have you been involved in TE, and your most powerful experience from these dialogue sessions (good or bad)?**
- 2. On a scale from 1-10, how would you rate the dialogues series, with 1 being the worst and 10 being the best?**
 - a. Can anyone describe why you chose the number you did?**
- 3. Did going through these dialogues benefit you or your work with TE? How? Skills?**
4. Do you think these dialogues benefitted the officers? Why or why not?
5. *Do you think participating in this process can help officers be more effective?*
 - a. Possibly trust, communication, relationships with youth, etc.*
6. *Did your attitude toward police changed as a result of these sessions? How?*
- 7. Has or will your behavior toward officers change as a result of being in these sessions? If they did, do you have any examples?**
8. *Did you learn anything new about the issues that officers face? That youth face?*
- 9. What was the most challenging part of participating in these dialogues for you?**
- 10. How do you think these dialogues could be improved?**
11. How well do you think these dialogues were organized and facilitated? Any suggestions?
12. Were there any topics that you felt needed to be discussed more?
13. Did you feel safe to share your thoughts in these dialogues? What helped you feel safe, or what could have helped you share more?
14. *Do you believe this process can help improve youth-police relations in Rochester, if more youth and officers participate over time? If yes, how? If no, what could?*
15. *Do you feel like you would use what you learned to challenge stereotypes among your peers or family about police? Why? How?*
- 16. What youth-related topics do you think are most important to train new RPD officers on?**
- 17. What do you think is the most important thing that other youth need to hear that you learned from these dialogues?**

Appendix H: *Officer Focus Group Questions*

Questions for police, 4/15/14 at 4pm, Gandhi Institute:

1. Can you say your rank or job role? And what made you want to participate?
 - a. Are there any other factors that encouraged you or factored into your decision to participate? We'd like to hear them all so we can best recruit other officers.
2. What did you expect this project to be like before participating?
3. On a scale from 1-10, how would you rate the dialogue series?
 - a. Can anyone describe why you chose the number you did?
4. Describe the most powerful or memorable experience you had in these dialogues.
5. Did going through these dialogues benefit you or your work? If so, in what ways?
6. When you think about what makes you effective as an officer, did this process help you be more effective in the role you play in the community? How?
 - a. Possibly trust, communication, relationships with youth, etc.
7. Do you think these dialogues benefitted the youth? Why or why not?
8. What was the most challenging part of participating in these dialogues for you?
9. Did your behavior (actions) toward youths (or the community) change as a result of being in these sessions? Why or why not? Do you have any examples?
10. Did you learn anything new about the issues that youth face? That officers face?
11. How do you think these dialogues could be improved?
 - a. (if conversation lags, ask if there were logistical issues, emotional barriers, etc.)
12. Were there any topics that you felt needed to be discussed more?
13. Do you believe this process can help improve youth-police relations in Rochester, if more youth and officers participate over time?
14. Would you encourage other officers to participate? Why or why not?
15. How should TE recruit officers? What type of officers should be recruited, or when in their career? (young, old, patrol, SRO, etc.)
16. How could this be expanded within the RPD? Should it be?
17. What do you think is the most important thing officers need to know that you learned in this process?
18. Have you done other youth engagement activities? What were they like, and how did they compare?

Appendix I: Teen Empowerment/RPD Post-Academy Training: YOUTH Pre-Survey

RATE HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS (CIRCLE A NUMBER)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I want to work with other youth to improve youth-police relations.	5	4	3	2	1
Youth and police can work together effectively to help the community.	5	4	3	2	1
I am excited about working with police officers to improve youth-police relations.	5	4	3	2	1
Most police officers try to understand what youth are going through.	5	4	3	2	1
I trust the police.	5	4	3	2	1
When they respond to a scene/call, police officers handle the situation well.	5	4	3	2	1
In general, young people trust the police.	5	4	3	2	1
In general, I feel safe around police officers.	5	4	3	2	1
Youth in Rochester respect the police.	5	4	3	2	1
Most police officers want to help the community.	5	4	3	2	1
Relations between youth and police need to be improved.	5	4	3	2	1

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. What do you hope to get out of or accomplish at today's training?

