Excerpted from Chapter 1 of the Blueprint for Safety

FOUNDATIONS OF EFFECTIVE INTERVENTION©

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NOTE: Chapter 1 conveys the design, intent, and principles of the Blueprint for Safety as created in St. Paul, MN. Communities are asked to include this chapter in its entirety as an introduction to their local adaptation.

In the 1970s, women across the country began organizing to call attention to and end the abuse of women by their husbands or male partners. They sought an end to this pervasive violence and its resulting death, injury, fear, and harm to women and their children and communities. As a result of this work, the first shelters opened and advocates across the country began to seek changes in the law that would protect victims of abuse, including expanded sanctions under criminal law and options for civil protection orders. In the 1980s, proponents of change began to emphasize the need for agencies in the criminal legal system to work together more effectively by sharing information and coordinating intervention. Duluth, Minnesota, became the first community to establish such a "coordinated community response" and mandate arrest for domestic assault. The Duluth Model, as it came to be known, has been replicated throughout the country and around the world. Tribal and non-tribal communities have used the model to establish their own coordinated, interagency response to domestic violence cases.

In 2007, Praxis International and the City of Saint Paul, Minnesota, took the next step of innovation when they developed the Blueprint for Safety (Blueprint), a first-of-its-kind comprehensive approach for addressing domestic violence in the criminal legal system.[1] The Blueprint integrates the knowledge gleaned from almost forty years of research, demonstration projects, and practice into a "blueprint" for city and county agencies responding to domestic violence-related crimes. The Blueprint for Safety is the result of conversations and consultation with victims and survivors, advocates, practitioners, defense attorneys, researchers, agency leaders, and experts in confronting this crime both locally and nationally. The united leadership of advocacy, core intervening agencies, and the court creates a successful Blueprint community. Such leadership is the basis for any community's effort to confront this devastating form of violence.

St. Paul's experience has continued to shape the Blueprint. Another phase of innovation began in 2011 when the Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women launched a demonstration initiative to test adaptation of the Blueprint in Duluth, Minnesota; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Shelby County/Memphis, Tennessee. The three communities tested the Blueprint under different local conditions, including Duluth and its decades of experience with coordinated community response. The experiences and lessons from these early adapters helped produce a detailed, step-by-step adaptation guide published by Praxis International in 2015: *A Guide to Becoming a Blueprint Community: An Interagency Response to Battering and Domestic Violence Crimes.*[2]

The Blueprint for Safety is a coordinated justice system response to domestic violence crimes that positions this complex system to respond more quickly and effectively and enhance its capacity to stop violence, reduce harm, and save lives. It is a coordinated community response (CCR), fully articulated. While the Blueprint is applicable to the broad range of domestic violence crimes, its primary focus is on the response to battering in intimate partner relationships.[3]

The Blueprint presents the first comprehensive, written interagency plan in the nation for the criminal legal system's response to domestic violence crimes, from 911 through sentencing and probation. It unites each step in the process around consistent identification and communication of risk. It is distinctive in its emphasis on self-examination and problem-solving, foundational principles, and a central role for community-based advocacy in its leadership and partnerships.

FOUNDATION PRINCIPLES

The Blueprint is anchored in six foundational principles we have identified as essential characteristics of intervention that maximize safety for victims of domestic violence and holds offenders accountable while offering them opportunities to change. These principles are:

1. Adhere to an **interagency approach and collective intervention goals**
2. Build attention to the **context and severity** of abuse into each intervention
3. Recognize that most domestic violence is a **patterned crime** requiring continuing engagement with victims and offenders
4. Ensure **sure and swift** consequences for continued abuse
5. Use the power of the criminal justice system to **send messages of help and accountability**
6. Act in ways that **reduce unintended consequences and the disparity of impact** on victims and offenders

Endnotes highlighting research findings, academic literature, and intervention models supportive of these foundational elements can be found at the end of each chapter, with a complete bibliography in Chapter 9.

