



# LA PERCEPCIÓ IMPORTA

La seguretat de les  
persones

# Perception Matters



Generalitat de Catalunya  
Departament  
d'Interior

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# LA PERCEPCIÓ IMPORTA

La seguretat de les  
persones

## Guide to analysing and responding to outbreaks of perceived unsafety

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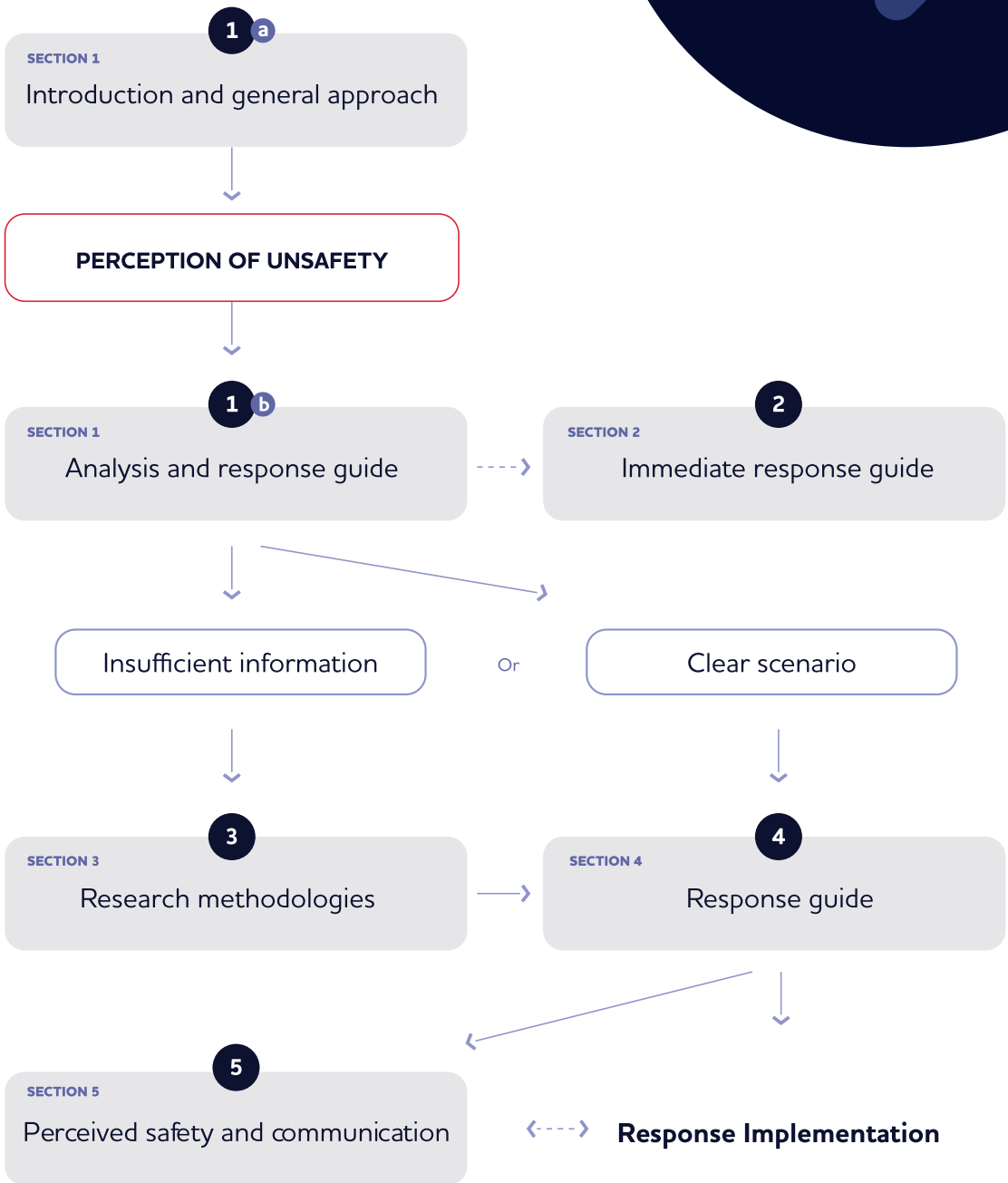
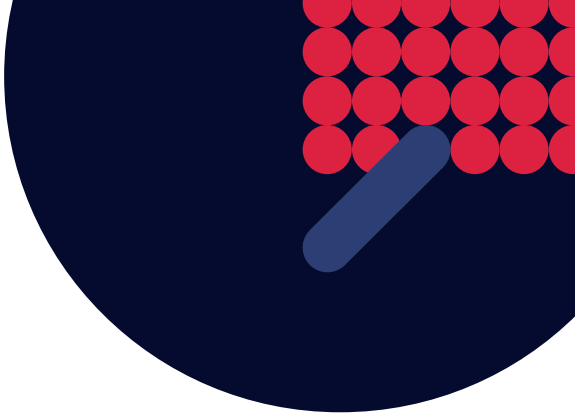
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# Guide to analysing and responding to outbreaks of perceived unsafety

People's perception of insecurity can have many different causes. When it arises suddenly and intensely in specific spaces or areas, it can affect daily life and coexistence. It requires rapid responses that carefully address the causes of these feelings of insecurity or unsafety. It is important to follow the appropriate process to find these causes and the corresponding responses. This guide attempts to direct you in this rapid process of analysis and response.





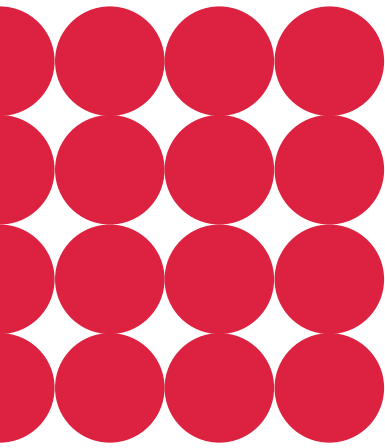


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# Starting point

People are expressing notable feelings of unsafety in a particular place and moment.

When an outbreak of unsafety occurs it is very important to ask yourself the right questions in order to correctly analyse the situation and propose adequate solutions to improve perceived safety.



## INITIAL QUESTIONS

### WHAT IS AN OUTBREAK OF UNSAFETY?

For the purposes of this document, we will consider an outbreak of unsafety to be the public declaration of a group of people (or their representatives) expressing that certain spaces in the city are not safe for them to carry out their daily activities, as these activities are influenced by the existing (perceived) lack of safety. As a result, citizens no longer carry out activities that they would normally want to and undertake other (defensive) activities that they would not normally want to (and that can be problematic). The situation is made public in order to demand the government to intervene to resolve the problem.

**A clear example:** The mobilisation of residents that took place around carrer **Príncep de Viana in the city of Barcelona** in January 2020 to protest against the occupation of empty flats where **drug trafficking and distribution** was taking place.

### DOES AN OUTBREAK OF UNSAFETY ALWAYS INVOLVE AN INCREASE IN CRIME OR SAFETY INFRACTIONS IN THE AREA?

Not necessarily. It is possible for an increase in crime or antisocial behaviour to cause an increase in citizens' feelings of unsafety. For example: the notable increase in **robberies** in the city of Barcelona in **summer 2019** led to an increase in feelings of unsafety among citizens, demonstrated by the population in the various surveys of which they were the subject. In other words, in summer 2019 people felt less safe due to an unprecedented increase in robberies. Yet, prior to summer 2019 this was not the case, even though such crimes had been on the rise for almost two years. In other cases, a decline in the quality of life in a certain area (deterioration of public spaces or services), an increase in disorder in public spaces, with controversial activities such as the occupation of empty buildings or flats, prostitution, and public drug or alcohol consumption, can cause concern in a given area.

### HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT AN OUTBREAK OF UNSAFETY IS IN RESPONSE TO?

By asking ourselves the necessary questions to know what the underlying reasons are that have brought about this perception of unsafety. As obvious as the situation might be, defining the underlying problem is key. Otherwise, actions could be proposed that only tackle the outward appearance of the problem and not the factors that led to its cause.

INITIAL QUESTIONS

WHAT QUESTIONS DO WE HAVE TO ASK OURSELVES?



Information on public expression of the problem

This point is important

— How did the news reach us?

(It may have done so through multiple channels)

**Media**

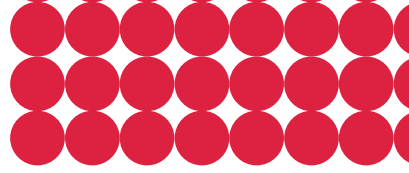
- > Who/What is cited by journalists as the source of the problem?
- > Was it mentioned in a range of media or only in one/a few? (TV, newspapers, radio, etc.)
- > In your experience, is/are the journalist/s in question reliable?
- > Is it possible to contact one/some of them?

**Residents' Protest** (Protest/rally/gathering in the street or near police or municipal offices)

- > Was it planned or spontaneous?
- > Who led it? Was it a particular person, group or association?
- > Are these people or groups well-known? Are they open to reaching an agreement or fundamentally destructive?
- > Are there open communication channels with them?

**Social media**

- > How was the issue introduced and by whom?
- > Are they a reliable source? Are they regular activists in various areas?
- > What impact has it had? Has it been shared a lot? Or only among a very specific type of user?
- > Has anyone put the news into context? Have there been attempts to calm the mood? Has any official source responded?



**Has it emerged in political debate?**

- > Has a political party brought up the issue? Which one?
- > Is there really an open debate around this issue or is it simply a (typical or not) matter of political orientation?
- > Have other political parties, social or civic organisations taken a stance on the issue?
- > Has it reached the city council meeting?