2. What do you think are the biggest problems to address in order to improve youth-police relations?

CIRCLE THE WORDS THAT YOU THINK DESCRIBE YOUTH IN ROCHESTER.

Courteous Mean Friendly Rude Harmful Bored Respectable
 Annoying Grudge Intimidating Anxious Cooperative Brave Disrespectful
 Uncaring Stressed Intelligent Respectful Dangerous Unfriendly Outspoken
 Scared Strangers Arrogant Weak Engaged Helpful Vulnerable Destructive Fearless
 Compassionate Caring Uncooperative Forgiving Strong Resilient Dumb Neighbors
 Out-of-touch Violent Understanding Frustrating

RATE HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS (CIRCLE A NUMBER)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Most police officers trust young people.	5	4	3	2	1
The way I treat police officers influences how my peers act towards police officers.	5	4	3	2	1
I respect the police.	5	4	3	2	1
If I or someone I knew was in immediate danger of being hurt, I would approach a police officer for help if I saw one in the area.	5	4	3	2	1
Police officers respect the youth in Rochester.	5	4	3	2	1
Relations between youth and police can be improved.	5	4	3	2	1
If my friend was disrespecting a police officer, I would encourage him or her to act differently.	5	4	3	2	1
I try to communicate well with police officers.	5	4	3	2	1

CIRCLE THE WORDS BELOW THAT YOU THINK DESCRIBE POLICE OFFICERS.

Fair Authority Mean Friendly Dedicated Harmful Protecting Respectable
 Nice Intimidating Anxious Bored Brave Disrespectful Uncaring
 Stressed Intelligent Respectful Fear-provoking Unfriendly Rude Compassionate
 Controlling Arrogant Helpful Vulnerable Destructive Overworked Trustworthy
 Power Strangers Caring Weak Strong Resilient Stupid Neighbors
 Out-of-touch Violent Understanding

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. **Have you ever participated in TE's youth-police dialogues before?** ___Yes
 ___No
 - a. **If yes, when?** _____
2. **What makes you willing or able to share your opinions and feelings in this process?**
3. **Why are you willing to listen to the opinions and feelings of police officers?**

Appendix J: Teen Empowerment/RPD Post-Academy Training: YOUTH Post-Survey

RATE HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS (CIRCLE A NUMBER)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I want to work with other youth to improve youth-police relations.	5	4	3	2	1
Youth and police can work together effectively to help the community.	5	4	3	2	1
I am excited about working with police officers to improve youth-police relations.	5	4	3	2	1
Most police officers try to understand what youth are going through.	5	4	3	2	1
I trust the police.	5	4	3	2	1
When they respond to a scene/call, police officers handle the situation well.	5	4	3	2	1
In general, young people trust the police.	5	4	3	2	1
In general, I feel safe around police officers.	5	4	3	2	1
Youth in Rochester respect the police.	5	4	3	2	1
Most police officers want to help the community.	5	4	3	2	1
Relations between youth and police need to be improved.	5	4	3	2	1
I understand police officers better.	5	4	3	2	1
I feel like the TE Youth Organizers got their point across.	5	4	3	2	1
I feel more comfortable now interacting with police officers.	5	4	3	2	1

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

1. What was the most important or surprising thing that you got out of today's training?

2. What do you think are the biggest problems to address in order to improve youth-police relations?

CIRCLE THE WORDS THAT YOU THINK DESCRIBE YOUTH IN ROCHESTER.

