"If you're gonna make a decision, you should understand the rationale"

Introducing the Evidence Based Policing
Police Leaders Master Class

Dr. Laura Huey
Canadian Society of Evidence Based Policing

Original study:

Preparing Police Leaders of the Future:
An Educational Needs Assessment

- RQ1. What forms of police leader education and training currently exist for Canadian police leaders? (environmental scan)

- RQ2. Are these courses and/or programs suitable for the needs of police leaders given the demands they face? (interviews with 29 police leaders from across Canada).

BUT we also wanted to know: Are police leadership programs preparing Canadian police leaders for evidence based policing?

additional questions:

1. do police leaders need to be evidence based, **YES**

2. how comfortable they are with making evidence based decisions, **VERY**

3. whether they felt their educational or training experiences had prepared them for evidence based decision-making, **NO** (unless they went through a research intensive grad program)

4. through what other sources, beyond leadership training and education, are police leaders being exposed to research and research skills? **crime analysts, internet, reading research**

So, we created a training initiative using a "Master Class" approach

Intro to Evidence Based Policing
Police Leaders Master Class

Instructor
Prof. Laura Huey, University of Western Ontario
Email: lhuey@uwo.ca

Description

This is a master class in evidence based policing consisting that will provide attendees with an overview of the basic principles of evidence based policing and evidence based decision-making.

Learning Objectives

1. To learn the basic elements of research.
2. To develop an improved understanding of the relationship of scientific research and policing experience to informing policing policies and programs.
3. To articulate the major ideas and concepts underlining evidence based policing and decision making.

Learning Outcomes

1. The attendee will have introductory level knowledge of the key components of evidence based policing and relevant concepts and ideas.
2. The attendee will have introductory level knowledge of aspects of research and research design.
3. The attendee will develop some familiarity of the various sources of research and knowledge available and enhanced insight into how to assess these sources.
4. The attendee will have an enhanced understanding of how to use research within police decision-making.

Kill Your Darlings

In 2004, Jeff Bezos brought Steve Kessel, one of his most trusted executives, into his office. Kessel ran Amazon's book division, the company's bread-and-butter business category. Bezos had the utmost confidence in Kessel, who had successfully grown the division over several years. In the meeting, Bezos revealed that he was giving Kessel new responsibilities.[1]

Bezos wanted Kessel to focus on e-books. At the time, Bezos could see that digital books were poised to threaten physical books, just as digital music had threatened CDs. He was still reeling from Apple's takeover of online music with its iTunes store. His reluctance to enter the market had caused Amazon to miss out on a tremendous opportunity, and Bezos wasn't about to let it happen again. So Bezos told Kessel that his first priority was to build an electronic reading device—a piece of technology that would become the dominant hardware platform for e-books, something innovative and impressive enough to be at the forefront of the movement toward digital books.

It was an ambitious call to action, but Kessel was confused. A foray into digital would undermine Amazon's traditional business, cannibalizing his current division's physical book sales. How could Kessel lead a project that would threaten his existing business? Bezos was well aware of this conflict of interests. He had been highly influenced by Clayton

CAN SEBP

Some common(ish) EBP terms that maybe not all that common elsewhere

3Rs
Refers to a traditional policing approach involving *random* patrol, *rapid* call response and *reactive* investigations.

3Ts
A proactive approach to policing that entails *targeting* problems or issues, *testing* police responses to that problem and *tracking* the effects of those responses over time to ensure continued effectiveness.

Abstract
A summary overview of the key elements of a piece of research (topic, argument/hypothesis/research questions, methods and findings). Usually found at the head or beginning of a write up of the research.

Actionability
The practice of making research findings usable by police practitioners, crime analysts, administrators, police leaders and/or policy-makers.

Boost
Found in offender and place based theories of crime; a boost occurs when an offender successfully targets a site and, armed with knowledge of the property, returns to reoffend. This theory may explain why some houses are repeatedly burgled and others are not.

Cambridge Crime Harm Index
A technique for measuring the impact of harm caused by crime. Crime rate reporting is typically based on counting the number of violent and property offenses reported to police. The Index uses various factors, in this case the U.K sentencing guidelines starting point for imprisonment, to convert an offense from being a simple count (assaults = 8453) into a measure of how harmful this offense is perceived to be in the community based on sentences given (assaults = 621, 785 days of jail time) or other standards set by researchers (such as lost employee wages, lost business revenues, etc.).

