



BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Module 2: 911 Diversion & 988 Protocols

INSTRUCTOR MODEL – Homeless Encampment Example

Officers are dispatched to a homeless encampment for removal of property. City workers are requesting police because the last time they did an encampment removal they were threatened with violence. On arrival, most people have voluntarily left with their belongings. One female is refusing to take down her tent or remove her property.

When approached by city workers the woman became verbally abusive and stated, *"I know you're with the FBI! Stop following me. I've already contacted the President!"*

City workers have tried to tell her that they are not with the FBI but are unsuccessful in getting her to believe them. When they request her to move again, she then said, *"If I can't live here, I've got nowhere else to go and I might as well kill myself".*

In your group, discuss the following...

1. What factors are the basis for officers' decision-making?
2. How will the "totality of circumstances" be applied in decision-making?
3. What are the safety considerations?
4. Are there any suspected or known special needs of the individual? If so, what?
5. Using the flowchart, describe the most logical response's sequence of events.



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SCENARIO 1

A man calls 911 indicating that his sister, who has been diagnosed with schizophrenia, is outside screaming and refuses to come back into their house. She has been sitting on the curb for several hours and it is getting dark. Officers are dispatched. They find the woman at the curb in front of their home shouting, *“Give me the gun! I know that the FBI is hiding in the basement. I’m gonna get them this time!”* The man states that he has a gun, but it is locked away. He indicates that he had been taking his sister to a mental health program and she had been doing well, but she refused to go for her last appointment. She also stopped taking her medications. She has no history of significant violence but has been psychiatrically hospitalized many times over the years.

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SCENARIO 2

Officers respond to a 911 call from a homeowner who reported that a car was parked in the middle of his street for about an hour and that the driver, with his head buried in his hands, was apparently in great distress. Upon arrival, officers found a young man alone in his car crying uncontrollably. He told the officers that he had nothing to live for and had been thinking of ramming his car into a building and “*ending it all.*” He said that if the police didn’t leave him alone, he just might do that. The man insisted that he had broken no laws, and what he was going through was his private business. He stated that he absolutely did not want help. He said that if the officers would move their patrol car, which was blocking his way, he’d like to go home.

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SCENARIO 3

Officers are dispatched to a shelter, where staff reported that a woman who had been staying there for a couple of nights physically attacked and injured several residents without apparent provocation. No one there knew much about the woman. She was initially very hesitant to talk to the officers, but began to open up, telling them that she once had a nice home, but her husband had become very abusive to her. Three years ago she left him, thinking she could live with friends, but that didn't work out and she ended up on the streets. She found that to be very dangerous and twice she was sexually assaulted. She began to use street drugs, was arrested several times, and was once hospitalized for major depression. She didn't deny fighting at the shelter but claimed that she could hear others whispering about her, and that she had to defend herself from them. At times during the interview, she shouted curses at other residents. The woman indicated that she wanted help to leave the shelter because she didn't feel safe.

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SCENARIO 4

Officers are dispatched to a 911 call for service of an elderly man who arrived at someone's doorstep. The man does not live there, appears confused as to where he is, or how he got there. When the resident tried to ask him questions or approach him, the elderly man got agitated and verbally abusive. The older man is able to tell the neighbor that his name is “Bill” but can’t remember his last name. He also can’t remember if he was born in the city he lives in or where he lives.

In your group, discuss the following...

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3. What are the safety considerations?
4. Are there any suspected or known special needs of the individual? If so, what?
5. Using the flowchart, describe the most logical response’s sequence of events.