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If anyone other than police officers broke into someone's home, violated them and stole their property charges would be laid. Why are police and other government agencies not held accountable for the trauma routinely inflicted on human beings or for loss and damages that are a result of their actions? I believe all government agents and police should be held to a higher standard because of their position not be unaccountable because they are given authority through title.

These are only a few examples of the many and varied ways I, personally, have been violated by government agencies, authority and the police throughout my life. I have also heard story after story from other people whose rights have been violated. Newspapers and media regularly cover stories where police are using excessive force, sometimes killing a suspect who has yet to be charged with or convicted of anything.

While working for five years as a one-on-one support worker for people with severe developmental disabilities I had the opportunity to work with many wonderful clients that were diagnosed with Level 5 needs. When they were under extreme stress they would respond in inappropriate ways that included violence in the form of biting, scratching, throwing human excrement and occasionally the use of weapons. I learned there are two primary areas conflict can be broken into - health and safety of the people involved or power struggles.

The support workers job was to protect and guide the person through the crisis and never to mistreat or abuse. I was trained to respond to these violent attacks with non-violent crisis intervention techniques by using gentle restraint and calm reassurance to de-escalate the psychological crisis. I kept myself safe while getting weapons away and without harming the client in crisis. Even with the largest of clients I was able to maintain this gentle method until they were once again in control and the conflict was resolved.

There were support workers who would respond to crises inappropriately. When clients became agitated these workers reprimanded them and escalated the situation by being insensitive to the reason for the agitation. The client would get increasingly aggressive. The worker became afraid and would irately command the client to stop and lecture them on how their behaviour was unacceptable. This method of asserting control would scare the client further as they felt like the situation was even more out of control. It would escalate into a physical attack by the client that resulted in the worker using excessive force to control it instead of reassuring the client while administering what is supposed to be non violent crisis intervention.

The police respond in the same way as the workers who use excessive force. They are called to respond to situations where the people involved are in crisis. As public servants who have taken an oath to protect us they should be trained to non-violently deescalate the situation through proven physical and psychological techniques that keep everyone safe. Instead they create a power struggle by raising their voices and asserting their authority toward someone who is already obviously irrational. Police have been provided with several tools for non-lethal methods of resolving crisis situations yet, sadly, many of these conflicts end with law enforcement officers severely harming or killing the suspect.

I believe power struggles are abusive if applied to irrational people in a moment of crisis. I believe the people granted the authority to act as law enforcement should be trained to respond to these crises with techniques that deescalate the situation rather than deliberately escalating them to the point they feel entitled to use excessive force.

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