Why?

Class components

Hour 1:

Why? Why do police leaders need to know about this "EBP stuff"? Isn't this just a fad?
- The cornerstones of 21st century policing: effectiveness & efficiency
- Policing research - where are we at now?
- Why experience is valuable but can be misleading (confirmation bias)
- Science is your friend; however, you need to watch out for 'frenemies'
- Stat spotting 101 (or how to avoid being fooled)

Why do police leaders need to know about this "EBP stuff"? Isn't this just a fad?

A paradigm shift has happened

- What doesn't work any more:

- Telling stories about 'little Timmy' to get money from cash-strapped city councils

- Business cases for more bodies that are not backed by solid data

- Citing personal experience or years of service as justifications for new (often costly) programs or policies

- Pointing to the crime rate as a justification for more resources

Why should cops care about the scientific method?

"To be scientifically literate is to empower yourself to

know when someone else is full of shit"

– Neil Degrasse Tyson

Fun with Laura:
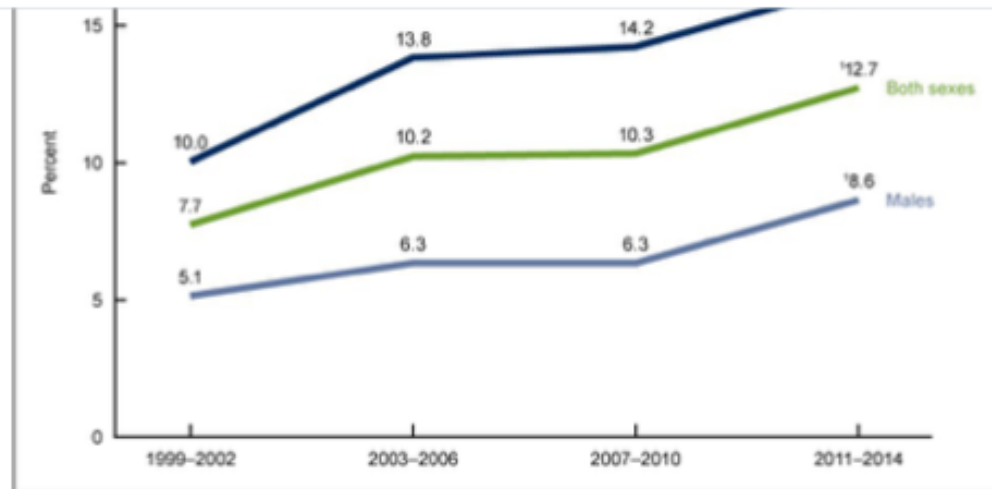# Stat spotting and other fun research abuse tricks

Enforcement of cannabis laws cost $1.2bn (2002)

CBCnews | Toronto

Legalizing all drugs would be good for Canada, according to Toronto Liberal MP

Nathaniel Erskine-Smith, Liberal MP, says drug use should be treated as a health matter, not a criminal matter

By Alexandra Sienkiewicz, CBC News   Posted: Jan 31, 2017 6:00 AM ET | Last Updated: Jan 31, 2017 7:43 PM ET

Erskine-Smith isn't alone in advocating for decriminalization of all drugs. The Global Commission on Drug Policy — a global group, which includes Kofi Anan, Richard Branson, Louise Arbour and several former world leaders, has long promoted decriminalizing drugs and in 2014 it recommended governments legalize all drugs.

- Decriminalize cocaine and psychedelics, global group urges
- Marijuana legalization in Canada: What we know and don't know

