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Articulations of an Institution: Attending to Disability Narrated as a Dangerous Site of Emergency

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Abstract

Tip sheets represent a genre of text that take a communicative orientation. As an ordinary form of engagement, tip sheets produced by institutions of police represent and are constituted by taken-for-granted communicative norms that mark policing as the solution to "problem" people. Guided by interpretive disability studies and critical phenomenology, this article orchestrates an encounter with a Toronto Police Service (TPS) tip sheet. A careful analysis of the communicative moves in the text reveals the articulations of an institution, that is the processes by which readers are expected to partake, without question, in a story of disability as a dangerous site of emergency. Attending to how the TPS articulates ways to deal with its problem of disability through blanket nomenclature, binary-communication, and the norm of cooperation, the white colonial project of policing and its method of communicating 'policing-as-help' becomes a site of inquiry and an occasion for enacting pause.

Various kinds of texts are produced and distributed in culture. Institutions, such as the institutions of law and police, are no exception to the production of texts. Following Dorothy Smith (1999) who argues that culture is textually-mediated, the texts put forth by institutions reflect cultural understandings of disability and the human broadly conceived. A slow and careful attention to the stories at work in institutional texts produced by institutions of police, in particular, may reveal attempts to call readers into particular relation to conceptions of the world that secure the police as a fixture of everyday life. In this article, I carefully attend to an institutional text produced and shared by the Toronto Police Service (TPS) titled, "Police Encounters with People in Crisis" (see Appendix), what I henceforward refer to as the TPS tip sheet, that offers public-facing tips for engaging with people in crisis. Enacting a slow and careful reading of the TPS tip sheet, I explore the singular meanings made of disability, normalcy, and policing. I note how the text actively attempts to recruit readers to its cause of obliterating signs of interpretation in relation to disability (Titchkosky & Michalko, 2009, p. 48), relying on carceral logics that produce and reinforce linear pathways of thinking about policing, difference, and the policing of difference. By seeking to give account to appearances as processes and processes as constituted by stories, my close interpretive read of the tip sheet reveals how textual descriptions of people in crisis categorize the TPS as protectors of the state while simultaneously storying disability as a dangerous problem.

Influenced by interpretive disability studies, I explore how the TPS tip sheet relies on blanket nomenclature and binary-communication in an attempt to sever relations between the institution and their storied problem of people in crisis. I question, more broadly, how tip sheets produced by institutions and for members of the public rely on various meaning-making devices to center the TPS as protectors and helpers and decenter disability as desirable life. Of these meaning-making devices, I discuss the norm of cooperation, binary-communication, blanket nomenclature, and the useless-suffering of disability as useless-difference (Michalko, 2002), all of which work to create the appearance of an innocuous institutional text. Thinking in conversation with Elizabeth Ellcessor (2022), I suggest that the innocuous TPS text is an articulation of emergency media that makes urgent and ordinary the danger of disability. The violence of carceral humanism is also essential to emergency media texts, where meanings of who needs to be institutionalized for 'their own benefit,' are produced and circulated as if commonsensical and without question (Ben-Moshe, 2020).

Method and Theoretical Commitments

An institution's articulations gesture to the conditions of existence that give institutions both form and meaning. Using articulations as a mode of apprehending the complexity of institutional critique, I draw from Stuart Hall (1985) who says,

> By the term, "articulation," I mean a connection or link which is not necessarily given in all cases, as a law or fact of life, but which requires particular conditions of existence to appear at all, which has to be positively sustained by specific processes, which is not "eternal" but has constantly to be renewed, which can under some circumstances disappear or be overthrown, leading to the old linkages being dis-

> solved and new connections - re-articulations - being forged. (p. 113)

By focusing specifically on the articulations of an institution, I make my site of inquiry and pause the specific meaning-making processes that make 'the police' a normal fixture of everyday life. Articulations, then, are simultaneously utterance of word and condition; articulations hold stories about culture and what it means to exist in the world. My turn toward the articulations of the TPS, as ascertained through one of their tip sheet texts, makes clear that institutions are socially produced. Indeed, their appearances are precluded by particular conditions – conditions that Indigenous epistemologies help me understand as formed by stories (King, 2003). Attending to articulations helps me realize the stories of normal ways of being and doing that must constantly be circulated so that the conditions that potentiate the seeming ordinary appearance of institutions in culture are sustained.

Approaching the TPS tip sheet text as an articulation of an institution of police is a way to draw nearer to the narrative labour required of sustaining normalcy. Disability studies shares a relation with normalcy. This relation to normalcy, however, is unlike the study of disability, since disability studies is not interested in solving, remedying, or rehabilitating disability-as-a-problem so as to return to a state of normalcy (Titchkosky & Michalko, 2009). As Titchkosky and Michalko (2009) make clear, "Disability, then, becomes the occasion for disability studies to interrogate normalcy, to make *it* an object of study" (p. 6). Informed by this provocation to make normalcy an object of study, I interrogate the appearance of police as protectors and helpers, presented as a given in various texts, including the one of focus here — a given that simultaneously and necessarily paints disability as a dangerous problem. In particular, I work with a police service webpage meant to provide the public with tips on how to deal with "mental health crises" (Toronto Police Service, 2023b). My analysis engages with this text as a tip sheet, revealing how the genre of "tip sheet" represents, and is constituted by, taken-for-granted cultural communicative norms.

As with any field of research and scholarship, there are different ways of "doing" disability studies. Informing my way of proceeding in this chapter is interpretive disability studies. Shaped by Indigenous storytelling traditions, Black radical thought, and a critical phenomenological turn, the interpretive disability studies I engage with compels me to question how disability has been made to matter through the ways in which disability is made to appear and disappear in our everyday lives (Titchkosky et al., 2022). Interpretive disability studies calls for enacting a pause so that the phenomena of everyday life come to be revealed as produced, constructed, and narrated in such a way to appear normal, even commonsense (Titchkosky et al., 2022). This means encountering a webpage on an institution's website as more than just another page to click and scroll through, instead learning to encounter the mundanity of the everyday, such as this webpage, as an active site of meaning-making that tells a story of disability's place in culture.

Informing my interpretive approach to the mundanity of the everyday and the making of meaning is critical phenomenology, which operates as both philosophical and political practice (Guenther, 2020). Critical phenomenology, says Guenther (2020),

> ...suspends commonsense accounts of reality in order to map and describe the structures that make these accounts possible, to analyze the way they function, and to open up new possibilities for reimagining and reclaiming the commons...[and] is a struggle for liberation from structures that privilege, naturalize, and normalize certain experiences of the world while marginalizing, pathologizing, and discrediting others. (p. 15)

Endeavouring to make the familiar unfamiliar and the seemingly natural preternatural, I suspend my understanding of the TPS tip sheet as a commonsense account of reality and more specifically, a commonsense story of disability and policing. With critical phenomenology guiding my philosophical commitments as well as interpretive disability studies informing my method of close interpretive reading, the structures that make normal the appearance of people for whom "we" need to be trained *about* come to appear.

