

Integrating Municipal Police Officers Onto Assertive Community Treatment Teams (IMPACT)

Definitions

- **ACT** stands for “Assertive Community Treatment.” This interdisciplinary healthcare program serves people (**recipients**) with serious mental illnesses who need support in order to live in the community.
- **ACT police officers** have a special interest in mental health. They are employed by the police department and are embedded on the ACT teams.

What is the impact of including police officers on the ACT teams in Victoria, BC?



Benefits



Positive and respectful relationships are developed between recipients of ACT services and ACT police officers.



Recipients benefit from **long-term support and prevention** from ACT police officers rather than interacting with police only in acute crises.



Recipients benefit from ACT police officers who bring a **unique combination of skills and abilities** to the ACT team.



ACT police officers are more available as team members, which allows for more **effective coordination** with healthcare.

Drawbacks



Some recipients may fear **looking like an informant** if they interact with a police officer.



Mistrust of the police may lead a recipient to become agitated.



Interactions with police officers can be triggering for recipients with a past history of **traumatic experiences with police**.



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

01

Will recipients be criminalized or stigmatized by ACT police officers?

No. ACT police officer involvement is more likely to steer people away from the criminal justice system.

02

Could anyone else fill this role?

No, not completely. ACT police officers have a unique combination of authority, knowledge, and ability that is beneficial in a wide range of situations, including high risk ones.

03

How would recipients be impacted if the current ACT police officers were cut or eliminated?

It is better for recipients to interact with known police officers. Those stable relationships lead to more empathic and tailored care. Since trust can develop, the risk of becoming agitated or triggered is also reduced.

04

Do these findings apply to other models of police involvement with mental health?

Not necessarily. There are many ways in which police are involved in mental health care, ranging from crisis response to long-term care. This is a long-term care model.

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Have questions?

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