

Are Current Canadian Police Intervention Methods for Children in Crisis, Resulting from Violence and Abuse, Effective in Mitigating Children from Entering the Criminal Justice System or Causing Further Trauma Leading to Justice-Involved Youth?

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Abstract

This study is a critical appraisal with a pragmatic worldview of current research on the topic of police crisis intervention methods with children in crisis and the research question is, “Are current Canadian police intervention methods for children in crisis, resulting from violence and abuse, effective in mitigating children from entering the Criminal Justice System or causing further trauma leading to justice-involved youth?” A significant gap in Canadian research was found on current police crisis intervention methods and on these with children as the person in crisis. Generalizability of studies in other countries may not be possible due to Canada’s unique multicultural society and differences in policies and laws. Similar models and training frameworks may be applicable, however, with customization for a Canadian context.

Keywords: police, child, crisis, crisis intervention, police methods, childhood trauma, Adverse Childhood Experiences, Canada

Background

As first responders, police officers frequently encounter and interact with people in crisis and at times those in crisis will be children. How an officer handles the situation and interacts with the child may have lasting impacts on the child's impression of police officers and it may even affect their development. If a child is in crisis from violence and abuse, they may have already suffered from childhood trauma and this trauma can have long lasting effects on them, following into adulthood. Childhood trauma can effect a child psychologically, physically, emotionally, and behaviourally (The National Child Traumatic Stress Network [NCTSN], n.d.). It can cause development of inappropriate stress responses that may be misinterpreted by others, such as appearing distant or "overreacting" (NCTSN, n.d.). Childhood trauma can also lead to high risk behaviours, such as self-harm, theft, substance use and abuse, and engaging in higher risk activities. These behaviours can lead to more, and potentially negative, interactions with police (NCTSN, n.d.). Children in crisis, especially those resulting from violence and abuse, may already have childhood trauma and have developed the inappropriate stress responses (Elliffe & Holt, 2019; McCormick et al., 2019).

Children in crisis require special care and attention to mitigate and/or prevent further traumatization. If police officers, who are attending to a child in crisis, use crisis intervention methods that are not suitable for children, the officers may cause further trauma. A couple studies were found that showed that police officers may inadvertently cause childhood trauma associated with police on the children in a crisis situation, whether the child is directly involved or simply at the same location (Elliffe & Holt, 2019; McCormick, Cohen, & Ashton, 2019). This may lead to a negative view of police and illegal behaviours that cause them to be in trouble with

the law. Those children may then become youth, who are involved with the criminal justice system and get stuck in the cycle of recidivism.

Research Question and Rationale

The research question for this study is, “Are current Canadian police intervention methods for children in crisis, resulting from violence and abuse, effective in mitigating children from entering the Criminal Justice System or causing further trauma leading to justice-involved youth?” In conducting a literature search, a significant gap was discovered for research on the topic of children in crisis when connected with police crisis intervention methods, especially in the Canadian context. There are studies that conduct research on the interactions of police with children (Geller, 2021; Jackson, 2021), however most studies looked at interactions from criminal involvement with youth (Vitopoulos, Peterson-Badali, Brown, & Skilling, 2018) or indirect interaction with children, such as children being present in domestic abuse or intimate partner violence (IPV) situations with police intervention (Elliffe & Holt, 2019; McCormick et al., 2019).

Due to the discovered gap in research, a critical appraisal of the literature currently available and using a pragmatic worldview, it seeks to understand if these studies can be generalized or if further research is required to understand whether current police intervention methods are effective in mitigating child involvement in the justice system. A pragmatic worldview, according to Creswell (2014), focuses on the consequences of actions, is problem-centered and oriented in real-world practice. Pragmatic researchers are not limited to using one system of philosophy, reality, or method of research and truth is what works at that time (Creswell, 2014). They also focus on the research problem, using whichever method is required to best understand their research problem (Creswell, 2014).

