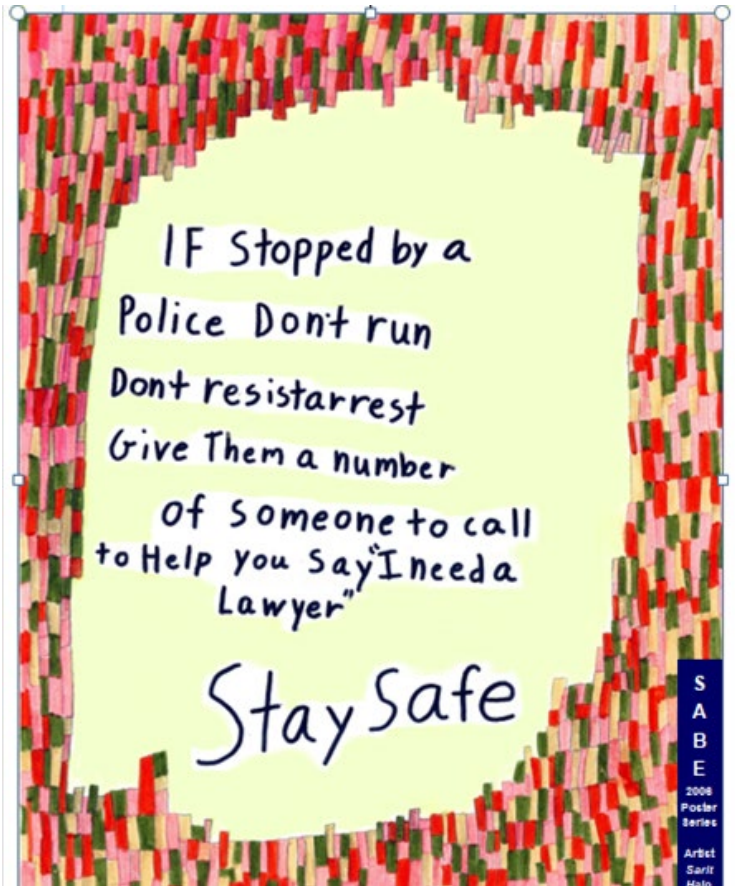


In 2006 SABE had a poster contest to get out information about what to do if you were stopped by the police. Here are two of the posters people made.





Tips for People With Disabilities When Interacting With Police

Police officers do not understand disabilities, and they may not be trained to recognize behavior that is common for people with disabilities. The following tips will prepare you to protect yourself when confronted by a police officer.

- Stay calm.
- Listen and do what they say. You must be cooperative
- We all have coping strategies. These are things we do to calm down and relax. Practice your coping strategies with a friend or supporter. Think about how an officer will react to your actions. For example, an officer will not like it if you hide your hands or touch the officer. This will be seen as a threat.
- Roleplaying police interactions with a friend, close relative, or supporter can help keep you safe when talking to the police.

Adapted from: <https://policebrutalitycenter.org/interacting-with-police-if-you-have-a-disability/>



More Suggestions Of What To Do And Say When Talking To Police

Even though 1 in 5 people are disabled, officers do not always get training in working with us. Police officers may not be aware of our disabilities. They may not know how to communicate with us in a way that is comfortable and effective.

Due to their lack of training, police may make a mistake when they talk to you. They might think you are aggressive or uncooperative.

For example,

- Follow directions the first time asked. This is hard to do. But if you do not immediately follow instructions, they might think you are dangerous.
- Try to look an officer in the face. This is hard for some people But if you do not make eye contact, they might think you are dangerous.



Sometimes, you can have a great relationship with a police officer. You might know them from school. They might be a relative. But the police have a job. Their job is to make sure people follow the law.

An officer will tell you what to do. They might yell. They might speak fast and give you more than one direction at a time.