Courteous Mean Friendly Rude Harmful Bored Respectable
 Annoying Grudge Intimidating Anxious Cooperative Brave Disrespectful
 Uncaring Stressed Intelligent Respectful Dangerous Unfriendly Outspoken
 Scared Strangers Arrogant Weak Engaged Helpful Vulnerable Destructive Fearless
 Compassionate Caring Uncooperative Forgiving Strong Resilient Dumb Neighbors
 Out-of-touch Violent Understanding Frustrating

**Teen Empowerment/RPD Post-Academy Training
YOUTH Post-Survey**

RATE HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS (CIRCLE A NUMBER)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Most police officers trust young people.	5	4	3	2	1
The way I treat police officers influences how my peers act towards police officers.	5	4	3	2	1
I respect the police.	5	4	3	2	1
If I or someone I knew was in immediate danger of being hurt, I would approach a police officer for help, if I saw one in the area.	5	4	3	2	1
Police officers respect the youth in Rochester.	5	4	3	2	1
Relations between youth and police can be improved.	5	4	3	2	1
If my friend was disrespecting a police officer, I would encourage him or her to act differently.	5	4	3	2	1
I am aware of the challenges faced by police in Rochester.	5	4	3	2	1
I will try harder to establish better communication between myself and the police.	5	4	3	2	1
After participating in the youth/police dialogues, I have a better understanding of how police feel.	5	4	3	2	1
I will encourage other youth to participate in youth/police dialogues.	5	4	3	2	1

CIRCLE THE WORDS BELOW THAT YOU THINK DESCRIBE POLICE OFFICERS.

Fair Authority Mean Friendly Dedicated Harmful Protecting Respectable
 Nice Intimidating Anxious Bored Brave Disrespectful Uncaring
 Stressed Intelligent Respectful Fear-provoking Unfriendly Rude Compassionate
 Controlling Arrogant Helpful Vulnerable Destructive Overworked Trustworthy
 Power Strangers Caring Weak Strong Resilient Stupid Neighbors
 Out-of-touch Violent Understanding

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- 1. What was difficult or challenging about today's session? Why?**

- 2. Describe something new you learned today:**

- 3. Have you ever participated in TE's youth-police dialogues before?** ___Yes
 ___No
 - a. If yes, when?** _____

Appendix K: Teen Empowerment/RPD Post-Academy Training: RECRUIT Pre-Survey

RATE HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS (CIRCLE A NUMBER)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have worked with inner-city youth in a professional role before.	5	4	3	2	1
I want to work with Rochester youth to improve youth-police relations.	5	4	3	2	1
I want to work with Officers to improve relations with youth.	5	4	3	2	1
I trust youth in Rochester.	5	4	3	2	1
In general, Rochester police officers trust youth.	5	4	3	2	1
As a police officer, I will try to understand what youth are going through.	5	4	3	2	1
In general, I feel safe and comfortable dealing with youth.	5	4	3	2	1
Youth in Rochester respect the police.	5	4	3	2	1
Youth in Rochester trust the police.	5	4	3	2	1
I respect youth in Rochester.	5	4	3	2	1
Relations between youth and police need to be improved.	5	4	3	2	1

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think are the biggest problems to address in order to improve youth-police relations?

CIRCLE THE WORDS THAT YOU THINK DESCRIBE YOUTH IN ROCHESTER.

Courteous Mean Friendly Rude Harmful Bored Respectable
 Annoying Grudge Intimidating Anxious Cooperative Brave Disrespectful
 Uncaring Stressed Intelligent Respectful Dangerous Unfriendly Outspoken
 Scared Strangers Arrogant Weak Engaged Helpful Vulnerable Destructive Fearless
 Compassionate Caring Uncooperative Forgiving Strong Resilient Dumb Neighbors
 Out-of-touch Violent Understanding Frustrating

RATE HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS (CIRCLE A NUMBER)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Police officers respect the youth in Rochester.	5	4	3	2	1
Relations between youth and police can be improved.	5	4	3	2	1
I go out of my way to help youth with their problems, even if it's not technically part of my job.	5	4	3	2	1
Youth and police can work together effectively to help the community.	5	4	3	2	1
Most police officers want to help the community.	5	4	3	2	1
Youth in Rochester want to make their community better.	5	4	3	2	1
When responding to a call or scene, police officers handle the situation to the best of their ability.	5	4	3	2	1
If one of my fellow officers were disrespecting a youth, I would encourage him/her to act differently.	5	4	3	2	1
The way I treat youth influences how my peers and colleagues treat youth.	5	4	3	2	1
I will seek opportunities to work with youth as an officer.	5	4	3	2	1
I will try to establish good communication with youth.	5	4	3	2	1

CIRCLE THE WORDS BELOW THAT YOU THINK DESCRIBE POLICE OFFICERS.