—— **When, and in what moment was the problem revealed?**

**Are we faced with a catalyst (recent problem), an underlying problem that appears periodically or a pre-existing problem that has evolved?**

**Is the “crisis” still ongoing or has it calmed down after the outbreak?**

—— **What are the complaints, demands and petitions for action to public authorities?**

**Increase in crime (what kind of crimes)?**

**Increase in antisocial behaviour (incivilities)?**

**Inadequate public facilities (lack of lighting, of cleanliness)?**

**Public drug or alcohol consumption?**

**Presence of prostitution?**

**“Different” or unknown people in the area?**

**Others (please specify)**

INITIAL QUESTIONS

— **What is the general situation in the city?**

**Is the perception of safety in the city generally good, bad, are there other problem areas?**

**Have there been outbreaks related to the same issue elsewhere in the previous weeks/months? How have they evolved?**

> Has any news surfaced in the media recently?

**What physical space is the problem in?**

> A neighbourhood? Part of a neighbourhood? A space between two neighbourhoods? A space that borders a neighbouring municipality?

— **Do we know the proportion of the population affected by this outbreak of unsafety?**

**Does it particularly affect a specific group?**

**Is it a general feeling in the area or neighbourhood?**

**Does the affected group have a particular motivation and level of organisation?**

— **Has there been a reduction in residents' usual activities or the activities that they want to do, which they have abandoned because of these feelings of unsafety?**

**Which ones?**

**In which spaces?** (These could be limited to the area that's considered "dangerous" or extend into neighbouring areas)

— **Have residents taken any form of protective or defensive action because of perceived unsafety?**

**Who?**

**In what kind of spaces?**

## Have all these questions given us enough responses to have a clear idea of the problem?

**VERY IMPORTANT!** | Do we think it necessary to take immediate steps? Which ones?

**D**

If the answer is yes, we can go to section D. *pag. 14*

**B**

Otherwise, continue to section B. *pag. 10*



INITIAL QUESTIONS



**What information do we have to hand?**

— **What does police data tell us?**

**Does it offer a reason for the feelings of unsafety?**

**Does it show an increase in crime?**

**And in antisocial behaviour?**

**Have the police received calls to report unsafety in the area (directly or through the national emergency number)?**

This indicator is a good reference of the mood of the area's residents, more so than reported crimes or incidents of antisocial behaviour, as the majority of these incidents do not reach the police. Furthermore, calls better specify the problem that is worrying residents.

— **Is there data on citizens' opinions and perception of safety? Are there surveys on this available?**

**Do they help us to understand the nature of feelings of unsafety in the area subject to intervention? Are they current? Are they specific enough to the area? Or do they deal with larger spaces than those subject to analysis?** For example, the Barcelona Victimization Survey only provides data on the perception of safety in an entire district, which is too large an area to give the precise responses needed.

We are in a position to extrapolate (through several variables) perception data to the area in question (in case that, for example, the perception data is by district).



— **Are there additional easily accessible databases?**

Registered population of the area

Level of income of the area's population

Type and age of housing, and housing ownership system

Immigrant population

Type of businesses and economic activities

Public facilities, spaces and services in the area

Addiction treatment centres

New tool from the Barcelona Institute of Regional and Metropolitan Studies (IERMB. Institut d'Estudis Regionals i Metropolitans de Barcelona) (see p.27)

— **Are there key stakeholders who understand the situation?**

Social workers?

Prevention specialists?

Active members of an important social group?

An NGO that is established or runs activities in the area?

Neighbourhood or small business associations with minimal influence and organisation?

INITIAL QUESTIONS

Civil enforcement officers?

An education or health centre?

A community centre?

An established religious centre in the area?

— Is it possible to talk to one of these stakeholders?

Do we know about their previous involvement in the area?

What information can they give us?

What options would we have?

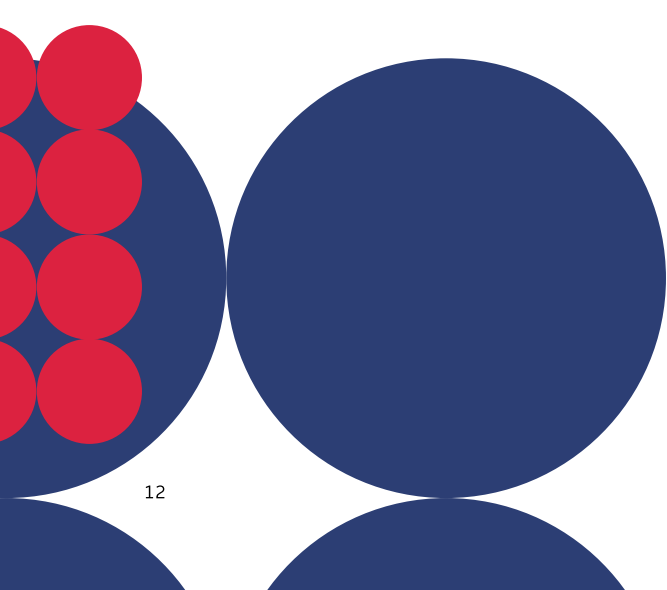
— Have there been previous public interventions in the area of interest?

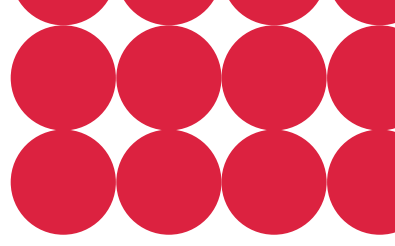
When and what kind?

Do we know their results?

Was their impact evaluated?

Were these interventions well-communicated?





To conclude: we have identified the problem as (this will probably have multiple answers):

**A safety problem in the classic or strictest sense of the word**  
(crime, disorder)

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**A very low level of subjective safety** (or, in other words, high level of feelings of unsafety)

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**Deterioration of the neighbourhood**

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**Bad relationships with public institutions**

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**Bad communication regarding municipal interventions**

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**Problems with coexistence between different groups**

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**Residents who are socially and economically extremely vulnerable**

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**Very active stakeholders whose demands have been ignored.**

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## Could you specify, in maximum three or four lines, the key factors that have caused this perceived lack of safety, and any causal links between them?



### Possible appropriate responses

Is a response from the police necessary? What kind of response? Is a response from police needed to make residents feel safe? Do those who are victimising residents need to be acted against? Do there need to be police patrols? Should these be intensive at first? For how long? Are plainclothes officers needed to investigate?

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A response related to the road system and transportation infrastructure, to keep spaces free of vehicles for the citizens that live there?

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Urban reforms. What kind? Do we need to remove spaces with limited visibility? Design spaces that facilitate coexistence and a variety of uses? Spaces that facilitate encounters and coexistence between different groups?

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Improvement/establishment of public services. Which services or facilities would need to be improved in order to improve residents' quality of life and safety?

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Do we need to put health-related measures in place? Would it be necessary to establish or expand a care centre for drug addicts? A medical centre? A mental health facility?

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There need to be social services to meet residents' needs. What kind? For the elderly? For young people? For people in the process of reintegration? A reception centre for immigrants?

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Is it necessary to organise coexistence between different religious centres?

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Do we need to think of activities to regenerate the neighbourhood? What kind? Cultural, sporting activities? Commercial or economic? Celebratory? Intercultural festivals?

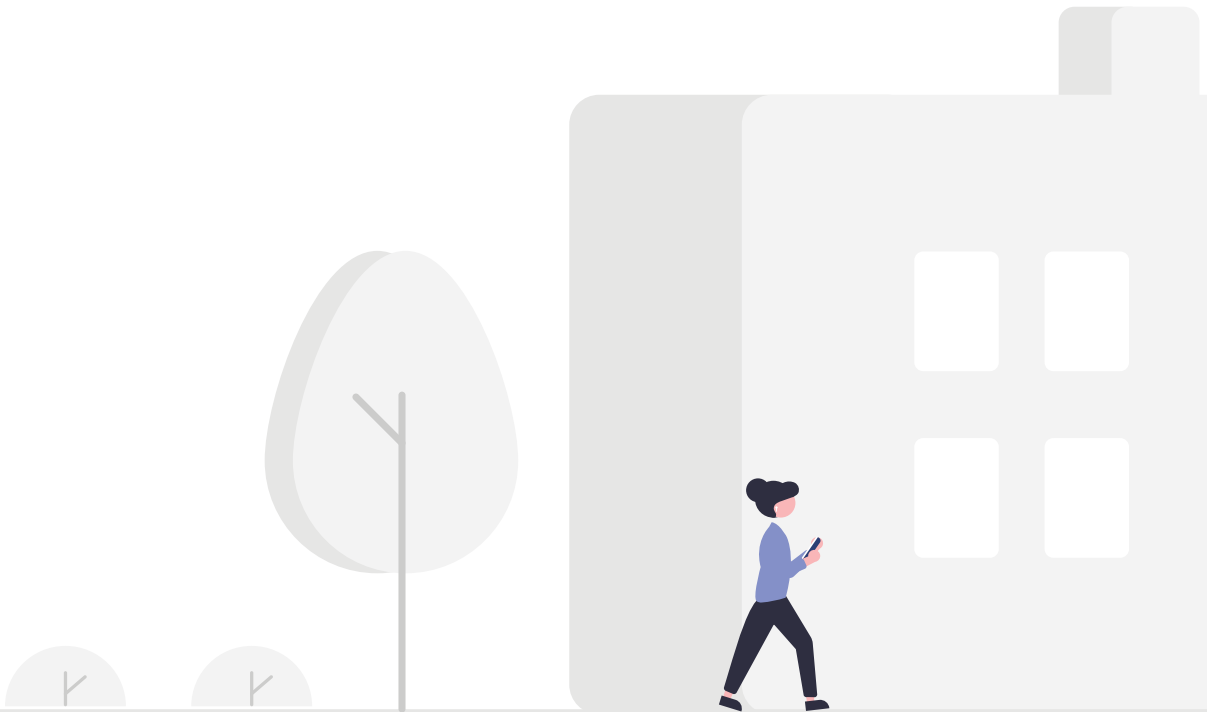
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## TIMING

How urgently are responses needed?