Enacting a pause at the texts that mediate our everyday lives, such as the webpages we might scroll or read through, permits a closer reading of these texts, and their producers, as sites of encounter. For the purposes of this article, the aim of making the institution of police a site of encounter through the tip sheet is neither about solving the media text as "problem" nor hoping to remedy the troubling appearance of disability storied as dangerous by an institution. By seeking to give account to appearances as processes in a media text, my engagement reveals how descriptions of "people in crisis" in the artefact help center the TPS as protectors of the state and helpers of the disabled while being necessarily preceded by colonial ways of understanding disability that produce and reinforce carceral ableism (Ben-Moshe, 2020). As Ben-Moshe states, "Carceral ableism is the praxis and belief that people with disabilities need special or extra protections, in ways that often expand legitimate their further marginalization and incarceration" (p. 17). Strategic moves in language help legitimize a particular world while erasing the possibilities for Being that other worlds and ways of knowing have to offer. Through a meticulous and careful close-reading of a specific emergency media text — the police tip sheet — I explore how an institution of police calls on the reader to join in its carceral ableist desire to police disability as a dangerous and uncooperative problem. Through this exploration, it becomes evident that disability as a way of orienting to the world is disappeared in favor of conflating disability and cultural constructions of "problem" people (Titchkosky, 2000). A critical phenomenological turn is helpful here as we hope to encounter the text as a living document (Smith, 1999), one that is coming-to-appear

and that does so through invoking a particular world alongside ways of communicating ordinary life.

Tip Sheet as Text

I read the world as textually-mediated and therefore, understand the TPS tip sheet as a text, which as Dorothy E. Smith (1999) says, "...is a material object that brings into actual contexts of reading a standardized form of words or images that can be and may be read/seen/heard in many other settings by many others at the same or other times" (p. 7). The language of the TPS website invites a readership familiar and fluent in the English language and the form of the website assumes readers have access to the technology required to access the internet. Overall, the tip sheet can be read as text inasmuch as it is housed on an institutional website whose open-access and online format ensure that the tip sheet's standardized images and words are read by many and in a variety of settings.

It is important to note that the TPS tip sheet has undergone various changes since 2021, when I began my study of its so-called commonsense appearance. What follows is a description of the tip sheet, including screenshot images, that I captured on September 22, 2023. The TPS website has since completely disappeared the webpage and the pathway that I trace below. A critical reading of this disappearance suggests that although the text can no longer be currently access by many others and in a variety of settings via the TPS website, this piece reappears the TPS' meaning-filled story of disability as a dangerous site of emergency, interrupting the institution's attempt at erasure. In other words, we might understand enacting a pause with commonsensical appearances as a way of memorializing moments in culture.

Let us turn, then, to how one might have arrived at the TPS tip sheet only recently. I describe my textual encounters in the present tense, suggesting that through narration and re-narration we can activate the past anew. Located on the TPS webpage titled, "Crime prevention," (see Figure 1) the TPS tip sheet is part of a lengthy list of pages offered to the public by the TPS to "[educate and assist] community members to be more aware of their own safety, and to be proactive in the reduction of crime and eliminating the opportunity for crime" (Toronto Police Service, 2023a). Among this list are pamphlets titled, "Bicycle safety," "Holiday safety," "Protect your child" and "Protect yourself," to name a few.

Organizing and Naming 'Normal'

As disability studies encourages we do with normalcy, let us make the TPS tip sheet the object of study. Sight as perceptual practice provides one way of making sense of this TPS webpage (see Figure 2). Immediately I note how the artefact is organized and structured as a resource for how to deal with "mental health issues." The look of resource is achieved by organizing the text in point-form as well as housing the link to this page on the aforementioned page titled, "Crime prevention." The point-form style of the text further communicates the appearance of resource document. Returning to Smith's (1999) understanding of text, the standardized words and form on the webpage – that is the brief headings and use of point-form notation – signal other texts that I have read and seen in everyday life, shaping my reading of this resource text as also, a tip sheet. The look of the resource document seems to communicate that the problem of "people in crisis" is a widely-known problem, hence the need to produce and share the contents of this document to begin with. Suggestions in point-form further show that the problem made of mental health issues in the text is one devoid of nuance and complexity. Afterall, the tip sheet appears to ask, what nuance could arise between police and mental health issues when the former is singularly storied as helper and the latter as problem?

At the top of the page and in the largest-sized text reads, "Toronto Police Service: To Serve and Protect." Planted next to the title is a large police crest. Beneath this heading, two phone numbers are provided. On one side, the "Non-Emergency" contact and on the other, the "Emergency" contact is provided. The Emergency contact number that is provided is 9-1-1, which is a number that directs callers to the institution of police. The institution offering itself as who to contact in an emergency is also important to note, as this emphasizes that the police are not only expert on emergency/non-emergency but also, are the solution to the problem of emergency that they narrate. In other words, "Emergency" explicitly appears in the text to position the police as both expert on and solution to disability as a dangerous site of emergency.

Consider, too, how the tips on the page are also communicated and organized in a way that narrate the ordinariness of the problem of mental health crises. There are "basics" to encountering people in crisis and several options, listed in point-form, to help in dealing with the basics of this problem. Further down the page, in black and bolded letters, a subheading reads, "The Mental Health Act," adding another layer to the ordinariness of the problem of people in crisis. The mention of "Act" appears the authority of the institution of law. In a culture organized by juridical stories, the appearance of the law as institution lends legitimacy to the authority of this tip sheet and the story of disability that the text reproduces. The appearance of this tip sheet shows that an institution of police, and the ruling relations that grant this institution power and legitimacy, reads and stories disability as a dangerous problem. By invoking the juridical language of "Act", the reader is called to ascertain the presence of a formal policy body of sorts that further formalizes and objectifies the problem of which the tip sheet is concerned – the problem of encountering people in crisis (Toronto Police Service, 2023b). As the list of evidence for the ordinariness of the problem of people in crisis begins to tally, it becomes clearer that this artefact is a means of doing the ordinary (Sacks, 1984), of constituting disability as a "location of trouble" (Titchkosky, 2011, p. 14) and of articulating disability, particularly mental health issues

Figure 1. The TPS webpage titled "Crime prevention"

Note: The TPS owns this content. Since the time of my analysis, the TPS removed this content and changed their website. https://www.tps.ca/

(Toronto Police Service, 2023b), a site of emergency (Ellcessor, 2022).

