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# COPS

Community Oriented Policing Services  
U.S. Department of Justice

# IIR

Institute for Intergovernmental Research



## Building Relationships of Trust Commonly Used Terms

**advisory council.** A structured group composed of community leaders and police officers brought together to share important information about their community and to develop problem-solving strategies and tactics jointly.

**common thread theory.** The idea of using issues of mutual concern to help bridge the gaps between law enforcement and the community.

**community policing.** A philosophy of policing and associated strategies based on strong community collaboration and partnership, a problem-solving methodology involving the community, and strong relationships (and thus legitimacy) between police officers and the community.

**community self-governance.** Informal social control within neighborhoods where the community exercises control over its members' behaviors in a manner acceptable to most members.

**COPS Office.** Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, the component of the U.S. Department

of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territory, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

**cultural awareness.** Recognition that people have different values, behaviors, and approaches to life and cultural backgrounds.

**demystify.** To clarify or make clear, as in an intention.

**deterrence.** Law enforcement actions that seek to prevent criminal occurrences before they occur. See also general deterrence, focused deterrence, and specific deterrence.

**economic improvement.** When a neighborhood begins to thrive with new commerce.

**felt presence.** When officers are getting out of their cars and meaningfully engaging with members of the community.

**focused deterrence.** This type of deterrence focuses on groups of offenders by leveraging targeted strategies (i.e., group loyalty) in a manner that pressures them not to be involved in criminal acts. For example, individuals in an identified group will be deterred from violence because of the resulting personal and group consequences. This relatively new concept is associated with pulling levers and focused deterrence frameworks originated by David Kennedy. See also deterrence, general deterrence, and specific deterrence.

**general deterrence.** This type of deterrence focuses on the public at large and the effect that threat of legal punishment has on the public. For example, seeing offenders punished inhibits others from committing the same acts because they fear similar punishment. See also deterrence, focused deterrence, and specific deterrence.

**moral voice.** An articulated sense among community members that crime, particularly violent crime, and disorder are wrong, unacceptable to members of the community, and not tolerated.

**neighborhood policing.** Policing structures and services organized around geographic areas reflecting neighborhoods of a city. Often incorporates the concept of community policing. See also community policing.

**open communication.** Allowing ideas and information to be shared freely between police officers and the community.

**police legitimacy.** When the police department has earned the community's trust and mutual respect, resulting in community acceptance of police officers and the law as legitimate sources of authority.

**quality-of-life measures.** Standard indicators (such as broken windows, litter, and graffiti) that send subliminal messages to community members on how that community tolerates the current conditions.

**relationship of trust.** A relationship established between police officers and community members that optimizes mutual respect and a spirit of collaboration.

**social capital.** A reservoir of good will between police officers and the community that police officers can draw on when issues arise that concern the community.

**specific deterrence.** This type of deterrence focuses on the impact of punishment on individual offenders. The core idea is that once punished, an offender will be less likely to offend again because he or she will wish to avoid further punishment.

**suspicious activities.** Behaviors that seem to be wrong and are not tied to race, ethnicity, religion, or gender; the basis of the Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) Initiative (NSI).

**transparency.** A quality of openness and communication under which police officers and the community openly share and clearly see concerns and intentions.

