The 911 Call: The Critical Starting Point
Best Practices in 911 Response to Domestic Violence-Related Calls

With Jane Sadusky and Emily DeBroux

Critical role of 911
- Initial call takers
- Immediate link to responding officers
- Longer term link between incident and prosecution and probation

Best Practices in 911 Call Taking
What do we mean by “Best Practice”?

▪ Lessons from 70+ communities’ analysis of responses to battering
▪ Research of outcomes in criminal justice intervention for women and children

Lesson: Complex systems not designed to account for battering

Coordinate & organize work to account for battering

Enhanced safety & accountability

For 911, “Best Practice” means:

▪ Communicate effectively, respectfully, safely
▪ Determine emergency and priority
▪ Direct responding officers
▪ Establish the type and level of danger
▪ Advance safety
▪ Document info related to the emergency
▪ Continuing engagement

Assessing 911 response

▪ Policy change
▪ Best practice implementation
▪ Ongoing monitoring
911 call review
- Checklists
- Redacted calls
- Listen once, listen again to analyze

Assess for the following best practices in 911 call taking:
- Communicate effectively, respectfully, and safely
- Establish the type and level of danger

Call 1: Communicate effectively, respectfully, and safely with callers
- Respond to callers unable to speak
- Elicit information safely
- Promote safety
- Respond to calls that are disconnected
- Awareness of cultural and social factors
- Communicate core messages
Call 1

Call 2: Establish the type and level of danger

- Elicit information from the caller about:
  - Immediate danger
  - Aggression/harm that has occurred or is occurring
  - Suspect’s history
- Determine the risk to:
  - Persons at the scene
  - Responding officers

Call 2
Using call reviews to assess 911 practice

- Who?
- What?
- When?
- Why?

Best Practice Assessment Tools

A set of tools for a small, interdisciplinary group to review response to domestic violence-related cases in four key areas of criminal legal system intervention:

911 → Patrol → Investigation → Charging

Making the connections...

Coordinated Community Response → Best Practice Assessment
Features of Best Practice Assessment

- A specific focus
- Conducted by a small team
- Checklists of core practices
- Practitioner-advocate partnership

To learn more...

Tools and technical assistance provided by Praxis:

- www.praxisinternational.org
  - Go to Our Programs, Institutional Analysis/Community Assessment
  - Vast audio archive and resources on analyzing institutional responses to violence against women
  - Domestic Violence Best Practice Assessment Guides

Questions?

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