

FANTASY WORLD PRESENTS...

RESOLVING COMMUNITY ISSUES WITHOUT INVOLVING 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. Unfortunately, the reality is simple—calling the police is an act of violence, no matter your intent. 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. Below we break down some ways to solve issues within your community without involving law enforcement.

GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS

Many problems can be solved simply by getting to know your neighbors. Many times there is a non-violent issue, someone will call the police to avoid confrontation. If you get to know your neighbors you can easily solve issues like loud music, smoke, etc. without putting anyone in danger. Getting to know your neighbors also helps build a stronger community, and can benefit you in many ways in your day to day life. This is especially important if you are a white person moving into a predominantly non-white neighborhood—introduce yourself to your neighbors, and show a commitment to listen and learn about the history and dynamics of the community.

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. More often than not, these feelings can be rooted in white supremacy.

IS ANYONE BEING HURT BY WHAT I AM OBSERVING?

This is important. If the answer is no, hold off.

- If you witness private property being stolen or damaged, there is no need to bring the police to your community. If your own property is being stolen or damaged and you need to file an insurance claim, consider going to the station instead of bringing the police to your community.
- Just because someone is acting 'odd' does not mean that they are publicly intoxicated, or that you need to bring the police to your community. Ask if they are OK, and if they need any assistance.
- ALWAYS question your impulse to call the police because someone is acting 'suspicious'—is their race, housing status, or other factors affecting these thoughts? Remember that calling the police can quite often lead to violence or death purely based on your 'suspicions'.
- If someone is urinating in public, simply don't look at them. Many homeless people do not have access to restrooms.
- Don't call the police over someone doing graffiti. If it is on your private property and you do not like the way it looks, simply paint over it yourself.

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. There are several ways to both prevent, and stop violence within your community without involving the police.

- Encourage teachers, organizers, and community leaders to not bring the police into their spaces. This will create a habit of solving issues as a community as they come up.
- Hold/plan workshops for de-escalation, conflict resolution, first-aid, volunteer medic, and self defense in your community.
- 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.

MEDIATION AND HOTLINES

Much of what the police are “supposed” to do can be done within your community with the help of mediation, and volunteers/hotlines.

- Mediation is a conversation between two people that disagree that is monitored/guided by a trained, neutral party (the mediator). Mediation can quickly and effectively resolve issues without involving the police, or any other law enforcement, and also lead to stronger relationships within your community. Look up local mediation centers/programs, and work to have it set as the go-to for problem solving within your community. Keep the phone number handy, and share it with other members of the community.
- There are many non-profits/hotlines that deal with many of the same issues that police are called for, but in a non-violent way. Make sure to look up your local organizations, and keep phone numbers and physical locations handy both for yourself, and to share with other members of the community. Examples include: Homeless Support, Victim Support, Sexual Violence Support, Domestic Violence Support, and more.

FOR MORE GUIDES AND RESOURCES, PLEASE VISIT

[WWW.PFW.GUIDE](http://www.pfw.guide)

BLACK LIVES MATTER

