



A DCI Deliberation Guide

Policing, Safety, and Justice

Format for Deliberation

Before the Deliberation

- I. Read this document's Background, Expected Outcomes and Conversation Agreements section.
- II. Read and review [this piece from Insider](#), as well as the attached [NIF issue guide](#) on "Safety and Justice: How Should Communities Reduce Violence?"
- III. (Optional) Review any of the resources listed in the appendix or conduct your own research on the topic for familiarity.

During the Deliberation

- I. Expected Outcomes and Conversation Agreements - 5 min.
- II. Personal Stakes and Values - 30 min.
- III. Naming Environmental Challenges and Evaluating Different Solutions - 40 min.
- IV. Reflections - 15 min.

Background

Conversations about policing in the United States are complex, deeply personal, and intricately linked to several other policy topics. These conversations have grown more urgent in an increasingly polarized America. In 2017, National Issues Forum (NIF) developed an issue guide that is useful for this conversation, but it does not cover some of the most recent ideas related to policing, safety, and justice. Therefore, the DCI has created a hybrid approach for this D Team deliberation using the NIF guide and other articles as background reading.

A list of several different policy ideas for addressing concerns about policing in the United States is available as an appendix at the end of this document.

Calls to reimagine the funding, structure and function of police departments have garnered significant attention in 2020. Some of these calls have been made under the banner of "defund the police," which can mean different things to different people. [This Britannica article](#) explores the pros and cons of one such reimagining, while [this article](#) in *Black Enterprise*, [this article](#) in

USA Today, [this article](#) from the American Friends Service Committee, and [this article](#) from the R Street Institute represent different perspectives on this issue.

Expected Outcomes and Conversation Agreements (5 min.)

Expected Outcomes of the Conversation

Given the complexity of this topic, we do not expect to come to any formal agreement or declaration in this conversation. Instead, our focus is on deepening our understanding of the interrelated issues of policing in the United States and share our thoughts and feelings regarding them. As usual, we will be following up with resources for actions to take related to this important topic following the deliberation today.

Deliberative Dispositions

The DCI has identified several “deliberative dispositions” as critical to the success of deliberative enterprises. When participants adopt these dispositions, they are much more likely to feel their deliberations are meaningful, respectful, and productive. Several of the conversation Agreements recommended below directly reflect these dispositions, which include a commitment to egalitarianism, open mindedness, empathy, charity, attentiveness, and anticipation, among others. A full list of these dispositions is available at <https://deliberativecitizenship.org/deliberative-dispositions/>.

Conversation Agreements

In entering into this discussion, to the best of our ability we all agree to:

1. Be authentic and respectful
2. Be an attentive and active listener
3. Be a purposeful and concise speaker
4. Approach fellow deliberators’ stories, experiences, and arguments with curiosity, not hostility
5. Assume the best - and not the worst - about the intentions and values of others, and avoid snap judgements
6. Recognize that no one has all the answers, and bring intellectual humility by asking questions that you have and make space for others to do the same
7. Critique the idea you disagree with, not the person expressing it, and remember to practice empathy
8. Note areas of both agreement and disagreement
9. Respect the confidentiality of the discussion

10. Avoid speaking in absolutes (i.e. “All people think this,” or “No educated people hold that view”)

Within each section below, please take ~2 minutes each to answer one of the listed questions without interruption or crosstalk. After everyone has answered, the group may take a few minutes for clarifying or follow up questions, responses, and additional thoughts. Continue exploring the focus of the section as time allows.

Personal Stakes and Values (30 min.)

We know that this topic is one that is personal to many, and each person brings their own unique point of view and different levels of understanding. Please use this time not only to share the unique experiences, relationships, or circumstances that help inform your perspective on this topic, but also to explore the “*whys*” that underly your opinions. You may also use this time to express any questions or concerns about the topic.

Personal Stakes (10 - 15 min.)

1. How has this issue impacted you personally?
2. When you think about this issue, what bothers you? What encourages you?
3. What experiences or personal relationships have informed your perspectives on this issue?
4. How do you feel this issue has impacted your friends and families, as well as the broader community?
5. Do you have any anxieties or concerns about any of the proposed solutions you’ve heard of? What concerns do you have about them?

Personal Values and Policing (15 - 20 min.)

Some psychology-based theory suggests that all humans share a set of six common values or moral foundations, similar to how people have five different taste buds. But different people and cultures make use of these moral foundations in different ways and to different degrees – in the same way that people experience taste differently. While this is not to say we cannot come to appreciate and value particular moral foundations and tastes more over time, the way in which we rely on and interpret these foundations very much shapes our core values and worldview. These are not the only foundations but may be a helpful framework to identify your core values and those of your group.¹

¹ [OpenMinds Platform](#)



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As you consider the following questions, think about how some of these moral foundations might shape your worldview and experience.

1. When you think about your community, what are some of the values that you associate with the role and function of police? Why?
2. What does the phrase “protect and serve” mean to you? What does it mean to protect and serve our communities?
3. What role do you want police to play? What role do you not want police to play?
4. Do you think police are different from other social service providers? If yes, in what ways?
5. Who should police be accountable to, and how should they be held accountable to them? Why?

General & Specific Policing Ideas, Priorities, and Policies (20 - 30 min.)

General Policing Ideas, Priorities, and Policies

1. Was there something you read in the background materials that was new or surprising to you?
2. Does this topic affect any particular groups in different ways that are important to consider? How does policing intersect with issues of race, ethnicity, gender, geography, ideology, or other social identities and factors?
3. How do your political beliefs influence your opinion on this issue? Do your priorities align with one party or another? If yes, in what ways? If no, in what ways do they differ?
4. What issues in the topic of policing are you most comfortable discussing? What issues do you wish you knew more about?

Specific Policing Ideas, Priorities, and Policies

1. What specific ideas about reforming policing in the United States do you most agree with? Most disagree with?
2. What does the phrase “defund the police” mean to you? What would be the policy implications based upon your definition?

² You can explore these values and the theory behind them through OpenMinds – a free online learning platform that will be included in the “Beyond the Deliberation” document your facilitators send out.

3. Do you think there are areas in which conservatives and liberals might find common ground to pass legislation or take political action? What fundamental differences reflect different values or priorities that might be difficult to bridge?
4. Can you identify any key drawbacks to different policy ideas for reforming policing?
5. Policing policies can be established by federal, state, and local laws. What are some of the challenges of setting policy at different levels? Do these challenges change how you think about different policy options?
6. Who are the main stakeholders in the conversation around policing? How might those not represented in this group respond to these policy challenges and potential solutions?

Reflections (15 min.)

1. In one sentence, share what was most meaningful or valuable to you during this deliberation.
2. Was there anything that was said or not said that you think should be addressed with the group?
3. Are there any perspectives missing from this conversation that you feel would be important to hear?
4. What did you hear that gives you hope for the future of conversations on policing?
5. Were there any moments of tension that highlight different values in this conversation?
6. What questions remain? What work do we still need to do?
7. Is there a next step you would like to take based upon the deliberation you just had?
8. Many of these actions will require different levels and combinations of time, financial resources, and broad public and institutional support. Do those factor into your priorities for change, and if so, how?

Closing (10 minutes)

As the final D Team before winter break, groups will spend the last few minutes of this conversation reflecting on the semester and learning about plans for spring D Teams.

About This Guide

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The Deliberative Citizenship Initiative

The Deliberative Citizenship Initiative (DCI) is dedicated to the creation of opportunities for Davidson students, faculty, staff, alumni, and members of the wider community to productively engage with one another on difficult and contentious issues facing our community and society. The DCI regularly hosts facilitated deliberations on a wide range of topics as well as organizes training workshops for deliberation facilitators. To learn more about these opportunities, visit www.deliberativecitizenship.org.

DCI Deliberation Guides

The DCI has launched this series of Deliberation Guides as a foundation for such conversations. They provide both important background information on the topics in question and a specific framework for engaging with these topics. The Guides are designed to be informative without being overwhelming and structured without being inflexible. They cover a range of topics and come in a variety of formats but share several common elements, including opportunities to commit to a shared set of Conversation Agreements, learn about diverse perspectives, and reflect together on the conversation and its yield. The DCI encourages conversations based on these guides to be moderated by a trained facilitator. After each conversation, the DCI also suggests that its associated Pathway Guide be distributed to the conversation's participants.

DCI Pathways Guides

For every Deliberation Guide, the DCI has also developed an associated Pathways Guide, which outlines opportunities for action that participants can consider that are related to the covered topic. These Pathways Guides reinforce the DCI's commitment to an action orientation, a key deliberative disposition. While dialogue and deliberation are themselves important contributors to a healthy democracy, they become even more valuable when they lead to individual or collective action on the key issues facing society. Such action can come in a range of forms and should be broadly understood. It might involve developing a better understanding of a topic, connecting with relevant local or national organizations, generating new approaches to an issue. or deciding to support a particular policy.

If you make use of this guide in a deliberation, please provide attribution to the Deliberative Citizenship Initiative and email dcide@deliberativecitizenship.org to tell us about your event. To access more of our growing library of Deliberation Guides, Pathway Guides and other resources, visit www.deliberativecitizenship.org/readings-and-resources.

Appendix: Policing Reform Ideas

Public Engagement

- Expand neighborhood watch programs
- Incentivize police officers to live in the communities and neighborhoods they serve
- Schedule regular community forums for individuals to interact with police

Funding

- Direct discretionary funding for law enforcement to departments who make efforts to improve their diversity and cultural and linguistic representation
- Hire more police officers with specialized training to meet community needs
- Redirect government funding from police departments to social services

Reorganization

- Include social workers, mental health professionals, and drug counselors in first response teams
- Limit school resource officer/police involvement in student discipline and truancy (unexcused absences) enforcement in schools
- Completely reorganize police departments, and make all officers reapply to serve in new precincts focused on nonviolent and unbiased law enforcement

Training and Education

- Require implicit bias training
- Address the role of mental illness and similar crises in police interactions
- Provide more counseling for police officers and first responders
- Include crisis intervention training and de-escalation tactics in police training programs

Accountability

- Create independent civilian review boards to investigate public complaints about police
- Make police disciplinary records available in public state and national databases
- Implement ongoing officer-to-officer review of cases separate from criminal and administrative investigations
- Evaluate the influence of police unions in accountability and reform efforts
- Make enforcement and sentencing more equitable