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) has studied the effects of decriminalizing marijuana, the results of which it presented in a 2014 report.
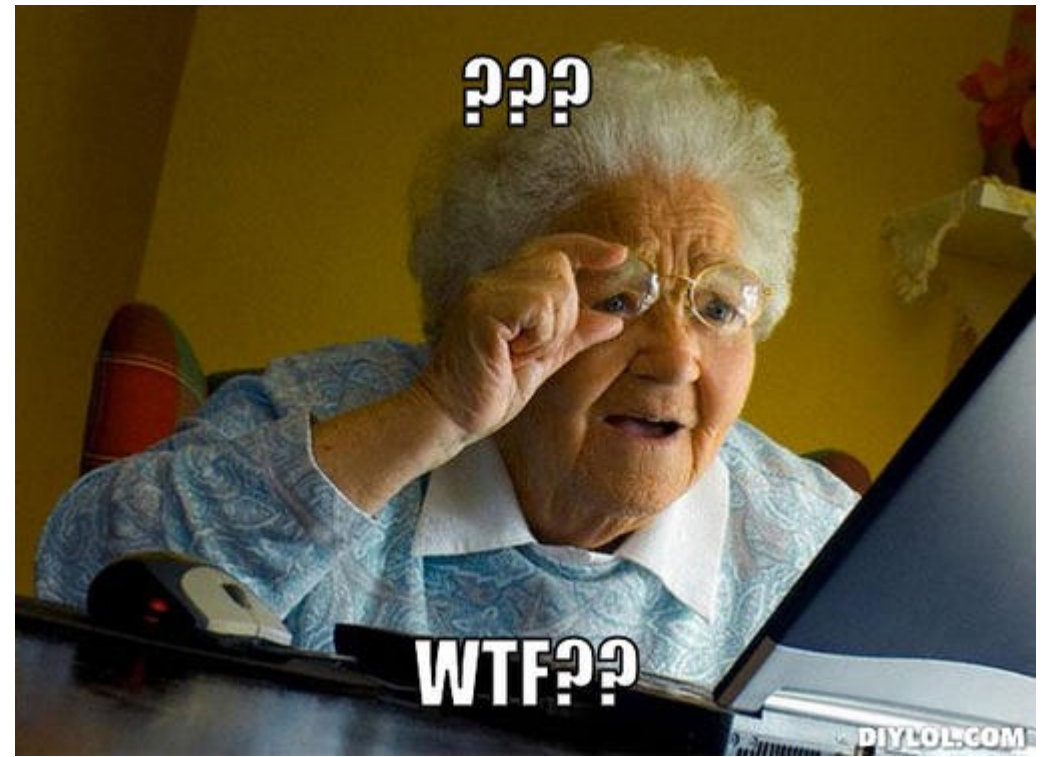
CAMH said "a decriminalization approach can reduce some of the adverse social impacts of criminalization" and that the annual cost of enforcing cannabis laws alone (including police, courts and corrections) cost Canadians $1.2 billion in 2002.

Safe injection sites

In December, federal Health Minister Jane Philpott introduced bill C-37, which aims to tackle the country's opioid crisis and ease restrictions on supervised injection sites.

So …

- I went to the 2014 report, which …
- Cited a 2006 report, which ….
- Cited a 2002 report, which ….

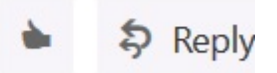- Told me nothing about where this figure comes from

$1.2 billion estimate on cannabis costs

Laura Huey   👍   ↩ Reply

Today, 3:24 PM

research@camh.ca ⌄

Hello,

I'm trying to trace the source of a statistic provided by CAMH and recited in the news media: that the 2002 law enforcement costs of enforcing the prohibition on cannabis were $1.2 billion. This stat appears in a CAMH report from 2014 and the source CAMH cites is Rehm et al. 2006. I've gone through the Rehm report and I can't find any specific mention of cannabis-related enforcement costs or a $1.2 billion figure.

Can you please advise where this number comes from? I would like to understand the methodology for estimating these costs.

Thanks, Laura

$1.2 billion estimate on cannabis costs

R

research <research@camh.ca>

Today, 1:18 PM

Laura Huey ⌄

👍 ↩ Reply all | ⌄

Here is the information on this figure:

This figure was derived from a report called The Costs of Substance Abuse in Canada 2002. This study found that the costs of law enforcement for illegal drugs in Canada was $2.335 billion in 2002. Law enforcement costs specific to cannabis were estimated by assigning half of total enforcement costs – $1.167 billion – to cannabis. This is a conservative estimate since a) more than half of drug-related offences reported by police involve cannabis and b) the numbers are from 2002 and have not been inflation-adjusted.

...

We use issues like this to teach about important research principles like ...