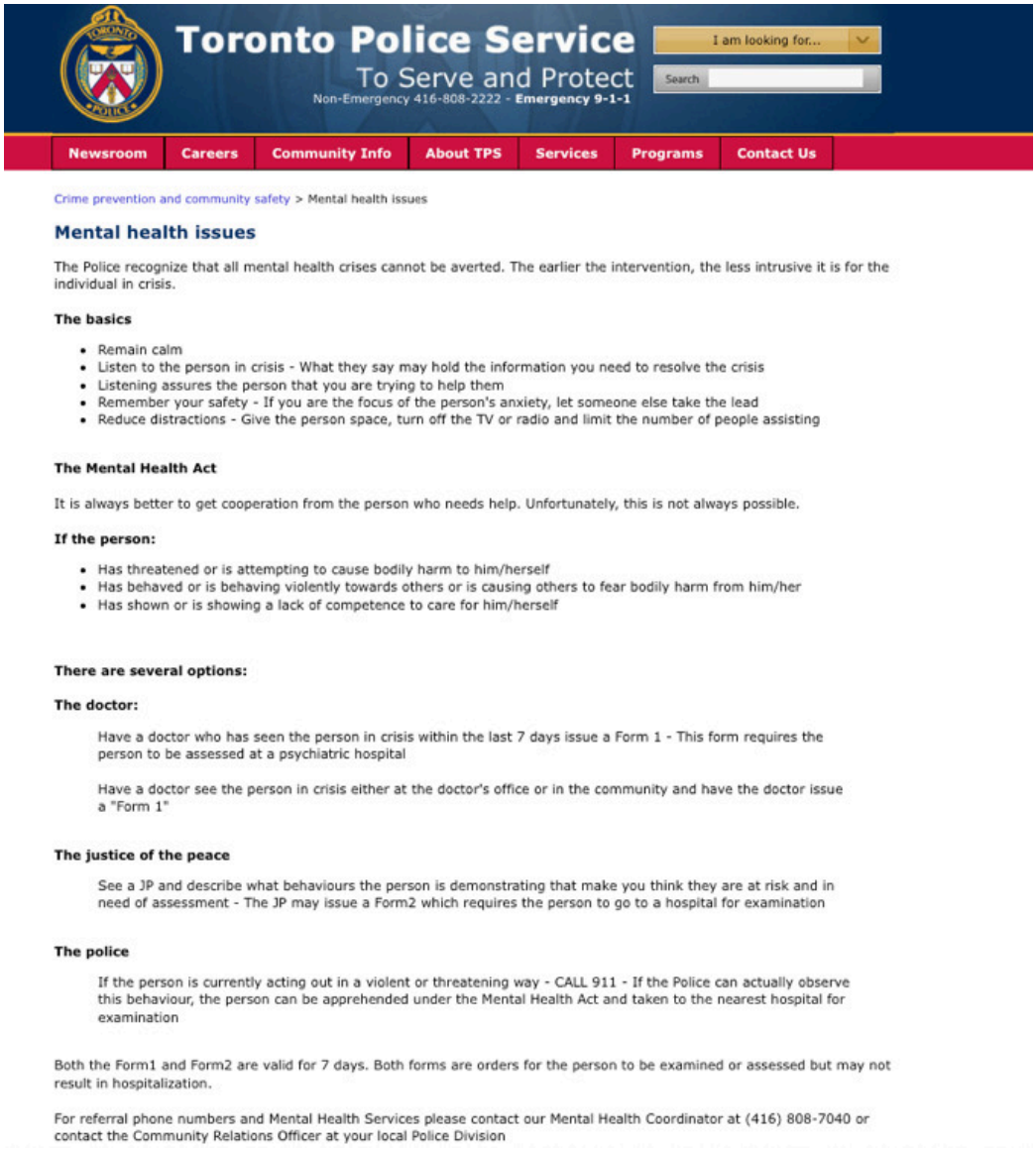
Enacting Pause and Analysis

In what follows, I continue enacting a pause with the TPS tip sheet to deepen and broaden my analysis of the text. Reading more closely for how the TPS tip sheet is made to appear resourceful to the reader, I notice how the narrator begins to administer tips for how to deal with a person in crisis (see Figure 3). Under a bolded subheading that reads, "Mental Health Issues," the narrator says, "The Police recognize that all mental health crises cannot be averted. The earlier the intervention, the less intrusive it is for the person in crisis" (Toronto Police Service, 2023b). From here, I am taken into the "basics" of encountering a person in crisis, which include tips like "remain calm," "listen to the person in crisis," "remember your safety – If you are the focus of the person's anxiety, let someone else take the lead," and "reduce distractions" (Toronto Police Service, 2023b). To gain a clear image of the problem with which the tip sheet text is concerned and suggests readers also be concerned about, I need only to sit with these tips and suspend my own expectations of how a person in crisis may appear. Indeed, the TPS tips on their own effectively illustrate how the TPS imagines a person in crisis to appear as a potentially anxious subject, devoid of peace and stability, who may make others feel unsafe.

I note too, how the seemingly harmless offering of tips on the webpage establishes the TPS as an authority while simultaneously establishing disability as a shared problem. The "Police," capitalized on the tip sheet, know that all mental health issues cannot be averted. know that the problem of *all* mental health issues cannot be averted. They also know what is less intrusive for a person in crisis. As is also clear, they are informed and knowledgeable enough to advise others on how to encounter a person in crisis.

An interpretive disability studies approach reminds me to stay with the tips for a bit longer. Enacting a pause allows me to wonder after how the genre of the tip sheet creates the ideal conditions for maintaining hierarchies of thought that rely on and reinforce disability as useless-difference (Michalko, 2002).

And so, I read the tips again. The first tip they offer is to "remain calm." Tips such as listen to the person in crisis, reduce distractions, and remember your safety follow afterwards. The TPS then suggests the value of listening to the person in crisis, that is, "what *they say may*



Toronto Police Service

To Serve and Protect

Non-Emergency 416-808-2222 - **Emergency 9-1-1**

I am looking for...

Search

Newsroom | Careers | Community Info | About TPS | Services | Programs | Contact Us

Crime prevention and community safety > Mental health issues

Mental health issues

The Police recognize that all mental health crises cannot be averted. The earlier the intervention, the less intrusive it is for the individual in crisis.

The basics

- Remain calm
- Listen to the person in crisis - What they say may hold the information you need to resolve the crisis
- Listening assures the person that you are trying to help them
- Remember your safety - If you are the focus of the person's anxiety, let someone else take the lead
- Reduce distractions - Give the person space, turn off the TV or radio and limit the number of people assisting

The Mental Health Act

It is always better to get cooperation from the person who needs help. Unfortunately, this is not always possible.