- **What short-term responses can be (or have to be) offered (in addition to those that have already been adopted with immediate effect) and what is the likely result? How long could the result last for?**
- **What (necessary) responses can only be offered adequately in the medium-term?**
- **What (necessary) responses are structural in nature and will only be effective in the long term? What steps can provisionally be taken to avoid shortfalls caused by the slow arrival of structural measures?**

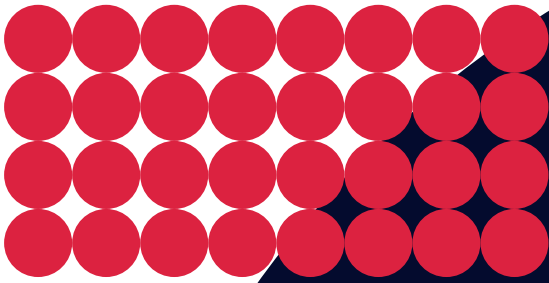


INITIAL QUESTIONS



COMMUNICATION

- How will we communicate with key municipal actors? Do we know what their priorities are? Do we have spaces/means to communicate with them?
  
- Do we have a communication strategy with the stakeholders in the problem area? We must keep them informed of the assessment and diagnosis, as well as the proposed actions and their implementation status. How can we involve them in the explanation and dissemination of our action plan?
  
- How will we inform residents in the area of what we are doing?
  
- What means of communication do we have available? Do we have to turn to official spokespersons? Do we have Twitter or Facebook accounts or ad hoc APPs available?
  
- How will we counter the smear campaign about the area in the rest of the city (if there is one)? What communication actions should we carry out?



# Key concepts to support the analysis

## 1

### The Feelings of Unsafety Lifecycle Model

**1** There are contextual, social and personal factors that influence the predisposition to feel safe when faced with situations that hypothetically present risks (we are referring to **social or individual worries and anxieties**):

- a.** People's mental attitude — some people are very adaptable and do not feel unsafe if they are not in an extremely adverse situation. However, others feel unsafe when faced with any change in or secondary consequence of their daily activities.
- b.** Dominant public opinion in relation to safety: a context of societal alarm in relation to a lack of safety predisposes citizens to detect signs of unsafety.
- c.** Ideology/political priorities: people's ideology in relation to crime and social unrest affects the emotional level of their reaction when faced with risks or threats.



## **2** There is a second area related to the **assumed situation of vulnerability**

- a.** The spaces we live and move in exemplify to us the perception of daily risk and, consequently, the possibilities of us experiencing a negative incident.
- b.** The routes we have to take and the circumstances surrounding them make us aware of our vulnerability.
- c.** The safety conditions in housing and neighbourhoods provoke certain perspectives in relation to safety.
- d.** Having many or few resources to deal with the consequences of a hypothetical victimisation incident influences the perception of a situation as safe or unsafe.

## **3** Unsafety (**anxiety**) becomes **situational** when:

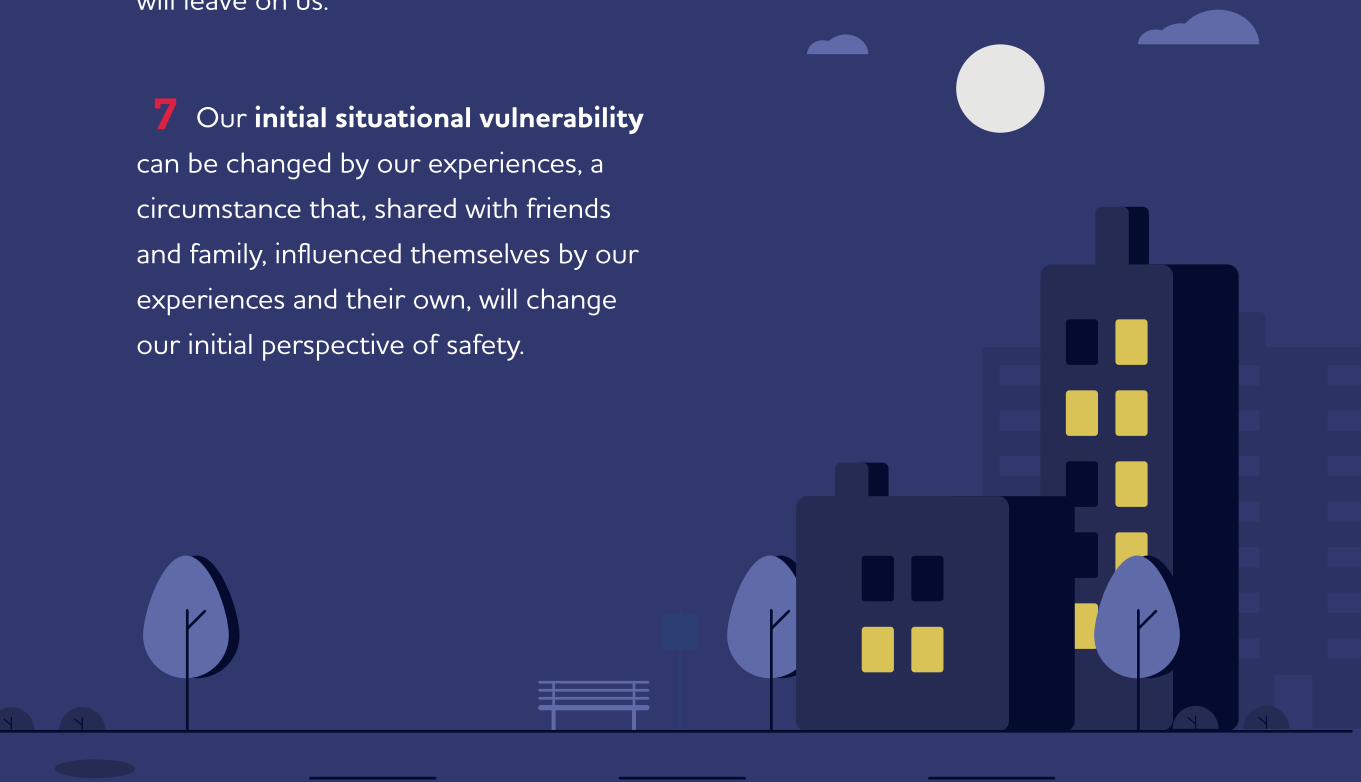
- a.** Attacks take place in spaces that we normally use.
- b.** Spaces that we usually frequent become deteriorated.
- c.** News about crime in our surroundings multiplies.

**4** Feelings of unsafety become those of **fear when we are faced with a direct threat of being victims of a crime or attack**. For example, when we are passing through a deserted area and someone is aggressive towards us.

**5** Once we have been attacked, this fear becomes **shock, anger or stress**. This is the immediate impact.

**6** How we and those around us **deal with the consequences of victimisation** (how we manage it) indicates the mark it will leave on us.

**7** Our **initial situational vulnerability** can be changed by our experiences, a circumstance that, shared with friends and family, influenced themselves by our experiences and their own, will change our initial perspective of safety.



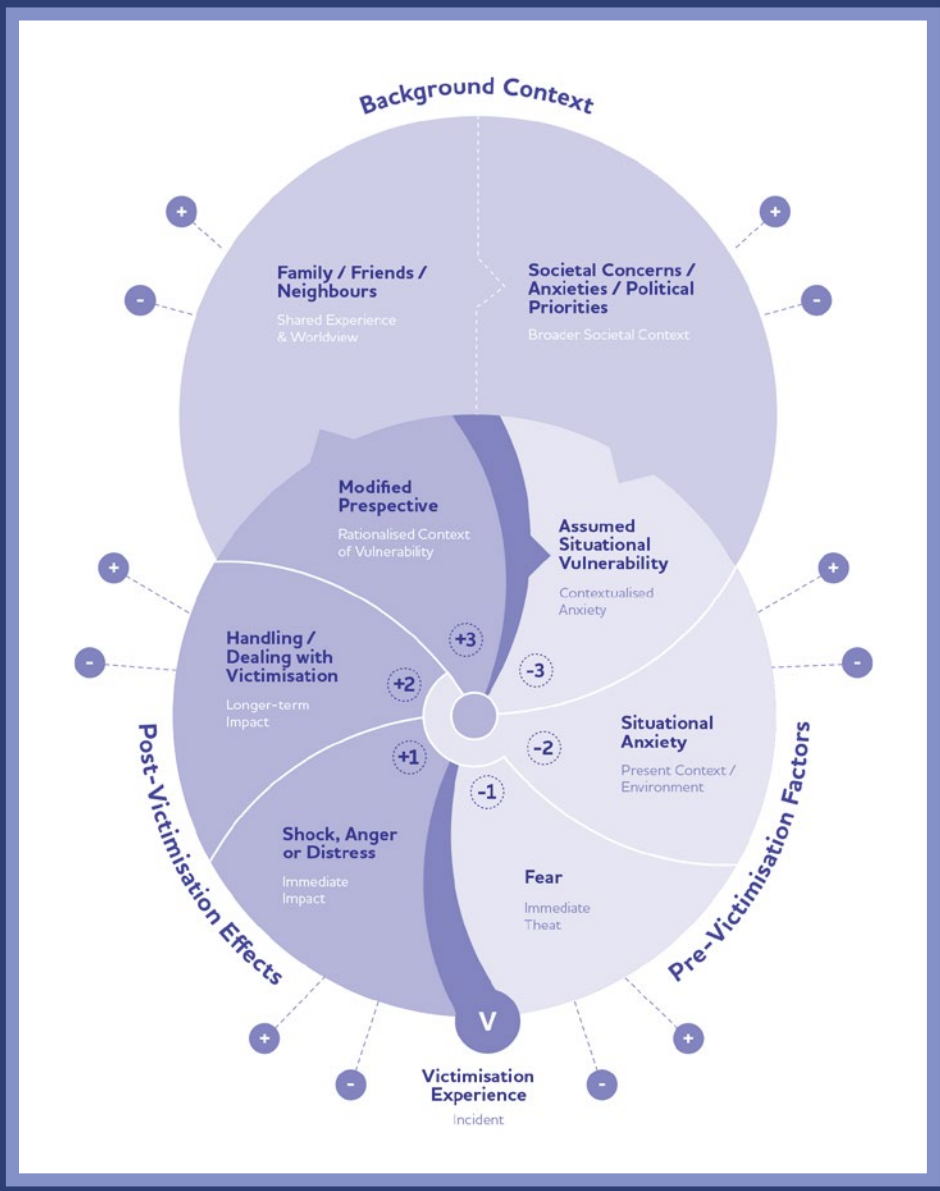
# The perception of safety with a gender perspective

One of the factors that influences the predisposition to feel safe when faced with a situation that subjectively presents risks is gender. Women and men relate differently to people and their surroundings, and this has an impact on their perception of safety.

