

Task Force to Reimagine Policing in Brookline
Subcommittee on Vulnerable People and People in Crisis
Second Meeting
10/08/20
First Meeting, 7:00-8:30pm

- Attendance
 - Subcommittee members
 - Anne Weaver
 - Almas Dossa
 - Alexander Weinstein
- Articles/links
 - Almas: Wish we'd each taken a third of it and been able to present on that
 - Alex: I'm concerned about pre-arrest diversion programs. Tons of discretion for cops.
 - Alex: BEST Team as an alternative for emergency calls. Anne mentioned worry of emergency room assessments? What's that?
 - Anne: Hears good things about BEST and not good things. They're coming from a good place. They're part of a hospital, Boston Medical Center, so sometimes people are sent for evaluation at BMC ER for psych hospitalization. Those experiences may be more rare. There is a place for psych hospitalization; some have good experiences, some have bad. Anne is interested in alternatives to the traditional medical model. People without housing can end up in psych wards that are really bad; BMC doesn't have a great reputation for inpatient psych.
 - Almas: Bazelon study that Alex sent was good. Lots of ideas and definitions. Seems like a fantasy to have all these things, but that's what reimagining is about.
 - Anne: Most of the time, EDs are the wrong place to send people. Not about locking them up in a psych ward.
 - Alex: Let's ask BEST what percentage of calls result in a psychiatric evaluation at the ER/ED, and what percentage of those evals result in psych hospitalization. They could be a really good resource for us because they already have a 24/7 urgent care line, which could be a great existing alternative to police.
 - Anne: Western Mass Learning Community - radical and small alternative-to-traditional mental health community. They have an alternative to a psychiatric hospital in western Massachusetts. Anne said she would send information about this to us
 - Almas: BEST also has homeless support services. And they have clinics, not just urgent care.
 - Anne: Peer support is great in mental health crisis.
- Domestic Violence Roundtable and whether to keep DV in our wheelhouse
 - All members of this sub-committee attended the Roundtable meeting today.
 - Anne: Interested in hearing what they thought was missing. They were worried that we were going to take the police away from DV. We should talk to Julie. She invited us to do so, and she noted that not everyone feels comfortable talking with police. How to incorporate that into our recommendations?
 - Almas: I have Julie's e-mail and we can follow up with her if we decide to do that.

- Anne: They were talking about batterers. Not sure whether that's within our scope. They're vulnerable people too, but I don't know.
- Almas: Whether to keep DV. These are all important.
- Anne: What about a peer support crisis call line? Alternative crisis call support?
- Alex: Maybe not reinvent the wheel on crisis call line. Those exist already in Boston. And they're a massive investment of work-hours and money, if done correctly.
- Alex: During the roundtable, Anne told the attendees that we aren't trying to remove police from DV. Good intention to reassure them, but maybe worth not phrasing things like we've come to conclusions that we haven't yet arrived at.
- Anne: Fair. Was taken aback by the public comments. Got the impression that they didn't want things to change in the DV area, very pro-police. She wanted to reassure them that we're not the enemy. They don't need to feel threatened by us.
- Alex: You're right, and that was a good intention.
- Alex: What's going on with safe housing? Cops know about a safe house? But there isn't safe housing? Worth digging in - this would be a great support system to build.
- Almas: They mentioned the Emerge system for batterers. Worth looking into things that already exist.
- Alex: Yeah. If any of these alternative systems already exist, we should collect that information.
- Almas: They referred to the Norfolk County jail sheriff's anger management program.
- Alex: Gets twitchy about looking at programs that are part of systems of incarceration, but it's worth look.
- Whether to keep DV in our wheelhouse
 - Anne: Not ready to rule it out. Community supports that we should dig into.
 - Almas: We only had one roundtable; we don't have enough information to know. They said confidentiality, batterers programs, and emergency housing are missing. Not sure what confidentiality means here. Maybe worth a more targeted, focused follow-up?
 - Anne: Julie had lots of ideas about things that are needed. Worth reaching out to her?
 - Alex: Was concerned about keeping DV in our wheelhouse because its relationship to policing, specifically, is very different from other subjects. But very important. Maybe we could keep it and just recognize that we'll approach it differently from our other subjects.
- Almas: The Reform committee is producing videos to educate the public on what the police do. June is putting together stories about police dealing with mental health issues.
 - Alex: Concerned that this looks like the reform TF advocating for the police. Could be wrong.
- Crisis calls
 - Almas: Husband had meeting with Brookline police IT folks. They had a lot of specific information about crisis calls. Actual, specific reports beyond the numbers: Data on what happened. Referred? Gone to hospital? Jailed? —> How to get that? We can bring it up at tomorrow's meeting.

- Alex: Completely agree, let's get that data.
- Anne: Also agrees.
- Almas: Difficulty getting into the task force's Sharepoint folder.
- Anne: What do these call codes mean? Suspicious person? Group disturbance? Confused person? Well-being checks are often mental health. Suspicious person was high. So was suspicious activity.
- Alex: Maybe we should ask for deeper data on 911 calls that are related to our purpose.
- Raul asked Chief O'Leary whether there is an MOU between Brookline PD and Brookline Community Mental Health Center. He said no. Anne emailed the chief today to ask, if there's no MOU, is there an informal arrangement?
- Next steps
 - Alex will get data from BEST
 - Continue reading suggested materials that we researched
 - See what other committee is doing
 - Interviews? Annabelle, the PD social worker?