



## Contact

For more information on how you can support this program, contact:  
Black Mental Health Canada

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# BREATHE

Black Response & Empathy Alternative to Harmful Enforcement

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## What is BREATHE?

BREATHE is a groundbreaking crisis response program designed to address non-violent emergency calls, emphasizing empathy, support, and non-punitive care. Modeled after the successful Cahoots program in Eugene, Oregon, BREATHE aims to provide compassionate assistance to individuals in crisis, focusing on mental health, homelessness, and substance abuse issues. By integrating a team of trained crisis workers and medical professionals, BREATHE seeks to reduce the burden on law enforcement and emergency medical services while enhancing community safety.

**BREATHE** represents a transformative approach to crisis response, emphasizing empathy, collaboration, and community support. By uniting diverse organizations and professionals under a shared mission, BREATHE aims to create safer, more compassionate communities where individuals in crisis receive the care they need and deserve. Through ongoing collaboration, evaluation, and adaptation, BREATHE will pave the way for a more empathetic and responsive approach to crisis intervention in Canada.

## Why the need for BREATHE

The need for BREATHE, particularly within black communities, is critical and multifaceted. Black communities often face systemic disparities in access to mental health resources, affordable housing, and substance abuse treatment. Additionally, there exists a deep-rooted lack of trust and apprehension surrounding law enforcement due to historical and contemporary issues of racial profiling and police violence. As a result, many individuals in crisis within these communities may be hesitant to seek help, fearing further harm or discrimination.

BREATHE addresses this pressing need by offering a culturally sensitive, non-punitive, and empathetic response to non-violent emergency calls. The program recognizes and respects the unique challenges faced by black individuals, acknowledging their experiences of systemic racism and historical trauma. By providing crisis workers and medical professionals trained to understand and respond to these specific needs, BREATHE aims to bridge the gap between communities and emergency services.



## Key organizations involved to implement BREATHE.

### Local Law Enforcement:

Collaborate with police departments to integrate BREATHE into their emergency response protocols. Provide training to law enforcement officers about the program's objectives and procedures.

### Healthcare Providers:

Engage paramedics, nurses, and other medical professionals to offer medical assistance during crisis interventions. Coordinate with local hospitals and clinics to ensure seamless access to medical services.

### Social Service Agencies:

Partner with mental health organizations, homelessness support agencies, and substance abuse treatment centers. Collaborate to provide holistic care, addressing both immediate needs and long-term support for individuals in crisis.

### Community Organizations:

Involve local churches, charities, and non-profit groups to offer additional resources and support services. Raise awareness within the community, promoting understanding and acceptance of the program.

### Local Government:

Secure funding and resources from local government agencies to sustain the program's operations. Facilitate coordination between various stakeholders and ensure regulatory compliance.

**Join the Movement and Breathe.**