



**ABLE**  
Active Bystandership  
for Law Enforcement

# ACTIVE BYSTANDERSHIP FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

## Deep Dive: Decide

2026

Behavioral Health & De-Escalation

# What is ABLE about?

**Authorizing and empowering**  
us all to intervene to prevent or stop harm;

**Teaching skills and tactics**  
for intervening effectively;

**Protecting interveners**  
from formal or informal consequences; and

**Cultivating a culture**  
where we all give and receive interventions  
when needed.

# How does ABLE help build a culture of active bystandership?

## Our agency has committed to:

- Embrace community accountability
- Provide meaningful training
- Foster ongoing implementation and program coordination, department wide
- Support intervention in policy and practice
- Prioritize employee wellness
- NOT add new intervention reporting requirements
- Participate in research on ABLE's impact
- Maintain ongoing efforts to build, support, and enhance a culture of active bystandership



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# When do we use ABLE?

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At the first signs that a situation may lead to harm—early is best, but better late than never.



Harm caused  
&  
difficulty of  
intervention

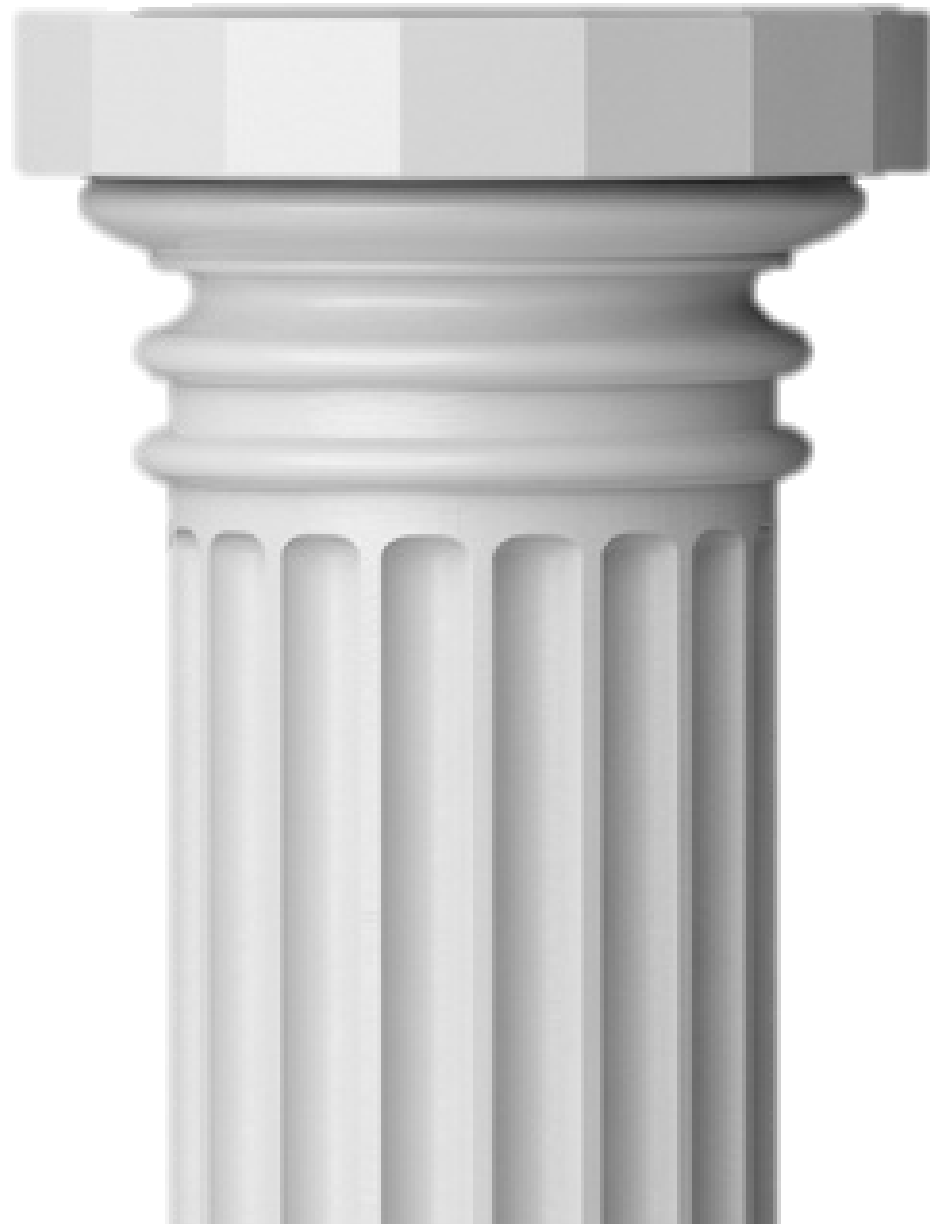
# Why do we use ABLE?

