FEBRUARY 9, 2022

Business Education Night

NEW WESTMINSTER

Vulnerable People and Homelessness in New Westminster

PRESENTED BY:
JEN ARBO, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
CAMILLE OLIVEIRA, NEW WEST POLICE
BAL VARN, BYLAW ENFORCMENT

Agenda

- Context of homelessness in New Westminster
- Strategies and who to call
- Resources
- Strategies and tips for de-escalation
- Future small business education topics
- Questions



Context

- Cleanliness and general maintenance of the city
- Public concerns and impacts on businesses of vulnerable and street entrenched people coming into establishments and lingering
- Impact of people sleeping on private property or at storefronts
- Open consumption and selling of drugs
- Encampments and unhoused people leaving behind belongings
- Wanting to be compassionate but don't know how

Numbers



The last homeless people count here was in March of 2020. It is estimated we had approximately 123 individuals living unsheltered and sheltered in our community. Approximately 45-50 are unsheltered and living on the streets of New Westminster.

Collaborative Approach

- The City and NWPD are working together with social service providers and other organizations to approach these issues.
- Communication with one another is key
- Understanding across organizations and departments helps provide context
- Reduces duplication of efforts and is more compassionate toward street entrenched and vulnerable people
- Working with external stakeholders such as business associations and non profit organizations

- Road map of immediate and short term actions to address issues
- Increased garbage containers and frequency of collection
- Hired specialized waste removal service
- Installation and maintenance plan for portable toilet
- Funding for homeless support workers
- Additional bylaw officers and extended hours of service

Downtown Livability Strategy

Outreach

MORNING PATROLS

- During the work week Vulnerable Persons Liaison Officer Camille Oliveira typically conduct patrols to engage with our homeless population.
- On Wednesdays and Thursdays, Outreach Worker Justin joins NWPD members for patrols.

CONSIDERATIONS

- Exposure to the weather
- Possible overdose (Tainted drug supplies)
- Mental health issues
- Food sustainability
- Barriers reporting to police: Victims of Violence, Systemic racism, Multigenerational Trauma and Colonialization

LAWFUL AUTHORITY FOR POLICE

- **“Loitering”** – simply standing or sitting with your shopping cart and belongings in a public space is not a criminal offence
- **Open consumption of drugs** – at this time, the Office of Federal Public Prosecutions has advised all police agencies that they will not be approving criminal charges for simple possession and open consumption on the street, as it is an issue of public health and addictions…. not criminalization.
- **Living structures and tents:**
  - Supreme Court of Canada and recent case law has advised that the issues of tents in City and public parks are not an issue of police enforcement and criminalization. Recent case law provides that police cannot ask vulnerable person in living structures to leave parks and public spaces (between the hours of 7:00 pm and 9:00 am).
  - The City of New Westminster has the primary authority for Living structures on City property. City of New Westminster Bylaws can ask police to assist by standing by and keeping the peace. Police will not be involved in the removal of living structures.
- **Private property** – On private property, police will stand by while the property owners asks the individual to leave and “may” consider removal under the Trespass act (Violation Ticket)

LAWFUL AUTHORITY FOR BYLAWS

- The direction from City Council is to approach all encounters with vulnerable populations with compassion and understanding. With this in mind:
  - A trauma-informed approach is used
  - Bylaw officers try to connect individuals to services and outreach workers. Multiple visits/encounters may be required to encourage campers to pack-up
  - If a tent is unoccupied at time of visit a notice is left to remove the tent and all belongings by 9am the following morning. If tent is not removed, staff will re-attend the next day to determine next steps based on the situation.
- Bylaw officers do not have authority to physically remove people or ask for identification.
- Fines are not issued to vulnerable persons.
- Tents and belongings are only removed (by Engineering Operations) when all other strategies are exhausted.