Not all women will have the same perception of what is safe or unsafe, as it will depend on factors such as their lived experiences, differences, age, education received, etc. They usually identify their home environment as the safest and public spaces as hostile and dangerous places, because culturally this idea has been instilled in them since childhood. This means that, particularly at nighttime, in deserted areas or when a stranger approaches them or speaks to them, they can experience feelings of distrust, anxiety and fear.

While a woman may feel unsafe due to her previous experiences, she may also fear not only being a victim of crime, but also of experiencing safety-related incidents not necessarily classified as crimes (i.e. behaviours that are not criminal, such as cat-calling). These fears and the self-protective measures that women take in order to feel safer limit their rights, free enjoyment of public spaces, mobility, social, personal and professional life and behaviour.

In order to properly analyse the situation when there is an outbreak of unsafety, we must therefore also take into account this different perception of safety and include the gender perspective in the questions that we ask ourselves. This Perspective must also inform chosen methodologies, policy definition and adoption of prevention and protection measures related to personal autonomy and the use of spaces.



Davey, C.L. and Wootton, A.B. (2019) "Feelings of Insecurity Lifecycle model" in the report "Report on feelings of insecurity – Concepts and models". Report of Cutting Crime Impact (CCI) project, p. 12. Can be downloaded at [www.cuttingcrimeimpact.eu](http://www.cuttingcrimeimpact.eu)

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*This lifecycle of feelings of unsafety is not always carried out entirely. In other words, when an outbreak of unsafety occurs, it does not mean that everyone expressing such feelings has been victimised and has gone through all the stages of the cycle. There can be people who, in effect, have gone through the whole cycle, while there can be others who express a lot of insecurity and have not been faced with a concrete threat nor felt particularly vulnerable for personal or social reasons.*

## Tip

It is very important to be able to recognise/identify the approximate proportion of people, out of those who express a lack of safety, in each stage of the lifecycle of unsafety. The measures to take will be different if, for example, the amount of people who have experienced victimisation is significant or if only a very small number have been victimised, whilst the rest are in previous phases of the lifecycle of feelings of unsafety.

# 2

## Evaluation

### It is important to differentiate between:

#### Evaluation of the activity

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Checking that the promised activities have been carried out.

#### Evaluation of impact

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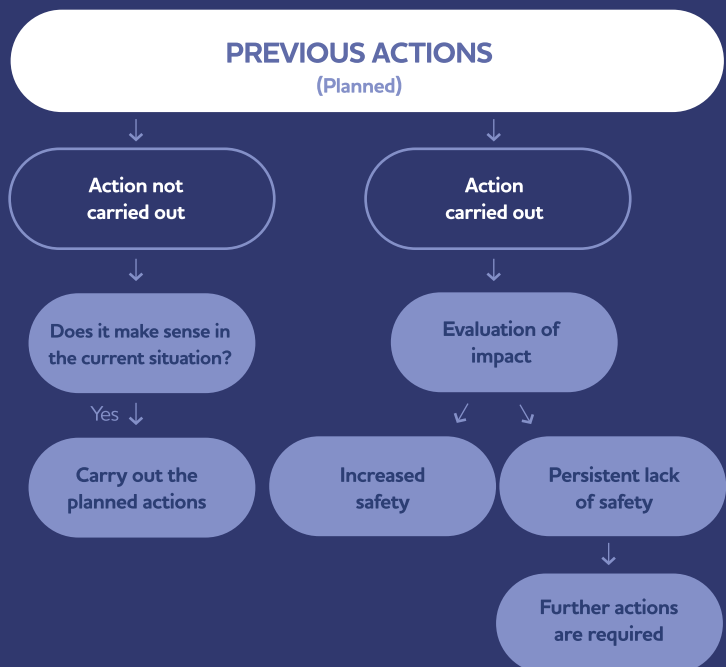
Checking if the planned objectives have really been achieved.

In the case of subjective safety (or the perception of unsafety), the evaluation of the activity is not relevant beyond confirming that commitments have been met. What is crucial is to know if people feel safer, and this can be checked through:

- a. Direct surveys of the affected population.
- b. Checking the levels of occupation of public spaces, especially in terms of recreational activities.
- c. Interviews with key or relevant stakeholders from the area.
- d. The number of visitors who come from other parts of the city.

For example, it is possible that, faced with an increase in feelings of unsafety, in a given moment greater police presence in the area or an increase in street cleaning was promised, in order to prevent the situation from deteriorating. The fact that the number of police patrols increased or that the streets have been cleaned does not necessarily mean that people's subjective safety

has improved. It is of course important to know if the promised actions have been carried out, but we must also check that the perception of safety has increased. Otherwise, the evaluation will show us that the chosen measures or actions were not sufficient, and we will have to adopt and implement other ones.



# 3

## Signal crimes or incidents

When dealing with subjective safety it is very important to bear in mind that not all crimes or incidents have the same effect. Some are more likely to affect subjective safety in the eyes of the general public. They are what the English criminologist Martin Innes calls “signal crimes”. These generally refer to behaviours that demonstrate a level of physical and moral decline that no amount of social cohesion can prevent. To mention some: selling and consumption of drugs in public, prostitution, public urination, vandalising public facilities, etc...





## **New tool developed by the Institute of Regional and Metropolitan Studies**

Through the integration of various databases (victimisation surveys, population registers, administrative registers of levels of coexistence among residents, criminal incidents known to the police and sociourban information), the proportion of the population of the 73 neighbourhoods in Barcelona that give the level of safety in their neighbourhood a low theoretical score has been estimated. Secondly, the combination of individual and territorial data through multilevel logistic regression models makes it possible to identify the factors with the greatest impact on the causes of unsafety in such neighbourhoods. The results enable the production of a control panel on factors affecting unsafety that can be used to design and monitor preventive actions.

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# First steps when faced with outbreaks of unsafety. Criteria

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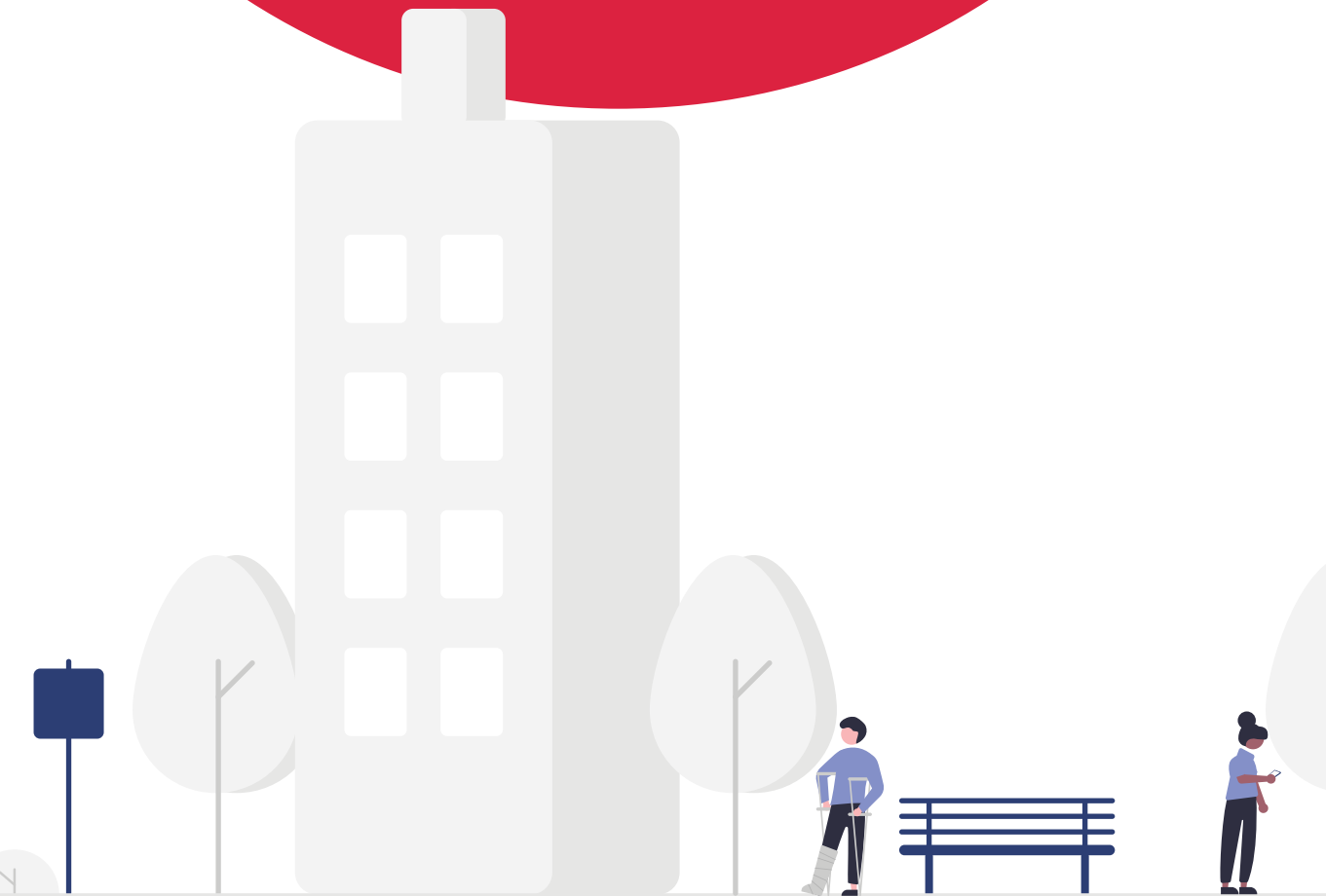


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# What elements or circumstances necessitate taking immediate first steps before completing the process recommended in the guide?