- Transparency

- Validity

- Testability

- Reliability

- Objectivity

- Among others

What? When?

Hour 2:

What? EBP Basics
- definition
- what is a pracademic?
- data vs fact
- targeting, testing and tracking
- evidence base doesn't just mean based on evidence (replication and
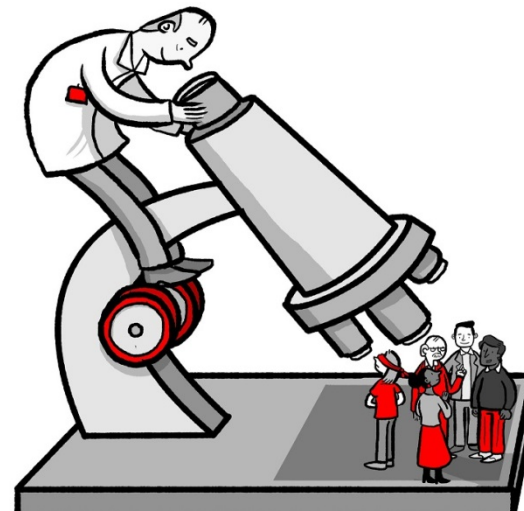 reproduction)
When? - Examples of operational and administrative decision-making where EBP
  is useful
- exercise: identifying programs/practices/policies that could probably
  stand some scrutiny

What is EBP? The definition we espouse:
(source: UK College of policing)

- In an evidence based policing approach, police officers and staff create, review and use the best available evidence to inform and challenge policies, practices and decisions.

- As a way of working, it *can* be supported by collaboration with academics and other partners.

Do you need a degree to be a pracademic?
Clue: it might help, but you just need to be open to learning

Evidence + experience = expertise

EBP **incorporates the police in the research process**.

- as co-creators of projects (helping to develop topics, research questions, refine methods, etc.)

- as co-investigators on research teams (conducting research and/or analyzing results)

- serve as advisors during the research process (providing advice and feedback while projects are ongoing)

- and/or provide crucial feedback on study results and recommendations.

EBP topics

- Police leadership
- Domestic abuse programs
- Body worn cameras
- Victim contact programs
- Offender diversion programs
- Traffic safety initiatives
- Police workload issues
- Foot patrol
- Peer support programs for police officers
- Prioritization strategies for offender targeting
- Hot spot policing
- Emotional intelligence testing for new recruits

Exercise: Targeting

Write down all your agency programs

4 Groups

1 Social Programs

2 Crime Prevention Programs

3 Youth Programs

4 Public Relations Programs

Exercise: Targeting

- For each project/program you have written down list:

  - How much does the program cost yearly – to police department, city, or outside agencies
  - Metrics you use to measure success
  - Do those metrics measure the goals you set out to achieve?
  - If you think the metrics for each program demonstrate value for the costs of the program, place a X next to the program name
  - Now put a check mark next to each program if you think there is societal harm

