

## Alternatives to calling the police; Generated Ideas

This is a document to share results of brainstorming discussions to non carceral solutions to police. It is by no means exhaustive and meant to be a living doc to help prompt your own imagination, so take what works for you and modify things based on your own situations. These scenarios are generalized examples of things we've talked through during past workshops and are intentionally lacking details to respect people's privacy, which doesn't leave us with a lot of room for nuance here so think of it as a starting point.

When intervening:

- be aware of power dynamics
- consider if your involvement is really necessary, or if you should stay out of it
- if possible, ask before you act

### **Police are at the front door of my building responding to a call - do i let them in?**

- You can deny them from entering your house unless they are chasing a suspect, have a warrant, or believe someone is in danger (is this the same for an apartment building?)
- if they do enter, follow and record them

### **You suspect your friend has overdosed/may require medical attention but you can't reach them.**

- agency over who responds: firefighters can break down doors; any sort of drug related call brings police. if you need urgent paramedic care (eg someone is unconscious) you can say that instead of "overdose"
- naloxone training from 9 circles & street connections, if OD is opiate related
- if police are present, can follow and potentially film them, best to do with person's consent
- when emerg is over, plan for future: ask person what they need, compile supports or make safety plan, esp if it is not an accidental OD
- can mean: checking in; arrange with neighbours/ have spare key; use drugs around other people or while on the phone; decide who are trusted people to call on; make plans for long-term solutions/support

### **Overhearing friends or neighbours in domestic violence situation**

- offer ride/accompaniment to safe place
- ask if they're ok and what they need
- awareness there is a law in mb where police must arrest someone in domestic violence call; this can mean the person in danger gets arrested
- asking: do you need another person here? (in the moment)
- resolution: offering to check in after when things have calmed down; brainstorm potential resources
- lacking: safe places to go especially while using substances

- In public: standing nearby and asking "hey, are you ok? Do you need anything?"; offer to accompany someone; saying "i'm here and see (what's happening)"
- Responding to neighbours; letting people know you are there
- In situations involving children: offering the child support through school/etc
- Naming what's happening so as not to normalize violence
- Get to know your neighbours; say hi, converse about things going on in your building/area; community cleanups; organizing around needs

**Your partner hits you; this is part of a pattern of behaviour, you plan to leave but are afraid they will hurt you or others**

- make plan with friends/family in case of a crisis:  
Who can you call and what should their response should be? Should they come over? Do you need a code word you can use to let them know you need help? are there relatives that can take care of kids/anyone whose safety you're concerned about in an emergency?
- have someone you trust call shelters/make arrangements
- Have a kit of essentials ready in case you need to run or keep things like phone, id, etc as close as possible until you are able to leave
- Use the disappearing messages function on your phone app (like signal) or on instagram etc., to communicate with your friends/family, if your partner is monitoring your communications

**A sex worker is assaulted at work / client is sending harassing texts/emails/knows where you live**

- Report to bad date list (run by swaac)
- Seek support from family/friends
- When dealing with anyone being exploited - finding other ways to meet the needs that they are depending on those harming them re: shelter, food, income

- Re harassing - not responding to harassment, contacting others, using information as leverage
- community /networking through our place safe space (fris evenings at dmsmca, currently 5-11pm) also: 13 moons, sunshine house, we24, 24hr space at ndinawe for ages 13-24; need for more 24h safer spaces for people of all ages
- Catie.ca - resource for harm reduction practices

### **A friend is missing and they are suicidal.**

- Check in with close people or anyone you think might have recently come into contact with them
- Try to understand the social networks of our loved ones; find the people who they call in crisis
- Recognize patterns of places people go in crisis; call people to search physical locations, calling ERs/etc
- Formalize support network; make plans for what might happen instead of planning on crisis not happening & connect community and personal supports.
- Center the needs of the person in crisis, don't impose a plan on someone without their input.
- Call an org that will help formulate a search party - bear clan? WE24 & circulate photos carefully, with awareness that posting social media can have negative repercussions and that info should be shared thoughtfully/with care.

### **Someone seems like they may be in distress/crisis**

Questions you can ask:

How are you? (instead of "what are you doing?")

Is there someone I can call for you?

Is there a safe place I can walk/drive you to?

Things you can offer:

-food

-coffee

-water

-clothes

-cigarettes

-a place to have a warm shower

### **For people who use drugs - What is safety?**

- while you're using - being aware of whether or not to trust strangers
- trusting your gut/listening to your instincts
- knowing your own high / knowing the highs of people you are with
- carrying self defense tools
- knowing your drugs / knowing the supply
- knowing your surroundings
- using with someone you trust
- being aware of people around you
- being aware of power dynamics
- safety is an illusion
- familiarity
- knowing and trusting your dealer
- confidentiality/trust - being in control of your own information
- staying out of it
- being able to assess a situation
- having a plan
- being informed

### **For people who use drugs - What is danger?**

- being at parties
  - unpredictability (strangers, police)
  - engagement with the police - especially for specific people based on race, gender, drug use, class/socio economic status
  - people trying to 'take control'
  - using sarcasm with cops
  - non-consensual disclosure/using control of your information
  - not knowing your drugs
- [could contribute to safety or danger: tone/body language]

### **Things that drug users need to keep themselves safe:**

- trust in the supply and the dealer
- networks and spaces where we can get support from peers
- spaces where we can use with people they trust or at least be able to assess the safety of the situation
- spaces we can meet their needs without having to disclose information to people we don't trust

- access to tools we can use/resources to access in order to make an informed plan for our using
- exit resources/strategies if you feel unsafe (self defense, other people to call - ie. how would you answer the questions we came up with if they were asked of you?)
- using with people they know (ie. don't call the police on groups of people doing drugs together)

What to do instead of calling the police:

Things we can do already:

- Bear Clan - respond with kindness, not authority
- mind your own business
- connect people with a drug user group (follow up - how can ppl help people connect?)
- take care of each other (see questions to ask and things to offer)
- work with youth (people) where they are at not where you want them to be