Most, if not all, studies found were conducted outside of Canada, such as in Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom. This is a concern as Canada has its unique multicultural society with unique situations and aspects that may not be suitable for generalization from studies by other countries. Also, Canadian laws and police methods may differ from the ones of other countries, which would affect the generalizability of the results other studies conclude.

Literature Search

As mentioned before, a significant gap was discovered when conducting the literature search for this study for research on police crisis intervention methods and the effect it has on children in crisis. There were studies that looked at the negative effects of childhood trauma (Dudley, 2015; NCTSN, n.d.) and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on children (Chandan, Hughes, Nirantharakumar, Bandyopadhyay, & Taylor, 2020; Geller, 2021), as well as the interaction and correlation between these and police interactions with children (Jaffe, Crooks, & Wolfe, 2003; McCormick et al., 2019). However, most studies were conducted outside of Canada and were not specific to children in a crisis situation.

Additionally, current studies on police intervention methods in Canada focused on the interaction between police and those suffering from mental health issues (Liegghio & Jaswal, 2015; Parent, 2007; Tiwari, Andrews, Casey, Liu, Tonmyr, & Gonzalez, 2021). Some studies were conducted on the effectiveness of implementing programs that involved the co-operation of mental health workers with police during crisis intervention calls, as mentioned in a study done by Liegghio and Jaswal (2015). There were no studies found on police intervention methods involving children in crisis due to violence and abuse situations. There was however, a study that had been conducted on the police intervention with children and youth suffering from mental health issues and the effect on families and police (Liegghio & Jaswal, 2015).

Search Methodology

In this critical appraisal, secondary data was utilized and found through a literature review of the current research available. This study chose to use secondary data as the lack of studies on the direct interactions between children and police during crisis intervention made it difficult to find primary data to analyze.

An initial search was conducted on Google Scholar using the keywords: police caused trauma and child, which yielded a limited number of results. The search was then expanded using the keywords: Childhood trauma, police, and crisis intervention, which resulted in a much larger result pool. However, to narrow the results, the keywords: youth, abuse, violence, recidivism, police inflicted childhood trauma, and law enforcement were used in a variety of combinations and with the use of quotation marks to limit the number of hits. EBSCOhost through the Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC) library system was also used.

Additionally, studies that were from Canada, Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom were included and ones from other countries were excluded, which was done by scanning the detailed information page and titles. Using this same method, studies conducted from the year 2000 to the present was included to account for current ideas on the topic. Studies in any other language other than English were also excluded, which was done by scanning titles and using the language filter on the search engines. As this study is focused on children, youth, and police, research literature with adults or elders as participants and healthcare, education, and/or parenting focused purposes were excluded.

Studies with children and/or youth aged 18 and below were included. Gender studies or studies that only included either male or female were excluded to limit bias and ensure data was

not excluded. Also, studies that focused on police as the study subject, such as research on “traumatized police”, were excluded, however studies that had police as a participant or that studied the effect of police or policing were included. These limitations were done by scanning the titles and abstracts. The literature was further limited by only including scholarly, peer-reviewed articles that had full text access and this was done by using the filter system in the search engine.

Sources on the topic of child perceptions of police were also sought to potentially fill the gap of pre-existing perceptions that children may have of officers prior to interaction that may affect how the child reacts to police officers. The prior exclusion and inclusion criteria stated above were used, however additional key words, such as child perception, Canada, and training, were used in combination with the previous key words to target a different topic. Research on Canadian police training on crisis intervention was searched as well, especially training targeted to children to provide understanding on the current methods used in Canada.

Source Evaluation

In order to ensure validity, reliability, and relevance of the articles used for secondary data, searches were limited to peer reviewed journal articles that were published in journals or written by authors in the field of study, such as law enforcement, criminologists, and psychologists. Current studies from the years 2000 until the present were selected to ensure that viewpoints and societal norms were not outdated to ensure reliability and relevance to this study. Abstract review was also conducted on all articles to ensure relevance to this study.

