PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX AND MENTAL HEALTH

An educational resource about the Prison Industrial Complex's role in schools and mental health

# Policing as a health concern

Policing: Through the Eyes of the Silenced

Policing is an oppressive system designed to maintain power and enforce "law and order." It is used to control and punish those who do not abide by said agenda. In fact, policing can be traced back to days of enslavement when "save patrols" dominated areas. These policing groups sought out to punish slaves who roamed without a pass or "congregated in groups" (Hansford, 2016, p.5). This system has been historically present to terrorize and control vulnerable communities. Racialized policing is a recurring issue. Law enforcement target individuals for suspicion of criminal activity based on race/ethnicity which is detrimental. For instance, "hot spots policing" is frequently practiced by local law enforcement which harm vulnerable communities that are impoverished and dominantly people of color (Jensen, 2019, p.125). Research indicates that communities targeted by law enforcement will see higher rates of mental health issues such as anxiety or chronic stress based on experiences with police (Jensen, 2019, p.132). These communities are left vulnerable because of disparities in arrests and poorer health. Hence, residents of "hot spots" are more likely to encounter police because of the frequency of police patrolling. Environmental factors such as air pollution and other hazardous pollutants as well as food insecurity impact health leaving residents susceptible to an unhealthy quality of life. Policing is a system of racism, suppression, and discrimination that harms the most vulnerable. Policing's ultimate goal would be to maintain racial hierarchy through the "practices of violence, control and incarceration" imposed on marginalized communities (Deivanayagam et al., 2020, p.2). Policing is a way to promote social order and crime prevention through means of force and discrimination towards people of color. Furthermore, the aspects of such a system negatively affect the physical and mental health of individuals and their communities upon police encounters and experiences.

Effects of Policing on Mental Health

Policing tactics, to name a few, stop and frisk, racial profiling, and hyperpolicing are damaging to the mental well-being of victims and survivors. These police encounters have been linked to various studies suggesting mental health issues that result from negative experiences. These experiences are common among minoritized groups, especially Black and Latinx individuals. They experience violence or harassment which can cause psychological distress (Hirschtick et al., 2019, p.2). For instance, it is common for people of color to be racially profiled which can escalate the severity of their encounter with police and their health. A recent study suggests that individuals of racial/ethnic minority background residing in neighborhoods with high crime rates are likelier to be stopped by police and this frequency of discrimination increases mental health problems such as depressive and anxiety symptoms and ultimately, PTSD (Hirschtick et al., 2019, p.1-2). Furthermore, another common policing tactic is hyperpolicing which is an addition to the collective suppressive and terrorizing methods used against people of color. Hyperpolicing is described as an aggressive method used for surveillance on racial/ethnic minority neighborhoods "and the designation of entire neighborhoods and residents as potential or actual criminals" (Bowleg et al., 2020, p.160). Again, this exposure has been linked to mental health disturbances. In fact, the figure below indicates the findings of a study done on the mental health of Black men's police encounters which reported higher rates of trauma and anxiety as well as other social factors, such as incarceration history and unemployment which as a result, exacerbated the likelihood of depression (Bowleg et al., 2020, p.161-162). Policing has been historically present to control minoritized populations and target individuals who fit the description of a criminal which disrupts a healthy life.
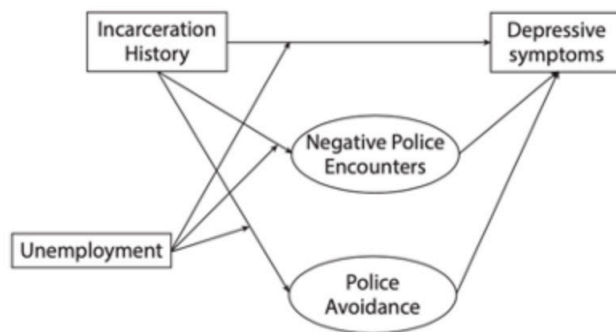
*P<.05; **P<.01; ***P<.001

FIGURE 1—Conceptual Model of Indirect Effects of Incarceration History on Depressive Symptoms via Negative Police Encounters and Police Avoidance, Moderated by Unemployment Among Black Men

Effects of Policing on Mental Health

Immigration policy is a form of racialized policing because of the terrorizing methods used to control undocumented individuals. Immigration policy and policing has been linked to negative mental and physical health for undocumented Latinx immigrants, including their families. Because of immigration raids and encounters with local law enforcement, fear, anxiety, and stress are prominent health issues in Latinx immigrants (Nichols et al., 2018; Wang & Kaushal, 2018). In fact, research on immigration policy has indicated drastic low and decline of, "health-care utilization and Medicaid participation" where local law enforcement were partnered with the immigration system because of the unsettling probability of deportation (Nichols et al., 2018, p.293). This indicates that such immigration policy and the general system of policing discourage undocumented immigrants in using social services. This means putting their health at risk because of the terrorizing fear imposed by immigration policies with deportation as threat. Furthermore, families of undocumented immigrants also report poor mental health. A strong indicator is living with uncertainty, meaning not knowing if a loved one will be deported (Wang & Kaushal, 2018, p.975). Immigration status functions as a means to terrorize a community which is all too similar with policing. Also, immigrants are prone to "workplace exploitation" which harms "economic opportunities" for fear of deportation (Wang & Kaushal, 2018, p.975). Studies also show that Latinx immigrants are likely to do drugs and drink alcohol as a coping mechanism because of the "psychological and economic burden" brought by their immigration status (Wang & Kaushal, 2018, p.975). These policing effects harm the Latinx community because it deteriorates their physical and mental well-being as well as family members. Immigration policies serve under policing. It is racialized and creates a consequential negative effect on marginalized groups that reinforce oppression.

