

Saskatoon Police Service

Case Study “Sara”



History:

Beginning in January 2022, the SPS had many interactions with Sara. They were the result of calls for service from both passers-by and from community organizations which were unable to provide her support due to her erratic behavior.

Although Sara never committed any violent offences due to her drug use and mental health, she presented as erratic and when she attended other community supports, her behavior caused fear to those witnessing it.

Outcome

Each time officers interacted with Sara they would attempt to direct her to appropriate resources in order to address her addictions, mental and physical health needs. However as outlined, many of the calls for service came from these supports as they were not able to manage her behavior.

As a result Police had no choice but to detain and transport Sara to cells over 39 times where she was held in custody.

While in detention, onsite paramedics noticed Sara’s declining physical health. They performed medical aid and repeatedly advised her to attend to hospital for further care, which she failed to do.

Police took Sara to hospital for mental health assessments on five occasions when they could see that the intoxication wore off in cells but the mental health struggles continued. Each time, Sara was released back into the community and was often rearrested within 24 hours.

SPS also attempted to get Sara help through the justice system. As a result she was charged with Disturbance under the Criminal Code. This allowed for the opportunity to have Crown Prosecutors request a forensic assessment and have Sara sent for extensive mental health care. The application was unsuccessful and she was released back into community.

Sara did not display criminal behavior, she was a person who was homeless and struggling with drug addiction and physical and mental health issues. Sara died in 2023 at the age of 52.

Demographics:

- * Female
- * 52 years old
- * Indigenous
- * Homeless

Complex needs:

- * Drug addiction
- * Mental Health
- * Housing
- * Physical Health

SPS INVOLVEMENT

- ◇ Countless calls for service where she was moved along
- ◇ 39 arrests for intoxication
- ◇ 5 Agra tickets
- ◇ 1 CC using a stolen credit card, which resulted in 3 FTA
- ◇ 5 Mental Health apprehensions by police
- ◇ 1 Mental Health Act Warrant