

Critically Assess Modern Criminal Justice Issues:

Exemplary Works & Reflection

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"Change is inevitable. Growth is optional"- John C. Maxwell. Reflecting on this program and all I have learned, I can't entirely agree with John C. Maxwell. Policing is changing, and as leaders in this profession, growing to serve our communities better is far from optional. If we choose not to grow, we will fail our communities and the citizens we serve.

I have selected three exemplary papers to assess modern criminal justice issues that address just a few of several current policing concerns. My first paper, *Dual Perspectives on a Contemporary Public Safety Issue*, discusses a growing conversation about higher education in law enforcement. Does a college degree make one person better suited for the job than another? Are we lowering standards to increase our applicant pool? My second paper, *Recruitment, and Retention*, address the competitive nature of recruiting and retaining law enforcement officers. Creating a culture for change and positivity will develop better attitudes with officers, hence assisting in recruiting. My third paper, *Wellness in your agency*, focuses on employee wellness and openly addresses depression and mental health problems among officers.

My first paper, *Dual Perspectives on a Contemporary Public Safety Issue*, looked at the differences between officers having an education, which might be causing departments to lower their applicant pool, and if removing educational requirements is lower standards to get more applicants. Evidence showed officers with college degrees were less likely to use force, connected better with their communities, and were more likely to hold leadership positions. On the flip side, officers without college degrees still uphold the most critical qualities of the profession, Responsibility. Integrity. Accountability.

My second paper, *Recruitment and Retention* studied the difficulty agencies across the country currently face in recruiting qualified applicants. As importantly, taking care of and retaining our current, dedicated employees. It is critical to improve communication with applicants and ensure they have the resources they need to succeed through the testing and interview process. Equally important, however, is promoting a culture change in our departments to improve morale among current officers. Officers on the street are the best recruiters in today's profession.

My third paper, *Wellness in your agency*, focused on employee mental health and breaking down the stigma around depression and mental health issues. This paper created an employee wellness policy to address mental health issues and change the stigma around depression. Every year our profession loses more officers to their hands than to criminals. We start looking out for one another and taking care of our employees.

John C. Maxwell is correct that change is inevitable. However, we must not accept growth is optional. Leaders in our agencies and profession need to grow to bring a culture change to our profession. A culture change welcomes new officers to our profession who are well educated and well trained to serve our communities the best they can while at the same time, we are taking care of each other behind the scenes.