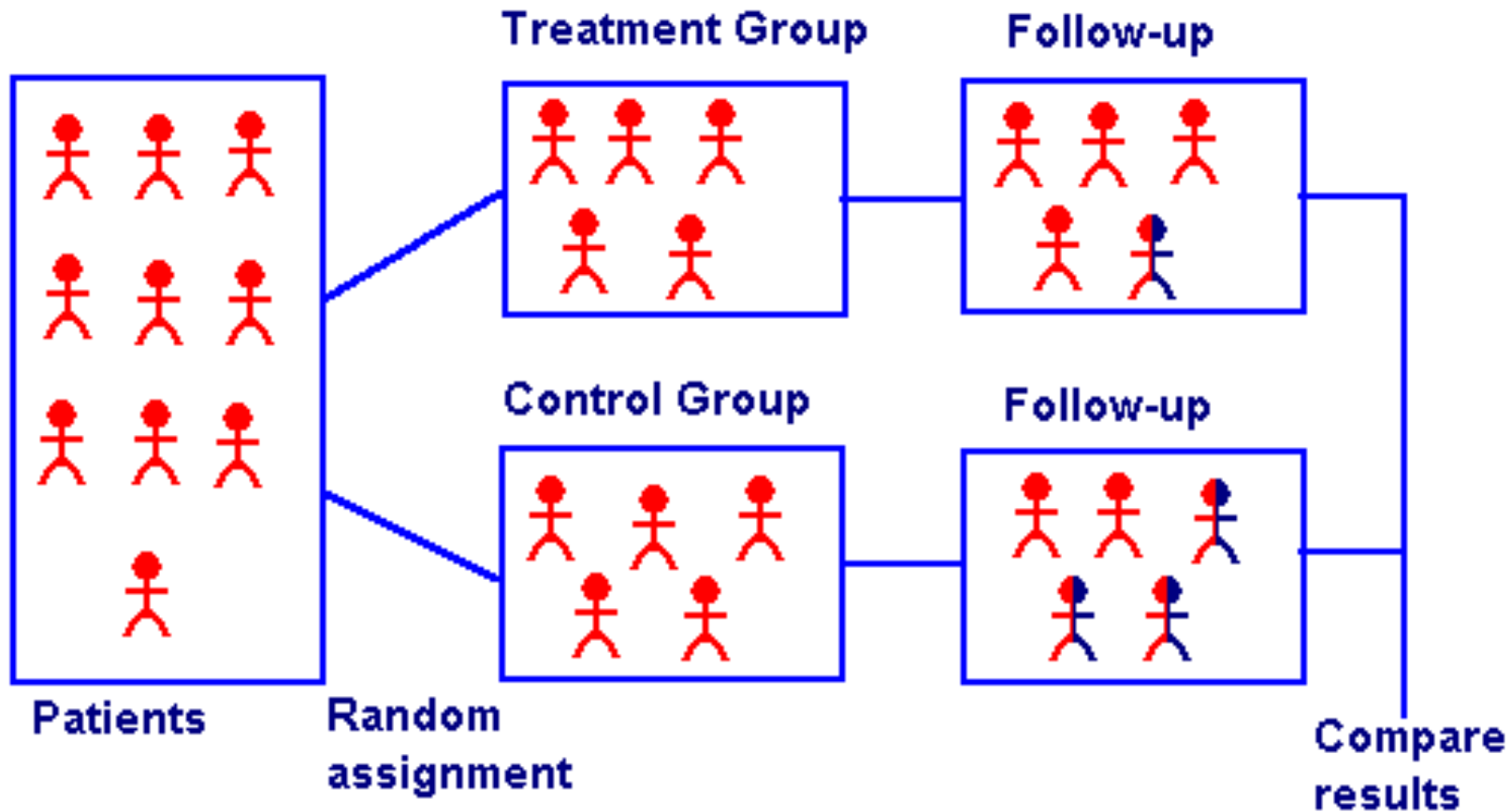# How?

Hour 3:

How? Some basic research design
- design 101
- exercise: designing your own study

Match your questions to your methods

- **Qualitative** Research: interviews, focus groups, ethnography, systematic social observation (also possibly experiments, but rarely done). Uses **research questions** that can have open-ended results.

- **Quantitative** Research: surveys, experiments (randomized control trials; pre-post/post-tests), testing questions using other forms of numerical data. Uses **hypotheses** that can only result in Yes/No responses.

- **Mixed:** combines two or more of the above from both qualitative and quantitative

A common method in EBP work: randomized control trial

Another one: Pre-test/Post-test

Interviewing 101

- Structured interviews (using a guide)

RESILENCY FORMATION INTERVIEW GUIDE					
Demographic information	YES*	NO**			
Race/Ethnicity					
White					
Black					
Latina					
Asian-american					
Pacific Islander					
Biracial					
Other					
Age					
Pregnant					
Length of current homelessness					
Trauma/obstacles/setbacks	YES	NO			
Child/Youth					
Physical abuse					
Sexual abuse					
Foster care					
Family death					
Witness violence					
Harrassment/bullying					
Parental abandonment					
Fire					
Natural disaster					
Homelessness					
Significant illness					
Gang-related violence					
Other					
Adult					
Physical assault					
Sexual assault					
Domestic violence					
Gang-related violence					
Homeless more than once					
Family death					
Fire					
Natural disaster					
Witness violence					
Job/career loss					
Significant illness					
Significant family illness					
Harassment					
Incarceration					
Child custody issues					
Other					
Resiliency vs. vulnerability	YES	NO			
See self as strong/survivor					
See self as vulnerable/weak					

Observations/field work

- Watching people do what they do is often a great technique for better understanding what people do.

