



POLICE INSTITUTE
UNT | DALLAS

Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement

Building Community Trust through Enhancing Public and Officer Safety

Active Bystandership In Law Enforcement (ABLE)

Now more than ever, communities and law enforcement agencies across the country are recognizing that first responders must do a better job intervening when necessary to prevent their colleagues from causing harm or making costly mistakes.

- ABLE is a peer intervention program based in social science that teaches officers how to intervene successfully – regardless of rank – and able implementation establishes protections for officers who intervene.
- Project ABLE, the national hub for able policy and training at Georgetown law, was developed to build on the training created by the founding director of a program on the psychology of peace and violence, dr. Ervin Staub, to help police officers stop unnecessary harmful behavior by fellow officers.

Critical Loyalty

Critical Loyalty materializes as **part of policing culture** when law enforcement officers are persistently loyal to fellow officers as a function of ensuring, and believing, that colleagues will be willing to ignore danger and assist them regardless of potential peril.

While Critical Loyalty is **necessary it is also a troubling phenomenon** when allowed to exist unchecked. An officer who will lay his or her life on the line to protect a fellow officer will often fail to see and/or intervene in a colleague's misconduct.

Peer intervention has **proven effective** in high-stress settings including surgery suites in hospitals and the flight deck of commercial airplanes in **overcoming Critical Loyalty**.

Immediate and consistent intervention **reinforce the boundaries** of acceptable behavior and emphasize the direction of critical loyalty is to the public's safety, the community, and the profession.

Bystander Inhibitors

ABLE is based in the principles of **active bystandership** as described by psychology professor and researcher Dr. Ervin Staub.

Most people are *passive bystanders*, assuming no responsibility for the actions of others often due to Bystander Inhibitors. However, active bystanders **speak up and take-action**, stepping in to **stop harmful behavior** when they see it.

Bystander Inhibitors include:

Fear of

- Standing alone
- Being wrong
- Making things worse
- Crossing boundaries
- Retaliation

Lack of

- Internal impetus to act
- Knowledge or skill
- Confidence in effectiveness
- Empathy for others
- Courage

Policy + ABLE

In a culture of Critical Loyalty and Bystander Inhibitors, a duty to intervene policy is necessary but **not sufficient** for change in the behavioral gap between the policy and the officers expected to follow policy during moments of intensity.

The foundation of peer intervention recognizes this *behavioral gap* and asserts that a healthy police officer, when properly trained in ethical decision making and tactics of peer intervention, is the ***single most essential resource available to prevent police misconduct.***

- Through **training, policy development**, and providing a **solidified intervention structure**; ABLE creates the concrete measures that must be in place to develop and sustain a culture of peer intervention.

ABLE Defined

ABLE provides a framework and training which overcomes critical loyalty and bystander inhibitors to **save communities from harm, save officers' lives**, and save cities and governance agencies from **costly lawsuits and scandals**.

Implementation with high fidelity to the ABLE model creates a police culture in which officers routinely intervene as necessary to:

- Protect officer and community safety;
- Redefine Critical Loyalty
- Overcome Bystander inhibitors
- Prevent misconduct;
- Avoid police mistakes, and,
- Promote officer health and wellness.

ABLE is not an extension of; nor replacement for:

- Internal affairs operations
- Mediation
- Discipline

Becoming an ABLE Department

While ABLE implementation provides tools through training to overcome Critical Loyalty and other Bystandership Inhibitors it also teaches **effective intervention strategies to prevent interventions from becoming disruptive** to community members needing police services and public safety.

For ABLE to be successful Departments must:

- Foster a culture of openness and transparency,
- Have leadership fully invested, and;
- Establish protections for officers who intervene.

Dallas is ready for ABLE



Commitment from Leadership

- City Leaders have demonstrated commitment to implementation from City Management through Council Members.
- DPD Leadership committed and chosen for invitational training.



Initial and Ongoing Training

- CPI is positioned to provide training through Project ABLE
- CPI can establish a trainer pool of 75-100 ABLE Certified Trainers to fully train DPD in 12 months.
- The trainer pool will provide annual refresher training as well as academy training.



Principals Infused Throughout the Department

- The implementation plan will include identifying trusted and credible ABLE Ambassadors to work directly with officers increasing dedication to ABLE principals.
- CPI will provide community engagement and officer outreach materials.



Aligns with Comprehensive Wellness Program

- DPD has an existing Peer Support Network.
- CPI has developed a regional peer network plan.
- CPI provides wellness training and is well positioned to build on DPD's existing peer program.

Community Members and Stakeholders

ABLE and the Dallas Police Department

Dallas City Leaders and law enforcement executives have demonstrated a dedication to building a strong relationship between the Dallas Police Department and the community it serves while also improving police officer recruitment, retention, morale, health and wellness, and decreasing instances of unnecessary force.

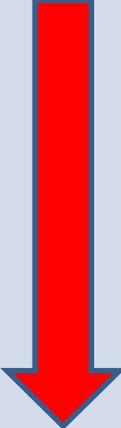
As seen since the 2014 founding of the ABLE based Ethical Policing is Courageous (EPIC) program in New Orleans, and supported in the research of Dr. Ervin Staub, each of these critical goals can be realized with the implementation of ABLE at the Dallas Police Department.

ABLE Impact: New Orleans and EPIC

In response to a lengthy Consent Decree in 2014 the New Orleans Police Department, in collaboration with Dr. Staub, established the Ethical Policing is Courageous (EPIC) program based on ABLE principals.

Since implementation NOPD has reported:

Increased	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Morale• Retention• Recruitment• Public Trust• Public Engagement• Officer Wellness• Officer Stability	

Decreased	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disciplinary Issues• Public Complaints• Officer Grievances• Use of Force Reports• Law Suites• Public Scandals	

ABLE Impact: Dallas Police Department

The **Caruth Police Institute at the University of North Texas Dallas** has developed a **bold plan** that will help Dallas Police Department become the first major city police department in Texas to be an ABLEReady Department within **12 months of the onset of implementation.**

By leveraging the resources in CPI's partnership with the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, CPI's relationship with Project ABLEReady at Georgetown, and partnering with community members, area scholars, UNTD faculty, and law enforcement trainers within Dallas Police Department and across the region, CPI will work with the City of Dallas to ensure the **Police Department becomes an example of transformation – leading the way for departments across the State and the Country.**



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