If the person:

- Has threatened or is attempting to cause bodily harm to him/herself
- Has behaved or is behaving violently towards others or is causing others to fear bodily harm from him/her
- Has shown or is showing a lack of competence to care for him/herself

There are several options:

The doctor:

Have a doctor who has seen the person in crisis within the last 7 days issue a Form 1 - This form requires the person to be assessed at a psychiatric hospital

Have a doctor see the person in crisis either at the doctor's office or in the community and have the doctor issue a "Form 1"

The justice of the peace

See a JP and describe what behaviours the person is demonstrating that make you think they are at risk and in need of assessment - The JP may issue a Form2 which requires the person to go to a hospital for examination

The police

If the person is currently acting out in a violent or threatening way - CALL 911 - If the Police can actually observe this behaviour, the person can be apprehended under the Mental Health Act and taken to the nearest hospital for examination

Both the Form1 and Form2 are valid for 7 days. Both forms are orders for the person to be examined or assessed but may not result in hospitalization.

For referral phone numbers and Mental Health Services please contact our Mental Health Coordinator at (416) 808-7040 or contact the Community Relations Officer at your local Police Division

Figure 2. The TPS tip sheet on "Mental health issues"

Note: This is a former version of the webpage as the website has changed since the time of analysis. https://data.torontopolice.on.ca/pages/persons-in-crisis

hold the information you need to *resolve the* crisis [emphasis added]." The conditional *may* here suggests a distrust in the person-in-crisis's self-awareness. It is uncertain, the TPS implies, if *they* know what will help them. In any case, what they say will not help the person in crisis resolve their own crisis. Instead, what they say may allow me, the reader, to resolve the crisis. Disability, then, cannot be both problem and solution. Wilful acts of separation between reader and person in crisis, and between TPS and person in crisis, arise where "they" is invoked. This section of the artefact, where "mental health" modifies "issues" to create "mental health issues," along with words like "resolve the crisis" and "remember your safety" are tips that tell a story of disability as a dangerous and uncertain problem. In explicit tones of authority and certainty, the TPS begins to articulate, meanwhile also othering, a very troubling appearance of normalcy-gone-wrong, that is of disability as an unaware, uncertain, and dangerous problem.

"Getting" Cooperation from Disability as Useless Difference

More tips follow beneath a bolded subheading that reads, "The Mental Health Act" (see Figure 4). Beneath this subheading we are told, "It is always better to get cooperation from the person who needs help. Unfortunately, this is not always possible." I note how the TPS again establishes itself as an authority on mental health, explaining what is better and what is not always possible for a person in crisis. The image of the person in crisis begins to form more clearly, where not only might they be dangerous (remember: stay calm) and lack self-awareness (they may not know how to help themselves), but also, they may not be cooperative.

Unclear, however, is who benefits from the person in crisis being cooperative. By attending to the term, "Unfortunately," in "Unfortunately this is not always possible," I am able to gather who the artefact suggests does

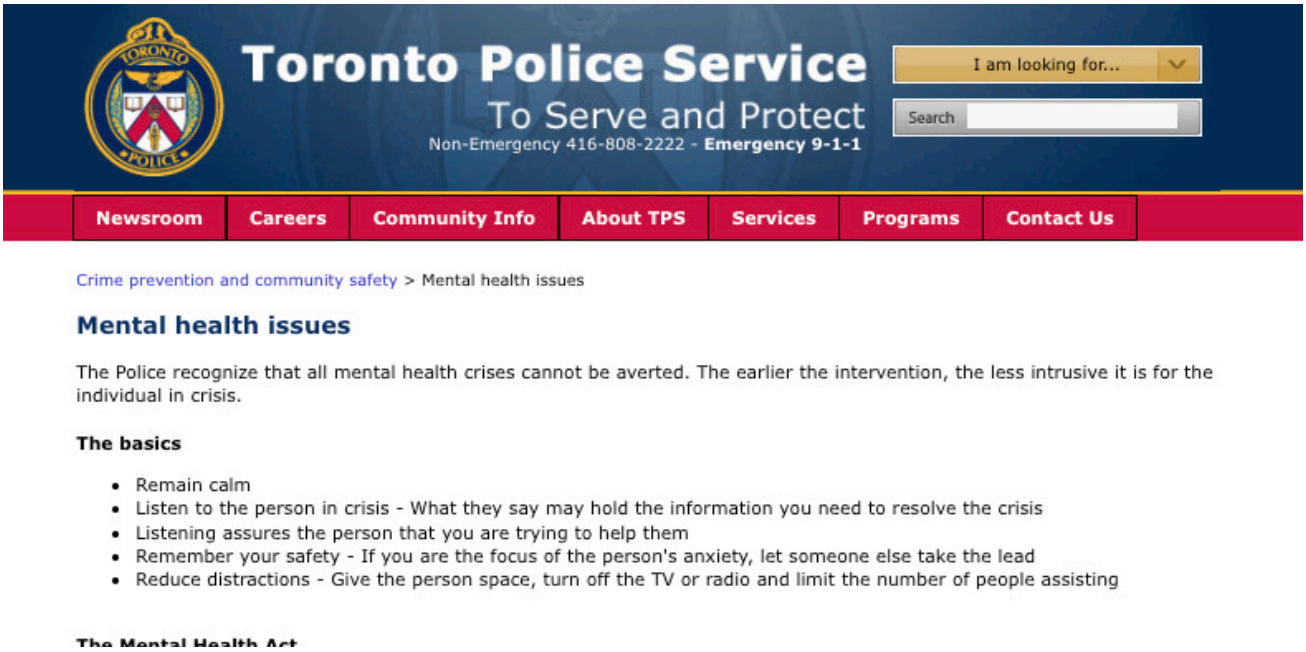


Figure 3. "The basics" of encountering mental health crises

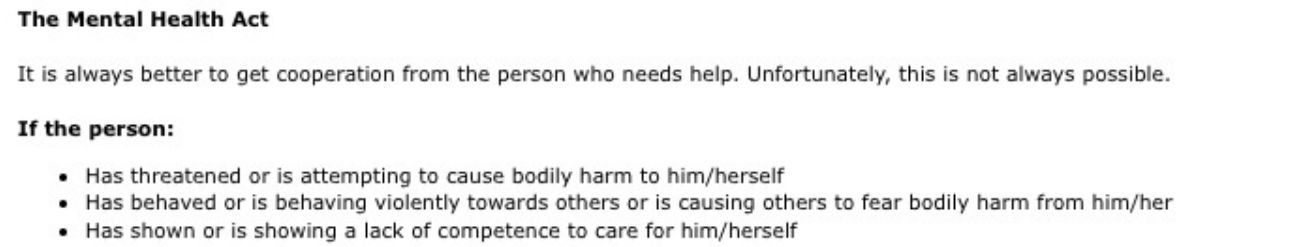


Figure 4.

not benefit when unable to "get cooperation" from the person in crisis. Following Michalko (2002), I understand "Unfortunately" as marking the perpetuation of the courtesies that "characterize the interpersonal commerce of the customary face-to-face of disability and nondisability" (p. 101). The narrative of misfortune frames the superiority of nondisability — here represented in the TPS and the reader — where what is perceived in disability is a "cry for help" (Michalko, 2002, p. 101). Misfortune is narratively inscribed onto police encounters with a person-in-crisis. Who then suffers the misfortune of not getting cooperation from the person who needs help? Within the interpersonal commerce of the face-to-face of disability and nondisability, Michalko (2002) says,

> The difference-of-disability makes no difference to the 'natural Other' except to remind it of the fragility of life and the need to end the 'useless suffering of useless-difference' that generates both the meaninglessness of useless-suffering and the ethical requirement to remedy it. (p. 99)

It is the TPS as nondisabled and natural authority, and the reader called on as nondisabled and natural Other, therefore, who suffer the misfortune of not being able to get cooperation from the person who needs help. It is not unfortunate that the person-in-crisis is perceived and treated as a problem by others; it is the "useless-suffering of useless-difference" of disability (Michalko, 2002) that is unfortunate.

According to the TPS tip sheet, among the basics of dealing with a person in crisis are remaining calm and remembering your safety. The absence of disability as anything other than the problem to deal with from these basics is significant. Not mentioned as part of the basics of encountering a person in crisis is ensuring the peace and calm of the disabled character, which following Michalko (2002), is attributable to the singular narrative that the difference that disability makes to the natural Other is only to remind the reader, who is assumed to be nondisabled, of the fragility of their own safety and peace. Disability is therefore storied as a problem that arises the ethical requirement for the non-disabled to help, fix, and

solve its appearance. When disability itself is unable to help institutions, such as the police, achieve the ethical duty to remedy it, normative culture endures the useless-suffering of disability as a useless-difference.

One way, according to the TSP tip sheet, that disability may help others stop the useless-suffering of its useless-difference is by being cooperative with others, such as the police. There is a taken-for-grantedness of *getting* cooperation, as opposed to earning or negotiating cooperation, in the sentence, "It is always better to *get* [emphasis added] cooperation from the person who needs help" (Toronto Police Service, 2023b). I interpret this taken-for-grantedness of it "always" being better to get cooperation from those who need help, and in turn, the expectation that those who need help will *give* their cooperation to helpers as the norm of cooperation. The norm of cooperation suggests that it is always ideal, and thus expected, that a disabled person receive help in the form of institutional intervention. On the tip sheet, following "The Mental Health Act" tips, the narrator lays out "several options" for disability as a dangerous and uncooperative problem. The several options, say the TPS, include referring the person in crisis to the doctor, the justice of peace, and the police.

In the TPS text, the norm of cooperation is key to the interpersonal communication between non-disability and disability, as well as between the authority of state institutions in relation to the person in crisis, as the assumption of "getting" cooperation from disability and the person in crisis works to naturalize hierarchies of power. The presentation of the institutions of medicine, law, and police as the options for a person in crisis in the TPS tip sheet necessarily ranks these institutional interventions above other possibilities for supporting a person in crisis. The norm of cooperation thus bolsters the authority of state institutions to intervene in the lives of disabled people, hardening the story of disability as useless-difference that must be taken care of to alleviate useless-suffering.

Disability storied as a useless-difference must also be storied as oppositional to the "natural Other" (Michalko, 2002). The objectification of disability as useless-difference reflects the violence of normativity, which as Marquis Bey (2022) states, is "a *mundane*, *quotidian* kind of violence" (p. 38). Normativity relies on the violence of reason, creating conditions of domination and subordination that prescribe departures from cis whiteness as markers of a nonlivable life (Bey, 2022). Attending to the objectification of disability, then, pivots attention to the quotidian violence of normativity that assaults the non-normative subjectivities of blackness and transness. The import of heeding attention to tactics of normativity feels especially notable if we hope to imagine caring for one another outside and beyond policing institutions that derive from the violence of the colonial state (Maynard & Simpson, 2022). The insidiousness of normative endeavours is evident in the norm of cooperation insofar as this norm is disguised as bringing people together while relying on authority rather than relationality, reproducing hierarchies of thought that feed on ableist failures of imagination (Kafer, 2013). Indeed the language of getting cooperation from the person who needs help suggests that the relationship between the person helping and the person needing help is not a mutual, spirited connection. Instead disability is made meaningful in the text when the relationship between helper/helped is one-sided, where if the person who needs help does not cooperate as expected, the helper must find different ways of getting cooperation.

Policing Through Binary-Communication

Help is offered by those who "recognize" a need for it. In this artefact, the TPS mentions recognizing how all mental health crises cannot be prevented. Disability studies invites an examination of this recognition, tracing it back to presupposition that there already exist in culture unpreventable crises *to recognize*. That is, the problem of disability as a dangerous and uncooperative problem, of the useless-suffering of disability as useless-difference, does not appear out of nowhere within this text. Rather, disability storied as a problem by policing institutions is part of a common world that is continuously coming-to-appear. The interlocking institutions of medicine, law, and police involved in the story of disability as a problem in the TPS tip sheet works to strengthen the linear pathway that disability is a dangerous problem and thus, a site of emergency.

The TPS tip sheet as troubling articulation of emergency media tells us that we are already embedded in a world that perceives disability as an absence of competence and rationality as well as a site of emergency. It is difficult not to recognize what has been just-the-way-things-are as anything other than ordinary; it is difficult for what has always already been not to provoke our recognition. Communicating in binaries, for instance, is essential to how this artefact comes-to-appear as ordinary. There are people in crisis, who may pose a danger to themselves and others, and there are the police (along with the reader); there are those who need help and those who will provide it; there is bad and there is good. This way of perceiving the world runs rampant through everyday discourse and is heavily shaped by stories that reproduce normativity as a natural mode of the world.

Through binary-communication, disability cannot exist as a difference that is relational and fluid. Instead, disability must exist as a divisive force that helps the ruling relations constitute opposition and hierarchy. Through binary-communication, the helpers cannot also be disabled or needing help, and those understood as needing help cannot be understood as helpers. Policing by way of binary-communication, then, may seem normal to me as reader because both policing and binary-communication are considered ordinary doings of the world. On the topic of policing, medicalization, and goodness, Razack (2011) writes:

> Certainly the crudeness of early settler responses hardens into the cold bureaucracies and routines of

> hospital care and policing in the 21st century, an inhumanity that medical science veils. What is remarkable, however, is the settler's continuing investment in these tyrannies and the equal compulsion to stage goodness amidst the violence, as in inquests. (p. 353)

Following Razack (2011), binary-communication, and thinking, as an internecine aspect of as an internecine aspect of crude early settler responses, hardens into modern policing institutions today. With Razack, we also encounter the relation between medical science and policing, wherein exists a hardened settler violence. This tip sheet distributed and written by the TPS is therefore an articulation of the institution of police as well as an articulation of any institution invested in the continued tyranny of Euro-Western ways of knowing and forms of staging goodness amidst violence. Storying disability as a dangerous site of emergency reflects "the settler's continuing investment" in the tyranny of policing institutions (Razack, 2011, p. 353), and hardens this linear story as an ordinary response to difference. The text represents a classic staging of goodness amid violence where the TPS appears to be helping the reader who is called into helping those that the institution of police perceives as needing help. There is a circuitous violence that emerges where the TPS calls the reader to join forces and do the work of a white settler colonial regime in policing embodied difference as useless-differences.

Returning to the language used to describe persons in crisis within the text, we find: "needs help," "behaved or is behaving violently," "shown or is showing a lack of competence to care for him/herself" (Toronto Police Service, 2023b). The language of persons needing help, who are behaving violently and emotionally disturbed, again assumes the reader to be colluding with the TPS yet apart from the problem made of disability. In otherwords, the violence described is attributed to the problem of the person in crisis and therefore as separate from both the TPS and reader. By way of the language of persons needing help, an "us" begins to steadily and stealthily form, which is positioned above the "them" and "they" made of disability within the text. If "they" and "them" are being storied as violent and lacking competence, what of the "us" that the TPS is forming through this artefact? That is, what behaviours am I meant to assume that police exhibit, *if not* the violence or incompetence that they attribute to the problem of people in crisis?

Employing Blanket Nomenclature

The TPS makes disability both trouble and emergency through what I understand as "blanket nomenclature." Using blanket nomenclature, the TPS interchangeably uses "mental health issues," "person in crisis," "mental health crises," "individual in crisis," and "person who needs help" throughout the text as blanket terms referring to disability as a dangerous and uncooperative problem. It appears to be a given that these names might be exchanged and used in place of another. It appears to be also assumed that the reader will not trouble how the institution of police calls the person in crisis by various names. I am meant to infer, as the TPS jumps from "mental health crises" to "persons who need help," that these moves in naming are normal and natural.

Referring to disability by interchangeable names further works to establish a particular type of narrator, a narrator that not only knows about the problem of people in crisis and its many names, but a narrator that is also necessarily *separate* from the problem that it knows so well. A calculated move to mark divisions between desirable and undesirable genres of the human (Wynter, 2003), the TPS' blanket nomenclature demonstrates wilful acts of separation that divide the reader and narrator from the problem made of disability — a problem that an institution of police locates *in some individual* persons (and not others). The process of "marking the diseased body" follows firmly-held traditions of locating disability as an *individual* problem within the medicalization of disability (Zola, 1977). Throughout the text disability is referred to in the singular, with the exception of the webpage title that reads, "*Mental health issues*" and the text beneath that invokes "*mental health crises*" [emphasis added] (Toronto Police Service, 2023b). Pluralizing and disembodying disability from a person or people in this way suggests that disease and crisis are countable in number as well as detachable from the body.

The singularization of disability is thus taken-for-granted, revealing an orientation that believes disability to be located only within the individual and not existing among us always and within culture. When disability is situated within the individual, as is effectively expressed in this text, it is the individual who must be fixed, solved, and changed. Zola's (1977) analysis of the cultural transformation of disability into a medical problem, shows that "...in the idea that if such a problem-person can be medically-treated-changed, it-he *should* be" (p. 65). This transformation of disability into a medical problem informs and shapes, therefore, the marking of the diseased body that feeds into emergency media, such as the TPS tip sheet, that stories disability as a dangerous site of emergency.

The presence of disability as a dangerous site of emergency is obscured by the disappearance of the term, "disability," from the text. This omission is made to seem normal and natural as if conceptions of disability are not always already wrapped up in our encounters with each other and how we perceive human embodiment. True to how disability is often made absent-present in everyday life, that is made present as a problem and absent as desirable life (Kafer, 2013), "disability" is not explicitly mentioned in the artefact and only implicitly gestured to as the absence of health, competence, and rationality. This puts me in mind of Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, who in a letter to Robyn Maynard and recalling an encounter with NourBeSe Philip, says, "Language = breath linked to sound linked to meaning" (Maynard & Simpson, 2022, p. 70). When disability is disappeared from the language used in the tip sheet, I wonder how disability is perceived as both not a desirable life and also not *breathed* into life

when absented from texts that are circulated within and among institutions. Following this pathway, if disability is not breathed into life, what meanings are made of disability and where do other stories of disability fall away to??

The disappearance of disability in the language of the tip sheet gives away the carceral desire to confine disability to the rigid parameters of emergency and danger. The confinement of the meaning of disability to emergency erases the possibility of disability as desirable life and disappears disability altogether from the pages of daily life as anything other than a problem. If language is breath linked to sound linked to meaning, as Simpson remembers Philip saying (Maynard & Simpson, 2022, p. 70), then it follows that the language of the tip sheet is linked to the death-giving register of white supremacy and its policing institutions linked to making meaning of the police as problem-solvers and certain bodies as problems (Toronto Police Service, 2023b). The register of white supremacy is death-giving, consumed with what Maynard calls, "a disregard for all living things *except for their value as property to be accumulated*" (Maynard & Simpson, 2022, p. 26). The explicit disappearance of the term, disability, in the TPS tip sheet is therefore indicative of the normative disregard of disability as life.

Disability in the TPS tip sheet is disregarded as life and instead perceived by the police as an accumulative property that poses a threat to the order of normal, peaceful life. Disability is taken-for-granted as a widespread and accumulating problem – hence the tip sheet – and the growth of the problem represents an emergency that the police have tasked themselves with solving. The use of blanket nomenclature is crucial to the production of the tip sheet text as it mediates the emergency that disability is assumed to be. While the tip sheet relies on the medicalization of disability as an individual problem, it simultaneously relies on the problem of disability being a collective problem to deal with and watch out for. Blanket nomenclature objectifies the experience of disability, storying it as a site of emergency. On the importance of attending to emergency media, Ellcessor (2022) states,

> The mediation of emergency replicates and entrenches differences of power and access, which nearly always disadvantage those already marginalized by race, disability, geography, poverty, gender, or age...[Emergency media] produce and circulate meanings about what is valuable, what is tragic, and how we ought to respond. (p. 3)

Further disconcerting about the connection between storying disability as emergency and the medicalization of disability is returning to the tip sheet and realizing that this is an emergency media text from the TPS and thus, an articulation of an institution of police. That is, issues of health and the body, of being medically-treated-changed as Zola (1977) would say, are taken up here as issues for the police to solve. In doing so, the mediation of disability as a site of emergency entrenches the police as fundamentally different from the problem made of disability. Fixing our attention on the normalcy of the tip sheet itself, then, the employment of blanket nomenclature represents a concerted effort by the TPS to mark a diseased body in terms of pathology (mental health crises), prevention (person who needs help), and policy (The Mental Health Act), as if the diseased body, let alone anybody, is for the institution to mark.

The appearance of the institutions of police, law, and medicine in the text in relation to disability objectified as an individual problem of the body and collective emergency to deal with replicates and entrenches differences that keep in place carceral humanism. Carceral humanism, as Ben-Moshe (2020) helps me understand, alludes to how punishment and marginalization by policing institutions have been storied as acts of care. Carceral ableism and sanism are entangled in the manifestation of carceral humanism, producing stories of rationality, sanity, disability, and difference that harden the continued marginalization and incarceration of disabled people (Ben-Moshe, 2020). The employment of norm of cooperation, binary-communication, and blanket nomenclature in the TPS tip sheet gestures to the carceral desire for objectification, where stories of what it means to be human, to be police and the policed, to be in crisis and not to be in crisis, are assumed as single truths. The sense of urgency that accompanies stories of disability as an emergency of deviance and danger obscures the quotidian violence of storying policing as both ordinary and necessary to everyday life.

Noticing the Violence of Mundanity

The terrible contradiction of disability being portrayed as violent by an institution of police is the well-documented violence perpetrated by police against people marked by difference. Given that the TPS is a Canadian policing institution, I understand that my critique of policing institutions focuses primarily on policing in the Euro-Western context. In Canada, wellness checks, that is where police are dispatched to deal with a mental health crisis, are under scrutiny due to the high number of people who die during a wellness check performed by the police (Fritsch et al., 2022, p. 3). According to CBC's Deadly Force database, fatal encounters where police used force in Canada have increased over the past 20 years, accounting, too, for population growth (Singh, 2020). We also learn that "mental health issues" are present in the majority of cases, with Black and Indigenous peoples being disproportionately represented in fatalities from police encounters (Singh, 2020).

Attempting to reduce the devastation of lives harmed and lost by police to statistics is already evidence of the violence of mundanity that permeates how we perceive the world. Statistics tell a story of culture, too — of what, our imaginations must decide. If we, as Dylan Rodriguez says, move away from the rhetoric of police violence and police brutality, then we come to understand the committed violence of policing to be "a pushing of the boundary of what policing actually is, of what the state will sanction" (Critical Resistance, 2017). Understanding policing in this way potentiates a way of reading the dispropor-

tionate number of Black and Indigenous peoples, as well as disabled people, who are harmed by police in police encounters as harmed, ultimately, in service of state interests. Policing, Rinaldo Walcott (2021) says, is rooted in the violence of plantation as well as "the violence of the logic that allowed Black people to be justifiably enslaved in the first place, which flows from the violence of ranking and valuing human lives in a radically unequal fashion" (p. 31). Recall that the mediation of emergency texts is enwrapped in notions of value and disposability. The singular story of police as helper in relation to the dangerous emergency of disability is in and of itself a tactic of normalizing police violence as exceptional rather than *foundational* to the formation of the institution itself.

My close interpretive reading of the TPS tip sheet and its look of resource, to the way the text is strategically organized, and to the communicative moves within that rely on blanket nomenclature, binary-communication, and narrating a suffering of disability as useless difference, reveals the text as an articulation of emergency media. Realizing the tip sheet to be an articulation of emergency media uncovers the link between emergency and policing that reifies relations of power that keep institutions of police in place. The text is demonstrative of the entanglements among white supremacy, colonial violence, carceral humanism, and the impulse to repress and contain undesirable bodies through objectification. The objectification of disability as an undesirable body of danger and deviance, and thus as a site of emergency, is framed by the desire to alleviate the useless suffering that accompanies disability's seeming useless difference (Michalko, 2002). It follows, then, that the carceral humanist desire to police disabled and racialized lives is also a colonial desire to maintain hierarchies of thought that rely on stories of disability as useless. The useless difference of disability installs the police as a useful difference, whose characterization as protector, helper, and legitimate owner of the land is made both ordinary and normal in everyday life (Ben-Moshe, 2020; Michalko, 2002; Razack, 2011).

Reading the tip sheet as an emergency text surfaces the narrative tactics through which an institution of police is able to reproduce carceral logics. In being recruited by the TPS to believe its singular story of disability, the reader is at risk of believing in hardened binaries that determine what is ordinary and what isn't, who gets to live and who doesn't, whose knowledge counts and whose doesn't. In other words, the carceral logics at work in the TPS tip sheet actively call me, in my encounter with the text, to objectify disability and thus to install myself, alongside the police, as a useful difference in relation to normalcy's useless difference of disability. Heeding the institutional call to install myself as such therefore demands an objectification of difference and also, relationality – as if doing so is possible.

Influenced by interpretive disability studies and critical phenomenology, I engage in a close interpretive reading of an institution of police's webpage, asking after its institutional story of disability and analyzing the way this story functions to trick the reader into joining forces with white supremacist colonial interests. Rather than leave statements such as "remember your safety" or "it is always better to get cooperation from the person who needs help" undisturbed (Toronto Police Service, 2023b), I attend to the acts of separation at work in the mundanity of these utterances. By carefully attending to the amount of narrative labour involved in presenting disability as a dangerous site of emergency, the pedagogical potential of disability as teacher of culture and communication comes to the surface. Perceiving life and potential in disability as teacher, I argue, harkens back to critical phenomenological aims of opening up "new possibilities for reimagining and reclaiming the commons" while struggling to be liberated from systems of oppression (Guenther, 2020, p. 15).

In the struggle to be liberated from systems of oppression that naturalize some experiences of the world as normal while pathologizing others, the urgency to notice how these systems of oppression permeate our daily lives cannot be overstated. As Steve Martinot and Jared Sexton (2003) suggest, attending to the rules of race and power — and I would add, disability — is urgent inasmuch as "Our 'tacit acquiescence' is the real silent source of white supremacy and power" (p. 173). Indeed, the ongoing "tacit acquiescence" to the common-sense meanings made of disability as a problem in culture represents an emergency of a closed imagination. I am thinking of Frank B. Wilderson III (2003) who says, "...for Black people, civil society itself — rather than its abuses or shortcomings — is a state of emergency" (p. 19). Beneath stories that mediate and organize the mundanity of the everyday is another story of the busy and cunning work of hegemony that frames certain bodies as sites of emergency while preventing the disability imaginary from wondering beyond the rigid contours of carceral humanism. The objectification of certain ways of being-in-the-world as natural sites of emergency – what I understand as indicative of "the inarticulable evil of banality" (Martinot & Sexton, 2003, p. 171) – is the emergency to which I have been alerted to through my close reading of the TPS tip sheet.