WATCH: "The Families Torn Apart by the Largest ICE Raid in American History" - *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDUVuWE4Ugc*
WARNING: May cause distress to viewers.

Poultry plants in Mississippi were raided by ICE and arrested nearly 700 undocumented immigrants. This is one of the many racialized policing strategies used to terrorize vulnerable communities to maintain power. Families of victims are left mentally strained and reflect on the treatment of immigrants and its lasting distress.

> ❝ *Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.* ❞
>
> *- Martin Luther King Jr.*

Policing is a Public Health Concern

Because policing is aggressive and studies show negative impacts to health, it has been considered as a public health issue. Also because of its "discriminatory power structure [that] actively harm[s] the physical, mental, social and emotional health" of people of color through its racist roots and continued aggressive force (Deivanayagam et al., 2020, p.1). Taking in social and physical environments is the best way to understand the connection of racialized policing to health. On that note, various studies have concluded that place, in terms of geographical location and its environment, can either be "health damaging or health promoting" (Jensen, 2019, p.124). Why is that? Disadvantaged areas are linked to higher mortality rates than wealthier ones because of food insecurity, poor health care services, environmental hazards, and psychological distress (Jensen, 2019, p.127-128). Furthermore, because local law enforcement has deemed specific places as "hot spots" they are more often patrolled, and residents are more likely to encounter police. Police encounters can be distressing especially because residents in these areas are deemed criminal and dangerous, they are prone to have negative experiences with police such as harassment or brutal force. Studies report that frequent "victimization or exposure to violence" in one's community leads to mental health problems such as, and not limited to, anxiety and depression (Jensen, 2019, p.132). Given the already disadvantages and health issues brought by residing in impoverished neighborhoods deemed "hot spots" by local law and their policing strategies being enforced in these areas, impacts the health of these residents and the community. The goal is to promote the well-being of communities through resources and that starts by understanding the connection of place and health rather than continuing the racialized policing that is all too common in communities of color.

Mental health institutions and their connection to PIC

The Policing of Mental Illness and Failed CITs

Mental illness has long been stigmatized and criminalized, so much so that it has led to large numbers of people to be incarcerated because the police don't know what else to do. In everyday life, those who face mental illnesses or suffer from bad mental health, whether it be bipolar disorder, depression, schizophrenia, etc, are more likely to end up incarcerated, or homeless. The lack of training for police to deal with those suffering a mental health crisis leads to hundreds of unnecessary deaths, or the imprisonment of those individuals who might have been able to seek help elsewhere. There is an important relationship among the rise of the prison industrial complex and the increasing psychiatrization of incarcerated populations. Since 2015, nearly a quarter of all people killed by police officers in America have had a known mental illness (NPR). Such was the case of Tanisha Anderson, who was killed in Cleveland, Ohio on Nov. 13, 2014. Tanisha was 37 years old and had the police called on her by her family to help calm her down during a mental health crisis, and once police arrived, a police officer placed his knee on her back and continued to handcuff her and she lay unable to breathe. She was pronounced dead, and in the news was revealed to have bipolar disorder. There are hundreds of cases where police are appointed the first responders in moments of mental health crises, even though they are unqualified for these positions. The pandemic has further strengthened the need for police to not be the first responders in these situations. For example, the recent shooting in Salt Lake City of a 13 year old boy with autism, whose mother called the police as he was distraught and having a "mental breakdown". The police started shooting once they reached the scene, although there was no harm inflicted upon them and the boy was unarmed. There was no reason for this to happen, and the boy is left with serious injuries.

There is also the case of Willie N. Heneley, the homeless man in Buffalo who was shot after police responded to a complaint of him being disturbing and in the streets suffering a "mental health crisis". Before they shot him, a cop hit him with a baton, and this cop was only 3 days out of the academy. Once Henely didn't react well to the baton hits, he was then shot 3 times. It is important to note he is a Black man, and this happened during the peak of police brutality and when people were wondering if police belonged anywhere near others during situations of mental health crises. The large number of police reacting in an incorrect manner towards those suffering mental health crises just further reinstate the idea that police and mental health response should not go hand in hand.

Police departments are trying to combat the backlash faced from these cases and so many others by creating what is called CITs (Crisis Intervention Teams). The problem with this is that these police in the CIT receive little to no training for real situations, only clocking about 40 hour-exercises /training. This is not enough for all the situations that the CIT is supposed to be able to handle. These groups have not shown significant results in actually helping de-escalate situations and lowering arrest rates. The best crisis intervention team would be one with no police involved at all, this would prevent certain issues from arising, this would take a lot of the aggression out of the process, and might lead to less people being incarcerated and more being helped.

