



Connecting the dots: Research, practice, and the future of community safety – welcome to the CSKA Forum

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Ten years ago, the Journal began as a shared vision to connect research and practice for better community outcomes. As we mark the 10th anniversaries of both the Journal (2016) and the Community Safety Knowledge Alliance (2015; CSKA), we are pleased to introduce the **CSKA Forum**, a dedicated space in each issue designed for us to highlight practice-informed dialogue, knowledge mobilization, and system-level innovation.

Over the past decade, CSKA and the Journal have enjoyed a symbiotic relationship where complex, practitioner-driven questions feed into applied research, which then returns to the field as actionable insights. CSKA's work is prioritized by our member organizations; this ensures that every initiative we undertake – and every one of our manuscripts destined for the Journal – remain inextricably linked to some of the most pressing needs of the policing and Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) sectors.

As we launch this forum, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the value some of our recently completed projects are already bringing to the improve CSWB service delivery and outcomes. For instance,

- Our 2025 report on *Police Operational Independence and the Rule of Law* synthesizes established jurisprudence to provide police, police boards, and government officials with practical advice on navigating this complex accountability system and protecting the police against inappropriate political influence.
- Recognizing that policing alone cannot solve complex social issues, our 2025 study on *Multi-Disciplinary Community Safety Partnerships* examined integrated models (in this case, situation tables) to offer an evidence-based framework and associated tools for sustaining high-impact inter-disciplinary partnerships.
- We have also advanced a whole-of-society response through our *Tackling Online Gendered Disinformation* project, providing actionable resources for families, educators, and the police among others, to combat digital threats that undermine public safety.

This is a time in which the landscape for community safety service delivery is changing rapidly:

- The proliferation of various forms of **cybercrime** is driving demand for new investigative and counter-cyber tools.
- **Transnational organized crime** – including organized auto theft and offshore-sponsored extortion schemes targeting communities across Canada – continues to challenge the capacities of local, regional, and national law enforcement efforts.
- The rise in **nationalist movements**, often involving extremist elements, is no longer something that only happens elsewhere. Canadians, and their public safety institutions, must be proactive in the face of these global trends.
- And finally, the impacts of **climate change** will continue to strain emergency management efforts and require ever more community resilience building.

What these emerging issues have in common is the need for “all of CSWB system” responses, in which police, governments, community-based organizations, public health, and other human services agencies work hand-in-hand to build enhanced local resilience, prevention, and intervention capacity.

With the preceding in mind, the real purpose of this regular segment of the Journal is to look ahead to the emerging priorities and issues impacting policing and the broader CSWB ecosystem. In upcoming issues, you can expect detailed updates on our active initiatives, such as our forward-looking horizon scan on how artificial intelligence (AI) will impact Canadian policing and CSWB between 2026 and 2031. We will explore what AI means for the sector, actively identifying both the unprecedented opportunities for operational efficiency and the complex landscape of emerging threats, ethical considerations, and risks of weaponization by hostile actors.

We must also aggressively tackle the essential evolution of the policing profession itself, a theme that will also be featured in upcoming issues. For example,

- Our ongoing *Reimagining Police Recruitment in Canada* project aims to fundamentally rethink how agencies attract and retain top talent by moving beyond narrow

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recruiting tactics to deeply examine the wider system of cultural, institutional, and societal factors that shape policing as a career choice. We are exploring how youth and diverse communities view policing, and how internal culture, technology, and public narratives influence the next generation of recruits.

We believe this research will have enduring importance to policing and our CSWB partners for years to come, and we look forward to sharing more about this project – and also providing a detailed manuscript for the Journal’s consideration for publication.

- Equally important is how police prepare and support those already in uniform. We will feature active evaluations from our two-phase *Police In-Service Training* project, focusing on optimizing the baseline capacities of training units, relieving operational pressures, and utilizing the Kirkpatrick model to ensure high-risk training programs translate effectively into real-world behaviour and performance.
- Furthermore, to support the executives guiding these systemic changes, we will share profound “lessons beyond the badge” gathered through our *Hindsight in*

Blue project, which captures the confidential reflections of former senior police leaders on what they wish they had known about work–life balance, public perception, and organizational culture while they were still in command.

Ultimately, the CSKA Forum will continually chart the way ahead for the greater adoption and maturation of CSWB models across Canada.

The real centrepiece of our twin 10-year milestone lies in the unwavering willingness of Canadian police, public health, other human service leaders, and researchers to continually ask tough questions and boldly ground their answers in empirical evidence.

As we embark on this next chapter through the CSKA Forum, we invite you to join the conversation, confident that our most important contributions still lie gloriously ahead.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES

The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.

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