

YOUTH JUSTICE: NAVIGATING POLICE INTERACTIONS AND LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

In Canada, Black youth often face criminalization, villainization and dehumanization due to instances of anti-Black racism which have become entrenched in societal institutions.

NAVIGATING POLICE INTERACTIONS

- THE POLICE CAN STOP AND QUESTION YOU AT ANY TIME, BUT UNLESS THEY ARE ARRESTING OR DETAINING YOU, YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO ASK IF YOU'RE FREE TO GO.
- IF BEING SEARCHED UNLAWFULLY, YOU SHOULD STATE "I DO NOT CONSENT" BUT AVOID PHYSICAL RESISTANCE.
- IF DETAINED, EXERCISE YOUR RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT, AND ASK FOR A LAWYER IMMEDIATELY.
- YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO KNOW WHY YOU ARE BEING DETAINED, AND YOU CAN REQUEST DUTY COUNSEL – A FREE 24/7 LEGAL SERVICE.
- IF YOU HAVEN'T BEEN ARRESTED, YOU CAN ASK AN OFFICER WHY THEY WANT TO SEARCH YOU AND THEY MUST TELL YOU WHY. THEY MUST ALSO TELL YOU WHAT THE OUTCOME WILL BE IF THEY DO SEARCH YOU. [HTTPS://WWW.KNOWYOURRIGHTS.TO/FAQ.HTML](https://www.knowyourrights.to/faq.html)

WHAT TO DO IF A BLACK YOUTH IS IN TROUBLE WITH THE POLICE:

- REACH OUT TO A LAWYER SPECIALIZING IN YOUTH OR CRIMINAL LAW. LEGAL AID SERVICES AND SUPPORTIVE ORGANIZATIONS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE.
- REMAIN SILENT. DO NOT MAKE STATEMENTS TO THE POLICE WITHOUT LEGAL ADVICE. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT.



- GAIN CLARITY ON THE CHARGES AGAINST THE YOUTH. LEGAL PROFESSIONALS CAN EXPLAIN THE CONSEQUENCES AND AVAILABLE OPTIONS FOR DEFENCE.
- ATTEND COURT HEARINGS WITH THE YOUTH TO UNDERSTAND AND PROVIDE CRUCIAL SUPPORT DURING THE LEGAL PROCESS.



- ACCESS YOUTH ADVOCACY SERVICES. SEEK ORGANIZATIONS SPECIALIZING IN YOUTH JUSTICE FOR TAILORED INFORMATION, RESOURCES, AND SUPPORT.
- SEEK OUT MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT. YOUTH JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT CAN BE EMOTIONALLY TRAUMATIZING. ACCESS COUNSELLING SERVICES TO INITIATE THE HEALING PROCESS.



Sources:

<https://jfcy.org/en/rights/lawyers/>

<https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/jr/bycjs-yncjs/pdf/RSD2021-BlackYouth-CJS-Engagement-EN.pdf>