HERE ARE SOME OF THEM

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Risk level for people and property. Measure the underlying risk of both criminal actions and the residents themselves. An increase in criminality or groups of residents patrolling the area are elements that must be confronted immediately.



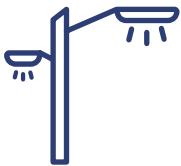
Threatening groups (or groups that appear threatening) require an immediate response.



Risk level for the occupation of public spaces. Noticeable disuse of public spaces. Children, older adults, etc. withdrawing from them.



Absence of communication channels with the public who feel unsafe. Need to include the general public and address their unease. Significant social alarm in the conflict area.



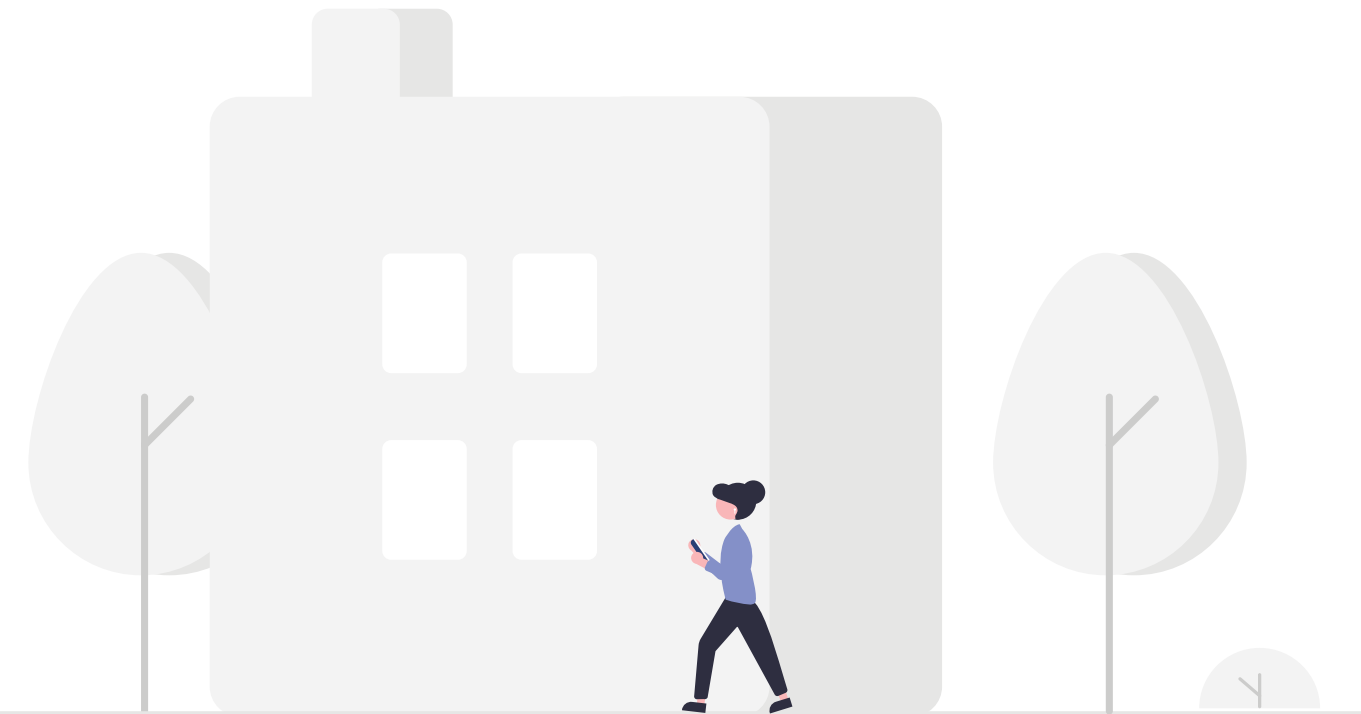
Serious decline in public services (cleanliness of public spaces, offensive graffiti, lighting, etc.).

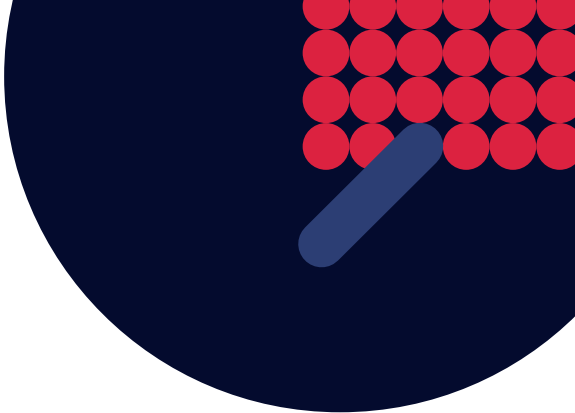


Existence of spaces or facilities that are likely to be targeted imminently (empty housing or warehouses, pedestrian areas with no external protection, centres for vulnerable groups, addiction treatment centres, institutional headquarters/centres, etc.).

## How we can better understand the existence (and level) of these risks

The information needed to make the decision on the need to adopt rapid measures at first, in addition to answering the questions in part A of Section 01, can be gathered from four basic sources.





**1. By talking to representatives/key people about the expression of feelings of unsafety** (members of involved organisations, stakeholders and users of the spaces in question, etc.) **We need to know:**

- > What their complaints are
- > What exactly they want
- > What actions they are thinking of undertaking

**2. Speaking to police officers in the area to assess:**

- > If there is data on crime or disorder that explains the outbreak
- > If they have noticed attempts at violence or confrontation
- > If, and how, the (feelings of) unsafety threaten coexistence
- > Immediate actions that the police can take to avoid escalation

**3. Consulting data from registers of crime reports, complaints and suggestions** (from the national emergency number). **We must look at any and every public record that contains this type of declaration by citizens and check if there are links to the outbreak of unsafety.**

**4. Consulting existing data on the perception of safety in the problem area** (surveys, estimates, etc.). **Data indicating high levels of feeling unsafe would lead us to a scenario where citizens very likely change their behaviour, no longer using spaces that they consider unsafe and even taking defensive measures.**



# In the case that we confirm that one of the above risk scenarios is taking place, what steps do we have to take?

## Measures to consider

### **Always:**

Establish or recover communication channels with residents as soon as possible to listen to them and analyse the problems. This should not only involve the police, but other public institutions as well.

Presence of institutions in the conflict area to take an interest in the situation (authorities, heads of department).

### **In the case of the serious deterioration of spaces, serious violence or threats against vulnerable groups:**

Immediate intervention in the deterioration of public spaces (cleanliness, facilities, etc.). For example, in the case of threats against vulnerable groups, the immediate removal of threatening posters or graffiti is reassuring/calming for the people who are subject to them. In the case of public spaces with an accumulation of litter in them, clean them as soon as possible. Broken lighting should be repaired immediately.

The presence of police can help increase feelings of safety, giving citizens the reassurance that those in power are protecting them — as long as it does not involve indiscriminate aggressive interventions.



**In the case of the presence of people or groups who seriously concern residents:**

Contact the people who are of concern to the residents as quickly as possible. Note: it is not a question of criminalising them, but rather showing that the authorities are dealing with the problem and normalising their presence. When we have an idea of the background of these people we must inform residents. People are afraid of what they do not know or understand.

**In cases of continued, organised and sensationalist information that causes social alarm in the area:**

Establish stable public messaging with the general public by obtaining reliable data on hot topics.

Establish stable information channels with stakeholders and groups. Provide the affected citizens with the most up-to-date and verified information possible about the issues causing conflict.

**In the case of risks to particular spaces:**

Protection, isolation, closing the spaces in question (e.g. unoccupied housing or industrial spaces, pedestrian areas without access protection, centres for persecuted groups, etc.).



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# Useful tools and methodologies for research into feelings of unsafety

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# Process Mapping

**What?** A visualisation of the key activities, people, processes and decision points involved in doing something over time.

**When?** During the first stages of requirements capture to provide an understanding of how something gets done, and map its activities, decisions inputs and outputs.

## How to record?

Identify and map the individual coded process elements onto a large sheet of paper using sticky notes.

Photograph the final map.

Record the reasoning behind process mapping decisions in your research diary.

### Tip

Input from those who manage and deliver the process is critical to ensure the mapping is accurate.

