

How to resolve community issues without calling the police

For many people (particularly white people) calling the police seems like the natural step when you, or someone you see, is in some sort of distress or danger.

However, police involvement directly puts people at risk, especially Black people, non-Black POC, LGBTQ+ people, sex workers, and people living with a mental illness. **In 2019 alone, at least 1,100 people were killed at the hands of the police.**

Everyone deserves to feel safe, but for many calling the police does the exact opposite. Unfortunately, the reality is simple: calling the police is an act of violence, no matter your intent. Below we break down some ways to solve issues within your community without involving law enforcement.

1 Get to know your neighbors

Often there is a non-violent issue and someone will call the police to avoid confrontation. But many problems can be solved simply by getting to know your neighbors and communicating with them.

2 Dissect the situation

Many (mostly white) people are conditioned to believe that police are the safest way to solve problems. As we have established, this is not the case. If you feel like you need to call the police, ask yourself why you feel this way. Ask yourself:

IS ANYONE BEING HURT BY WHAT I AM OBSERVING?

This is important. If the answer is no, hold off. ALWAYS question your impulse to call the police because someone is acting 'suspicious': is their race, class, housing status, or other factors affecting these thoughts?

3 Use mediators and hotlines

Much of what the police are "supposed" to do can be done within your community. Make a list of local crisis mediation centers' phone numbers and put it on your fridge in case of emergencies.

4 Dealing with violent situations

Often when the police are called to a violent situation, they simply add more violence. This can be a danger to not only who is causing violence, but also who you are attempting to protect.

- Police often escalate domestic violent situations. Offer support to neighbors and community members with a place to stay, rides to a safe location, and childcare. Utilize domestic violence hotlines, groups, and similar resources.

- Remember that **police are 6x more likely to kill someone with a mental illness** than someone without one. If someone with a mental illness is behaving violently, work with your community to de-escalate without calling the police.

- Encourage teachers, organizers, and community leaders to not bring the police into their spaces.

5 DEFUND THE POLICE

Defunding (and eventually dismantling) the police with the intent to redistribute this money into community resources will help grow a non-violent, anti-racist network of public safety services. **Source** pfw.guide

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