1. INTERAGENCY APPROACH[4] AND COLLECTIVE GOALS

Processing a single domestic violence-related case involves five levels of government and over a dozen intervening agencies. Hundreds of practitioners might touch these cases every day. An effective response—meaning one that leads to an end to the violence—requires *solid coordination* across and among the many practitioners involved, as well as a strong *system of accountability*. Practitioners are committed to the mission, function, and goals of their respective agencies, but in an interagency approach they are also accountable to the victim on whose behalf they intervene, to the offender with whom they intervene, and to others intervening in the case. This interagency approach requires a *system of communication* in which each practitioner receives and relays information in ways that make it possible for everyone to act with the best knowledge of the case. An effective interagency response requires a *commitment to excellence* by each intervening agency and practitioner, as well as *a commitment to challenge one another and actively engage in resolving disagreements.* When so many agencies are involved in case processing there will be differences, arguments, and unmet expectations. Disagreement in itself is not the problem. The problem arises when there is no ongoing structured way

to resolve those conflicts. Interagency approaches succeed when everyone focuses on a shared goal that is centered on the needs of the victims and families harmed by the violence and brutality.

The criminal court process demands a high level of coordination to carry out the dozens of case processing steps involved in the response. The criminal codes, rules of evidence and procedure, case law, administrative forms and processes, calendars and schedules, databases, and information sharing protocols dictate how interagency collaboration is organized. The Blueprint provides additional structure by introducing coordinating elements designed specifically to enhance approaches to domestic violence related cases:

- In a criminal domestic violence case that involves over one hundred institutional steps, the Blueprint creates **written policies** for each core processing point. Beginning with the 911 operator and ending with the probation officer who discharges a case months or even years later, each policy is written with each practitioner's role in mind. The Blueprint's interlocking policies serve two purposes: (1) to standardize research-based practices and processes so that the public as well as system practitioners can count on a consistent, effective, and fair response[5]; and (2) to bring agencies with distinctive missions and goals together under a common set of collective goals centralizing victim safety and offender accountability. Shared, agreed-upon intervention goals help present clear messages, expectations, and actions to both victims and offenders.
- Each policy is accompanied by **administrative protocols or procedures** that coordinate workers' actions while simultaneously avoiding turning each practitioner into a robot, devoid of professional skills and judgment. Every form, matrix, set of guidelines, report writing format, and assessment tool has been designed to address the unique characteristics of this crime and the interagency nature of case management.
- Via a **system of documentation and information sharing,** each intervention step is woven together with the subsequent steps in case processing. The legal system is a text-based system, meaning that case files and related documents coordinate workers across agencies and disciplines and time and distance. What a law enforcement officer is trained and required to record about an incident, for example, has an impact on charging, trial decisions, sentencing, probation conditions, and rehabilitation programming. Risk scales, charging guidelines, and sentencing matrices are significant factors in how a complex institution processes thousands of cases. The Blueprint uses new and enhanced approaches to gathering, recording, and disseminating information on cases. This information sharing system is linked to agreed-upon intervention goals in domestic violence cases and to efforts to coordinate interventions across agencies.

- Each policy also sets a foundation from which public agencies and practitioners can clearly delineate their respective **roles and functions.** A multiagency coordinated response requires connections between and across practitioners so that it is impossible to lose sight of the nature of the harm, the likely danger, and the opportunities for action and change in each case. The Blueprint calls on each practitioner in each intervening agency to be oriented toward collective goals, as well as toward those of their own agencies. Those collective goals are to (a) protect adult and child victims from ongoing abuse, (b) impose meaningful consequences for the harm, (c) help offenders who are willing to change, and (d) reduce the unintended negative consequences of state intervention for individuals and communities. Community-based advocacy has a distinctive role under the Blueprint in keeping the interagency response grounded in an understanding of the lives and needs of victims of battering. Community-based advocacy helps ensure that the process of adapting and implementing the Blueprint engages with a range of community members, from victims and survivors to populations overrepresented and/or underserved in the criminal legal system. The Blueprint sets an expectation that a fully accountable CCR recognizes that a core role of advocacy is to identify problems, to say when and how policy and practice are not meeting the needs of victims of battering in the community.