A trend that was observed in the articles were that the most had been published in the past two to three years, with many being published in 2021. This could affect validity and

reliability as there may not have been enough time for the articles to be thoroughly peer reviewed or critically appraised by other researchers. However, it shows that there is an increased interest in the field of childhood trauma and police interactions with youth and children.

Literature Review

Ten articles were chosen for an annotated bibliography by reading the abstracts and scanning the introductions. The articles were chosen for and can be grouped by three general topics related to this study: domestic violence or IPV with child involvement (Elliffe & Holt, 2019; Humphreys, 2008; Jaffe et al., 2003; McCormick et al., 2019; Millar, Devaney, & Butler, 2019), ACEs and policing (Bateson, McManus, & Johnson, 2020; Chandan et al., 2020; Folk, Kemp, Yurasek, Barr-Walker, & Tolou-Shams, 2021; Geller, 2021; Jackson, 2021) and childhood trauma with consideration for interventions (Dudley, 2015; Ko, Kassam-Adams, Wilson, Ford, Berkowitz, & Wong, 2008; Marans, 2013; Vitopoulos et al., 2018). These articles explore the effects of the topic on children and/or the potential results of police involvement on children in relation to the topic. Some of the articles also explore the effects of current police practices that may have adverse effects on children and some recommendations for improvement.

Additionally, some themes that were discovered in these three topics were that trauma informed practice is recommended for policies and procedures for police officers when dealing with children, awareness for childhood trauma or ACEs in those whom police deal with may help police to better handle situations and the people involved, and childhood trauma is prevalent in children who are in violent or abusive situations and encounters with police in those situations is common.

When searching for studies on children's perceptions of police in Canada, an article by Jung, Greene, and Sprott (2021) was found that examined the perceptions of police of racialized people in North America. This study was chosen due to Canada's multicultural society and the large population of immigrant people that reside in Canada, who may have a higher chance of contact with police. Racialized people may also have more negative interactions with police due to cultural differences and language barriers (Jung et al., 2021). For example, in many cultures, eye contact is considered rude or disrespectful, especially with someone who is in authority, however in other cultures, a lack of eye contact can be interpreted as dismissive or deceitful. Research, as mentioned in this article, shows that in general, children's perception of police lean heavily on the side of punitive attitudes, regardless of whether the perception is built from personal experience or from views passed down from older generations (Jung et al., 2021).

In choosing to focus on this article, the validity of this study may be affected as it does not account for or bring in views of children who are not from immigrant families. However, this article does examine the views of children who were natively born in North America, which means their views may align well with those of other native-born children not from immigrant families. As a native-born Chinese Canadian from an immigrant family, speaking from personal experience, I find that my values align more with Canadian culture and society, although I have the unique situation of being able to experience and reflect on both Canadian and Chinese cultural views. This experience is not limited to me however, many first and second generation individuals have this opportunity.

Studies on police perception on children were excluded as most focused on police views of children suffering from mental health problems and to limit the scope of this study. However, with the exclusion of these studies, the validity of this study may be affected as it does not

account for pre-conceptions that police may have when interacting with children and how it may affect how they act when they interact with children. The focus of this study though is on the effect of police actions on children in crisis, so studies on child perceptions of police were included instead.

In searching for research on current Canadian police training in crisis intervention methods with children, this study found that the focus of current research is on mental health and those with mental health issues. A small amount of articles focused on police encounters with children, however in almost all articles, the research problem was children and youth with mental health issues (Liegghio & Jaswal, 2015; Parent, 2007; Tiwari et al., 2021). Although, mental health problems may be a factor in some crisis situations, the focus of this study is on crisis that have been brought about by violence and abuse on a child.