When talking to the police, it is important:

- Keep your hands where officers can see them.
- Keep your hands out of your pockets
- Never reach for your pocket without first getting the officer's permission.
- Drop anything in your hands.
- Tell the police officer about your disability
- **Ask the police to contact someone you trust who** can help you. It could be a family member or friend or support person

Adapted from: <https://policebrutalitycenter.org/interacting-with-police-if-you-have-a-disability/>

What NOT to do

- Do not run away from the police officer.
- Do not touch the police officer
- Do not touch their possessions or police dogs.
- Do not lie
- If officers try to question you when you are alone, politely tell the officer that you will wait for your emergency person is with you. **This is your right.**

Telling the Police About Your Disability

Nobody is perfect! We all have challenges. Some people need to wear glasses, or orthotics in their shoes, or take medicine for diabetes, for instance.

Your disability may entitle you to extra help and that is OK. There is no shame in asking for help or admitting that you are not perfect. Police need to understand what your disability is in order to help you.

Some people carry a card with information, about their disability. If you carry the card in your pocket, purse or vehicle, make sure you get the officer's permission before reaching for it.

If you do not have a card, it is still important to tell the officer that you have a disability. Tell them what you will need. Say how your disability may impact the interaction and Give them the number for your advocate or relative.

Adapted from: <https://policebrutalitycenter.org/interacting-with-police-if-you-have-a-disability/>

Making a Card About Your Disability

These questions might help you decide what to put on your card. Put your name on the card. Put "I have disability" And include whatever else makes sense.

_____ I have difficulty making people understand what I am saying.

_____ I have difficulty reading something.

_____ I have difficulty understanding what it is that I am reading.

_____ I have difficulty understanding what people are telling me because I don't understand all the words they are saying.

_____ I get nervous when someone is questioning me about something.

_____ I have difficulty hearing what someone is saying.

Adapted from: <https://policebrutalitycenter.org/interacting-with-police-if-you-have-a-disability/>

Making a Card About Your Disability

_____ I get defensive when someone questions me, asks me to read something that I know I cannot read, or to write something down.

_____ I have difficulty understanding the criminal justice system.

_____ I have difficulty paying attention to what someone is saying.

_____ I have difficulty staying on task.

_____ I have difficulty following lots of directions at once.

If you have answered YES to any of these statements you need to let a police officer know what it is that you have difficulty with.

QUESTIONING - What are your rights

Q: What kind of law enforcement officers might try to question me?

A: There are different kinds of law enforcement officers, including:

- **state**
- **local police officers**
- **FBI**
- **Immigration**
- **Border Patrol**
- **Drug Enforcement**
- **Army and Naval investigators**

Adapted from: <https://policebrutalitycenter.org/interacting-with-police-if-you-have-a-disability/>

QUESTIONING - What are your rights

Q: Do I have to answer questions asked by law enforcement officers?

A: No. You have the constitutional right to remain silent. In general, you do not have to talk to law enforcement officers (or anyone else). Even if they put you in jail. You cannot be punished for refusing to answer a question.

Q: What must I tell the police?

A: In many states, you must tell your name to a police officer. But even if you give your name, you are not required to answer other questions.

QUESTIONING - What are your rights

Q. What if I am driving?

A. If you are driving and you are pulled over for a traffic violation, the officer can require you to show your license, vehicle registration and proof of insurance.

BUT you do not have to answer questions.

QUESTIONING - What are your rights

Q: Can I talk to a lawyer before answering questions?

A: Yes. You have the constitutional right to talk to a lawyer before answering questions. The lawyer's job is to protect your rights. Once you say that you want to talk to a lawyer, officers should stop asking you questions.

If they Keep asking questions, you still have the right to remain silent.

QUESTIONING - What are your rights

Q: What if I speak to police officers anyway?

A: Anything you say to the police can be used against you and others. No matter what, assume that nothing you say is off the record. And remember that it is a crime to lie to an officer. It is better to keep quiet.

Q: What if police officers threaten me if I don't answer their questions?

A. You still do not have to answer the officer's questions.



Small Group Discussion

Interacting with Police

- What do you, as self-advocates, need to know when we interact with police?



Small Group Discussion Interacting with Police

- What do you want police to know when they interact with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities?