Race & Identity-based Data Collection (RBDC) Strategy: Co-designing solutions to address racial disparities

Mihaela Dinca-Panaitescu and Reuben Straatsma
Toronto Police Service

- IMPROVING TRUST IN AND WITHIN THE SERVICE
- ACCELERATING POLICE REFORM AND PROFESSIONALIZATION
- SUPPORTING SAFER COMMUNITIES

CO-DESIGN • CO-DEVELOP • CO-DELIVER

Agenda

- **Strategic approach:**
  - Phased & Iterative Approach
  - Reflect & Engage

- **Approach to data analysis**
  - Interaction Dynamics for Analysis
  - Multiple Benchmark Approach

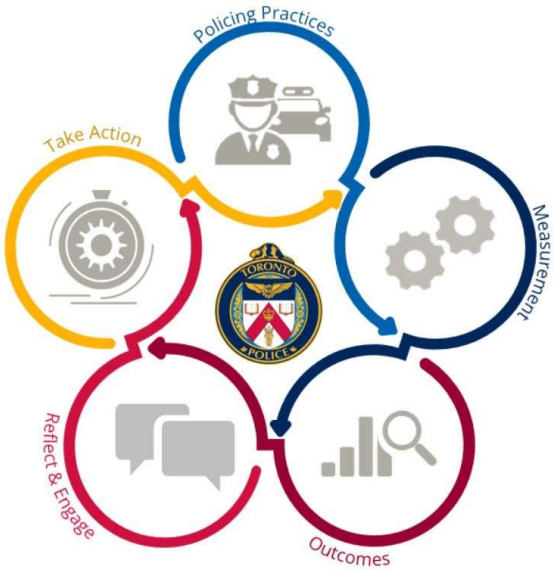
- **From data analysis to solutions**
  - Problem Frame and Outcomes
  - Implementation Approach

Phased & Iterative Approach

RBDC Strategy is an **ongoing initiative,** and our approach is an iterative **cycle**.

- Grounded in this approach, the RBDC Strategy unfolds in phases:
  - Phase 1: **Use of Force & Strip Searches**
  - Phase 2: **Arrests, Arrest Outcomes and Mental Health Apprehensions**

- We apply an **iterative hypothesis-driven approach** to data analysis for each police interaction:
  - work with the CAP, our Service members, and stakeholder contact groups to **ask questions;**
  - try to **answer as many questions** as we can;
  - lean into the conversation to **see what change is possible** when the questions don't have data to support an answer;
  - go again through this cycle until we **temporarily exhaust questions**, and ;
  - **report findings** along the way to keep the public informed on our progress.



Reflect & Engage

RBDC Launch

Phase 1

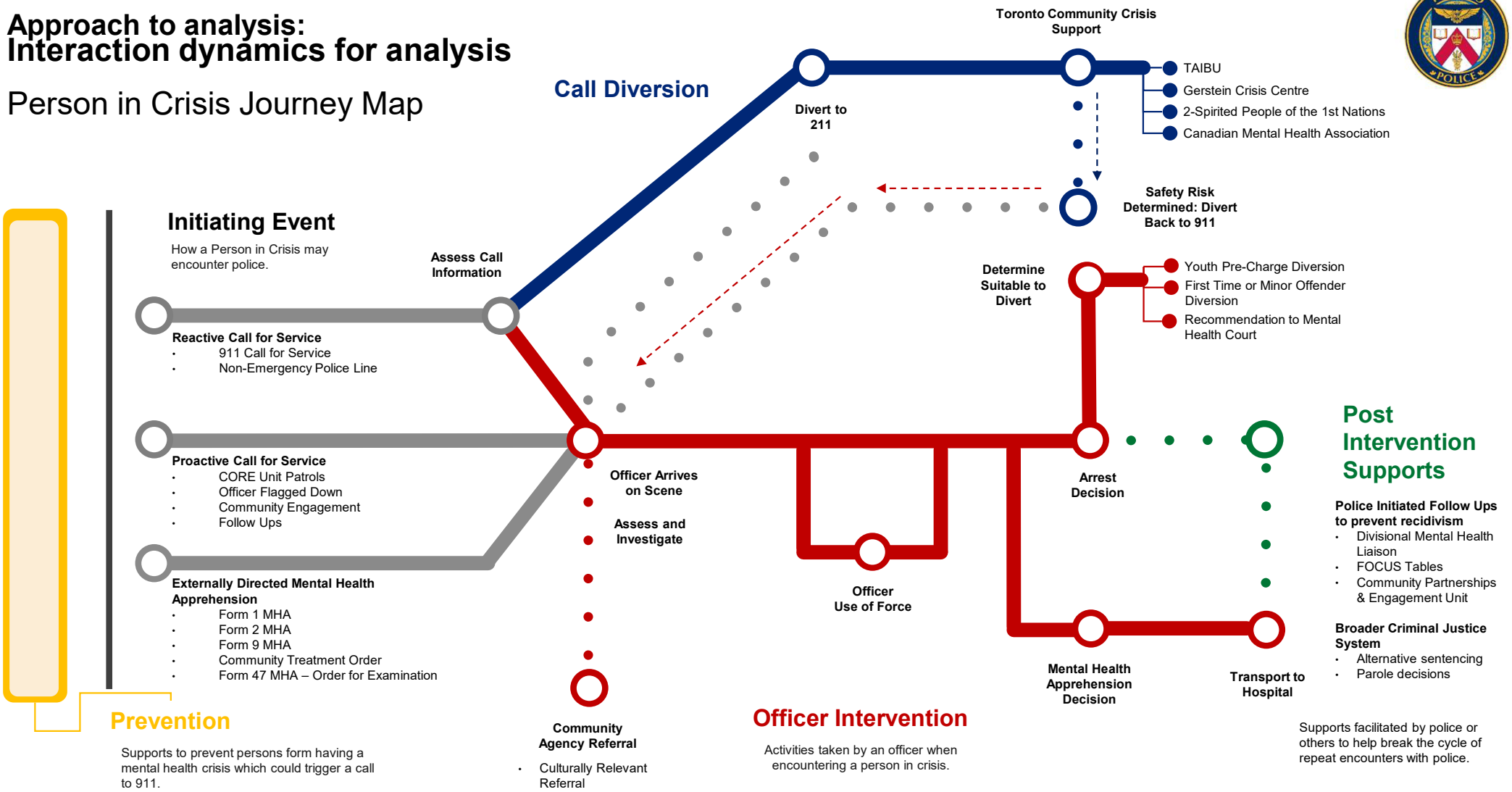
Phase 2 Onwards

- Community Focused Group
- Policing Focused Group
- Formal Committee Group
- Gov't Stakeholders Group

Increasingly broader & deeper engagements to Community Advisory Panel, internal and external stakeholder groups

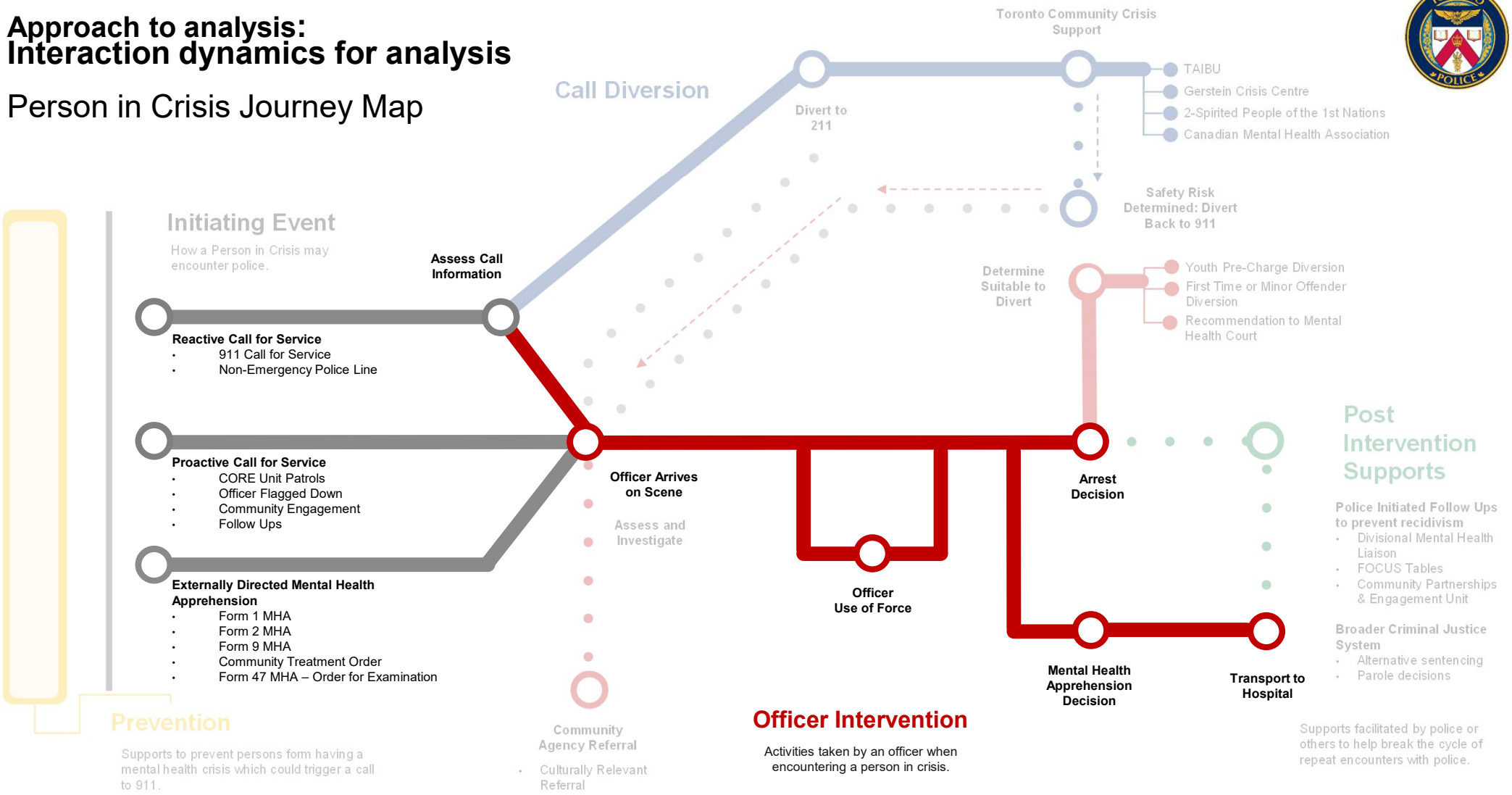
Approach to analysis:
Interaction dynamics for analysis

Person in Crisis Journey Map



Approach to analysis:
Interaction dynamics for analysis

Person in Crisis Journey Map



Approach to Analysis:
Multiple Benchmark Approach

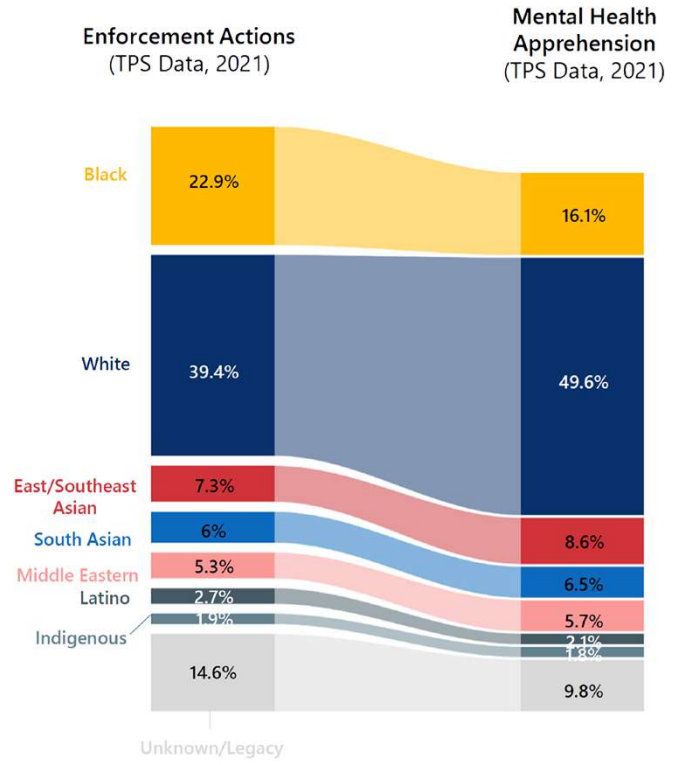
Key Objective: Identify, monitor and understand any **systemic racial disparities** in policing interactions and their outcomes and trends to **promote professional and equitable policing**.

Key Question:
Are any racial groups **over or under-represented** in police interactions, like **mental health apprehensions,** given their presence in **enforcement actions?**

Multiple Benchmark Approach:
Rather than just the resident population, we select the most appropriate benchmark to best understand disproportionalities in relation to the **at-risk population**. This acknowledges 'upstream' issues and helps look for solutions within the **policing scope of responsibility**.

What is an example of a disproportionality?

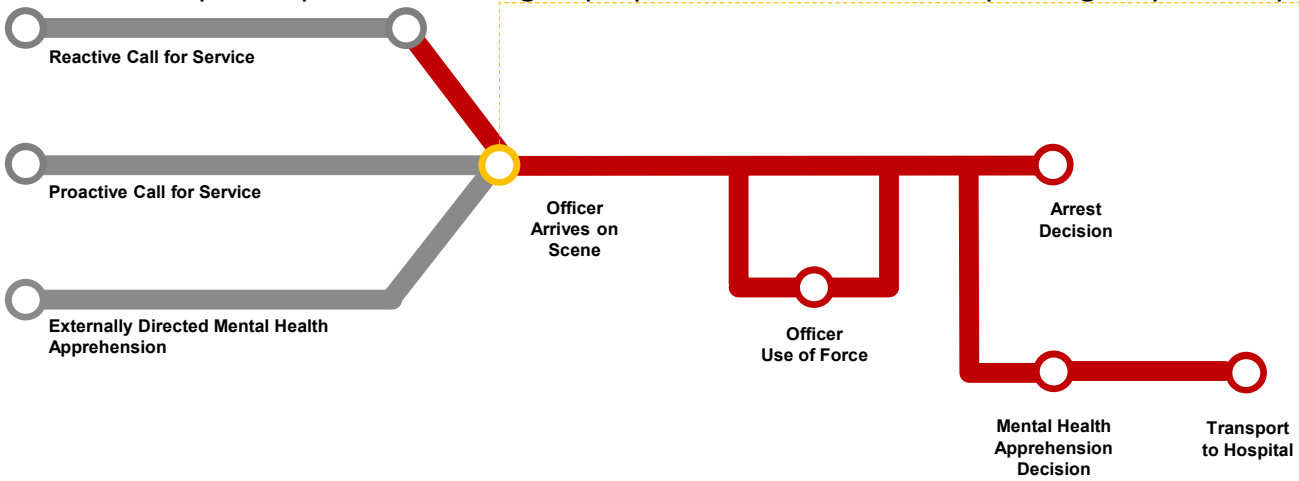
- In 2021 White people were **39.4%** of the **enforcement action population** of Toronto;
- and **49.6%** of the TPS mental health apprehension population;
- we would say that White people **are 1.3x over-represented** in arrests.



Key Data Stories

Context: Since 2020, the total volume of person in crisis calls attended by TPS has remained stable; however, the proportion resulting in an enforcement action response has increased moderately each year increasing from **36% in 2020** to **45% in 2024**.

Multiple Benchmark Approach: We first look at enforcement actions against the resident population to understand differing rates of contact with police, prior to isolating disproportionalities within the policing scope of responsibility.



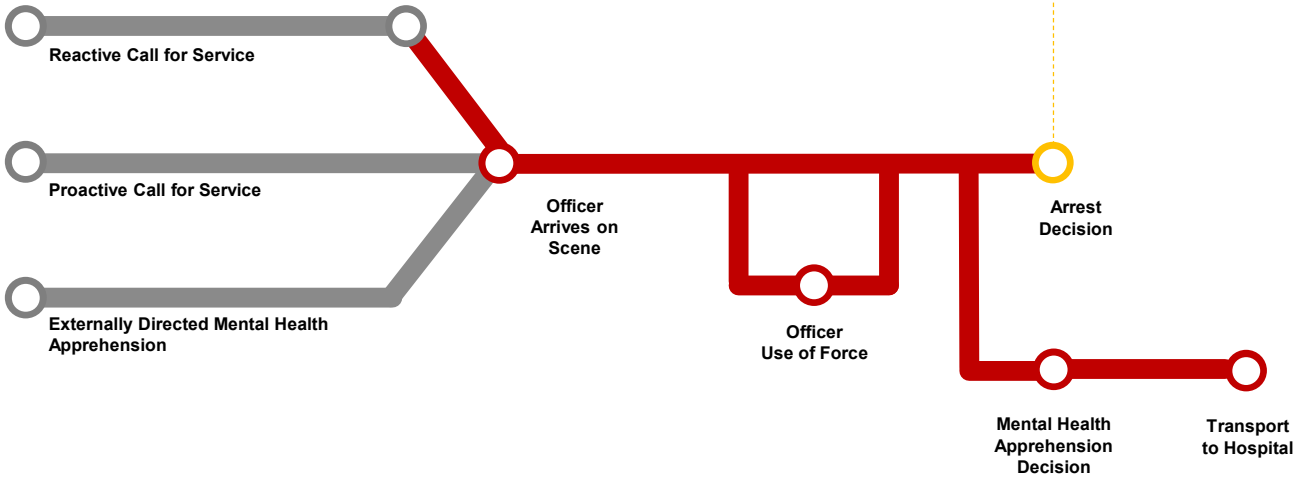
2024 Example:

Race	Person in Crisis Enforcement Actions Relative to Resident Population
Indigenous	Over (2.1x)
Black	Over (1.8x)
Middle Eastern	Over (1.3x)
White	*On par (1.1x)*
Latino	Under (0.8x)
South Asian	Under (0.5x)
East/Southeast Asian	Under (0.4x)

Under: ≤ 0.8x | On par: >0.8x and <1.2 | Over: ≥ 1.2

Key Data Stories

When a person in crisis call for service was met with an enforcement response, arrest outcomes were rare with 2024 seeing **764 (5%)** incidents. We then look at a second benchmark to examine disproportionalities in arrests following persons in crisis contact with police. **Indigenous** and **White** people **were more likely to be arrested** in 2024.

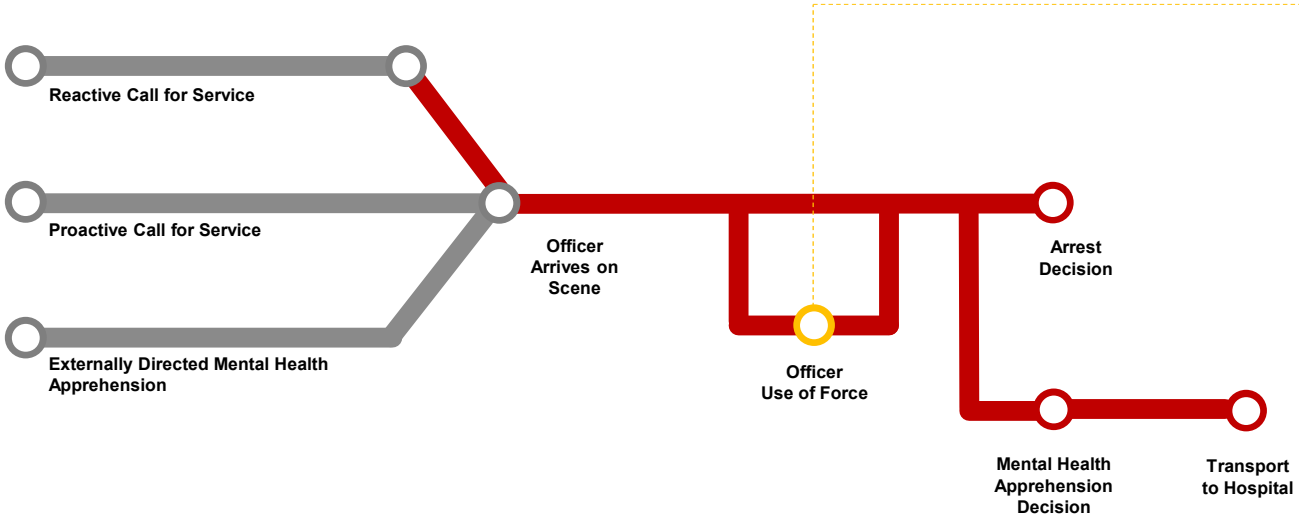


Race	Arrests Relative to Person in Crisis Enforcement Actions
Indigenous	Over (1.7x)
White	Over (1.5x)
East/Southeast Asian	*On par (1.1x)*
Middle Eastern	*On par (1.0x)*
Latino	Under (0.4x)
Black	Under (0.8x)
South Asian	Under (0.7x)

Under: ≤ 0.8x | On par: >0.8x and <1.2 | Over: ≥ 1.2

Key Data Stories

When attending a person in crisis call for service, the use of force was exceedingly rare. While 2024 analyses are on-going, 2023 only saw **68 incidents** associated to a use of force **(<0.5%)**. Racial disparities are often not reliable due to small sample sizes.

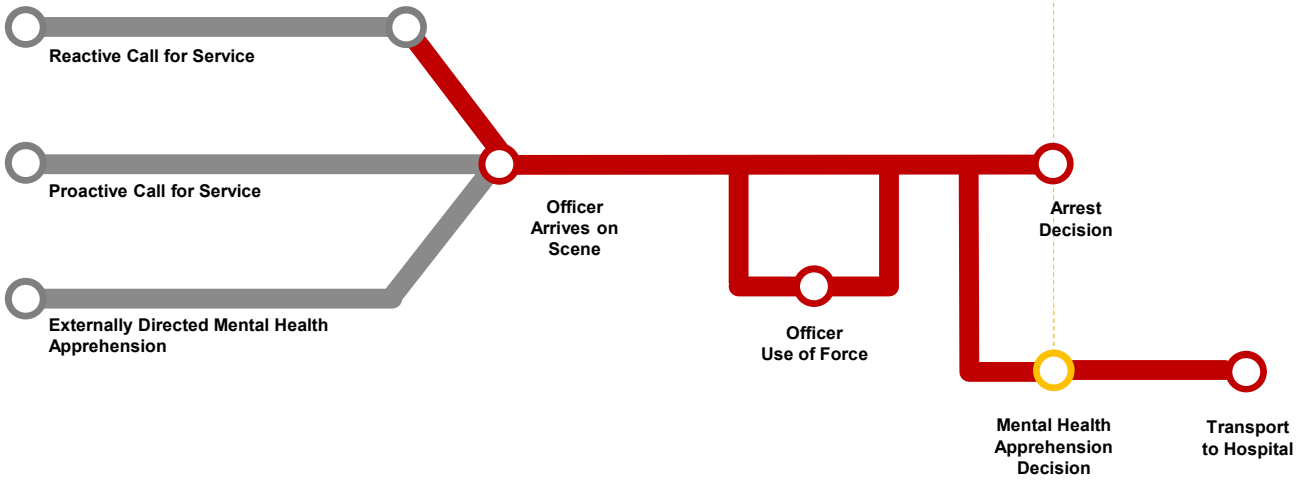


Race	Use of Force Relative to Person in Crisis Enforcement Actions (2023*)
Black	Over (1.6x)
East/Southeast Asian	*On par (0.9x)*
White	Under (0.8x)

Under: ≤ 0.8x | On par: >0.8x and <1.2 | Over: ≥ 1.2

Key Data Stories

When a person in crisis call for service was met with an enforcement response, MHA outcomes were common with 2024 seeing **9,364 (63%)** incidents. We then look at a enforcement action benchmark to examine disproportionalities in MHAs following contact with police. **White and East/Southeast Asian** were over-represented while **Black and Latino people** were under-represented in MHAs.



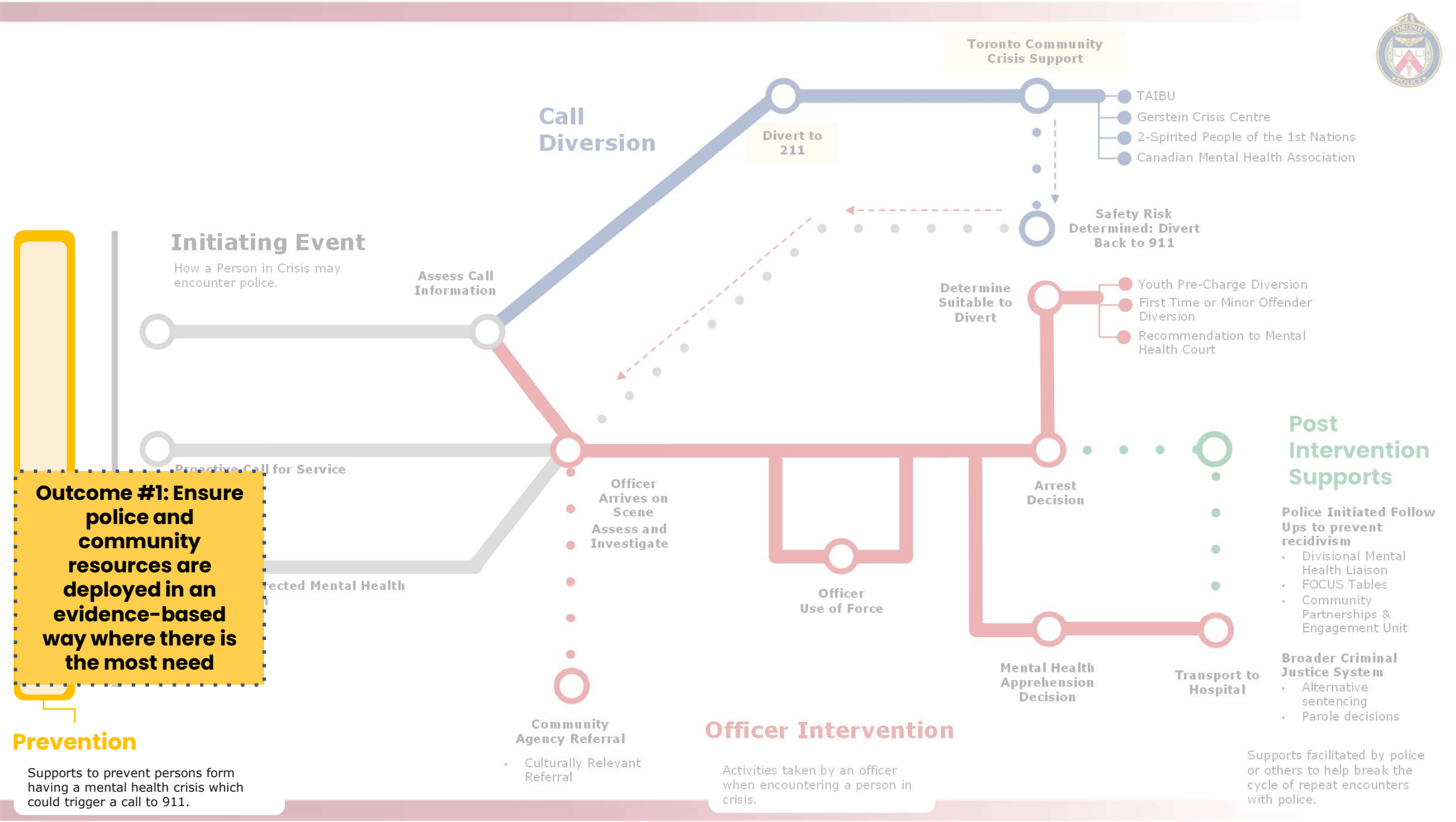
Race	Mental Health Apprehensions Relative to Enforcement Actions
White	Over (1.3x)
East/Southeast Asian	Over (1.3x)
South Asian	*On par (1.1x)*
Indigenous	*On par (1.0x)*
Middle Eastern	*On par (0.9x)*
Black	Under (0.8x)
Latino	Under (0.4x)

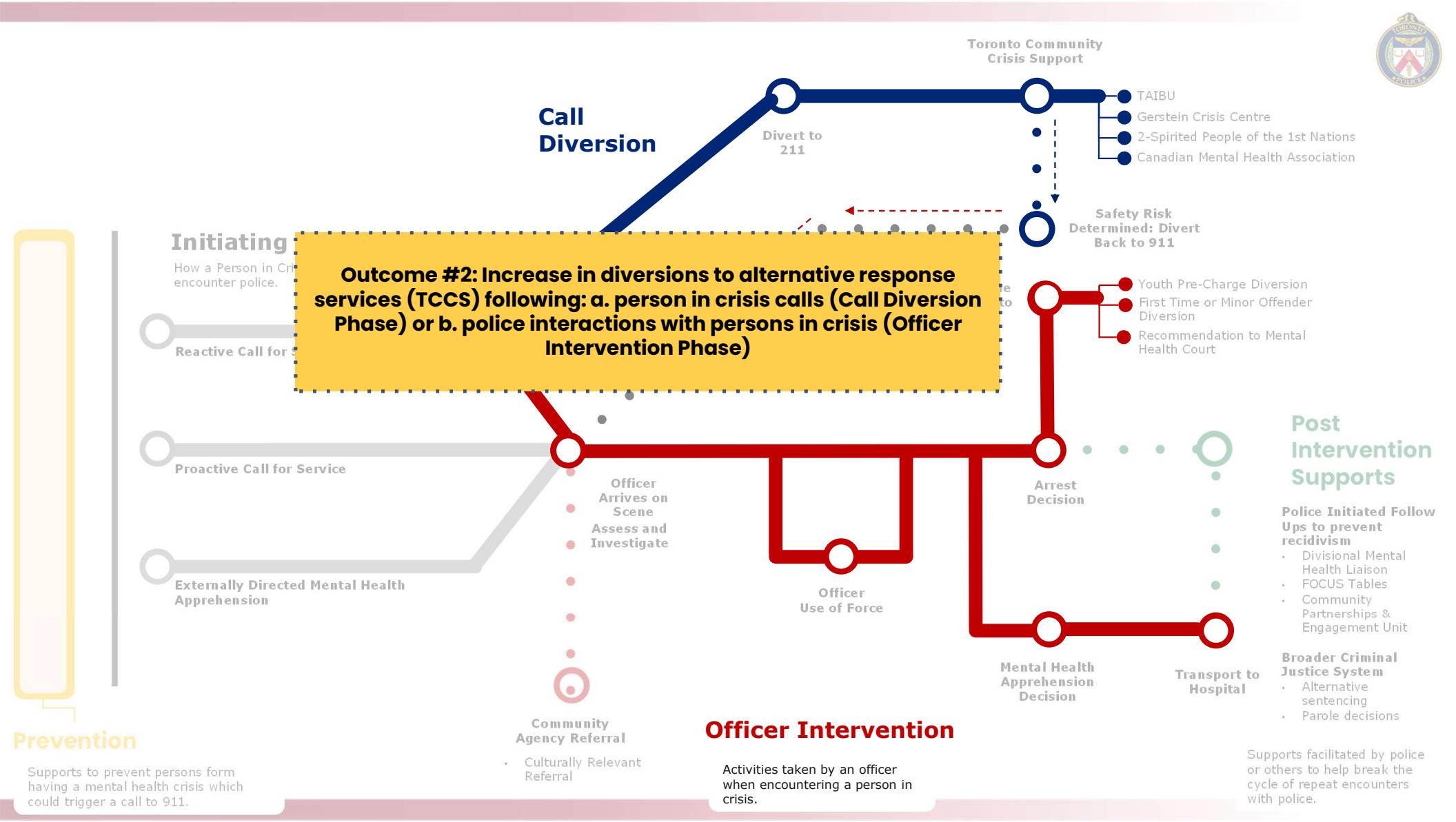
Under: ≤ 0.8x | On par: >0.8x and <1.2 | Over: ≥ 1.2

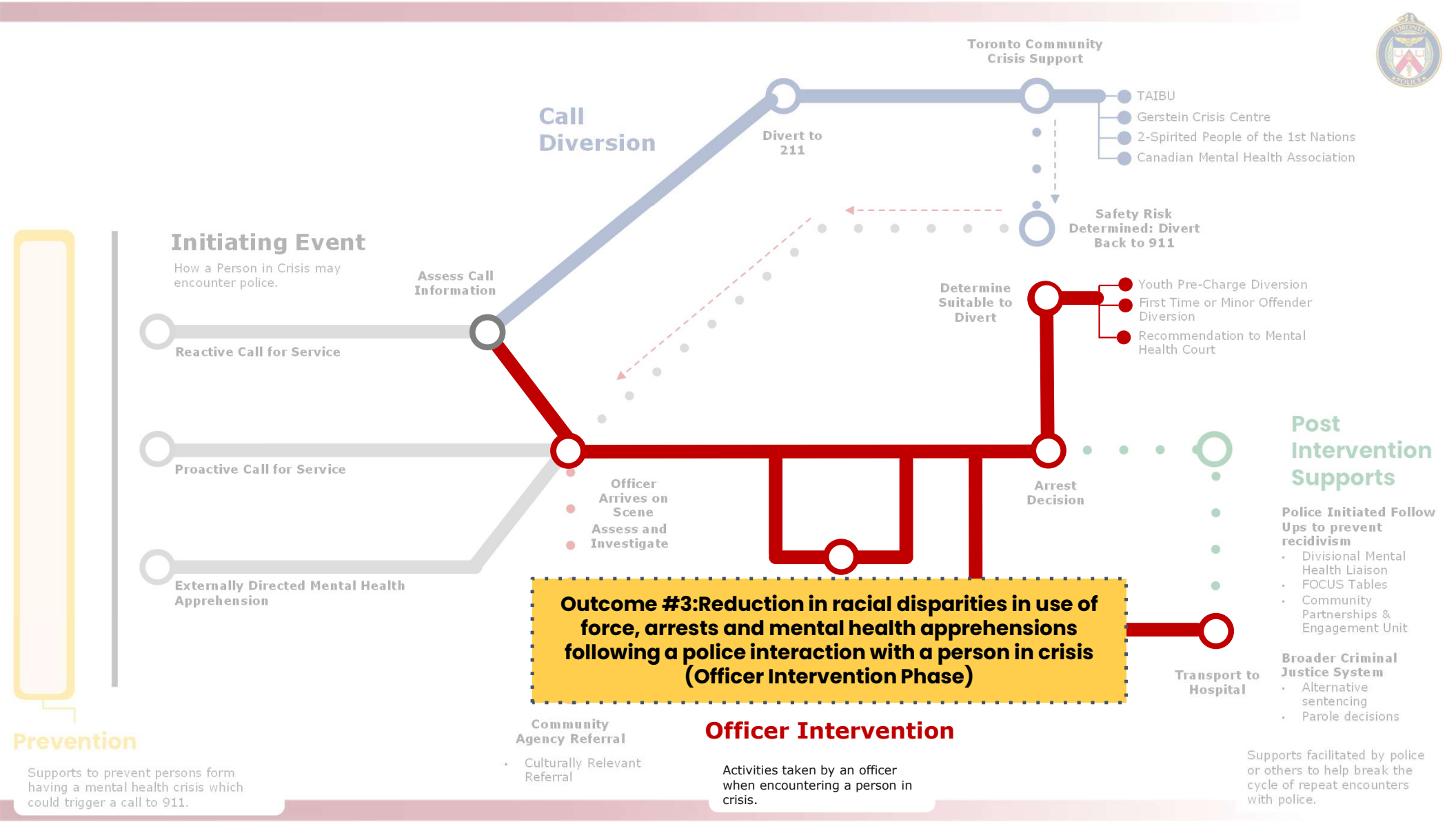
Problem Frame:

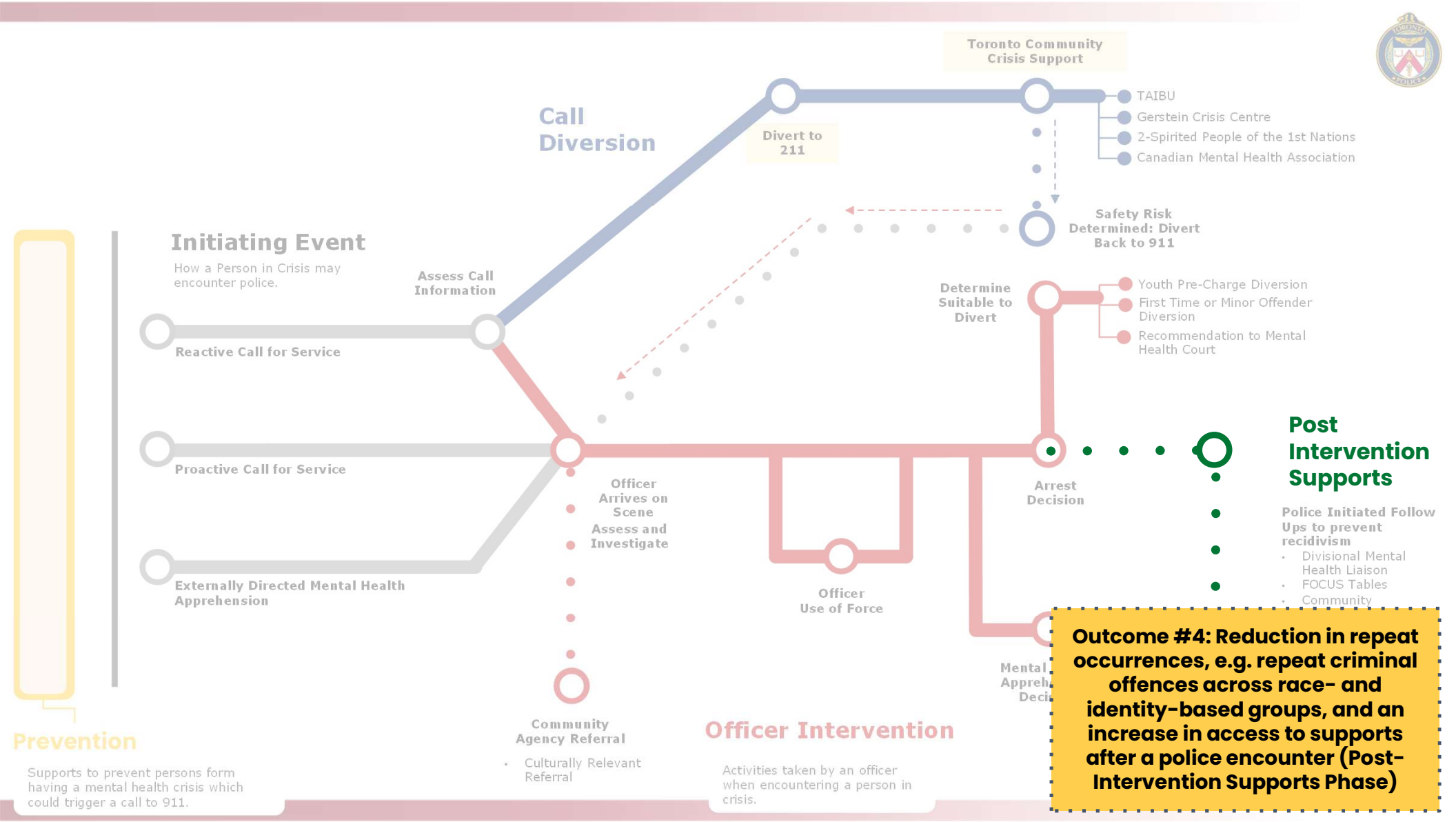
How do we reduce race- and identity-based disparities in outcomes for individuals in mental health crises, particularly those at the highest risk of coming into conflict with the law?

- **Intended Impact of this Work**: Decreased criminalization (or decriminalization) of racialized people experiencing mental health crises.
- **Ultimate Outcome**: Equitable responses for racialized people experiencing mental health crises.

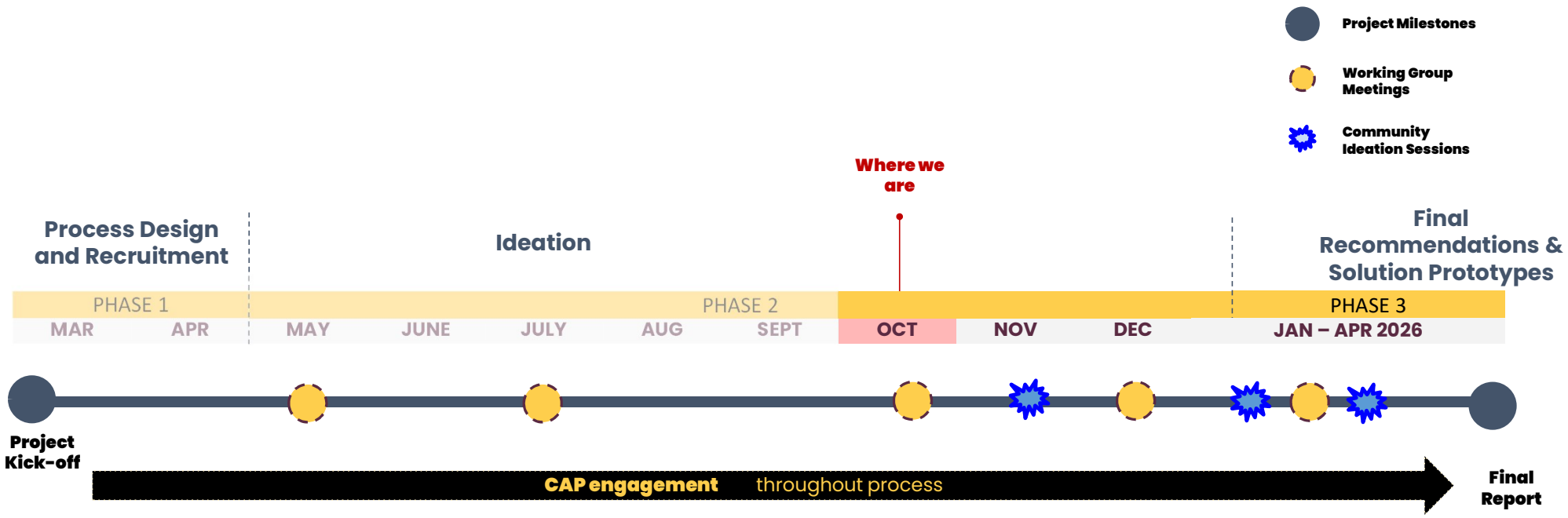

Toronto Community Crisis Support
Call Diversion
Divert to 211
TAIBU
Gerstein Crisis Centre
2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations
Canadian Mental Health Association
Safety Risk Determined: Divert Back to 911
Initiating Event
How a Person in Crisis may encounter police.
Assess Call Information
Determine Suitable to Divert
Youth Pre-Charge Diversion
First Time or Minor Offender Diversion
Recommendation to Mental Health Court
Proactive Call for Service
ected Mental Health
Officer Arrives on Scene
Assess and Investigate
Officer Use of Force
Arrest Decision
Post Intervention Supports
Police Initiated Follow Ups to prevent recidivism
Divisional Mental Health Liaison
FOCUS Tables
Community Partnerships & Engagement Unit
Broader Criminal Justice System
Alternative sentencing
Parole decisions
Outcome #1: Ensure police and community resources are deployed in an evidence-based way where there is the most need
Mental Health Apprehension Decision
Transport to Hospital
Community Agency Referral
Culturally Relevant Referral
Officer Intervention
Activities taken by an officer when encountering a person in crisis.
Supports facilitated by police or others to help break the cycle of repeat encounters with police.
Prevention
Supports to prevent persons form having a mental health crisis which could trigger a call to 911.


Toronto Community Crisis Support
Call Diversion
Divert to 211
TAIBU
Gerstein Crisis Centre
2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations
Canadian Mental Health Association
Safety Risk Determined: Divert Back to 911
Initiating
How a Person in Cri encounter police.
Outcome #2: Increase in diversions to alternative response services (TCCS) following: a. person in crisis calls (Call Diversion Phase) or b. police interactions with persons in crisis (Officer Intervention Phase)
Youth Pre-Charge Diversion
First Time or Minor Offender Diversion
Recommendation to Mental Health Court
Reactive Call for
Proactive Call for Service
Externally Directed Mental Health Apprehension
Officer Arrives on Scene
Assess and Investigate
Officer Use of Force
Arrest Decision
Mental Health Apprehension Decision
Transport to Hospital
Post Intervention Supports
Police Initiated Follow Ups to prevent recidivism
Divisional Mental Health Liaison
FOCUS Tables
Community Partnerships & Engagement Unit
Broader Criminal Justice System
Alternative sentencing
Parole decisions
Community Agency Referral
Culturally Relevant Referral
Officer Intervention
Activities taken by an officer when encountering a person in crisis.
Prevention
Supports to prevent persons form having a mental health crisis which could trigger a call to 911.
Supports facilitated by police or others to help break the cycle of repeat encounters with police.


Toronto Community Crisis Support
Call Diversion
Divert to 211
TAIBU
Gerstein Crisis Centre
2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations
Canadian Mental Health Association
Safety Risk Determined: Divert Back to 911
Initiating Event
How a Person in Crisis may encounter police.
Assess Call Information
Determine Suitable to Divert
Youth Pre-Charge Diversion
First Time or Minor Offender Diversion
Recommendation to Mental Health Court
Reactive Call for Service
Proactive Call for Service
Externally Directed Mental Health Apprehension
Officer Arrives on Scene
Assess and Investigate
Arrest Decision
Post Intervention Supports
Police Initiated Follow Ups to prevent recidivism
Divisional Mental Health Liaison
FOCUS Tables
Community Partnerships & Engagement Unit
Broader Criminal Justice System
Alternative sentencing
Parole decisions
Outcome #3:Reduction in racial disparities in use of force, arrests and mental health apprehensions following a police interaction with a person in crisis (Officer Intervention Phase)
Transport to Hospital
Prevention
Supports to prevent persons form having a mental health crisis which could trigger a call to 911.
Community Agency Referral
Culturally Relevant Referral
Officer Intervention
Activities taken by an officer when encountering a person in crisis.
Supports facilitated by police or others to help break the cycle of repeat encounters with police.


Toronto Community Crisis Support
Call Diversion
Divert to 211
TAIBU
Gerstein Crisis Centre
2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations
Canadian Mental Health Association
Safety Risk Determined: Divert Back to 911
Initiating Event
How a Person in Crisis may encounter police.
Assess Call Information
Reactive Call for Service
Proactive Call for Service
Externally Directed Mental Health Apprehension
Determine Suitable to Divert
Youth Pre-Charge Diversion
First Time or Minor Offender Diversion
Recommendation to Mental Health Court
Officer Arrives on Scene
Assess and Investigate
Officer Use of Force
Arrest Decision
Post Intervention Supports
Police Initiated Follow Ups to prevent recidivism
Divisional Mental Health Liaison
FOCUS Tables
Community
Community Agency Referral
Culturally Relevant Referral
Officer Intervention
Activities taken by an officer when encountering a person in crisis.
Prevention
Supports to prevent persons form having a mental health crisis which could trigger a call to 911.
Outcome #4: Reduction in repeat occurrences, e.g. repeat criminal offences across race- and identity-based groups, and an increase in access to supports after a police encounter (Post-Intervention Supports Phase)

From Data Analysis to Solutions:
Implementation Approach



Follow our Progress Online

If you're interested in learning more, you can find frequent updates on the Race-Based Data Collection Strategy's **Follow our Progress** portal

tps.ca/race-identity-based-data-collection/follow-our-progress/

Contact Us

- **Mihaela Dinca-Panaitescu, Senior Advisor/RBDC Team Lead**
  - Mihaela.Dinca-Panaitescu@tps.ca

- **Reuben Straatsma, Senior Analyst, Analytics & Innovation**
  - Reuben.Straatsma@tps.ca