# How?

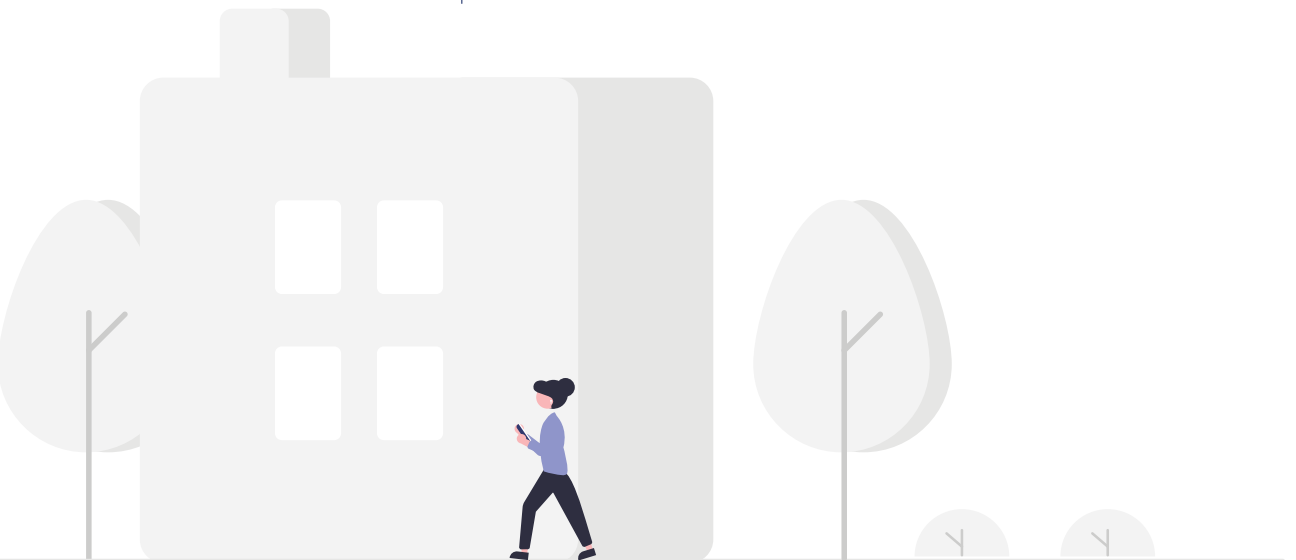
- 1.** Bring together a team to map the process to
- 2.** Outline the process using different sticky notes (tasks/activities; processes; decisions) with arrows to indicate flow
  - Think:** Where do the processes begin and end?
  - Think:** What are the steps in between these points?
  - Think:** What are the inputs and outputs of the process?
  - Think:** Who does what? When? Where and how?
- 3.** Organise the activities into sequential order.

## Additional spark

Try to identify the three most important parts of the process

**Think:** In doing this, how have you defined “importance” and what roles/priorities does this definition reflect?

**Think:** Are other, less well-defined parts of the process more important for those in other roles?



# Stakeholder mapping

**What?** Stakeholder mapping allows individual (key or peripheral) roles to be identified and an understanding of individual interactions, relationships and needs to be visualised. It is a method to visualise the human network of individuals in the given system to provide a full ecosystem view point, rather than a limited individual perception.

**When?** At the first stages of requirements capture to explore who is involved, question what they care about and what influence they have.

## How to record?

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Photograph the final map

---

Record the reasoning behind stakeholder mapping decisions in your research diary.

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Create a Stakeholder Register, containing a page for each stakeholder. Enter the information collated so far for each stakeholder with regard to role, priority and motivation.



### Tip

Stakeholder mapping can be used to create plans for the next stages of research. For example, highlighting stakeholders that you might wish to interview or observe.

# How?

- 1.** Generate an exhaustive list of stakeholders  
**Think:** Go beyond your first thoughts
- 2.** Organise the stakeholder sticky-notes onto a radar template against dimensions defined by you (for example, internal to external; or core to peripheral)
- 3.** Add the individual stakeholder's title and role to the sticky-note, this will help identify their drivers/motivations
- 4.** Write down each stakeholder's motivations on a separate sticky-note and attach it to the corresponding stakeholder note  
**Think:** What do stakeholders have in common? What attributes do they share?
- 5.** If stakeholder groups emerge, highlight these with a label, or by drawing a circle round them  
**Think:** Are there specific subgroups of stakeholders?

## Additional spark

Try to identify the three most important stakeholders in the process

**Think:** In doing this, how have you defined "importance" and what roles/priorities does this definition reflect?

# Focus group

**What?** A small group of stakeholders who are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes regarding a tool, service, concept or idea.

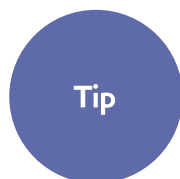
**When?** When you want to discuss and learn more about the aspects of the problem that you are working on and obtain more detailed information about people's feelings, perceptions and opinions.

## How to record?

Ideally, make an audio recording of the session. Notes and points of interest can be transcribed from the recording after the event. If you cannot record the audio, someone will need to take notes of the conversation and of the key points raised. This cannot be done by the person leading the focus group, so the assistance of a note-taker may be required.

Record notes and points of interest in your research diary.

## Additional spark



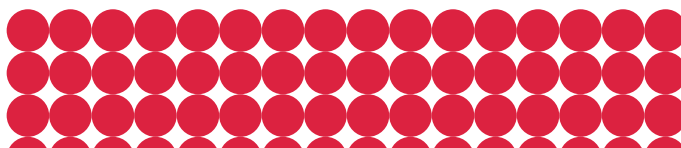
Stakeholder mapping can be used to create plans for the next stages of research. For example, highlighting stakeholders that you might wish to interview or observe.

A focus group should take around 1 hour to complete, and should be in a room that offers privacy.



# How?

- 1.** Write down what you aim to find out from the focus group. What is the purpose of the meeting?
- 2.** Ideally try to invite a diverse range of stakeholders (between 5 and 9 individuals) to promote a useful discussion  
**Think:** Have you included individuals from underrepresented groups?
- 3.** Add the individual stakeholder's title and role to the sticky-note, this will help identify their drivers/motivations
- 4.** Contact invitees introducing yourself and the purpose of the focus group meeting. Ask them to confirm their involvement and set a date, time and place
- 5.** Develop around six questions to guide the discussion. You may include follow-up "prompts" to ensure the conversation doesn't dry up
- 6.** When running the focus group, make sure you moderate the conversation to ensure everyone has a voice. Don't allow individuals to hijack the discussion!



# Insta-ethnography

**What?** A quick method to develop first-hand understanding of circumstances, environments, motivations and meanings around relevant stakeholder activities and experiences. A useful trust-building method with stakeholders.

**When?** At the early stages of requirements capture to identify with and develop a better understanding of stakeholders in the issue being worked on.

## How to record?

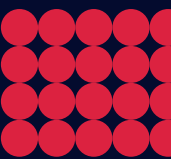
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Note your experience in your research diary and flag identified stakeholders of interest for involvement in more in-depth ethnographic activities.

# How?

- 1.** Contact the stakeholder to introduce yourself and arrange a short visit to talk to them and observe them in their working role (i.e. you are interested in)
- 2.** Spend time with the stakeholder and observe:
  - > their environment
  - > their activity
  - > their interactions
  - > their decisions
  - > the impact of these (on others or the wider process).

**Think:** Try to understand the observed stakeholder's reasoning/priorities in relation to what they do and the decisions they make.
- 3.** Record your observations as notes as you go, if you can. If not, you will need to write up your experience at the earliest opportunity after the insta-ethnography session.



# Interview

**What?** A method of gathering information through direct dialogue with an individual around a defined set of questions.

**When?** When you have identified an individual whose insight or perspective on matters relevant to the problem in question it would be useful to gain.

## How to record?

---

The audio recording of the interview (if allowed by the interviewee) will need to be transcribed. Alternatively, notes on the interviewee's answers to questions should be made.

---

Make sure to include a copy of the questions, anonymised interviewee details and the interview notes in your research diary.



### Tip

Input from those who manage and deliver the process is critical to ensure the mapping is accurate.

# How?

- 1.** Write down what you aim to find out from the interview. What is the purpose of the interview?
- 2.** Identify a diverse range of stakeholders to interview  
**Think:** Have you included individuals from underrepresented groups?
- 3.** Develop a “question route” to guide the discussion (no more than ten questions for a 30 to 60 minute interview)
- 4.** Approach the interviewees for interview, introduce yourself, the purpose of the interview and obtain (signed) consent
- 5.** Conduct the interview, making a digital audio-recording for transcription (as long as the interviewee gives permission).

## Tip

If you are working on subjective safety (the perception of unsafety), try to refer to the incidents causing unsafety that you want to convey to the experience of the representatives. For example, if the person talks about frequent attacks in the area, you can ask them if they can tell you about the last time that he/she was a victim of such an attack. In this way you can slightly distinguish perception from the actual victimisation.

# Observation

**What?** An approach to field research that adopts the unobtrusive perspective of the passive 'observer'. Careful, inconspicuous observations can provide valuable insight into social situations and activities. When left to their own devices, humans are likely to exhibit behaviours that they may be unaware of or unable to verbalise, even when prompted.

**When?** In situations where you do not want to interrupt the flow of their activities.

## How to record?

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Record your findings through video and audio recordings, photographs and notebook entries. Summarise your experience in your research diary.

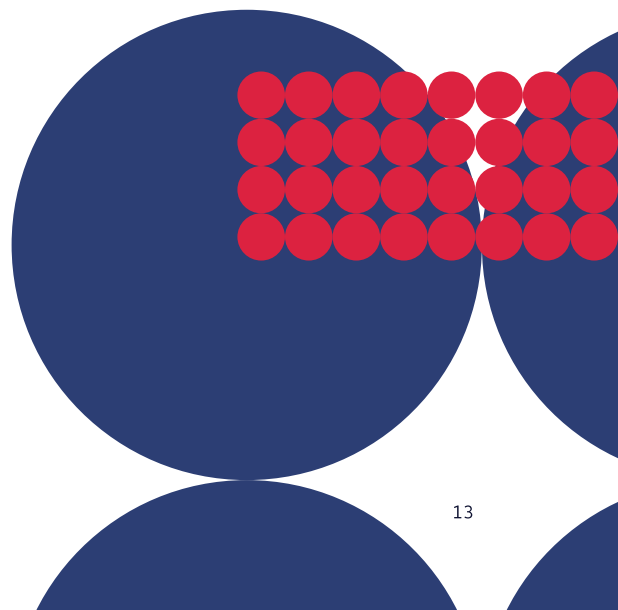
### Tip

Imagine that you're from another planet. What on Earth are these creatures doing? And why?

Make an effort to blend into the background during the observation and to be a passive bystander (e.g civilian clothing rather than police uniform). Move around - look at the situation from several vantage points and record all your observations, thoughts and questions in some form (audio, video, notes).

# How?

- 1.** Write down what you aim to gain from the observation — what is the purpose of the observation?
- 2.** Identify a diverse range of people who you want to observe and for how long. (This could but does not have to be informed by stakeholder mapping)  
**Think:** Have you included individuals from underrepresented groups?
- 3.** Obtain the necessary access and permission(s)
- 4.** Prepare materials to capture what you see — camera, notebook, audio recorder
- 5.** Conduct the observation making sure that you capture everything you see.  
**Think:** Don't only observe what people do, but also how they do it.



