

EXPLORING CARING AND INCLUSIVE APPROACHES TO COMMUNITY SAFETY

What is Safety?

Safety can mean more than just an absence of harm or injury. Safety is the active experience of trust, social connection, familiarity, and support. A caring and inclusive approach to safety improves everyone's sense of safety rather than enhancing the security of a select few. A focus only on security can create exclusion, surveillance, and fear, resulting in the division and isolation of people and communities. True safety requires us to address the root causes of vulnerability and actively create a positive sense of safety.

Safety Feelings vs Safety Facts

Individual feelings of safety, such as anger, worry and fear, are valid, though they don't always mirror the reality of risk. Research shows that violent crime is generally decreasing and exclusionary approaches to security are flawed. This requires reflection on our own views of safety, fear of crime, and who we might stereotype as dangerous or criminal. Sometimes shifting beliefs about what makes us safe can be as important as taking action.

Experiencing Safety

Safety is experienced as an active process of caring and being cared for. It comes from quality of life, knowing your neighbours, a sense of belonging, strong public services and supports, investment in the neighbourhood, accessible transportation, and accountability when harm occurs. Safety is a collective process that requires much more than just a personal sense of security from danger.

5 Questions to Ask Ourselves

1

Are we talking about safety as something that should benefit everyone?

2

Are we critically reflecting on the role prejudice plays in our fear and discomfort?

3

Are we focusing on what makes us feel safe? Or on our fear and discomfort?

4

If we're talking about crime, are we talking about actual rates of crime or our fear of crime?

5

Are we recognizing that harm and vulnerability are natural and that everyone experiences and perpetrates them?

Six Approaches to Creating Safety



SOCIAL CAPITAL

Strengthening connection, reciprocity, and trust within and between communities



GOOD GREENSPACE

Creating well-maintained and usable parks, gardens, and more



SEEING YOUR NEIGHBOURS

Supporting many different demographics using and sharing public spaces



CARING RESPONSES TO CRISIS

Responding to crisis and harm by de-escalating situations instead of criminalizing people



HARM REDUCTION

Providing supplies, supports, and spaces so that risky activities can be done more safely



STREET OUTREACH

Meeting people where they are to provide accessible support on the street



See the full 2022 report by Dagen Perrott & Julie Chamberlain, University of Winnipeg, Urban and Inner-City Studies: mra-mb.ca/publication/grassroots-anti-oppressive-approaches-to-safety. For more info contact: info@svrawinnipeg.org