

END THE CRIMINALIZATION OF MENTAL HEALTH

Berkeley Police currently respond to calls where people in need of mental health care about 35% of the time. With only an eight hour orientation to inform their actions, officers are encountering people with serious mental health disabilities on a daily basis. Sometimes, a Mobile Crisis Team member accompanies officers to the scene, but more often, the only response that residents get in a mental health emergency involves armed officers and no actual care provider.

THIS MUST CHANGE.

We remember that in 2013 Kayla Moore (a trans woman who lived in Berkeley and had schizophrenia) died in police custody after her friend called police to help when Kayla was having trouble. Officers attempted to forcibly take her out of her home and arrest her on a false warrant when she was having delusions. By escalating her fear and reactions, police provoked a struggle. Kayla stopped breathing under the weight of six police officers who were needlessly trying to subdue her. Sadly, BPD seems to have learned nothing from Kayla's tragic death.

This system is NOT working. Police should not be responding to routine mental health calls. We should be able to get services and not cop cruisers when we need help. People with mental health disabilities should not be regarded as dangerous criminals as a standard operating procedure. They should be able to access quality, professional help whether in an emergency situation or for routine prevention and care. Residents of Berkeley should be able to get 24 hour emergency assistance with and care for those who are having a mental health crisis.

We demand:

1. **Establishment of an emergency mental health crisis line** that can advise members of the public when they are having or dealing with someone who is in crisis.
2. **Assessment, response and services that connect those in need with an actual mental health professional and ACTUAL services.**
3. **Police role in mental health care and emergencies should be minimized** and dependent upon whether they are requested by a mental health professional who is managing the situation.

JOIN COPWATCH IN OUR EFFORTS TO TRANSFORM THE WAY THAT OUR CITY RESPONDS TO MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

Weekly Meeting: Mondays 7pm
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