The Prison Effect on Mental Health

Being in prison has been proven to take a serious toll on one's psychological well being, and those who suffer from mental health issues previously may gain more once being imprisoned. The worst part is that after being released back into society, many will not receive the proper treatment, likening their chances to be recommitted into prison. Those incarcerated might feel that they are trapped, they have their rights stripped. They are not able to be "productive" members of society. Their identities are taken away from them. They are not able to see those that they love. The physical environment of prison is not one that is ideal for mental health. Isolation can create an incredibly stressful situation for those who are imprisoned, quite literally within four small walls. Prisoners are faced with mountains of stress from lack of physical activity, lack of drive to do anything, and their basic needs being unmet.

This is increased for those who are in solitary confinement, literally being extremely isolated, which can increase the risk of panic, insomnia, aggression, paranoia and depression. Prisoners are also often exposed to violence, whether it be daily or even once, which in turn can traumatize a person. All of these factors being accounted for, the end result being prisoners deteriorating mental health. There is a great lack of treatment for those who do need mental health services while incarcerated. Much of this can be because of the fact that many prisons do not offer services and those who do may have limited treatments, and many prisoners do not receive the proper medication needed.

Those who are mentally ill often stay in jail longer than other inmates, Riker's island reporting that the average stay for inmates being 42 days; and mentally ill inmates being 215 days. Those who are mentally ill are more likely to commit suicide. Those who are mentally ill often are placed in solitary confinement due to "behavioral issues". And as stated above, solitary confinement only works to worsen the mental health of prisoners. Mentally ill prisoners cost more to keep behind bars than those without mental health issues: $80 a day for a regular inmate, $130 a day for those mentally ill inmates. Prisons are often called "the new asylums" because serious mental illness has reached a new high. Today, the largest US jails and prisons hold more people with mental illness and co-occuring substance use disorders than most inpatient psychiatric facilities. Those who suffer mental illness are more likely to have experienced homelessness, prior incarceration, and substance abuse than those without mental illness.
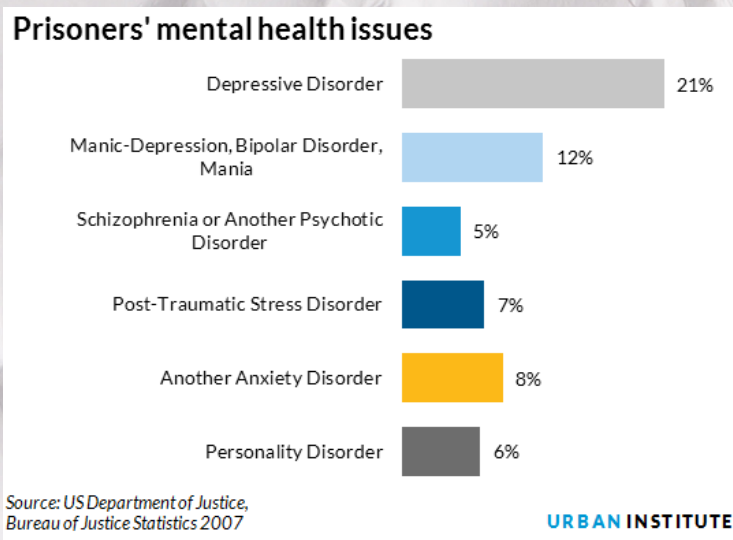
Mental Illness in Prison: Just how bad is it?
The numbers and statistics

Mental illness has long been stigmatized and criminalized, so much so that it has led to large numbers of people to be incarcerated because the police don't know what else to do. In everyday life, those who face mental illnesses or suffer from bad mental health, whether it be bipolar disorder, depression, schizophrenia, etc, are more likely to end up incarcerated, or homeless. The statistics of ending up homeless, or unemployed for suffering from mental illness increase even more when you factor in if the person ends up in jail. There is the issue of lack of intersectionality when we think about incarceration. Not only do people have to deal with the stigmatization of mental illness, but they then have to deal with the stigmatization of being criminals and this in turn creates more road blocks in their ability to lead a normal life, and usually leads to problems with getting housing, getting jobs, further criminalizing them even once they are out of jail.

Now let's look at statistics:
- "In Miami-Dade 197,00 adults and 55,000 children suffer from a serious mental illness- that's almost three times national average. Currently, 35% of county inmates are on psychotropic meds." (Judge Leifman)
- "In the past 12 years in Florida, there has been 50% increase in the # of people sent to prison, but the percentage of people with mental health illnesses going to prison has grown by 178%" (Judge Leifman)
- A 2015 article from New York shows that "an estimated 56% of state prisoners, 45% of federal prisoners, and 64% of jail inmates suffer from a mental health problem…only 3,500 to 4,000 inmates w/ serious mental health problems were receiving discharge planning services upon release, including medication, enrollment in Medicaid, and initial clinic appointments..thousands of others incarcerated were not eligible for these services"
- Every year more than 1.7 million people with serious mental illnesses are arrested
- Those with serious mental illnesses don't just get arrested more but they stay four to eight times longer than someone else with the exact same charge because the courts lack of knowledge of what to do with them
- Substance abuse is rampant among incarcerated individuals, many having substance abuse issues and mental health issues going hand in hand
- Minority populations are most affected by incarceration rates: almost 40% of inmates are Black and 26% are Hispanic