2. ATTENTION TO CONTEXT AND SEVERITY

The term "domestic violence" has come to include many kinds of behaviors within relationships between family and other household members. It lumps together vastly different actions: from throwing a shoe at a partner who gambled away a thousand dollars to strangling a woman to unconsciousness because she wants out of the relationship; from slapping someone on the arm to head-butting. The term domestic violence focuses attention on specific acts of violence toward a family member and obscures the context of that violence, which often includes ongoing coercion, intimidation, and emotional harm.

What has been largely submerged under the broad category of domestic violence is ***battering***, a term recognized, defined, and brought to public attention in the 1970s by advocates responding to the realities of sustained abuse in women's lives, primarily by their intimate partners. Battering came to describe an ongoing pattern of coercion, intimidation, and emotional abuse, reinforced by the use and threat of physical or sexual violence.[6] As laws were enacted to protect victims of battering and hold batterers accountable, the term "domestic violence" was adopted to be inclusive of most abuse occurring in the home among people in intimate or familial relationships. *Domestic* violence emphasized the setting: the home. Apart from child abuse, violence involving intimate partners or other family members came under the same definition: i.e., it became domestic violence. Laws passed with battering in mind were applied to teenagers hitting their parents, to one brother hitting another, to a husband strangling his wife, and to that wife scratching her husband in response. Slogans like "zero tolerance for violence in the home" hindered critical reflection about the differences between these acts of violence.

Applying a single treatment to such a broad range of human interactions and behaviors, however, inhibits meaningful intervention for victims and for perpetrators.[7] For example, grouping all acts of violence together, regardless of intent and context, leads to treating a battered woman or a teenage child who reacts to abuse with violence (albeit illegally) the same as the person who dominates his partner through a pattern of fear, coercion and violence: i.e., all become "domestic violence perpetrators." Placing all acts of relationship violence into a single category of "misdemeanor domestic violence" or "felony domestic violence" can distort understanding of who is doing what to whom, and who needs what level of protection from whom. For victims of battering, such misunderstandings are not benign and they can have fatal effects, as analysis of intimate partner homicide confirms.[8]

The Blueprint differentiates

battering (characterized by ongoing, patterned coercion, intimidation and violence) from **resistive** violence in response to battering and **non-battering** intimate partner violence. When the Blueprint refers to "domestic violence crimes," it is primarily concerned with those that occur in the context of battering, although its policies, protocols, and tools benefit the response to all forms of domestic violence.

The challenge is to make visible all that can possibly be known about the full scope of abuse occurring in a relationship.[9] Interveners must be able to see the scope and severity of the offender's violence, how often and under what circumstances it is occurring, and the pattern of the abuse. Is the violence escalating, deescalating, potentially lethal, or unpredictable? In designing the Blueprint, we were tempted to build it around typologies of domestic violence offenders, but decided that such an approach presented too many traps related to due process and safety. Instead, we built differentiation into each step of the process, supported by intense attention to gathering, documenting, disseminating, and building on new information over a period of time and by frequent, ongoing contact with offenders and victims[10]. This differentiation supports intervention tailored to the specifics of a case and the unique aspects and different levels of violence and abuse that offenders use and to which victims are subjected.

This process of differentiation is not new to the Blueprint. Law enforcement experts and state legislatures have recognized the need for differentiation by passing laws that discourage dual arrests even when evidence exists to arrest both parties in a domestic abuse-related case. Instead, these laws encourage officers to arrest the predominant aggressor and permit prosecutors to respond to the specifics of a case in new ways.

To respond to domestic violence without inadvertently causing further harm requires differentiating who is doing what to whom, and with what impact. The Blueprint directs practitioners to gather

information that illuminates both the pattern of abuse and the specific acts being committed. Policies and protocols then propose different interventions based on the circumstances, frequency, and severity of abuse. The Blueprint's expectation of ongoing leadership by and consultation with community-based advocates also helps maintain this focus on understanding and identifying the context of the abuse.