## The three pillars



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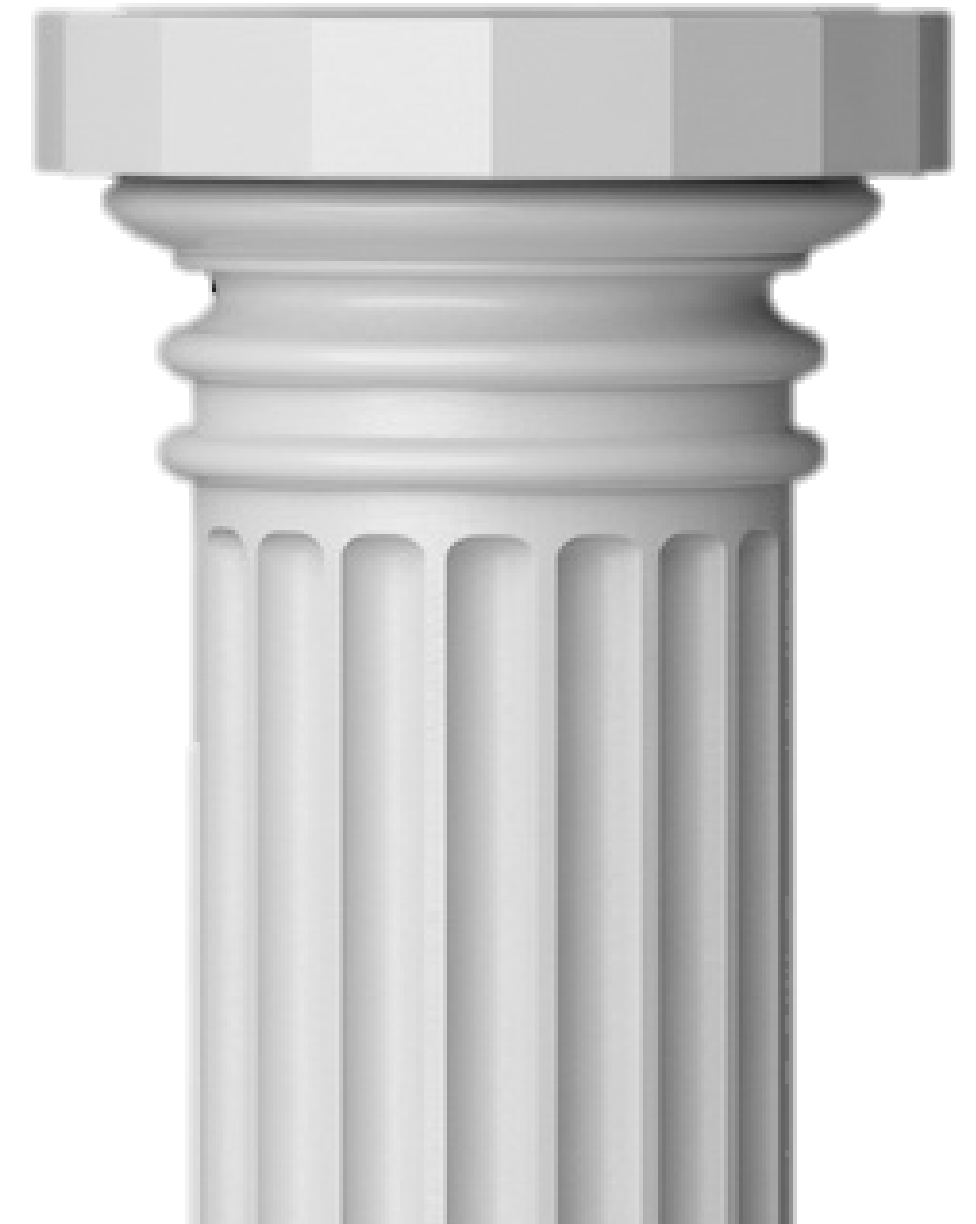
**Reduce Mistakes**



**Prevent Misconduct**



**Promote Health & Wellness**



How do the three pillars tie together?

What are some situations where a health & wellness issue could lead to mistakes or misconduct, or vice versa?



# How do we use ABLE?

## Steps of an effective intervention

**Notice**

*the need for  
intervention*

**Decide**

*when and how  
to intervene*

**Act**

*to prevent or  
stop harm*



# Digging In: Decide

- Instinct and experience drive split - second decision-making
- When time and safety permit, strategic planning can:
  - maximize the impact of intervention; &
  - minimize potential negative outcomes

# Deep Dive: Decide

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When, where, and how to intervene

## Decide intervention is needed

- Cost/benefit analysis—ask yourself:
  - What might happen if this situation continues?
  - Are there any safety risks or other strong barriers to intervention?
- Finding the line—ask yourself:
  - When does something cross the line from “not how I’d do it” to “not how it should be done?”
  - When does something cross the line between joking appropriately and inappropriately?

Every situation is unique—thinking through these questions can help you act quickly when needed

# Deep Dive: Decide

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When, where, and how to intervene

## Decide when to intervene

- Intervene immediately when:
  - it is safe to do so;
  - the situation is urgent; and
  - harm is imminent
- Intervene later when:
  - it is safe to do so;
  - the situation is not urgent or dangerous;
  - you need time to consider the best approach;
  - the intervention might be better received in private; and/or
  - you think someone else may be better positioned to intervene

# Deep Dive: Decide

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When, where, and how to intervene

## Decide who will intervene

Options include:

- You
- An ally (e.g. a friend of the person needing an intervention)
- A supervisor
- A peer support officer
- A mental health professional

or any combination of these

# Deep Dive: Decide

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When, where, and how to intervene

## Decide how to intervene

While every situation is unique, there are tools we can use to help us quickly decide on the most effective approach

What are the 3 D's of intervention approaches that we learned in the ABLE core class?

# Deciding how to intervene

## The three D's



### Direct

Address the behavior  
head-on



### Distract

Redirect the person's  
attention elsewhere



### Delegate

Engage allies in your  
intervention; or hand it off to  
someone in a better position  
to intervene

# Role play #1

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At an after -work gathering at a bar, an officer who is visibly intoxicated says they're going to drive themselves home.

*How do you keep that officer from driving their car?*

# Role play #1

The background of the slide is a dark blue gradient with a pattern of 3D question marks. The question marks are rendered in a lighter blue color with a metallic sheen and are scattered across the right side of the slide, creating a sense of depth and inquiry.

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What tactics did you see? What worked well?

How else might you have approached the situation?

How does your approach change if you're newer than that officer vs. more senior than that officer?

What do you do if the officer blows you off and insists on driving themselves home?

# Direct interventions



- Approaching the problem head -on
- Possible options include:
  - putting a hand on the person's shoulder;
  - using an agency code word (such as “ABLE”);
  - tapping your BWC as a reminder; or
  - simply pointing out the issue

## More complicated situations: PACT

- Mental model to help you decide on an approach based on urgency and severity of situation
- Can be especially useful to escalate an intervention that is not immediately accepted

# Direct Intervention Approach

## PACT



**Probe**



**Alert**



**Challenge**



**Take Action**

PACT is not a step-by-step process; rather, it provides a suite of options to use depending on the urgency and severity of the situation.

# PACT: Probe



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*When the situation is stable enough to gather additional information or have a quick conversation*

- Ask clarifying or guiding questions  
“Why are you doing [ x]/that way?”  
“Hey, is that in policy?”
- Check your understanding of the situation against your fellow-officers’  
“Are you seeing what I’m seeing?”
- Offer your own approach and ask for consensus  
“I’m thinking we should do [y]/here. Sound good to you?”



