

Reno Police participating in research project; aim to improve safety, community relations

by Melissa Matheney | Thursday, February 16th 2017



Seal of the Reno Police Department

RENO, Nev. (News 4 & Fox 11) — The Reno Police Department is participating in a research study that will help police officers better respond to critical situations.

Reno Police will take part in Cognitive Command (C2) training, which will assess police officers' emotions, stereotypes, implicit biases, and their use of senses to better to evaluate a threat.

The overall purpose of the training is to improve safety, skills, professionalism and police/community interactions.

Dr. Jon Page, who received his PH.D. in experimental psychology from the University of Nevada, Reno, is the creator of Cognitive Command Training. Page says police officers are often put in situations where they have to react different from the way their brains are wired to react. That's when the repetitive training comes into play.

"Fight, flight [or] freeze is the brains way of dealing with a threat," Page says. "But what we're asking law enforcement officers to do is really go against what their brain is built to do. Instead of just protecting themselves, they start protecting other people in the community. So to do that, it means they have to do something their brain isn't wired to do."

Through training, the roughly 40 participating officers do drills to address emotional knowledge, stereotypes and implicit biases.

"There's a part of it based on emotional intelligence," Page says. "So officers kind of better understand their emotions, also better understand another person's emotions so they can interact better."

Officers also learn how to better assess a situation quickly by using all of their senses.

Through the drills, the officers will be able to more quickly gauge the situation they are stepping into with the hopes they will make better decisions in stressful and sometimes life-threatening situations.

"What we hope to do is train our officers to think quicker on their feet," says Lt. Tim Donohoe with the Reno Police Department. "To build a sense of awareness and then comprehend that scene quicker. "

The participating Reno Police officers are doing all-day classes on Cognitive Command Feb. 15 and 16. After the classes, they will be given drills to practice on the job. Cognitive Command is paid for through the Reno Police Department's training budget.