- It's also useful for finding otherwise 'hidden' practices, beliefs or attitudes because:

* On surveys, people often lie, forget, misunderstand the question. Also, surveys are limited by what you ask.

* In interviews, people might forget some important detail, misrepresent, etc.

Question: how do you measure the effectiveness of a bike patrol in its present location?

a police organization requires an evaluation of the effectiveness of their bike patrol, which has been in operation since 2001. The bike patrol operates only in the city's downtown tourist district. The types of police data available include: call records for 3 years; occurrence reports for 5 years; shift staffing reports for 2 years. The police data can be customized to the area served by the bike patrol.

Constraints:

- there is no police data before 2001 and only some records post 2011.
- you cannot move, stop or alter the patrol's operation
- you cannot implement a new bike patrol elsewhere

Additional note: the police organization is open to creative solutions.

Exercise: Testing

- <mark>Pick a problem/issue. What would you like to know</mark>?

- What method or methods would you like to use to study it?

- What resources are available for you to draw upon?

- What challenges will you face?

- What's your timeline?

- If you implement a new program, policy or strategy how will you track it over time?

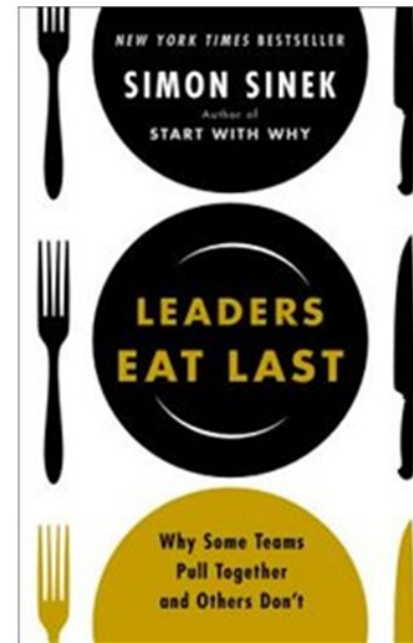- How would you share your results (with your own organization and other agencies)?

Where?

Hour 4:

Where? EB decision-making for police leaders
  - being okay with uncertainty (EBP is not a panacea)
  - criticism and critical thinking are not the same (or, how to encourage
     constructive "speaking up")
  - learning to be ruthless (on killing your darlings)
  - embracing failure
  - politics – reason vs. emotion
  - sources of existing knowledge you can use (free!)
  - discussion: how could you embed EBP within your own agency? What
     could work?

Be open to thinking about issues in a more scientific way

- When confronted with an issue or challenge, the first question should always be: "what does the research say?"

- Learn from not only policing specific research, but also from fields ranging from medicine, aviation, psychology, business, etc.

- Otherwise: just read widely. There's lot of great ideas out there!

Nothing in life comes with an absolute guarantee

• Evidence based policing does not provide <mark>definitive</mark> answers that

officers and staff should apply uncritically.

"The actual state of our knowledge is always provisional"

- Louis de Broglie, French Nobel physicist

"Life isn't black and white"
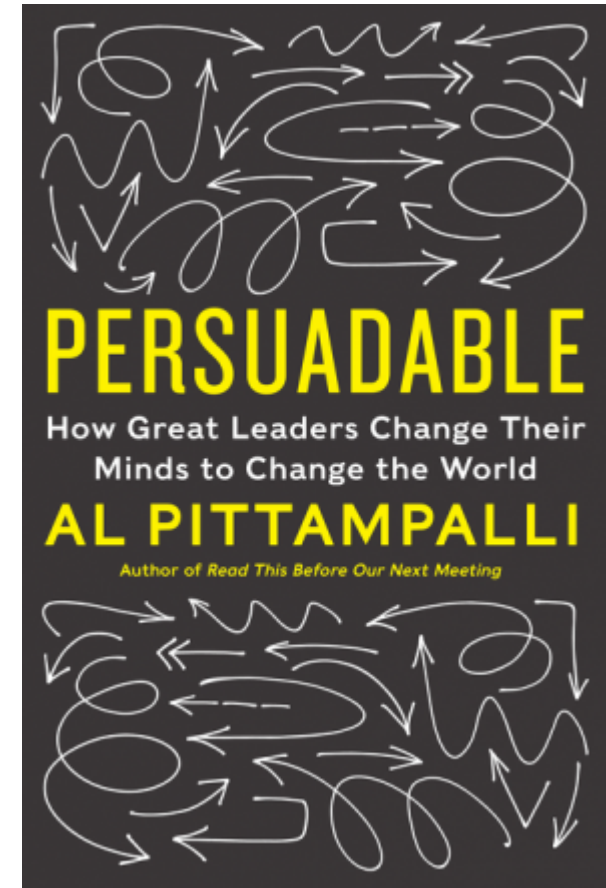
– old timer cop from Vancouver's DTES