Prisoners' mental health issues

Disorder	Percentage
Depressive Disorder	21%
Manic-Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Mania	12%
Schizophrenia or Another Psychotic Disorder	5%
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	7%
Another Anxiety Disorder	8%
Personality Disorder	6%

Source: US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics 2007

URBAN INSTITUTE

Solutions to the Problem

Psychologists believe that keeping those with mental health problems out of correctional facilities is the best way to solve the problem. Along with programs that help inmates learn how to avoid behaviours that, once released, may lead to reincarceration. The specific program I researched was the Changing Lives and Changing Outcomes program, which leads its beliefs in addressing what Robert Morgan calls "criminal-ness" - describing it as antisocial thinking and behavior problems. The main goal is to help those once out of prison to stay out of prison - while still in prison. This program consists of a six-month program with 155 hours of group and individual therapy sessions, and included clinicians teaching participants about healthy reactions and ways to deal with anger, fear, interpreting situations, and medication adherence, among other things. During a test trial, the results found that participants "experienced decreased depression, anxiety, hostility, reactive criminal thinking, psychoticism, and paranoid ideation". Although not a perfect system, it's a step in the right direction.

Other solutions might include:

- Reducing the number of those placed in isolation / solitary confinement → this will then provide less feeling of isolation, anxiety, depression, loss of identity, act as suicide prevention as well
- Trauma-informed care for those experiencing mental health issues → this includes teaching those who work in prisons how to communicate with inmates and understanding histories of trauma i.e. how to lessen anxiety in inmates by maybe explaining what they are going to do before they do it such as before conducting pat-down searches
- Community based treatment → examples are : outpatient treatment centers, private contractors, community mental health systems; this can provide as an alternative for hospitalization for those who suffer from mental health issues and have been accused of nonviolent felonies or misdemean or offenses

Abolition of prisons and police will significantly reduce the number of people with mental health issues, many of whom develop these issues or have prior issues worsen while in prisons. There is a reason why police create so much anxiety and mental health issues for those who are minorities.

Proper mental health care, proper attention to mental illnesses, the decriminalization of mental illness, no cops being involved in community groups who strive to help those in communities suffering mental health crises. All of these are options, in an ideal world.

school-to-prison pipeline

The Problem of School Policing

The school to prison pipeline is the criminalization of youth using policies that push kids out of school and into prisons. These are zero-tolerance policies which suspend or expel children from their classrooms for even minor violations of school rules. No matter if there was an accident, unintentional or miscommunicated occurrence, schools considered suspension and expulsion as the corrective solutions for "deviance".

Schools are segregated through redlining in an effort to continue to separate White and Black children. Although now many students of color live in affluent areas which grants them access to previously White public schools, kids in low income areas tend to still be overwhelmingly Black and Brown. For many, the student body consists of strictly Black and Hispanic students, rarely encountering White students and students of varying ethnic and economic backgrounds. Regardless of diversity, or lack thereof, these schools' low income students receive the shorter end of the stick when it comes to funding and resources. Many poor schools do not have access to textbooks, technology or even the capacity to hire enough teachers for the amount of students enrolled. They also do not have access to school psychologists, counselors or nurses. As a result, Black and Brown students struggle with overcrowding, lack of resources, little to no extracurricular activities and low engagement with the material they're being taught.

Students who are not engaged with the classroom tend to fall behind easier and find it harder to catch up. Many times, these students are forgotten by teachers and staff and pushed out of school because of low test scores, poor attendance, or behavioral issues. Yet there is rarely an effort made to help the student or even consider how their home life may be impacting their performance. Instead, they are pushed out or suspended and left to further engage in what could be detrimental, harmful activity at home or in the streets. Research shows that once a student is arrested a first time, they become 7 times more likely to commit an offense again. Zero-tolerance policies along with the underfunding of schools and presence of school police officers set students of color up for failure since their first day of school.

The Effects of School Policing

Studies show that students who are pushed out of school through suspension or expulsion struggle with the stigmas of being a "drop out" and being excluded from activities with their peers. Often, these incidents label kids as 'bad' and impact how other students, friends, parents, teachers, staff and even their own family and friends view them. Often, they are deemed "problematic kids" and ignored for their perceived deficits rather than investing time to figure out what is causing the behavior and how to support them. Hopelessness, worthlessness and symptoms of depression as a result of being pushed out from schools can all occur during this process. This kind of isolation can lead to stress, anxiety and depression for young and impressionable kids. This can also aggravate the behaviors which got them in trouble primarily, as they feel this is the only way they can garner attention from adults around them.

