

10 Things to Do When You See Homeless People

1. Introduce yourself.
2. Be a good neighbor: Offer cash, a sandwich, a new pair of socks, if it seems like these are useful.
3. If the person is in immediate psychiatric crisis, check in with them before calling Mobile Crisis: (415) 970-4000.
4. If the person requests medical help or is unconscious, call 911. Make it clear that this is a medical and not a police emergency.
5. If the person is medically compromised but not in need of an ambulance, call the HOT team at 415-355-7445
6. Learn about homeless services in your area. Support their work by volunteering time or by donating money. Find out how you can get involved with the Coalition on Homelessness at cohfsf.org.
7. Call your Supervisor and the Mayor's Office and pressure them to double the number of homeless units in their affordable housing pipeline.
8. If your neighborhood is short on public restrooms (and it is), call DPW and pressure them to put in "Pit Stops."
9. Organize your neighbors and invite a speaker to talk about real solutions to homelessness, and how San Francisco could do better. The Coalition can help.
10. Education yourself! Read the Street Sheet and make sure you know the basic facts: there are not enough shelter beds, most homeless people were San Franciscans before they were homeless San Franciscans, and the reason we have mass homelessness is that the federal government gutted housing budgets for poor people!

Thing Not to Do

1. Do not call the police. NEVER call the police on people who aren't threats. Thousands of homeless people end up cited and often incarcerated every year for no offense greater than sleeping, and several homeless people have been murdered by police in the last few years. Police contact can actually prolong a person's homelessness.