You need to each be 'leaders' and your leaders need to be comfortable with empowering that

• In an EBP organization, officers and staff will reflect on their practice, consider how the 'best available' evidence applies to their day to day work, and learn from their successes and <mark>failures</mark>.

• The approach should mean officers and
staff can ask questions, challenge accepted
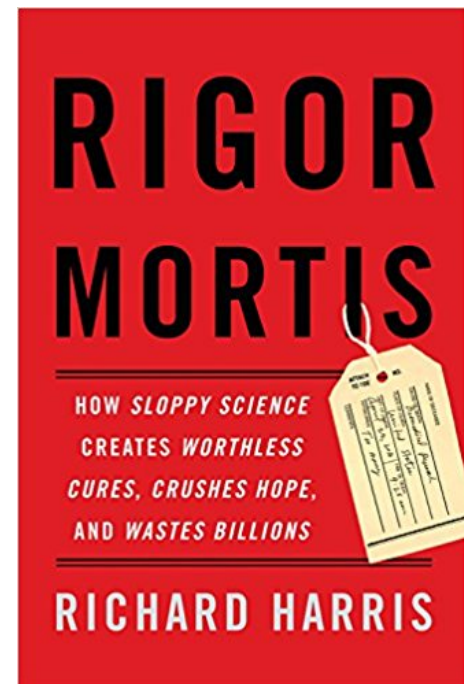practices and innovate in the public interest.

Be open to being persuaded

• We are all fallible

• So rather than focusing on creating a culture of absolute certainty while the ship goes down, be open to hearing different views and

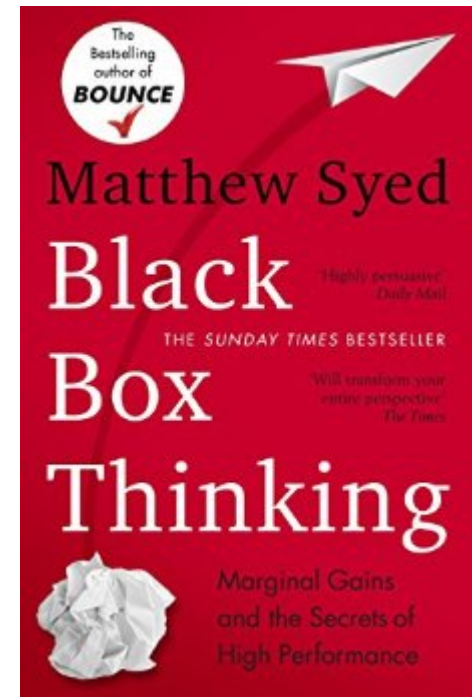• Be prepared to change course (don't double down on a bad bet!)

Be prepared to kill your darlings

- Everyone has pet ideas, beliefs, policies, practices and programs.

- But not everyone is ruthless enough to challenge their own darlings or to kill them.