> **Too many children are not having their basic needs met and are encountering violence in their neighborhoods,** Thurau said, which leads to toxic stress and trauma.
> *(https://ciswh.org)*

Especially in areas where children are already struggling with poverty, racism and discrimination schools may be the only place they can escape. However, when they are also being policed at school they may feel that they do not have access to a safe space. Students that may be struggling with mental issues can have symptoms exacerbated as they are policed or watch their peers be arrested, suspended or expelled. Behavioral issues only become worse as a result of these policies which can also impact their living conditions at home. The exclusion from their peers, teachers and family can create the perfect environment for mental illness to persevere and further harm the student; a preventable situation if we provided them the adequate resources to live free and supported lives during their most formative years.

Care Not Cops

In schools where police officers are employed, studies show that they often made non-violent conflicts worse. Most students also report that having police officers in school did not make them feel safe. There are several occurrences online about the over-regulating of Black children's behavior, in which Black students have been arrested, incarcerated and beat for minor disruptions in the classroom. One instance of a Black student in a South Carolina High School went viral after it was caught on video with her classmates. This video shows as she is pulled off her chair by her neck and tossed to the ground by a school officer for being "disruptive"; he is reported to have told her "I'll put you in jail next" after successfully detaining her and removing her from the classroom. Similarly, Kaia Rolle was handcuffed and removed from school grounds by a resource officer after having a tantrum. She was six years old. Jmiya Rickman was also arrested and restrained at the wrists, feet and waist after a temper tantrum in which she hit an officer. She was eight years old and struggled with separation anxiety, depression and autism. The members of her school who knew this failed to protect her even though her guardian had been informed and was on his way to her. When searching topics like "Black student" and "school police officers" on google, the number of cases that pop up are exponential. This is an issue that we should be actively fighting against to protect the lives of our most vulnerable students.

> **" The rise in school-based arrests, the quick-est route from the classroom to the jailhouse, most directly exemplifies the criminalization of school children. "**
> *(ACLU)*

Schools in the U.S allow officers, with guns and other weapons, on campus no matter the age range of the students. This was justified as making schools safer from school shooters (instead of banning guns..) and despite its failure, officers continue to be employed in schools throughout the country. Oftentime school officers become enforcers of rules which in turn results in violence towards young students. Despite having principals, deans and teachers as figures of authority many times students are left at the hands of officers which can influence their ideas of police and make them unsafe. Research shows that students who experience forms of school punishment such as suspension or expulsion are more likely to not complete high school and even twice as likely to be arrested. This risk is increased if this experience occurs before the age of 15. Similarly, those who do not graduate from high school are more likely to be incarcerated (thoughtco.com). Shared Justice's journalist Matt Leistra reports that 80% of young people in one state facility reported being suspended from school at one point, while 50% reported being expelled. Meanwhile, studies show that at least 40% of students expelled every year are Black. When combining Black and Latinx students, this data jumps to 70%; a worrying statistic as White people make up 70% of the country's population, yet a much smaller portion of suspended, expelled or incarcerated people. This problem becomes much larger as we see 68% of males in prisons across the country did not receive a high school diploma, and 50-70% of children in juvenile detention centers meet the criteria for mental disorders.

The Solution: Empathy

Victor Rios discusses how students in schools are seen as having deficits; automatically labeled "trouble", "bad" and other negative associations which determine how they will be treated by teachers and other authority figures. Since these kids know they are not respected and looked down on, they behave in the ways they are expected to- a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy. Essentially, trying to control the actions of youth that you perceive as at risk or "deviant" will only result in those criminal behaviors that you are trying to prevent. Many times the living conditions of students are ignored when they enter school. Teachers view their students through a bias lens which dictates which students they will support and pay more attention to. Rios also argues that students should not be looked at as missing something because they do not fit the idea of a perfect student, but rather as contributing their own special ways of learning and looking at the world, which can help them reach success much easier. Though success is subjective, in this case it could be considered as the completion of grade school or simply keeping them out and away from the criminal justice system.

> **In a social context in which social institutions label deviant youth as bad or criminal, and in doing so, strip them of dignity, fail to acknowledge their struggles, and do not treat them with respect, rebellion and criminality are acts of resistance.**
> *(thoughtco.com)*

School faculty must commit to abandon zero-tolerance policies and instead invest in the mental wellbeing of their students. Many times, children are going hungry, struggling financially, living with parents at risk of deportation or at risk themselves, suffering abuse at home, being bullied by others or struggling with undiagnosed mental illness which affects their performance at school. Rather than trying to correct perceived "incorrect" behavior, educators must present a genuine effort to engage with students and provide a safe environment where they can disclose their problems. Many times, behavioral outbursts are ways of gaining power that students feel they lack at home, or garnering attention whether it be positive or negative because they feel ignored. School should no longer punish students for minor infractions when they can invest time and funds into nourishing their minds. Movements like #CARENOTCOPS initiated by L.A Students Deserve have already achieved the goal of defunding cops in LAUSD and instead spending that money on student resources like counselors and psychologists which are much needed in Los Angeles' low income communities.

Police Crisis Intervention & 911 Responses

Dialing 9-1-1

All our lives, we have been told to call 911 in case of an emergency. The type of emergency doesn't matter - Americans are taught to dial 911 for any kind of emergency and whenever they feel like they need assistance. After people dial 911, call centers will obtain information and dispatch the appropriate responders, such as police, fire, or paramedic, to the location.