This shows a significant gap in research, especially Canadian research, on the efficacy of current police crisis intervention methods with children in crisis, specifically crises brought on by violence and abuse. Although there is a significant gap in research on police crisis intervention methods with children in crisis in general as well. This may be attributed to a lack of reporting, documentation, or even interest in the topic. However, similar to how mental health has become and is remaining a hot topic in the research field, there appears to be a growing interest in the effects of childhood trauma and police interactions with children as the majority of the articles that were found for this study have been published within the last 5 years.

Critical Appraisal

The U.S studies were on direct and indirect interactions between children and youth with police officers and the potential adverse effects (Elliffe & Holt, 2019). There were many studies

found on the negative effect of childhood trauma and adverse childhood experiences on children and youth, for example, Ko et al., (2008) concluded a need for trauma-informed practices and policies in all systems that deal with children, especially those that require intervention as the negative effects of childhood trauma and adverse childhood experiences caused developmental problems in children, of which the effects were irreversible. These problems lasted into adulthood and caused issues with and in social interactions for the individuals studied (Ko et al., 2008). However, further research on the effects of police crisis intervention methods with children as the participants and subject of study is needed. This is a significant gap in research that could aid in informing and potentially changing current Canadian police crisis intervention methods to effectively aid children and mitigate children from entering the criminal justice system.

As most of the research on the topic of current police crisis intervention methods are based on and meant for other countries, generalizability to Canada may be difficult. Canada is known for its mosaic of multiculturalism and because of this, the people that police officers encounter may act differently due to their culture. Additionally, people that participate in studies may interpret police actions differently or report differently because of their cultural or societal norms. In many countries, police officers are mistrusted, corrupt, or unreliable and people who are immigrants may bring with them their views of police to their new country of residence. The data from these studies may also be biased towards or against the cultures and society of that country where the study was conducted. This means that the generalizability to Canada may not be possible or may be limited.

There is also the aspect that Canadian laws and police methods may differ from those of other countries. This means that the results of police actions from these studies may not be

transferrable to a Canadian context as Canadian police officers may be trained to act differently from those in the United Kingdom for example. Many factors may play into these differences as well, such as whether the officers are trained and/or carry firearms, how much training officers receive on de-escalation tactics, or even whether the officers normally work alone or with a partner. The societal and cultural norms may also dictate how co-operative an individual is with police instructions, which would affect the generalizability of studies between countries.

As mentioned in the literature review section, the research articles that were selected and used for this study can be grouped into the topics of domestic violence or IPV with child involvement, ACEs and policing, childhood trauma with consideration for interventions, children's perceptions of police, and current Canadian police crisis intervention methods. Some of the articles also speak on the topic of trauma awareness and the need for implementing training for not only police officers, but all those who work with children (Dudley, 2015; Ko et al., 2008; Millar et al., 2019).

Domestic Violence or Intimate Partner Violence with Child Involvement

In the articles about IPV, Elliffe and Holt (2019) and McCormick et al., (2019) find that children are negatively affected, even traumatized during the police intervention of their parents or guardians, however, the children are usually overlooked, sometimes ignored by police. This can be unintentional as well, as the children are found to appear shut down, distant, or may even hide (McCormick et al., 2019). Often times the children are not directly involved in the situation, but are present during the crisis and this still negatively affects them. If the child already has childhood trauma and they may have already developed inappropriate stress responses that cause them to be overlooked by police in the IPV situation. While appearing distant or hiding in an attempt to cope with the IPV situation and arrest of their parent or guardian, the child is actually

being negatively affected, potentially further traumatized (McCormick et al., 2019). The child may also be in a crisis, despite how they may appear to behave, and as a person in crisis, the child may require a direct response from police as well.

These studies highlight the need for the views of children in IPV situations to change from passive witnesses to being viewed as a victim in need of aid as well (Elliffe & Holt, 2019; McCormick et al., 2019; Millar et al., 2019). The articles recommend training on child awareness during IPV and IPV arrest situations (Elliffe & Holt, 2019; McCormick et al., 2019; Millar et al., 2019; Tiwari et al., 2021) and one article even recommends that police in collaboration with child experts to have integrated units respond in order to minimize potential negative effects (McCormick et al., 2019).

