

## **A Systematic Literature Review of Non-Police Response Models to Those in Crisis**

When there is a medical emergency in Canada, you call 911, and an ambulance comes. So, why is it different for a psychological emergency? Although there are some joint response teams in Ontario where a mental health professional responds to such calls with a police officer, these are generally reserved for bigger cities such as Toronto and Hamilton, and they often lack round-the-clock staffing. This means that most of the 20,000 calls Ontario police receive every year about those in crisis are tended to by patrol officers with minimal mental health training. As made clear recently in the media, such encounters can result in tragedy, such as in the case of Michael Eligon. Not even 4 hours after being released from a 72-hour psychological hold, Eligon was shot and killed at the hands of a Toronto police officer. Cases like this have prompted calls for non-police responses to people experiencing mental health crises.

Although Canada has been slow to implement such programs, many successful programs exist worldwide. CAHOOTS (Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets) is one of the longest-running community policing initiatives, which launched in 1989 in Eugene, Oregon. According to the White Bird Clinic, which runs the program, CAHOOTS has had incredible success, currently answering around 17% of the police department's mental health calls, saving the city around \$8.5 million annually, and requesting police backup in less than 150 of the 24,000 cases they've responded to. One of the few programs like this in Canada is currently being evaluated in Toronto as part of an \$11 million pilot project. If that project is implemented, it will become Canada's most extensive non-police response program.

Although Toronto's program is a promising start, many other cities in Canada are reluctant to follow suit, in part because municipalities have many questions that cannot easily be answered given the lack of attention paid to these programs by policing researchers. This project aims to start developing an evidence base on non-police response models to mental health crises by conducting a systematic literature review. This will be done to summarize the published and unpublished research in this area, which will allow for an accurate assessment of what is currently known about these programs and what still needs to be discovered.

This literature review will draw on published articles and unpublished material such as yearly performance reviews and internal reports generated by the organizations that run relevant programs. Key questions will be focused on, including: How many programs exist? When and where have these programs been implemented? How do the programs operate? What types of calls do the programs respond to? What are the costs and benefits of the programs in financial terms? What are the costs and benefits of the programs in human terms (e.g., diversion away from the criminal justice system, injury rates for service users and providers)?

This research will provide vital information that can help inform conversations about these programs that are currently taking place in Ontario and across Canada. By creating a document that encapsulates all available information in this area, we are providing a resource that can be used by academic researchers, police services, community members, and policy makers to ensure that people with mental illness receive the highest quality of care possible.

Anne Bowker  
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Dear Anne Bowker

I am very interested in the Carleton University Research Opportunity Program (CUROP) and believe my skills and experiences will allow me to produce high quality research that will benefit the university. I am currently in my third year of a BA Honours degree in Forensic Psychology with a minor in Neuroscience and Mental Health. I currently hold a CGPA of 11.77 with my concentration GPA being 12.00 and minor GPA being 11.66. I thoroughly enjoy learning and strive to succeed in all of my studies. Through my seminar class with Dr. ... I found I had a keen interest in the work conducted in the .... Although they are conducting some promising research on joint response models to those in crisis, there seems to be a lack of non-police response models. Thus, the idea for a **Systematic Literature Review of Non-Police Response Models to Those in Crisis** was born.

This project will build the foundations for an evidence base in this area as well as provide useful tools in preparation for my undergraduate thesis. As a student whom has completed most of their undergraduate degree virtually, the opportunity to be part of a lab will provide great insight into how university research operates and better prepare me for lab research next year. It will also provide opportunities to improve my research and writing skills and to incorporate constructive feedback. It would be a privilege to explore research in this area, experience different software and would certainly help direct my graduate school applications. Finally, the presentation in Fall of 2022 will provide an opportunity to speak publicly about research and will prepare me for the Psychology Undergraduate Research Event at the end of my 4<sup>th</sup> year.

Not only would this summer position allow me to practice skills I have learned, but it would allow me to showcase my strong communication skills, and my ability to work well with others. My work ethic and experiences demonstrate that I'm a hardworking, dedicated and determined individual. I am passionate about research and think you will find my skills and experiences make me an excellent candidate. I look forward to discussing this position further.

Sincerely,

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