

# What To Do Instead of Calling the Police

8-10 minutes : 7/9/2016

Original Source [What To Do Instead of Calling the Police](#)

A Guide, A Syllabus, A Conversation, A Process

So, you understand that the police force in the U.S. upholds a system of racialized violence and white supremacy. You know that, when police get involved, black people, people of color, queer & trans people, sex workers, women, and immigrants are usually in more danger, even if they are the victims of the crime being reported. You know that police violently escalate peaceful interactions and murder black people with impunity every single day in this country.

But, your neighbor is setting off fireworks at 3am, or there's intimate partner violence happening outside your window, or you see someone hit their child in public... What do you do? What do you do instead of calling the police? How do you keep yourself safe without seeking protection from a system that is predicated upon the surveillance and extermination of others?

We start by shifting our perspective. We start by learning about the racist history of the police. We start by saying, an alternative to this system should exist. We start by pausing before we dial 911. We start by making different choices where we can. We start by getting to know our neighbors and asking them to be a part of this process.

Below is an in-progress list of resources on alternatives to policing, which range from the theoretical to the practical. It's my intention to eventually synthesize best practices from all of the below resources and include that write-up here. If you'd like to add to or suggest a correction to this list, please email me (Aaron Rose) at aaronxrose at gmail dot com. I'm currently taking responsibility for developing and managing this document, but if other people would like to help, or think I should be doing things differently, I'm happy to work with you and/or transfer ownership.

A theoretical starting place from [Taj James](#) on Facebook:

"White people. I love you! You are stretching in this moment to try to figure out what you can do and how to do more. I have an idea:

In addition to talking with other white folks about how heartbroken you are about the latest round of murders of Black people by the police. In addition to getting your family to share how they feel and declare their solidarity and linked fate by putting up a #BlackLivesMatter sign in their window at home or at work. In addition to supporting Black-led direct action and policy campaigns. In addition to making large donations to organizations who are a part of the Movement for Black Lives and to the families of those who have lost loved ones. In addition to doing the basic, hard and essential work of reconnecting white people to their lost humanity and our shared humanity, what if the next step might be to say:

“White friends and family, I think we are better off without the police. I think we might be safer, happier, healthier if there were no police. In addition to fewer Black people being killed by those police our life would be much better. I am starting to think we are better off without them. That we don’t need them. That if we shut them all down today and transferred all the resources they control to communities to set up systems of community safety and accountability we would all be much happier.”

What we need is structured and dramatic transition from an old system that does not work to a new system that does. My gut is that when white people are able to say “Having no police is better than what we have now” that will reflect the willingness and courage needed to make a fundamental transition from an old system to a new one.

An utter, fundamental and unequivocal rejection of the system we have is necessary to create the political will for a JUST TRANSITION to what we need.

I invite you to explore this possibility to start discussing it with other white people. I have a feeling that until white people, a lot of white people, are clear that we don’t need the police, that the system we have is not reformable and we are better off with no police than the ones we have now, then the murder of Black life by the police will not end and will likely escalate as the movement to hold those systems accountable produces more fear and backlash from the people in those systems that are feeling their unquestioned power and authority to dominate and control challenged.

The police exist to protect white people and respond to white fear. That is their core function. That is what white supremacy means in practical terms. So until white people say “We don’t need you, we don’t want you killing for us anymore, we are going to stop paying you to kill for us, you’re fired.” Then the killing will likely continue and escalate.

Anyone up for the challenge? Let me know. Try it out and see what kinds of conversations it generates. I have other posts on my page with more context for this if you are feeling courageous and bold.”

What To Do Instead of Calling the Police

[A New Year's Resolution: Don't Call the Police](#) (Truth Out)

[Alternatives to Policing](#) (Justice in Policing)

[Alternatives to Police](#) (Rose City CopWatch)

[Alternatives to the Police](#) (McGill Daily)

[Audre Lorde Project's Safer Party Toolkit](#): How to run a safe party that doesn't need police presence to maintain safety. ([Español](#) | [Zine version](#))

[Calling Someone Other than the Cops](#) (The Atlantic)

[Chain Reaction: Alternatives to Policing](#) (WeChargeGenocide.org)

[Creative Interventions Toolkit](#): An incredible organization created by Black and Asian feminists that interviewed people about what they did to intervene in partner abuse and sexual assault without the state. This is one of the things they created – a huge guidebook with tons of concrete examples, stories and tools for how folks have done this work.

[Critical Resistance Abolitionist Toolkit](#)

INCITE's [Stop Law Enforcement Toolkit](#)

INCITE's [Community Accountability Best Practices](#)

[Peacekeeper: An Alternative to Calling the Police](#) (PoliceStateUSA.com)

[Policing is a Dirty Job and Nobody's Gotta Do it: 6 Ideas for a Cop-Free World](#) (Rolling Stone)

[Stop Violence Everyday](#): Another project of Critical Interventions, lots of stories of folks intervening in partner abuse and sexual assault.

[The Revolution Starts At Home](#): A book co-authored by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinh, Ching In Chen, and Jai Dulani about abuse inside activist communities and how folks have dealt with it without the cops (was out of print, is now back in print).

[What To Do When Someone is Having a Mental Health Crisis on the Street](#)

[Alternatives to Policing Projects / Organizations](#)

[Audre Lorde Project's Safe Outside the System \(SOS\)](#) seeks to empower community members to be proactive in preventing anti-LGBTQ violence, intervene when violent situations arise, and build stronger relationships between LGBTQ people of color, our allies and the community as a whole.

[Cure Violence](#) stops the spread of violence in communities by using the methods and strategies associated with disease control – detecting and interrupting conflicts, identifying and treating the highest risk individuals, and changing social norms – resulting in reductions in violence of 40% to 70%. Note: this program is now state-sponsored, which some people feel undermines its efficacy and sustainability.

[People's Community Medics](#): An organization created by Black women in East Oakland that is a community controlled alternative to calling 911 for emergency medical care. They created it after the ambulances were just not showing up or cops were showing up first.

[Philly Stands Up](#): An organization that works with folks who have committed sexual assault or partner abuse who want to take accountability. This is their document where they talk about how they work with perpetrators.

Resources on Racism & The Police

[Corinne Werder on the History of the Police](#)

[Curriculum for White Americans to Educate Themselves On Race and Racism](#)