Currently, calling 911 for a mental health crisis will most likely result in police arriving at the scene. This is concerning, as police are not trained social workers or mental health professionals. They are not equipped with the necessary tools and knowledge that is required in de-escalating a mental health crisis. Since January 1, 2015, 1415 people with mental illnesses have been shot and killed by police. 208 of these cases took place in California. While people expect police to come help them, they do the opposite; calling the police for a mental health crisis may pose more danger than the crisis itself.

Why do we rely on 911?

Before we ask this question, we should ask ourselves why we rely on the prison industrial complex so much. Dialing 911, ultimately, is also part of this complex because it involves law enforcement and criminalization. The prison industrial complex has been part of our lives, however, people don't know completely what is going on inside them; because of this, as Angela Davis states, "the prison is present in our lives, and, at the same time, it is absent from our lives" (p. 15). Prisons also create a "good" and a "bad"; this ultimately leads people to think that it is a fate for "evildoers" and not themselves. As a result, people take prisons for granted and never question it because there are other people in charge. Dialing 911 and relying on police to provide assistance for emergencies poses a similar case. Calling 911 is always the immediate solution and people have been so used to it that we never question why we should call 911. Additionally, breaking this barrier can lead into other questions, such as why we don't have specific mental health responders or more services to help people with mental health issues.

9-1-1 Victims

Christian Hall

Christian Hall was a 19-year-old Chinese American adopted by Fe and Gareth Hall. On December 30, 2020, the Pennsylvania State Police was contacted for a de-escalation on a mental health crisis, possibly one where Hall was contemplating suicide. Instead of providing the assistance that he needed, the police shot and killed Christian. Later on, the police stated that Christian had a gun. However, a video footage reveals that Christian had both hands up.

> **"He needed help. He was looking for help, but instead of getting help, he was killed by those who were supposed to help him."**
> *- Fe Hall, Christian's mother*

Walter Wallace Jr.

Walter Wallace Jr. was a 27-year-old Black man who had a history of bipolar disorder. On October 26th, the police were called to his home three times. When the Philadelphia Police arrived, Wallace walked towards two officers, holding a knife. Despite Walter's mom pleading to not shoot her son and Walter's wife telling officers to stand down and making them aware of Walter's mental health issues, the police proceeded to fire 14 shots, killing him at the scene.

> **"I was telling the police to stop, 'Don't shoot my son, please, don't shoot my son'."**
> *- Cathy Wallace, Walter's mother*

Angelo Quinto

Angelo Quinto was a 30-year-old man who was born in the Phillippines who suffered from paranoia and anxiety after a brain injury. On December 23, 2020, his family called 911 in response of a mental health crisis that Angelo was having. His mother, Cassandra Quinto-Collins watched in horror as an Antioch police officer "knelt on her son's neck for nearly five minutes while another officer restrained him" (Washington Post). He died a few days later on December 26 in the hospital.

> **"I'm always going to regret calling the police and hope no one has to regret doing what they think is the right thing."**
> *- Isabella Collins, Angelo's sister*
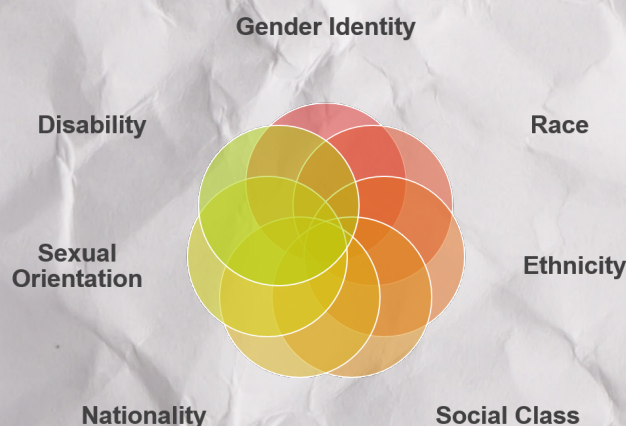
The Police Statistics

The page before this only showed three out of thousands of people who died because of police shootings. Here are some statistics of police shootings taken from The Washington Post database contains records of every fatal shooting in the United States by a police officer in the line of duty since Jan. 1, 2015:

- 1,004 people have been shot and killed by police in the past year
- 6,129 people have been shot and killed by the police nationwide
- 1,415 of these people suffered from mental illnesses
- 908 people have been shot and killed by police in California
- 208 people suffering from mental illnesses were shot and killed by police in California
- States with the highest rates of shootings are New Mexico, Alaska and Oklahoma
- An overwhelming majority of people shot and killed by police are male — over 95 percent. More than half the victims are between 20 and 40 years old.
- Although half of the people shot and killed by police are White, Black Americans are shot at a disproportionate rate. They account for less than 13 percent of the U.S. population, but are killed by police at more than twice the rate of White Americans. Hispanic Americans are also killed by police at a disproportionate rate.