Studies by Humphreys (2008), and Jaffe et al. (2003), however examine the effects of mandatory reporting of IPV on the children involved and these studies were conducted in Australia and Canada respectively. These studies showed that the mandatory reporting had negative consequences on the child, family, and even the intervention system itself. The children and victims of IPV, often women, were further traumatized and victimized by the protection services system that was supposed to help them by taking away personal autonomy (Humphreys, 2008; Jaffe et al., 2003). Mandatory reporting also caused net-widening, which meant more serious cases of IPV were being buried and lost in the intervention systems, causing more time and opportunity for further trauma (Humphreys, 2008). Additionally, the amount of reports cause the systems to be overwhelmed and interventions or responses are delayed.

These studies show that children in violence and abuse situations may often be overlooked by police, meaning children in crisis because of these situations do not get the support or aid that they need in the situation. Also, the current system of mandatory reporting

may not be as effective or helpful as intended, leading to continued or further trauma to the child. Implementing child awareness and trauma awareness training or collaboration with child experts for these situations may aid current Canadian police forces to better support children in crisis.

Adverse Childhood Experiences and Policing

The studies on this topic explore ACEs and the use of ACEs inventories in police interactions with children and youth. ACEs are incidents that have negative effects on children and youth (Bateson et al., 2020; Chandan et al., 2020). In these studies, police interactions cause ACEs through direct or indirect means, for example, a direct means would be police-initiated contact with aggression or intrusiveness and an indirect means would be exposure to friends, family, or neighbours being stopped by police and questioned (Jackson, 2021). ACEs and the associated traumas with police lead to irreversible negative effects on the child and youth emotionally, physically, psychologically, and behaviourally (Folk et al., 2021; Geller, 2021; Jackson, 2021).

These studies recommend for policing agencies to implement the use of ACEs framework, like a check list or inventory, as a means to be trauma aware when entering situations with children and youth with ACEs (Bateson et al., 2020; Chandan et al., 2020). The studies by Bateson et al. (2020) and Chandan et al. (2020), conducted in the United Kingdom, warn of the overuse or oversimplification of using the ACEs framework to determining interactions with youth. Chandan et al. (2020) concludes the ACEs framework is a helpful in sensitising police officers to how ACEs affect experiences of criminality and victimisation and the increased awareness of officers to the adversity children face, however ACEs should not be used to determine future criminality or victimisation.

Bateson et al. (2020) similarly agrees that the ACEs framework can be used as an easily understandable method to help develop trauma informed police practices and responses and that there is a potential ACEs could be misused by police to base decisions on the presence of a specific singular ACE. ACEs do not account for the resilience of individuals and the individual's ability to cope, which means if police officers decide to act according to knowledge of ACEs based on the effect ACEs had on one individual on a separate individual, the response may be inappropriate, potentially causing further harm (Bateson et al., 2020).

These studies show that the use of ACEs and the ACEs framework may be a useful tool to Canadian police officers to increase trauma awareness, sensitivity, and preparedness when interacting with children or youth. Although, it needs to be utilized with caution to decrease the risk of generalization or simplification of complex individuals when handling crisis situations with children.

Childhood Trauma with Consideration for Interventions

Studies on childhood trauma show that it has dramatic and long lasting effects on a person (Dudley, 2015; NCTSN, n.d.; Tiwari et al., 2021). These studies found that repeated exposure to traumatic events during childhood, a time when a child is developing and growing, can have irreversible effects on them in all aspects of life (Dudley, 2015; Ko et al., 2008; Marans, 2013; Vitopoulos et al., 2018). In the study done by Ko et al. (2008), approximately 25% of children and youth experience at least one potentially traumatic situation in their lifetime and although many children can and do recover quickly from a single instance, repeated exposure leads to a higher need for intervention. The studies found that early intervention in cases of traumatic events leads to a higher chance of recovery or resilience of those with childhood trauma (Marans, 2013; Vitopoulos et al., 2018).