Conclusion

The TPS tip sheet attempts to call us into its work of making disability matter as a dangerous site of emergency; whether or not the institutional text is successful at roping the reader into its work of objectification is determined by the reader's critical attention to normalcy. Interpretive disability studies calls us to refuse the seduction of mundanity and the quick disregard for the experiences of everyday lives or "the certainties of common sense" as unimportant and routine. Instead, how is the appearance of mundanity reflective of normalcy busy at work? Following Guenther (2020), the certainties of common sense can refer to patterns that we see when we do a close interpretive read of an institutional text and according to which we see (p. 16). Suspending for a moment our recognition of the everyday so that we might

read for the disability imaginary that shapes our perception of life allows us to take on the imperative task of rewriting knowledge as we know it (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015). Exploring institutional texts such as tip sheets with an interpretive disability studies approach allows us to suspend what we know about normalcy, in turn opening a narrow understanding of a world that objectifies and makes singular the meanings of disability and race. It is in this opening, however small or tightly enclosed it may be, that Wynter's call to rewrite knowledge as we know and understand it can be taken up (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015).

Important to any act of rewriting is reading. By attending to how communication and disability may appear as meaning-making devices, ordinary stories of our everyday might give rise to different ones. The various stories we are able to read within texts represent multiple openings of possibility. Not only does this article represent an exploration of an encounter with a story of disability as a dangerous site of emergency by carceral institutions, it also represents an exploration of how through reading, we activate a text and help summon the meanings it makes of disability (Smith, 1999). Something different and exciting happens when possibilities for Being are unlatched by encountering how we encounter our everyday. What if the pedagogical potential of disability and decentering non-disability as natural Other is sourced in how we are already bound together in difference? How might we begin to experience, feel, and encounter disability beyond suffering its difference as useless? How can encountering the ordinary as always coming-to-appear shift what comes to appear for us and how we come to appear for each other?

Just as Wilderson III (2003) says that Blackness destabilizes the analogs of hegemony, disability, too, "works back upon the grammar of hegemony and threatens it with incoherence" (p. 25). As a way forward, I argue for a slow moving inward, inspirited by the incoherence of embodied difference, into the texts that mediate our everyday lives and the world from which these texts spring so that we might conjure other possibilities for living and making meaning together. It is slow and careful work that allows us to uncover the processes by which we partake in objectifying disability, Blackness, Indigeneity, race, and other differences. Othering differences as a way of marking the less-human is part of the language of whiteness and colonialism; the act of othering attempts to sever the threads that weave us to one another. Robyn Maynard says, "Abolition is imagination work, anti-colonial struggle is imagination work, conjure work, science fiction in real time" (Maynard & Simpson, 2022, p. 128). A critical and interpretive approach to disability studies feels for the edges of oft-forgotten threads and tries to conceive of ways to begin together anew.

Pausing at how disability has been, and is, made to matter in institutional texts is part of the imagination work of abolition and anti-colonial struggle. An attentive and meticulous reading of communication and disability reveals the ways we constitute hierarchies of thought that story difference as oppositional rather than relational. An interpretive disability studies orientation imparts different ways for noticing how we are thrust into relation with stories of disability and the world, and calls us to recognize how we, alongside the texts we encounter, are always coming-to-appear. By noticing how texts like the TPS webpage and its genre of tip sheet *come to appear* as coherent and normal, we may begin to enliven, engage, and disturb the stories of institutions that constitute the colonial state and its quotidian violence. By turning to the articulations of an institution, facing and apprehending them as formed and constructed by stories that bring to bear the work of hegemony, we enact a pause that is crucial to the conjure-work of dreaming difference differently.

Positionality Statement

In what Linda Alcoff calls, "the realm of the visible," processes of racialization and processes of racialization and gendering, alongside readings of disability and non-disability, textually inscribe my body with stories about the person I am expected to perform in scenes of ordinary life. The ways in which expectations are often predetermined for people shaped by singular stories of visible and embodied difference radically shapes my politics and my character as an academic and scholar.

My relationships to disability, race, gender, and queerness produce an orientation that potentiates my interpretive analysis of deafness, disability, and race in the context of policing. In writing this piece, I work to reveal the ongoing textual practices that sustain injustice.

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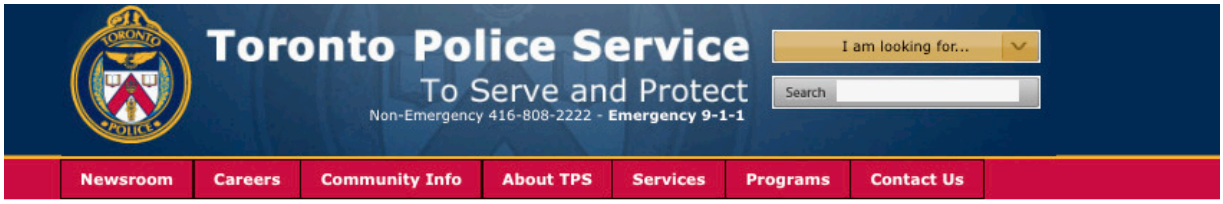
Appendix



Crime prevention and community safety > Mental health issues

Mental health issues

The Police recognize that all mental health crises cannot be averted. The earlier the intervention, the less intrusive it is for the individual in crisis.

The basics

- Remain calm
- Listen to the person in crisis - What they say may hold the information you need to resolve the crisis
- Listening assures the person that you are trying to help them
- Remember your safety - If you are the focus of the person's anxiety, let someone else take the lead
- Reduce distractions - Give the person space, turn off the TV or radio and limit the number of people assisting

The Mental Health Act

It is always better to get cooperation from the person who needs help. Unfortunately, this is not always possible.

If the person:

- Has threatened or is attempting to cause bodily harm to him/herself
- Has behaved or is behaving violently towards others or is causing others to fear bodily harm from him/her
- Has shown or is showing a lack of competence to care for him/herself

There are several options:

The doctor:

Have a doctor who has seen the person in crisis within the last 7 days issue a Form 1 - This form requires the person to be assessed at a psychiatric hospital

Have a doctor see the person in crisis either at the doctor's office or in the community and have the doctor issue a "Form 1"

The justice of the peace

See a JP and describe what behaviours the person is demonstrating that make you think they are at risk and in need of assessment - The JP may issue a Form2 which requires the person to go to a hospital for examination

The police

If the person is currently acting out in a violent or threatening way - CALL 911 - If the Police can actually observe this behaviour, the person can be apprehended under the Mental Health Act and taken to the nearest hospital for examination

Both the Form1 and Form2 are valid for 7 days. Both forms are orders for the person to be examined or assessed but may not result in hospitalization.

For referral phone numbers and Mental Health Services please contact our Mental Health Coordinator at (416) 808-7040 or contact the Community Relations Officer at your local Police Division