Why Intersectionality Matters

Intersectionality is a term coined by Kimberle Crenshaw. It acknowledges that some people face more discrimination and oppression than others because of their intersecting identities. These identities are not independent of each other and they can create multiple levels of discrimination, such as sexism, racism, ableism, and more. This term is important because it recognizes that our institutions are systemically racist, enforce a two-gender binary system, and have other layers of systemic oppression.

Policing and the prison industrial complex disproportionately affects BIPOC, especially Black and Latinx communities, poorer communities, and LGBTQ+ communities. These communities are also the ones who are the most vulnerable to suffering from policing. It's important to acknowledge that the intersectionalities of people matter when it comes to the prison industrial complex and that their identities will affect their degrees of outcome. The outcome of dialing 911 can also pose a greater threat to the person who dialed 911 in the first place for help. Additionally, many police officers get away with the attrocities that they have committed because they are part of a system that protects them. There is a double standard between police officers and the way they treat others because of their identities.

Gender Identity

Disability

Race

Sexual Orientation

Ethnicity

Nationality

Social Class

so if not police, then what?

PAUSE BEFORE YOU CALL

THE 4 STEPS TO TAKE BEFORE CONTACTING THE POLICE

4 STEPS

01
Is this merely an inconvenience to me?
Can I put up with this and be okay?

IF YES, you identified the police do not need to be involved

NO

02
Can I handle this situation on my own?
Is this something I could talk out with this person?

IF YES, you handled the situation

NO

03
Is there a friend, neighbor, or someone else I could call to help me?

IF YES, you and your community handled the situation

NO

04
Could we use mediation to talk through the problem?
Could I contact an alternate emergency response line?

IF YES, you helped your community handle the situation

NO

If at anytime, these steps are sufficient to solve the situation, it is no longer appropriate to contact the police

If I call the police, **do I understand how involving the police could impact me and the other person in this situation?**

5546

Remember! During Your Call to 911:

What happens when you call 9-1-1 in Alameda County?

Dispatch Police

Dispatch receives and codes call.
(Note: Dispatch is not in Alameda County)

Dispatch Fire

(given 7 min to respond)

Dispatch Ambulance

(given 10 min and 30 sec to respond)
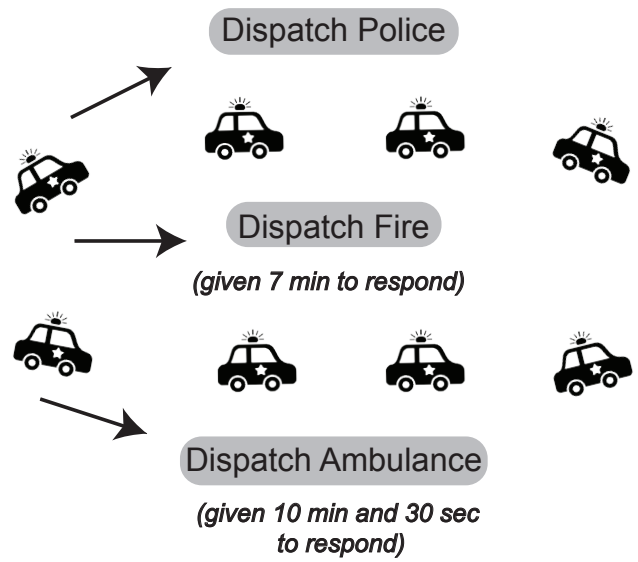
Remember:

★ Police are usually the first to respond to 911 calls.

★ Even if you tell the dispatcher not to send the police they may arrive anyway.

★ Certain geographical locations are always coded for police response depending on the neighborhood and type of call.

To Reduce the Risk of Police Being Dispatched Call the Alameda County Fire and Medical Emergency Line:
510-444-1616

Examples of Community-Based Resources in Action
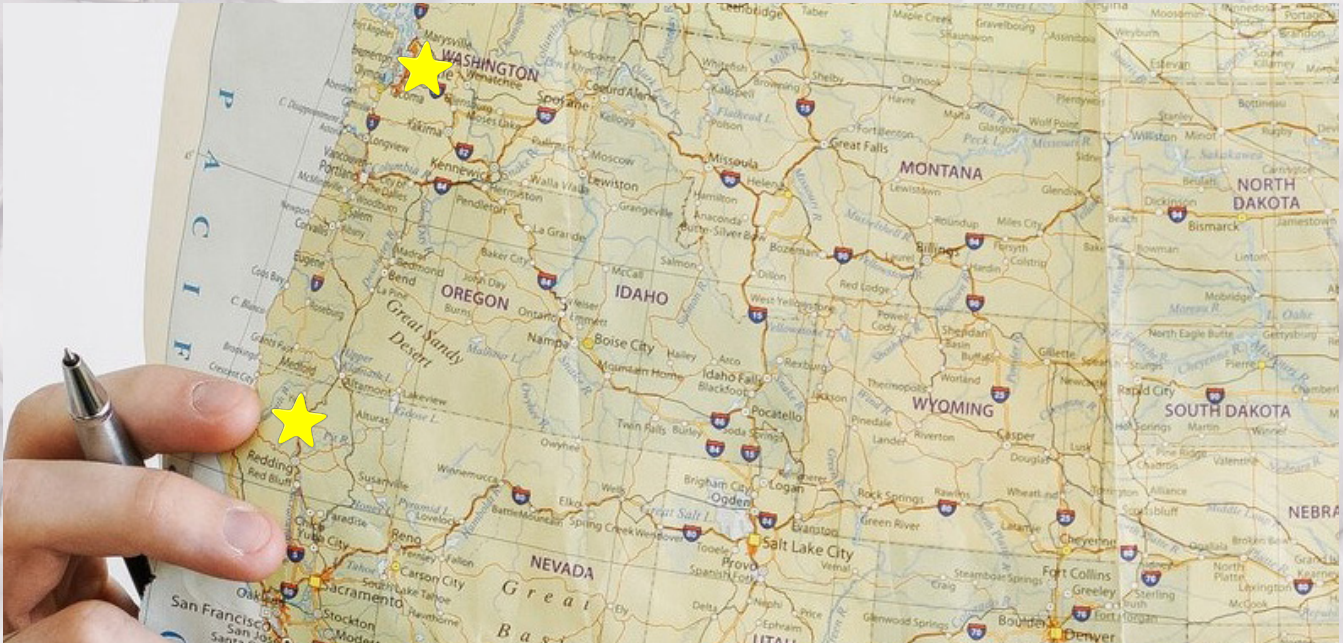
Eugene/Springfield, Oregon [est. 1970]