Ko et al. (2008) recommends that all the systems of child and family services, such as child welfare, education, first responder, healthcare, and the juvenile justice systems, work individually to implement trauma awareness practices that best suit their responsibilities for meeting the child's needs and collaboratively to through the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) to make all systems increasingly trauma informed.

In this study's categorization, police officers fall under the first responders system and have the unique opportunity to decrease the immediate traumatic stress of people they encounter (Ko et al., 2008). If police officers supportively address the person in crisis, clearly provide and help develop safety plans, and connect the individual with professional or community support, officers can provide a crucial psychological framework for traumatized children and families to better deal with crises (Ko et al., 2008). However, most police officers do not receive formal training that aids them to help children in dealing with trauma or address the complexities of children's psychological development and needs (Ko et al., 2008). With support and training from trauma specialists, police officers are better equipped to help and support children in crisis and decrease their exposure to further incidents (Ko et al., 2008).

Ko et al. (2008) mentions a model for creating trauma informed policing systems called The Child Development Community Policing (CD-CP) program, which was first implemented by the New Haven Department of Police Service in 1991 and initiated by the Yale Child Study Center. The CD-CP program connects mental health professionals with police to work side by side in early interventions with children exposed to violence or other traumas and the program worked well, being extended and developed further by the White House, which renamed it the National Center for Children Exposed to Violence (Ko et al., 2008). This model shows that

active partnerships between police officers and trauma informed mental health professionals effectively aid traumatized children and families (Ko et al., 2008).

These studies show that childhood trauma is well documented in how it negatively affects those with it and police officers are in a unique position as first responders to aid children in crisis, however, without the proper training, they may inadvertently cause further trauma. If Canadian police agencies develop and implement a system like the CD-CP program with the aid of child experts and trauma informed mental health professionals, police will be better equipped with knowledge, skills, and supports to meet the needs of a child in crisis.

Children's Perception of Police

This study by Jung et al. (2021) explores the perceptions of police in North America from racialized people's perspective and it takes into account native born versus immigrant status. It found that native born participants perceived a greater level of discrimination compared to immigrant participants and that the longer the individual lived in Canada, the perceptions of discrimination increased (Jung et al., 2021). Although, the longer immigrants stayed in Canada, the more similar their views of police became to those who were native born (Jung et al., 2021). Research, as mentioned in this article, shows that in general, children's perception of police lean heavily on the side of punitive attitudes, regardless of whether the perception is built from personal experience or from views passed down from older generations (Jung et al., 2021).

The perceived discrimination that individuals experienced may affect how they react and interact with police officers, in addition to the cultural differences that may cause misunderstandings. With these perceived discriminations, views may be passed down, perhaps even unintentionally, onto children and this would affect the views the children have of police

officers as well. Having a cultural awareness when police officers intervene during crisis situations with children and family of immigrants, would aid in better decision making by police officers in crisis situations.

Current Canadian Police Crisis Intervention Methods

The research on current Canadian police crisis intervention methods is limited and most, if not all, focus on mental health issues. Liegghio and Jaswal (2015), explore Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) for parents with a child or youth with mental health issues and the need for police to intervene when a child or sibling is distressed due to mental health issues. In this study, similar to in IPV crisis situations, when a child is distressed, requiring police intervention, not only the child in crisis is effected, but those involved and in the same place are also affected (Liegghio & Jaswal, 2015). The CIT model of informing parents and providing better understanding of the stigma of mental illness, may be a good foundation to build for training police in crisis situations with children with mental illness as well (Liegghio & Jaswal, 2015).