# Immersion

**What?** A way of building empathy through first-hand experience. Immersing yourself in another person's experience with the aim of both seeing and feeling a situation from their perspective. This activity is about promoting empathy.

**When?** To understand a series of issues related to the case in question from the perspective of a particular stakeholder.

This is really useful if an aspect of a particular stakeholder experience can be identified on which it would be useful to gain insight through direct experience (i.e. rather than through observation of someone else, or some other method).

## How to record?

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Take notes, document thoughts or make audio notes of how you are feeling at various stages in the experience, and take photos

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Report your findings in your research diary.



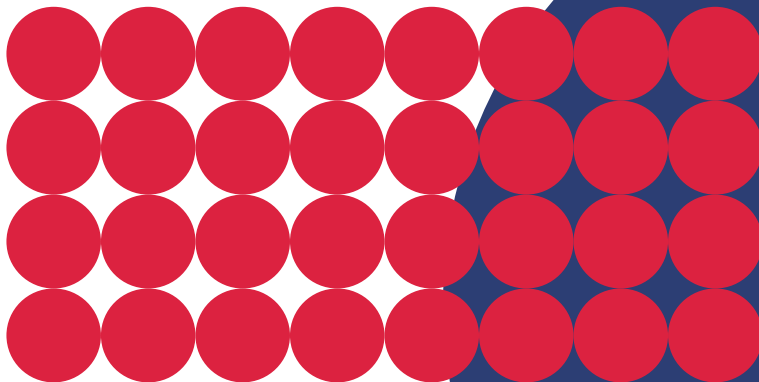
### Tip

Consider how the experience makes you feel in your role as 'user'. Does it promote positive or negative feelings?



# How?

- 1.** Identify the aspect of the area of work that you want to experience from the perspective of a particular stakeholder, or a particular stakeholder with whom you want to empathise
- 2.** Identify the activity that you want to experience and you might do this
- 3.** Obtain the necessary access and permission(s)
- 4.** Undertake the activity as realistically as possible, recording your thoughts and feelings. For example, you might record yourself narrating your experience of a particular activity (e.g. using a service, walking through a disorganised space, etc.).



# Journaling

**What?** A method of understanding stakeholder (user) experiences from their own perspective. Identified individuals are asked to record their personal experience of a process, activity or journey. This can be by them recording their experience in a diary, or by taking pictures with their phone, or by making video or audio recordings. Recorded material is shared with the researcher.

**When?** When you want to better understand the individual experiences of specific stakeholders or users and explore multiple perspectives of a different activity or user experience.

## How to record?

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Make notes on your check-in contact with participants in your research diary.

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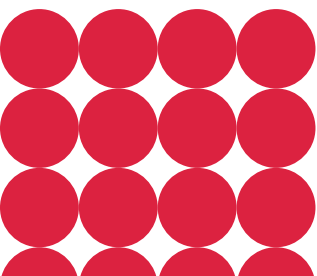
Make notes or record and transcribe any reflective conversations with participants following the journaling period.

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Store all journal material for possible further analysis/reference during the next stages of the design process.

# How?

- 1.** Develop a “journaling kit” for each participant – think about practicality and ease of use (e.g. what are they used to using?) For example, the kit might contain a paper or digital diary document and they may need to store video or audio recordings
- 2.** Identify and recruit potential participants. Journaling can require significant buy-in from participants, in that they will be responsible for recording their experiences
- 3.** Provide the participants with a detailed briefing and agree the time period that their journaling will cover. You must obtain informed consent
- 4.** Distribute the journaling kits to participants (include tips for capturing information, photos and/or videos)
- 5.** Agree to a date to ‘check-in’ with each participant mid-way through the journaling period to check on progress
- 6.** Make sure you receive all the journals at the end of the process
- 7.** After reviewing the journals, you may wish to meet with each participant and have a reflective conversation about the outcome of their journaling experience.



# Exploratory walks

**What?** A walk through an area that has already been identified as unsafe, accompanied by people who normally frequent the area so that they identify the elements, places and moments that cause feelings of unsafety.

**When?** When you already have information available that is starting to define risky areas for certain groups (historically this started being used to understand women's perception of safety). It enables information about the exact causes of feelings of unsafety to be specified.

## How to record?

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You can film the walk in its entirety (you must get the informed consent of the participants).

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A member of the investigation team can take notes of what the participants say and afterwards synthesise them in one document.



### Tip

The person or people who lead the walk have to encourage participants to speak and make it clear to them that they want to hear their opinion.

# How?

- 1.** Identify the spaces (by putting a route together) where there is evidence that people (or some people) feel unsafe and are reluctant to go there
- 2.** Identify the groups that are most affected by this feeling of unsafety (the elderly, women, children, immigrants)
- 3.** Get a group of people together that is not too big (no more than 10-15 people) who are representatives of this group or groups at a particular day and time to walk around the problematic areas
- 4.** Define what you want the participants to take a stance on and designate a coordinator who can get the group involved during the walk and focus them on the issues to be discussed
- 5.** The walk should not last very long, no longer than an hour, so that the participants do not get physically and mentally tired and therefore lose their focus on the activity.

**Think:** The walk has to be managed in such a way that the people who take part take a stance on what is needed for the investigation, but not in a predetermined way. To avoid this, it is important that they are not asked questions that imply a certain response. The conversations have to be led because they are about planned topics, but they need to be led in such a way that the participants explain their own perspective, their own feelings of unsafety, not ours.

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## LA PERCEPCIÓ IMPORTA

La seguretat de les  
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# Criteria for responding to outbreaks of perceived unsafety

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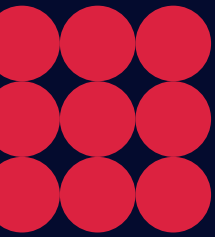
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Generalitat de Catalunya  
Departament  
d'Interior



# When it comes to responding to situations where there is a confirmed high level of perception of unsafety, we must keep certain principles or variables that have proven relevant in mind.

**1.** Social isolation facilitates the perception of unsafety. People who have more social contact tend to feel safer. It is important for people to get out of their social bubbles and interact in public spaces.

**2.** The unfamiliarity of others leads to a lack of trust (and feeling unsafe). Activities that put members of different groups in contact with each other in a peaceful, fun or celebratory way can reduce the unfamiliarity between them.

**3.** Streets are safer if several (peaceful of course) activities take place there at the same time. The peaceful and legitimate use of public

spaces gives residents confidence. Dedicating spaces exclusively to specific activities can result in a lack of activity for multiple periods of time, during which these spaces feel isolated and neglected.

**4.** Police presence can have several different effects that must be taken into account:

- > The presence of community police officers helps increase subjective safety. In other words, this type of police work increases the public's trust in the police and when the public has a good level of trust in the police they feel safer.



- > The preventive capacity of police presence is time-limited, if it is not accompanied by other structural measures. If you want to reduce security incidents in a safe way, it is recommended to follow police presence with measures that tackle the underlying problems and improve the environment.
- > A very aggressive police presence can cause alarm among residents, especially if the police are aggressive towards everyone.

**5.** Good communication by institutions with residents of different areas of the city increases trust and reduces feelings of unsafety. This involves both being informed by public institutions of the actions carried out and having open communication channels to express needs and be heard.

**6.** Facilitating communication between residents of different areas of the city can help alleviate problems. It is important to make it easy for citizens to visit and carry out activities in neighbourhoods other than their own. This communication can help to dismantle rumours regarding safety in certain areas or spaces, when this notably improves and residents of other neighbourhoods can confirm it.

**7.** Neglected spaces cause discomfort and demonstrate a lack of action from institutions, resulting in a reluctance in people to use them. This circumstance results in them being perceived as unsafe and that decreases the number of people who use them. It is therefore important to tackle the deterioration of public spaces as soon as possible.

**8.** The presence of public authorities that provide services in a given area helps citizens feel cared for, feel protected and supported by public authorities.

**9.** Well-lit public spaces, as well as the absence of spaces that are closed or not externally visible, promotes feelings of safety.

**10.** Architectural barriers may cause feelings of unsafety in people with mobility issues.

**11.** It is important to identify the activities that people stop doing due to their feelings of unsafety and to take appropriate steps to promote the resumption of these activities.

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

[Methods and tools for a strategic approach to urban security](#)

 [https://issuu.com/efus/docs/publication\\_a\\_en](https://issuu.com/efus/docs/publication_a_en)

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# LA PERCEPCIÓ IMPORTA

La seguretat de les  
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## Perceived safety and communication

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## The security-communication pairing

Communication between public actors and residents has a huge influence

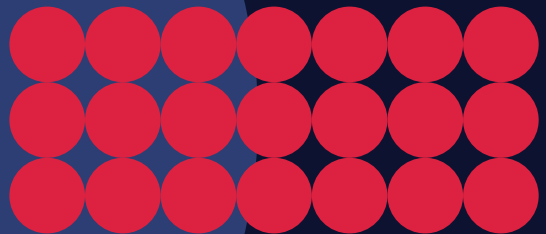
Feelings of unsafety are often related to two factors:

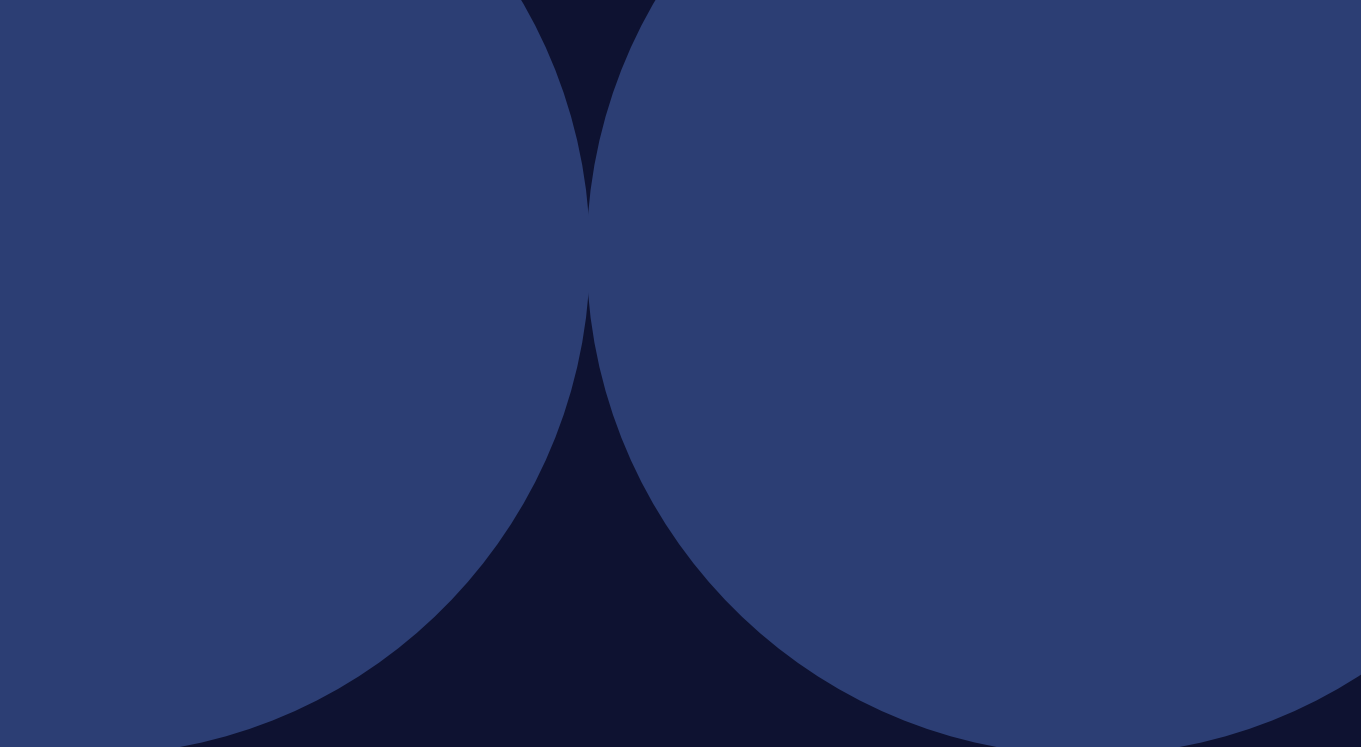
1.

A lack of information when faced with situations that generate uncertainty

2.

The absence of public actors who safeguard public interest





This implies that transparent, flexible and direct communication from the government provides the public with information that clears any uncertainty and shows the presence and support of public authorities. Good communication always increases levels of safety and trust.

This communication does not necessarily have to comply with the public's expectations, but rather give the public the most complete picture possible of the circumstances. People can deal with adverse situations if they receive enough information about their nature and how to handle them.

Citizens are better able to handle complex known situations than continuing in uncertainty. Obviously, in the event that the details of the public intervention that is taking place cannot be shared because this could put its success at risk (a common circumstance in the case of police operations), it is important to clearly communicate that they are aware of the problem and that they are tackling it. Of course, once the intervention is complete and the effects are apparent, they must duly inform the public.

## > Information flows at present

Nowadays, the dissemination of any kind of information is characterised by the following aspects:

- > Immediacy (of dissemination)
- > Viral nature (exponential dissemination)
- > Difficulty in corroborating information (rumours, fake news...)
- > Multiple different, sometimes opposing, voices (relativity of legitimisation and informative leadership)
- > Presence of influential people outside (or not) of institutions who become opinion creators and trend indicators.

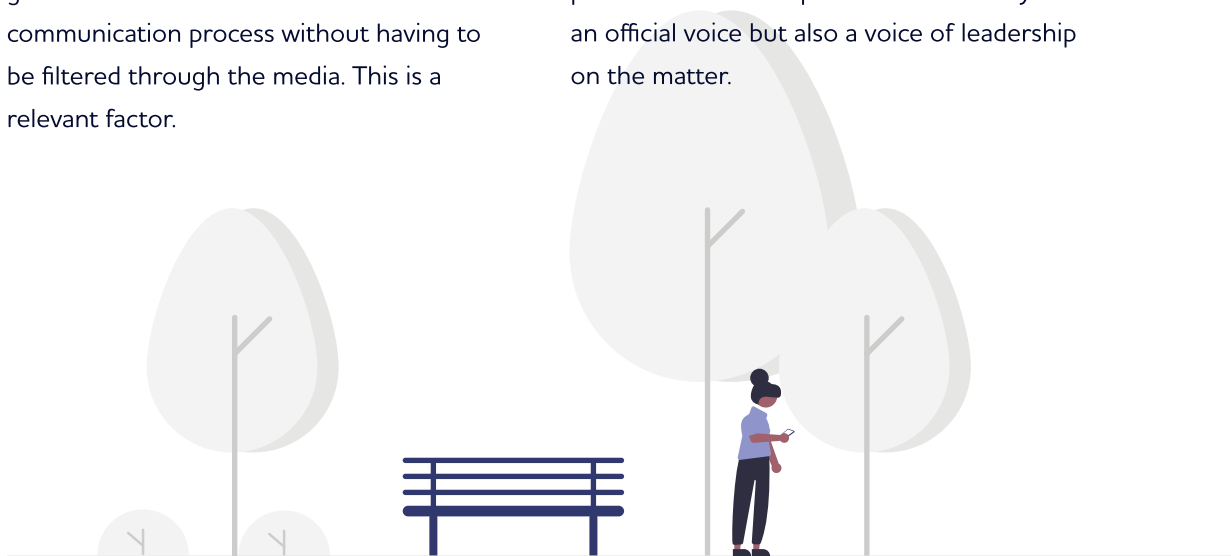
## > Social media as a communication tool

Regarding governments, this breaking of the monopoly has had a positive aspect: the government now has an active role in the communication process without having to be filtered through the media. This is a relevant factor.

When it comes to situations of outbreaks of unsafety linked to the perception of unsafety, it is necessary to bear in mind that it is advisable to break the reactive dynamic that usually accompanies this kind of situation.

The traditional process is: becoming aware of an incident through the media, protests by residents, social media, political debate, etc. All of these place the government in a passive-reactive role that it is in their interest to break.

As mentioned, the fact that the government takes an active role makes it possible for public actors to be seen as part of the solution rather than as part of the problem. When the government publicly shows (and not only in discussions with residents) that they have detected an emerging problem and that they will do something to resolve it, the focus falls on not only what the current situation is, but also what it will be like in the future. In this case public actors are empowered to not only be an official voice but also a voice of leadership on the matter.



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**The communication space is always occupied, if not by an actor (government) then someone else (residents' associations, rumours, the media, etc.).**

*It is necessary to design a system based on:*

- Setting up a radar system to capture all forms of unease that could potentially lead to an outbreak of unsafety
- Establishing a mechanism (an official or informal committee in the local area) to monitor and evaluate this unease in order to try and redirect it
- In terms of more serious situations, that are more likely to lead to an outbreak, it is necessary to:
  - > Establish a collection of arguments, stories and messages
  - > Talk to the affected groups
  - > Talk to leaders or influencers
  - > Consider actions where the problem is actively dealt with by the government, proposing solutions and working jointly with other actors. Common problem = common solutions

- > In this sense, also having a strategy for local media
- > Establish a flexible calendar of actions and reevaluation
- > Base our actions on transparency, which will generate credibility
- > Use simple language that avoids euphemisms that are rebuffed
- > We must also look for a two-directional system beyond the monitoring and search for information through existing networks and proposed dialogue. Instant messaging systems, through Whatsapp or Telegram, suggestions boxes, etc., should allow anyone to provide immediate information related to security issues that they consider important beyond the emergency
- > Have a bot system available to answer the most frequent questions. It is more a matter of knowing that you are being listened to in the moment than of actual effectiveness, but the overall picture of communications carried out by this system allows you to get an idea of what people are worried about.



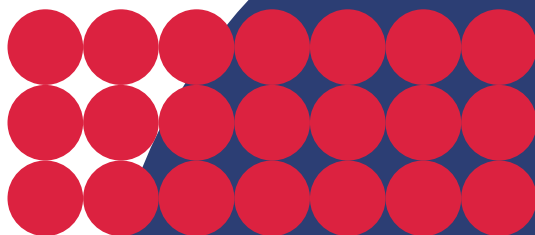
## > Internal implementation of proposals

It is necessary to establish a direct and flexible communication circuit regarding these detected and assessed potential problems that reach a sufficient level of responsibility. It is common for communication channels in large organisations to be long, complicated and slow. In any case, we need to establish small teams of few people who can present the situation to management: problem + solution. Complex circuits with multiple levels and people intervening lead to a lack of flexibility, and eventually the only positive point that they bring to the table is knowing where a warning about a problem got stuck (when it is already too late). Of course, this problem disappears in municipalities and in small and medium-sized organisations.

It is important for the technical level, who are able to propose answers, to be in contact with people with decision making powers, without intermediaries that could make communication more difficult. It is important that the decision proposals are reasoned and that they explain the expected results using research or previous experiences and their advantages in relation to more traditional, and even more popular, responses. For example, in the case of drug trafficking, there is quite clear evidence from previous experiences that police raids, which can give those suffering from drug trafficking in their surroundings, or even the public in general, a certain sense of comfort, do not tackle the problem in the medium and long term.

Professionals must be prepared to adequately defend their proposals, with concrete arguments and evidence, even if for them there is no doubt of their benefits. Debating is the only way to convince those who, for reasons beyond their control, are willing to prefer alternative answers.

However, once the decision has been made, completely or partially following the proposal made, it is necessary to inform the actors involved so that they feel that their work has been recognised and that they are willing to collaborate both in the implementation of decisions and in future assessments and proposals.







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