White Bird Clinic; One of the oldest alternatives is White Bird Clinic's 24/7 CAHOOTS. 911 Operators can instead send a team of a medic and crisis worker who are unarmed and without government power, and trained for 500 hours to de-escalate situations, help deal with crises, and provide transportation to medical aid. Cases include, and not limited to, homelessness, mental health problems, and intoxication. They help around 20% of the 911 calls and less than 1% of the situations needed police intervention. In diverting support from police, a report from eugene-or.gov reported that CAHOOTS saved an "estimated $8.5 million in taxpayer dollars every year."

Eugene: 541-682-5111 | Springfield: 541-726-3714 | Contact-free 24/7 hotline: 541-687-4000

Olympia, Washington [est. 1970]

Crisis Response Unit (CRU): They patrol downtown Olympia and similar to CAHOOTS, are unarmed and also can listen in to police radios and respond if necessary, or be referred to by officers. They help with services like crisis resolutions, housing assistance/homelessness, first-aid, substance abuse, and transportation to services. They also help and connect with people living in the sanctioned encampments for the homeless, and include a Familiar Faces program to help people that frequently encounter police to form connections with people and provide them with help for housing, child-care, transportation, and more. As a result, civilians, dispatchers, and officers have increasing trust and referrals to them.

Hotline: 360-704-2740 7am-9pm. 7 days a week.

Local Alternatives

Who do we call?

Community alternatives!

Non-government funded alternatives:

<u>Don't Call The Police:</u> is a collection of community-created services sorted by specific city for alternatives to the police in subjects like Housing, LGBTQ+, Mental Health, Domestic & Sexual Assault, Youth, Elderly, and more.

<u>CAT911:</u> Socal's Community Action Teams that are a direct alternative to 911. They also hold seminars and group meetings about mental health care, and provide free materials for info on Mental Health Rapid Response Training.

<u>MH First (Mental Health First):</u> Oakland and Sacramento: Launched in 2020, this is Black-led Anti Police Terror Project's free mobile mental health response units, designed to help in de-escalation, domestic violence intervention, substance abuse, follow-ups on patients who need extra help, and more. They are staffed with "impacted community members, medical and mental health professionals," and other volunteers. Currently phone-only due to Covid.
Oakland: (510) 999-9MH1 – on Friday & Saturday nights from 8pm to 8am |
Sacramento: (916) 670-4062 Friday through Sunday, 7:00 PM to 7:00 AM

Government funded alternatives:

<u>Bay Area:</u> calling the Fire and Medical Emergency Lines instead of 911, where a dispatcher may send unnecessary police intervention. But, note the longer response times from Oakland Power Project's Infographic, and the chance that a dispatcher will still likely reach to call the police.
Oakland: 510-444-1616 | San Francisco: 415-558-3291

<u>ACCESS CENTER:</u> LA county's center that operates 24/7 for mental health services and info, using crisis teams and referrals for more help.
1-800-854-7771 (OPTION/EXTENSION '1')

<u>211:</u> For 24/7 non-profit support that is serviced by 200+ local organizations like local crisis centers, as assistance and help for housing insecurity, healthcare, and other financial difficulties.
 However, due to state-funding cuts, this organization and others similarly funded (which relies on private and mostly government support), might not always be the best option.

What If I Want to Do More?

Be a presence! Make sure your friends and family know where to turn for alternative sources other than reaching to call the police right away. Let others know they have other options, whether you're at the gym or sitting down for a chat. Help out at a local grassroots organization, with your charming social skills, or artistic prowess, or snazzy computer knowledge, or just yourself! Most importantly of all, you'll bring your motivation to help improve the lives of your community, and in turn, yourself. It's never too late to start.

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Thank you for reading!