NON-EMERGENCY CALLS

604-525-5411

- Crime has already been committed
- Suspect is gone
- No active threat to persons or property

(i.e. vandalism, suspicious person)

EMERGENCY CALLS

911

- Crime is in-progress
- Suspect is on scene or fleeing
- Current or imminent threat to persons or property

(i.e. assault, robbery, break-in)

Who to Call

ONLINE REPORTING

A good fit for property damage under $5000, including graffiti or if your non-vehicle property valued under $5000 was stolen when there isn't specific suspect information or CCTV footage www.nwpolice.org/onlinereporting

BYLAWS

Call: 604-527-4657 or bylawenforcement@newwestcity.ca

ENGINEERING OPERATIONS

For garbage issues on public property 604-526-4691 or engops@newwestcity.ca
Also manage the portable toilet at Hyack Square

SEECLICKFIX

App may also be a good choice for certain non-time sensitive issues, such as garbage, graffiti, etc (it is not live-monitored)

NUISANCE ACTIVITY RESOURCE GUIDE



Due in part to the ongoing pandemic, the community is grappling with increased homelessness and other concerns such as graffiti and unsightly vacant premises. We are committed to reducing the resulting impacts to businesses and residents of New Westminster.

What's Happening

Increased homelessness and nuisance activity, which New Westminster and other Metro Vancouver municipalities are experiencing, is due to the following factors:

- Reductions in shelter capacity due to physical distancing requirements
- Employment and income disruption
- Reluctance on behalf of family and friends to temporarily accommodate people due to fear of virus transmission

YOU CAN HELP REDUCE NUISANCE ACTIVITY

Here are some best practices to reduce nuisance activity and the impacts on yourself and the community.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS



Keep the property neat and clean so it doesn't appear neglected or lack monitoring. This means mowing boulevard grass, attending to graffiti, and not allowing garbage bins to overflow.



Ensure your outside area is well-lit with lights facing down, and not into neighbouring properties.



Keep vegetation trimmed to reduce privacy spots for illicit activity or toilet uses.



Lock dumpsters, including bins solely used for cardboard as those may be viewed as dry, flat areas to sleep.

NUISANCE ACTIVITY RESOURCES & CONTACTS

City of New Westminster Bylaw

Encampments (occupied or vacant), large amounts of belongings, unsightly premises, unsecured buildings, and graffiti.
Call: 604-527-4657
Email: bylawenforcement@newwestcity.ca

New Westminster Police Non-Emergency

Help with getting someone to leave your property and to report a crime that has already been committed, where the suspect is gone and there is no active threat to persons or property (i.e. vandalism, suspicious person).
Call: 604-525-5411
Report Online: nwpolice.org

Health Van

Needle and razor disposal, harm reduction supplies, connecting someone to resources.
Call: 604-351-1885

Project ALLIES

Needle and razor disposal, harm reduction supplies, connecting someone to resources.
Call: 604-690-7337

BUSINESS LICENCE HOLDER RESOURCE GUIDE



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Other Community Resources

USED NEEDLES

- Health Van: 604-351-1885
- Project ALLIES: 604-690-7337

MICRO CLEANING AND NEEDLES

- I's on the Street: isonthestreet@gmail.com

EMERGENCY EXTREME WEATHER SHELTER

- 502 Front Street (Former Army & Navy) - ground floor entrance
- Operated by Purpose Society
- Anything below 2°, can be opened, operates 8pm to 8am
- Warm meal, coffee and donuts and snacks

HEALTH CONTACT CENTRE

- 40 Begbie Street
- Overdose Prevention Site, safe consumption, harm reduction, drug testing and access to resources

Coming April 2022!

Meeting every other month with the New Westminster Police Department, this is an opportunity for New Westminster Business Associations to have community engagement with the New Westminster Police Department.

