

# A PROPOSAL ON WAYS TO REDUCE POLICE USE OF FORCE: HOW TO DEFUSE NOT DEFUND POLICE

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1. Provide training opportunities using modeling videos and accompanying behavioral rehearsal and deliberate practice to the point of mastery. These videos should include real life situations where police confrontations with individuals and groups have escalated to the use of physical force, resulting in injuries and deaths. The training videos will be the stimulus for group discussion of alternative non-violence ways for the police to handle to manage the situations.
2. Involve members of the community, including Black Lives Matter advocates, experienced professional police officers, psychologists, conflict mediators, filmmakers, news reporters, religious leaders, youth leaders and representatives of other relevant groups in the development of the training program materials and course.
3. Focus the training videos on modeling films of non-violent means of achieving police personnel goals. This would be followed with discussions of common police-based and situation-based roadblocks to non-violent resolution of conflict as well as factors fueling aggressive behavior and violence.
4. Promote the view of police work as “Team Sport”, in which the attitudes and behaviors of its members have important consequences for the safety and health of the community. “Winning” consistently in real life settings without escalating into aggression and violence, requires a commitment to use *bystander interventions* by police personnel.
5. The use of bystander intervention must be accompanied by organizational support from police department leadership. Appropriate

incentives, such as financial and social reinforcement for personnel to engage in bystander intervention should be considered.

6. In order for the proposed training program to be successful there has to be "buy in " by police officers and all of their supervisors. Police personnel must feel that that it is SAFE and ACCEPTED to engage in such bystander intervention.
7. The goal is to help police officers learn to intentionally RESPOND and NOT JUST automatically REACT. To be sure, officer's safety is paramount. We want the police to be safe while preventing his or her emotional part of their brain (i.e., the amygdala and related organs) from hijacking the frontal part of their brain, the executive self-regulatory "thinking" control center.
8. Mobile applications and other innovative technologies could be used to support this effort. For example, a mobile application of The Melissa Institute's SNAP program (Stop Now And Think) could be placed on the officer's cell phone with, as well as self-modelling videos of proposed officer's coping responses. In this way, the Institute's app would act as a kind of surrogate frontal lobe and a form of bystander intervention.
9. The long-term sustainability of the proposed training model requires engagement and support by the public. To further this effort, body camera recordings of police personnel helping each other to defuse challenging and potentially violent incidents using bystander interventions could be shown on news, social media, and other appropriate outlets to inform the public while acknowledging and rewarding the use of bystander interventions by officers.

The adage that "It takes a village to change behavior" can be applied as well to changing how police and citizens interact to reduce the use of force by violence. It takes a concerted effort by committed individuals and police departments to provide a supportive environment for bystander interventions to be learned and incorporated into the behavioral repertoire of police officers.

The following Website addresses indicate that this is indeed DOABLE!

<https://melissainstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Know-your-Anger-and-Be-an-Active-Bystander-Course1.pdf>

<https://www.apa.org/monitor/2017/10/police-misconduct>