

# We Can't Breathe: The Deaf & Disabled Margin of Police Brutality Toolkit

Rest in peace to the countless souls who have lost their lives to police officers and systems that were never created to protect them. May we uplift your narratives in a respectful way, and give reverence to your names in our fight for freedom and liberation.



Product of: NCIL's Diversity Committee





# Step One

## Begin the Training by:

1. **Introducing the purpose of this training:**  
Provide an overview of the purpose of this training by modeling the introduction to this toolkit.
2. **Giving an overview of concepts:**  
Reviewing certain terminology will help ensure participants have access to relevant language throughout the training. Some of the terms the facilitator should discuss at the outset are: intersectionality, Independent Living, and the “isms/phobias.”<sup>3</sup> Facilitators can make a note of the glossary starting on page viii of the toolkit, and participants should be encouraged to ask questions about language at any point.
3. **Suggesting next steps:**  
Briefly discuss what tools/information participants should have after the completion of this training. Each training may pinpoint different tools, but facilitators should emphasize that this is an educational training. Participants will leave with a foundational understanding of state violence as it affects Deaf and Disabled people who are also women, people of color and LGBTQ+. The facilitators should also note that this training will ideally empower disability organizations and agencies to begin formulating ways to engage the issues surrounding state violence.

<sup>3</sup> isms/phobias- racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia



## Step Two

### Establish Guidelines and a Safe Space

State violence and police brutality are long-standing issues that particularly affect underrepresented communities. They can be sensitive subjects for individuals and families that have been victimized by the U.S. police and criminal justice systems. They can also be sensitive subjects for police officers or those who work within the U.S. criminal legal system in some capacity. As a facilitator, you may not always know who all will participate in your trainings. Regardless, it is important to establish rules that allow for a diverse group of people to have a productive conversation and learn from one another. This toolkit recommends that facilitators utilize the [Guidelines for Respectful Discussion](#) document that was designed by the Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA).

These guidelines should be read and discussed with all training participants. Ideally, everyone should agree that they will follow these guidelines throughout the entire training. It is important to establish a space that unapologetically rejects notions of ableism, audism, racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia. If anyone cannot adhere to the guidelines, they should be told to leave the training. The purpose of these agreements is for the facilitator to balance the perspectives of multiple people who have a variety of thoughts and experiences, find a way for participants to disagree without completely disrupting the training, and attempt to establish a safe space for people to ask questions and learn about issues they may not be familiar with.

It is important to note that establishing a safe space does not mean that any individual should dominate the conversation, and it does not mean that inaccurate information should be uplifted throughout the training simply because participants say “this is my opinion.” Rather, these guidelines are designed to help the facilitator train a group of people about issues that are multilayered and help participants navigate a complex conversation that invokes a range of knowledges, experiences, and emotions.

#### [Guidelines for Respectful Discussion Outline](#)

- One mic, one voice
- Step up, step back
- Use “I” statements
- Avoid making generalizations
- No assumptions – except for best intentions
- Correct gently, but do correct
- Respect confidentiality
- Don’t “yuck my yum”
- Lean into discomfort
- Uphold commitments
- Personalize these agreements















up in advertising, movies, history books, definitions of patriotism, and in policies and laws. Cultural racism is also a powerful force in maintaining systems of internalized supremacy and internalized racism. It does that by influencing collective beliefs about what constitutes appropriate behavior, what is seen as beautiful, and the value placed on various forms of expression. All of these cultural norms and values in the U.S. have explicitly or implicitly racialized ideals and assumptions.

**Fourth Amendment** <sup>5</sup> - Forbids unreasonable search and seizure.

**Gender Identity** <sup>10</sup> - One's innermost concept of self as male or female or both or neither—how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different than the sex assigned at birth.

**Implicit Bias** <sup>6</sup> - Also known as unconscious or hidden bias, implicit biases are negative associations that people unknowingly hold. They are expressed automatically, without conscious awareness. Many studies have indicated that implicit biases affect individuals' attitudes and actions, thus creating real-world implications, even though individuals may not even be aware that those biases exist within themselves. Notably, implicit biases have been shown to trump individuals' stated commitments to equality and fairness, thereby producing behavior that diverges from the explicit attitudes that many people profess.