Fair Authority Mean Friendly Dedicated Harmful Protecting Respectable
 Nice Intimidating Anxious Bored Brave Disrespectful Uncaring
 Stressed Intelligent Respectful Fear-provoking Unfriendly Rude Compassionate
 Controlling Arrogant Helpful Vulnerable Destructive Overworked Trustworthy
 Power Strangers Caring Weak Strong Resilient Stupid Neighbors
 Out-of-touch Violent Understanding

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

1. Please describe any youth-police activity you have participated in before:

Appendix L: Teen Empowerment/RPD Post-Academy Training: RECRUIT Post-Survey

RATE HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS (CIRCLE A NUMBER)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have worked with inner-city youth in a professional role before.	5	4	3	2	1
I want to work with youth to improve youth-police relations.	5	4	3	2	1
I want to work with other officers to improve relations with youth.	5	4	3	2	1
I trust youth in Rochester.	5	4	3	2	1
In general, Rochester police officers trust youth.	5	4	3	2	1
As a police officer, I will try to understand what youth are going through.	5	4	3	2	1
In general, I feel safe and comfortable dealing with youth.	5	4	3	2	1
I believe youth in Rochester respect the police.	5	4	3	2	1
I believe youth in Rochester trust the police.	5	4	3	2	1
I respect youth in Rochester.	5	4	3	2	1
Police officers respect the youth in Rochester.	5	4	3	2	1
Relations between youth and police need to be improved.	5	4	3	2	1
This training today helped me understand the bigger reasons why youth might come into contact with police.	5	4	3	2	1
This training helped me better understand the issues urban youth face.	5	4	3	2	1

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

1. What was the most important or surprising thing that you got out of today's training?

2. What was difficult or challenging about today's session? Why?

CIRCLE THE WORDS THAT YOU THINK DESCRIBE YOUTH IN ROCHESTER.

Courteous Mean Friendly Rude Harmful Bored Respectable
 Annoying Grudge Intimidating Anxious Cooperative Brave Disrespectful
 Uncaring Stressed Intelligent Respectful Dangerous Unfriendly Outspoken
 Scared Strangers Arrogant Weak Engaged Helpful Vulnerable Destructive Fearless
 Compassionate Caring Uncooperative Forgiving Strong Resilient Dumb Neighbors
 Out-of-touch Violent Understanding Frustrating

RATE HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS (CIRCLE A NUMBER)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Relations between youth and police can be improved.	5	4	3	2	1
I go out of my way to help youth with their problems, even if it's not technically part of my job.	5	4	3	2	1
Youth and police can work together effectively to help the community.	5	4	3	2	1
Most police officers want to help the community.	5	4	3	2	1
Youth in Rochester want to make their community better.	5	4	3	2	1
If one of my colleagues was disrespecting a youth, I would encourage him/her to act differently.	5	4	3	2	1
The way I treat youth influences how my peers and colleagues treat youth.	5	4	3	2	1
I am aware of the challenges faced by youth in Rochester.	5	4	3	2	1
I will try to establish good communication with youth.	5	4	3	2	1
After participating in the youth/police dialogues, I have a better understanding of how youth feel.	5	4	3	2	1
I will seek opportunities to work with youth as an officer.	5	4	3	2	1

CIRCLE THE WORDS BELOW THAT YOU THINK DESCRIBE POLICE OFFICERS.

Fair Authority Mean Friendly Dedicated Harmful Protecting Respectable
 Nice Intimidating Anxious Bored Brave Disrespectful Uncaring
 Stressed Intelligent Respectful Fear-provoking Unfriendly Rude Compassionate
 Controlling Arrogant Helpful Vulnerable Destructive Overworked Trustworthy
 Power Strangers Caring Weak Strong Resilient Stupid Neighbors
 Out-of-touch Violent Understanding

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- Please describe any youth-police activity you have participated in before (including if you've participated in TE's youth-police dialogues before):**

- What do you think are the biggest problems to address in order to improve youth-police relations?**