- Sometimes things need pruning. Sometimes they
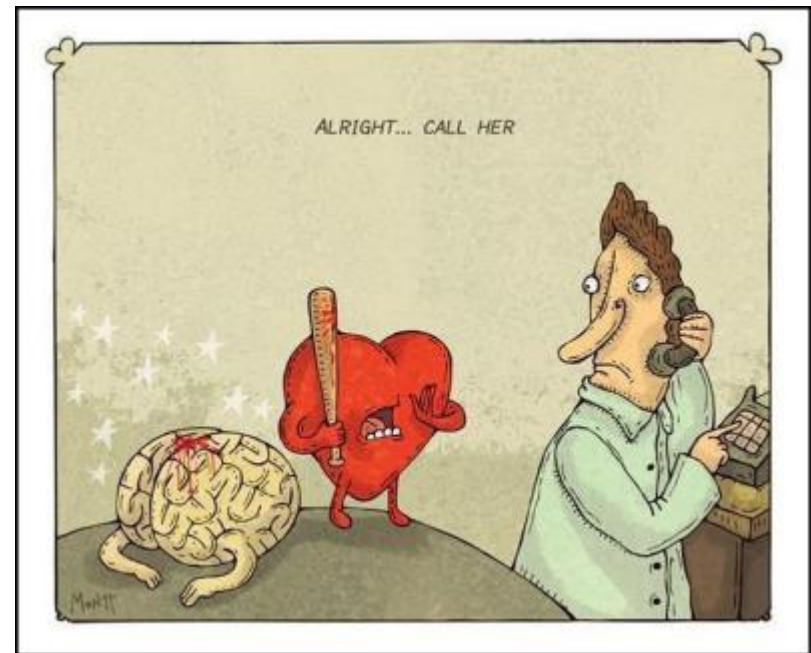need killing. Do it. That is all.

Embrace failure

- Failure (like death and taxes) is inevitable. Accept this, young Jedi.

- Use it as an opportunity to learn, improve and innovate

- Organizations that punish failure tend to not learn, not improve and not innovate

- They also tend to create cultures in which people start to colour outside the box to avoid punishment – jes sayin'

Politics: Reason vs. Emotion

- There is a significant volume of research that suggests that our political behavior, beliefs and values are governed mainly by emotion, and not reason. You can see some of this play out in response to police decision-making and research.

- EMSOU trial

Other perfectly free, very good resources

EBP resources online

Society of Evidence Based Policing (UK) — click

Australia and New Zealand Society of Evidence Based Policing — click

Cambridge Centre for Evidence Based Policing — click

Institute for Social Science Research, University of Queensland — click

Centre for Evidence-Based Crime Policy, George Mason University — click

Centre for Law Enforcement and Public Health, Melbourne University — click

American Society of Evidence Based Policing — click

Institute for Canadian Urban Research Studies, Simon Fraser — click

What Works in Crime Reduction, UK College of Policing — click

Smart Policing Initiative, US Bureau of Justice — click

WeCops Community site — click

Campbell Collaboration (systematic reviews) — click

Crime Solutions, US National Institute of Justice — click

Police Foundation — click

EBP apps/podcasts

Police Foundation podcasts — click

EBP application from Police Foundation, GMU, IACP, ITunes — click

SEBP podcasts on EBP topics — click

*NEW ResFinder - CAN-SEBP app to find EBP practitioners - Apple version — click

*NEW ResFinder - CAN-SEBP app to find EBP practitioners - GooglePlay version — click

*NEW Policing Matters podcast on EBP & patrol (ASEBP) — click

Research databases

Global Police Database, University of Queensland — click

Gray Literature Database, Rutgers University — click

EBP journals

Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice — click

Journal of Experimental Criminology — click

Police Science: The Journal of the Australia-New Zealand Society of Evidence Based Policing — click

Journal of Community Safety and Well-being — click

Cambridge Journal of Evidence Based Policing *COMING SOON!

EBP and (fun) science b

click — Keele University blog

click — BSC Policing Network blogs

click — Andrew Gelman's blog

click — Ben Goldacre's Bad Science blogs

EBP talks

CAN-SEBP YouTube channel

"Predictive Policing and the Role of Analysis". Talk by S. Chainey, UC

"Why we Need Evidence Based Policing". Talk by M. Brennan.

Policing news and comm

Policing Insight

Translational Criminology

Embedding EBP into an agency

- Internal working groups – GMP EBP Champs

- Setting up an EBP department – Western Australia Police/Austin Police

- LEADS Agencies (CAN-SEBP/NIJ)

- Research fellows/embedded researchers

- Involvement in external working groups

- Identifying and supporting individual EBP champs

- Ideas programs – ie. Operation Sprint (Western Australia Police/TPS).

Discussion:
Which of any of the ideas for embedding EBP are practical for your organization?

Thank-you!