- **improve dialogue**
- **discuss community crime trends**
- **policing issues and concerns**

Building Rapport and Tips for De-escalation

Strategies to Build Rapport

- NON-JUDGEMENTAL APPROACH
- COMMUNICATE CONCERN
- OFFER VALIDATION
- SET LIMITS AND BOUNDARIES
- OFFER SUPPORTS

TIPS FOR DE-ESCALATION

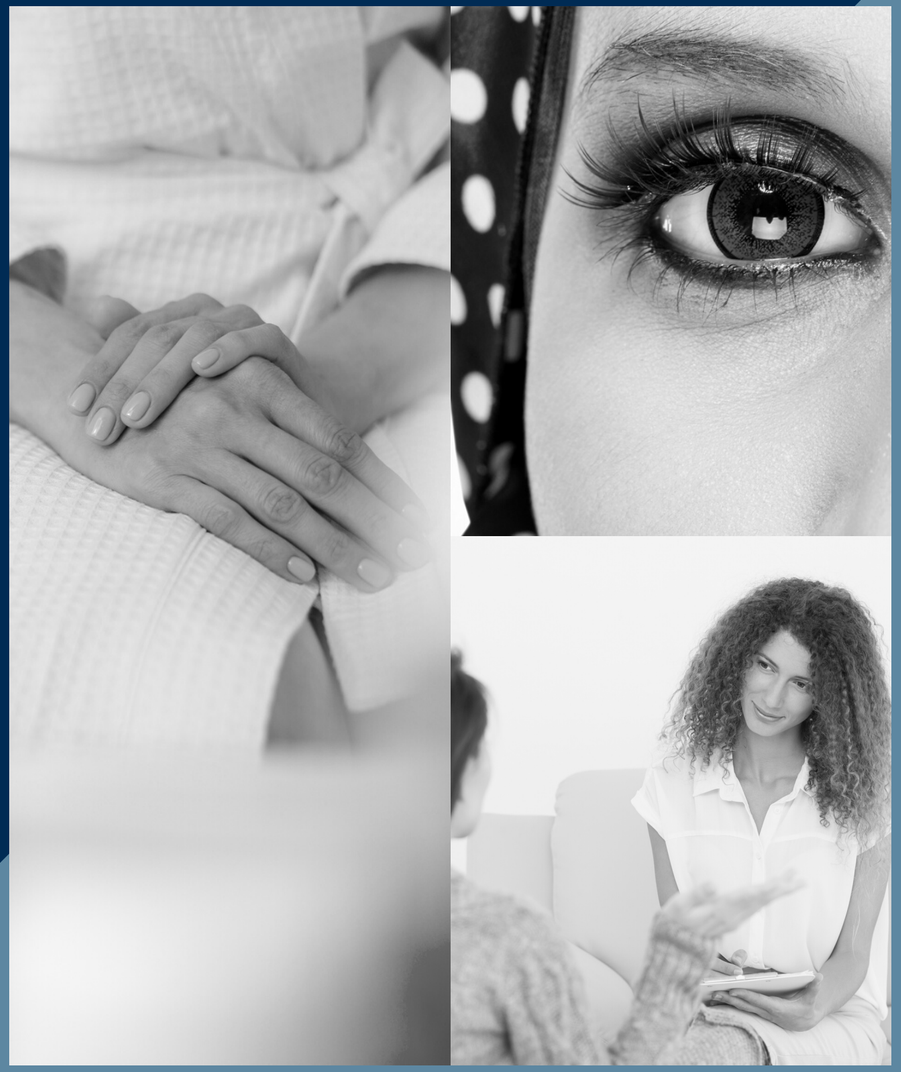
Match posture if possible

Increase distance to just outside arms' reach

Position at an angle to the person - don't square up

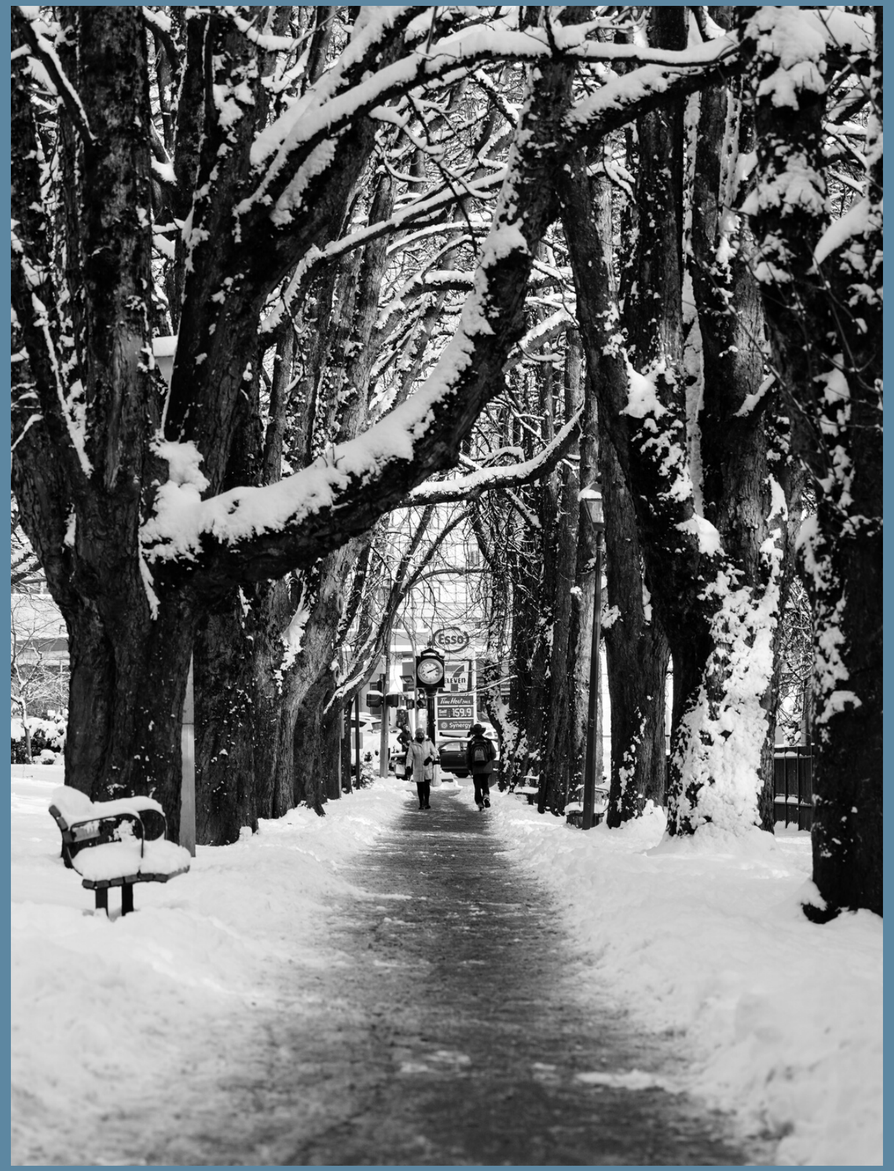
Utilize barriers where space is limited

Ensure open and equal exit access



MORE TIPS FOR DE-ESCALATION

- Keep hands down and visible, open posture
- Move slowly and less often
- Explain large movements before initiating them
- Make more eye contact when emotion is intense
- Use confirming gestures (e.g., nod, raise eyebrows)
- Consciously breathe slowly and deeply, using positive self-talk
- Ensure that back up is available



Thank you

Future Small Business Education Topics



Opioid Crisis and Helping During an Overdose



Crime Prevention Through Design



Targeting Hardening for Loss Prevention



Technology for Safety (Cameras, Locks, etc)



Staff Training and Being Prepared

Follow Up

www.newwestcity.ca/downtownlivability

Today's materials will be sent to participants and added to City's website

Email info@investnewwest.ca if you have questions

Sign up to Invest New West newsletter to learn about next education events at www.newwestcity.ca/ecdevsignup