A study by Parent (2007), focused on individuals suffering from mental health crisis, who may be violent, irrational, or erratic, and the associated police response options. However, the study does not specify age, other than mentioning that age is taken into account when deciding what course of action to take (Parent, 2007). The study also show that Crisis Intervention Teams, who are specialized response teams that are trained in dealing with individuals with suicidal ideation or mental illness, are efficient and effective in reducing criminalisation of mental illness situations (Parent, 2007). If police agencies develop a similar response team for children in crisis, or even just provide similar training, they may be able to better mitigate children from being further traumatized and potentially entering the criminal justice system leading to youth recidivism.

Discussion

In order to mitigate, or even prevent, children from entering the Criminal Justice System, police officers must know whether their methods for crisis intervention are effective or not and from the lack of research on Canadian police crisis intervention methods with children in crisis, the need for Canadian research is evident. As little is found on current Canadian methods and this is an issue as other countries' studies may not be generalizable as Canada's multicultural culture is unique and police methods may be different. Canada's youth justice system and criminal justice system also differs from other countries. With further studies, police crisis intervention methods can be changed or improved to potentially mitigate, or even prevent, children from entering the criminal justice system and the cycle of recidivism. This could also potentially help inform those working with children and youth on how to help youth who are already in the criminal justice system and how childhood trauma could have exacerbated involvement (Ko et al., 2008). Trauma awareness during police interactions could also help officers to better discern the best courses of action, how to help or handle situations, or inform officers on possibilities of why a person is acting the way they are acting (Ko et al., 2008), leading to police officers being able to better support and help children in crisis to regain hope and better cope.

Recommendations to do this would be to implement training for new recruits and currently working police officers by child experts and trauma informed mental health professionals to better equip police officers with knowledge on stigmas, childhood trauma, and cultural differences. This would help officers to be sensitive to underlying issues with a child in crisis, as well as how to react or act according to how the child is reacting or acting. Implementation of a CD-CP program or a similar program, where child experts, trauma informed

mental health professionals, and police officers can work together to better assist a child in crisis would also be beneficial. However, further research after implementation would be required to assess the efficacy of the training and programs on mitigating children from negatively interacting with the criminal justice system.

Conclusion

There is a significant gap in research on the effects of current Canadian police crisis intervention methods on children in crisis. If the goal of intervention is to mitigate criminal justice system involvement, there needs to be studies on the effectiveness of current police methods or officers may inadvertently be causing further trauma to children. The negative effects of childhood trauma have been studied and show it leads to problems in most, if not all, aspects of a child's development and developmental problems can lead to a higher risk of criminal justice system involvement and police interaction. Childhood trauma caused by police can impact the view a child or youth has of police officers and potentially affect the way they act when interacting with officers in later on. In addition to preconceptions that children may already have of police officers that they may have developed from prior interactions with police or through indirect exposure through family, friends, or acquaintances. A better understanding of childhood trauma and its effects can lead to trauma awareness and trauma-informed practices for police methods. This could improve effectiveness of current Canadian police crisis intervention methods in mitigating children from negatively interacting with the criminal justice system.

Additionally, with the discovered gap in Canadian research around the effectiveness of current police crisis intervention methods in violence and abuse crises in mitigating child involvement with the criminal justice system, this study seeks to highlight the lack of understanding and knowledge that may have lasting effects on children and youth who come into

contact with police. If these methods actually cause further trauma, potentially leading to justice-involved youth and the associated negative psychological and/or developmental effects, these crisis intervention methods could potentially be changed with further research.

As someone who is striving to enter the police force and who works with children and youth, occasionally those in crisis, I hope to gain a better understanding of the effects of trauma on children and the strategies to mitigate unintentional harm that I can implement in my work currently as a healthcare security officer in the Children's Hospital, and in the future as a police officer. Also, as I would like to be a mother one day, I hope to gain knowledge on how to prevent childhood trauma and how to support my children if they experience Adverse Childhood Experiences.

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