# PACT: Alert

*When the person isn't responding favorably to Probes;  
or when the situation is more severe or urgent*

- Point out the problem or potential problem you see  
“I don't think that weapons search was thorough. I'm worried we might have missed a gun on that guy.”  
“This approach is escalating the situation when we really don't need to.”
- Let the person know what you think about the situation  
“I don't appreciate these kinds of jokes; they're offensive and thoughtless.”  
“I really don't think this is the safest way to make this approach.”



# PACT: Challenge

*When Probing and Alerting hasn't been enough; or when you need the person to quickly understand the stakes*

- Explain the possible consequences if the person continues what they're doing
- If time and safety permit, give the person a chance to correct course

“I've been telling you —that hold violates policy. Change your position before he gets hurt; don't make me move you.”

“That guy is clearly getting to you. Let me take over before he pushes you to do something he can make a case about.”



# PACT: Take Action

*You may need to act right away if other approaches are not successful; or if the urgency or severity of the situation require immediate action*

- Your first priority is the safety of everyone present. Try to approach the situation in a way that is least likely to cause additional harm.
- Taking Action may look like:
  - physically stepping in to redirect or assist;
  - removing the person from the situation;
  - fixing tactical or safety-related mistakes when possible, and/or alerting others to the potential danger



## Role play #2

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In a group text with fellow -officers (all men), one starts complaining about the women on the force, saying that women shouldn't become police officers because they're too delicate.

*What do you do?*

*How does your approach change based on how well you know the other officers in the chat?*

*What if a woman officer was in the chat?*

*At what point would you, per your policy, have a duty to report this to a supervisor?*

# Role play #2

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What tactics did you see?

What worked well?

How else might you have  
approached the situation?



# Key takeaways

**The 3 D's and PACT are tools**  
and mental models to help you decide on  
an effective approach.

**They are not step -by-step  
processes;**

you will need to choose which tool is most  
helpful in any given situation.

**Intervening is a skill,**

which means we need to practice it to  
keep it sharp. Let's discuss potential  
intervention approaches using the 3D's  
and PACT.



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# Intervention scenario

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You are in the roll call room with the other officers on your platoon. A senior officer, an FTO, is ribbing his trainee about barely meeting the academy's physical standards.

The trainee is silent, but you notice he is clenching his jaw and balling up his fists. His face is getting redder and redder as the FTO starts laughing that his trainee can't take a joke.

*In small groups, discuss:*

- Group 1: What might a Direct intervention look like?
- Group 2: What would it look like to intervene by Distracting the FTO or the rookie?
- Group 3: When and how might you Delegate this intervention?

# After Notice Decide Act

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Follow-up is sometimes needed

## After an intervention

- Did anything happen that needs to be reported?
- Did my intervention help? Why/why not?
- Is the problem solved, or is there reason for continued concern?

*If you are concerned, you can use the 3Ds and PACT to help you decide on appropriate follow - up action*

- How can this experience help me more effectively intervene in the future?

# Discussion Scenario #1

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In the middle of what you perceive to be a calm interaction with a witness to a carjacking, your fellow -officer pulls their taser and starts yelling at the witness to back off.

*How do you respond?*

*How do you protect everyone's safety when you have limited time and limited information?*

## Discussion Scenario #2

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An officer on your platoon, with a different ethnicity to yours, confides that a few other officers have been harassing them. They say they're afraid to tell the supervisor because they worry about not being taken seriously, and being told they're overreacting or being too sensitive.

*How do you respond?*

*Which of the 3D's might work best here?*

*What questions might you need to ask this officer before deciding on a course of action?*

## Discussion Scenario #3

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Over the past few weeks, you've noticed that one of your fellow-officers looks like they haven't been sleeping; they have dark circles under their eyes and are pounding coffee. They've been irritable and unfocused.

*What do you do?*

*What would your response look like if you knew this officer very well? If you didn't know them well at all?*

*How would your response change if this officer were your supervisor?*

# Key takeaways

**Sometimes, you have to Decide  
on an approach quickly**

and you only have time to focus on safety.

**When you do have time,**

mental models like the 3D's and PACT can help you Decide on the most effective approach.

**While every situation is unique,**

thinking through potential scenarios ahead of time can help you be more ready to act quickly, safely, and effectively in the future.



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# Thank you!

Please contact the ABLE team with any questions or feedback at

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