**Interdependence** <sup>1</sup> - Those multiple interactive relationships necessary to create a sense of belonging and support between people. These relationships are mutually sought, sustained over time and are beneficial to those involved.

**Intersectionality** <sup>8</sup> - The relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations.

**Isms** <sup>7</sup> - A way of describing any attitude, action or institutional structure that subordinates (oppresses) a person or group because of their target group, color (racism), gender (sexism), economic status (classism), older age (ageism), religion (e.g., anti-Semitism), sexual orientation (heterosexism), language/immigrant status (xenophobia), etc.

**Manslaughter** <sup>5</sup> - Unlawful killing of another person, with no prior malice. Two types: involuntary manslaughter and voluntary manslaughter.



**Murder**<sup>5</sup> - The most severe statutory crime, carrying a penalty of life imprisonment or (in some States and at some times) death. Unlawful killing of another person, with prior malice. Three types:

- 1st (first)-degree murder requires premeditation and the intent to cause death
- 2nd (second)-degree murder involves the intent to cause death but not premeditation
- 3rd (third)-degree murder involves neither premeditation nor intent

**Police Brutality**<sup>3</sup> - The use of excessive and/or unnecessary force by police when dealing with civilians. Police officers can use nerve gas, batons, pepper spray, and guns in order to physically intimidate or even intentionally hurt civilians. Police brutality can also take the form of false arrests, verbal abuse, psychological intimidation, sexual abuse, police corruption, racial profiling, political repression and the improper use of tasers.

**Power**<sup>6</sup> - Unearned social power accorded by the formal and informal institutions of society to ALL members of a dominant group (e.g. white privilege, male privilege, etc.). Privilege is usually invisible to those who have it because we're taught not to see it, but nevertheless it puts them at an advantage over those who do not have it.

**Privilege**<sup>7</sup> - A right that only some people have access or availability to because of their social group memberships (dominants). Because hierarchies of privilege exist, even within the same group, people who are part of the group in power (white/Caucasian people with respect to people of color, men with respect to women, heterosexuals with respect to homosexuals, adults with respect to children, and rich people with respect to poor people) often deny they have privilege even when evidence of differential benefit is obvious.

**Race**<sup>6</sup> - A political construction created to concentrate power with white people and legitimize dominance over non-white people.

**Racial and Ethnic Identity**<sup>6</sup> - An individual's awareness and experience of being a member of a racial and ethnic group; the racial and ethnic categories that an individual chooses to describe him or herself based on such factors as biological heritage, physical appearance, cultural affiliation, early socialization, and personal experience.







## Image Descriptions

**Image 1 (Page 1):** A word art shaped as a hashtag. All of the words used to make the hashtag are colored in a dark red.

**The words inside of the hashtag are:** Jamycheal Mitchell. Freddy Centeno. Bruce Kelley Jr. Kayden Clarke. Natasha McKenna. Sandra Bland. Tamir Rice. Korryn Gaines. Ezell Ford. Jeremy McDole. Quintonio LeGrier. Kevin Matthews. Anthony Hill. Shereese Francis. Brian Beard. Eleanor Bumpurs. Milton Hall. Antonio Zambrano-Montes. Lavall Hall. James Chasse. Kristina Coignard. Kajieme Powell. Matthew Ojibade. Kelly Thomas. Domonic Felder. James Boyd. Tanisha Anderson. Dennis Grigsby. Darrius Kennedy. Michael Cambredella. Mhai Scott. Tinoris Williams. Jack Dale Collins. Jason Harrison. Robert Jones. Kaldrick Donald. Michelle Cusseaux. Charley Leundeu Keunang. Keith Vidal. Janisha Fonville. Alesia Thomas. Jeffrey Towe. Matthew Pollow. David Latham. Donald Ivy. Jason White. Sophia King. James Daniels. Jonathan McCourt. Michael Hildebrandt. Keith Lamont Scott. Ethan Saylor. Freddie Gray. The Unnamed.

**Image 2 (Page 1):** NCIL’s logo, which is a light blue semi-circle with words inside of the circle. The words are in black and state: NCIL National Council on Independent Living.

**Footnote Image:** A smaller version of Image 1.









