



De-Escalation & Intervention: Qualitative and Quantitative Description

De-escalations: 49

Empathy Connections: 508

Interventions to prevent arrests or de-escalate police: 2

Number of CSU team members: 12 (4 Spanish speakers)

Number of hours deployed: 236

Objectives of the CSU project:

Generally the purpose of the CSU project is to offer alternative community protection mechanisms in light of existing tensions and potential for ongoing conflict. More specifically the objectives include:

1. Improve community relations and imagination around public safety
2. Prevent violence and destructive conflict through nonviolent responses
3. Offer a channel to enhance access to needed resources for those in the Plaza and contribute to the Plaza becoming a more accessible and enjoyable place for all community members

Sample Stories of Struggle and Deep Empathy:

I supported “X” who asked to be taken to a rehab program to detox and address his alcohol dependency. He was very lucid. He shared stories of being called derogatory names and rough treatment at the RAP hospital and shared being worried that he would encounter similar treatment again.

I also talked in the group (with Eli and Shannon) to “X” after he considered going to the detox program but was intimidated by having to get blood work done/drawn at the historical and not knowing how long the program would keep him there. He told us about his past as being a gang member and how now instead he prefers to be peaceful like us. He also showed us his tattoos and said that he has 4 daughters whom he cares about.

“A man who was disheveled appeared like he may have spent the night on the streets. He was very low energy. When a DCPT member enquired if he was hungry, he confirmed that he was. A DCPT member purchased a pastry from a vendor and offered it to the man who while receiving it, with tears in his eyes expressed in words and gestured his deep thanks.

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“X shared that his only daughter was murdered in El Salvador (I believe he saw her body) and that he was still extorted to pay thousands of dollars. He was obviously distraught recounting this story. He has been in the US and lived in Lancaster, southern California. I asked if he was interested in getting help stopping drinking but he declined.”

A DCPT member accompanied “X” and “Y” to RAP (Regional Addiction Prevention) via an Uber that Sara from District Bridges ordered. They had a difficult, dehumanizing experience there.

A DCPT member spent a fair amount of time listening to “Y” and accompanying him around the market. He was drinking alcohol and getting more worked up. At first, he said the man on the ground made him feel sad and ashamed because that’s how he used to be, but not anymore. Later, he was asking people for money, something to eat, or a cigarette. He approached two women at a table and they looked away, maybe with disgust, and that got “Y” worked up. A DCPT member asked him about it and calmed him down and got him to walk away. He approached other people, with varying responses and varying reactions from him. He said something, like he was going to knock over a bunch of things and the police, would come and throw him in jail; a DCPT member discouraged him from doing that and said they wouldn’t want to see that happen. He asked a vendor for a sample. She said they’ll have samples next week, so he can come back. A DCPT member mediated this exchange.

“X” shared some thoughts on romantic relationships and what makes for a good partnership. He said he was doing well. He showed me that he sells fragrances that he makes and is planning on moving into selling essential oils.

Examples of de-escalation:

One individual was convinced that two other individuals had stolen his dog, and he tried to start fights with both of them. He was quite drunk, so I was able to intervene and ask him to sit down and drink some water.

Someone who referred to himself as “X” got upset and was yelling at and attempting to hit a couple of men in a group seated on the Tivoli Building steps, accusing them of having stolen a very expensive bottle of liquor. (I had earlier seen someone else walking off with a very large bottle half-concealed under his jacket.) I interpositioned with my arm and discouraged him from hitting them while also acknowledging that what had happened was unfair. He backed off, returned again, and started yelling again, but then backed off a second time. He grew upset at me twice and yelled at me to get away from him. I stepped away and was able to talk to him briefly (I told him my name & he told me his nickname). I stayed close by, under the trees at the

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opposite edge of the sidewalk from the steps, to keep an eye on the situation and discourage another escalation.

A male security guard ("B") of Tivoli wanted "X" (who uses a walker) to move away from the steps. A verbal altercation ensued. "B" pulled his cuffs out to detain "X". A DCPT member maintained at least 6 feet distance from them and asked "X" to walk away from the steps. Spoke with "X" for more than 15 minutes to calm her down.

DCPT member chatting with someone at a tent. They heard a loud sound. They moved quickly towards the trees in front of the T-mobile store. "X" was angry. She lifted her T-shirt up to show me multiple cuts (from previous violent interactions) on her body caused by another resident, "Y". "X" was angry because "Y" had been harassing "Z". "Y" started walking away after seeing the DCPT member. After "Y" left, the DCPT member walked with "X" and "Z" to the benches across Park road and offered some food and water.

A security guard at Park Triangle was angry at the residents and pulled his pepper spray bottle out. He was ready to use it if needed. He said to a DCPT member, "Keep them in line." The DCPT member stepped in front of the security guard to create a buffer zone and chatted with him to help reduce tension.

Connecting folks with community resources: 13

A man, from El Salvador on Temporary Protected Status, in his 40s doesn't have a valid ID card from Washington, DC. He has been working in the restaurant and construction industries for many years. I will try to see whether I can take him to a DMV center sometime this month.

Spoke with "X" and gave info about applying for Food Stamps (she learned you can use these at the market).

"X" was very drunk, and he requested to go to Howard for detox. "Y" was present and helped to translate for "X". I contacted CRT and was advised to dial 911, and did so. "X" went with an ambulance to a detox facility, although the EMTs were not able to share which facility he'd be going to.

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“X” wants to join a restorative circle (preferred language Spanish) to improve his relationships with members of his family. I will communicate with other DC Peace Team members to have the process resumed.

“X” expressed that he wanted a program to stop drinking. I mentioned the program at La Clinica but he wanted to go to something now. I suggested we could call the ambulance and ask them to take him to RAP, to which he agreed to and so I did. However, when the EMS arrived, he complained of chest pain, so the EMS said they were obligated to take him to the hospital first. They checked his vitals and said he was likely dehydrated. They explained after he was checked out he could be taken to RAP but also explained that they were being extremely restrictive in who they were admitting to RAP, because RAP said they did not have staff to assist people needing any kind of ambulatory assistance or medical attention.

“X” was helped to get his passport.

“X” is only 18 yrs. old and was in a shelter. He was re-connected with family and his school system.”

Individuals Transforming:

“X” coordinated with Sara for them to meet tomorrow to discuss obtaining housing; provided him with Al’s number and Sara’s number.

“X” saw a DCPT member at the compost area and said he was looking for a job opportunity. We connected him with a worker and texted him the email to contact him with a QR code.

“X” shared with me that he feels blessed that he has housing after a period of living on the streets.

“X” has entered Federal City for the 28 day treatment program for drinking.