3. A PATTERNED CRIME REQUIRING CONTINUING ENGAGEMENT

A domestic violence crime is rarely fully resolved with the first intervention.[11] For those offenders who have much to lose by criminal justice intervention, a single legal action may be enough to jolt them out of thinking that violence is an effective way of dealing with their relationship. For another group of offenders who batter, the violence will not stop or decrease significantly in severity until there are repeated interventions. There is a small but volatile group with long and violent criminal histories for whom sanctions have little or no impact. If the violence is caused by mental illness, brain trauma, or similar factors, multiple and very specific interventions may be necessary.

Because the criminal legal system is incident-focused, most domestic violence–related criminal interventions focus on a single event (stalking cases perhaps the exception, if they are pursued). But most practitioners charged with intervening understand that these single acts of violence are usually part of a patterned use of coercion, intimidation, and the use or threat of violence—namely, battering—and related to repeated actions and threats committed over time and in countless situations. Interventions to process a single case of assault look different than interventions intended to stop the continued use of abuse and violence.[12] The Blueprint is designed to both process the "event" of a crime *and* do so in a manner that confronts and stops the pattern of abuse and violence.

This dual approach to intervention has important implications for an interagency approach. First, practitioners must be prepared to link seemingly isolated incidents into a more coherent picture of behavior and complexity of risk and safety for any one victim. Second, they must see their shared task and function as reaching beyond that single event to stopping future abuse. Without significant change on the part of the offender, the coercion and violence is likely to continue and may escalate in severity and frequency.

The patterned nature of battering means that the criminal legal system's contact with a victim or offender will likely continue over a period of time. This extended contact provides the opportunity to build relationships that reinforce safety and accountability in more lasting ways. If a victim is reluctant or refuses to participate in a prosecution and court intervention at a given point, how system practitioners treat her or him will shape the possibilities for a future partnership.[13] As an investigator explained:

> *If I treat her with respect and let her know I'm concerned the first time I meet her, when it happens again she is more likely to take my call, or even call me. If I get frustrated and angry because I need her in order to get to him and I throw up my hands, saying 'fine, you want to live that way go ahead,' then I'm just one more person slapping her in the face.*

As two patrol officers noted:

> *What I do and say the first time we go out on a case sets the tone for what the next officer faces. If she's*

hostile and in my face and I treat her with respect and let her know we are here for her and her kids when they need us, the next officer (or maybe even the one after that) will be dealing with a different person...

Let's just put it this way, I'm not the one getting bashed up and pushed around and treated like an animal, so I'm in a better position to extend that hand. It might take two or three of us and different calls, but eventually most women get to a point where the police aren't the enemy and then they want to work together...

To produce a more meaningful and individualized response requires collaborating with victims in ways that acknowledge the nature of domestic violence as a patterned offense. This means:

- Wherever possible, minimize the victim's need to confront the offender.
- Protect the victim from retaliation when using information that she or he has provided.
- Treat each interaction with the victim as an opportunity to build collaboration over multiple interventions (even when a victim starts out hostile to those interventions).
- Stay mindful of the complex and often dangerous implications of a victim's collaboration with interveners.[14]
- Be aware that the fundamental purpose of battering, which characterizes the majority of domestic violence criminal cases, is to control what the victim says, thinks, feels, and does.[15]
- Engage in a dialogue with the victim rather than treating her or him as a data point.
- Avoid unintentionally reinforcing the abuser's actions: offer a clear alternative to messages that the victim is crazy, at fault, unbelievable, and unable to make decisions, and that the abuser is unstoppable.[16]

The distinctive role of community-based advocacy in a Blueprint community is critical to establishing an environment and practice of continuing engagement with victims of battering.[17] Community-based advocacy provides a setting where victims of battering can speak confidentially and openly—including those who are fearful of and try to avoid the criminal legal system or those whose experience with the system has left them feeling less safe. The interagency response turns to and relies on the advocacy organization(s) to serve as a bridge between victims and the system and to help identify whether and how victim engagement practices are working at each step of the criminal case process.[18]

The Blueprint promotes an advocacy-initiated response as a foundation for continuing engagement throughout the criminal legal system process. Under an advocacy-initiated response (AIR), the arresting officer contacts the community-based advocacy program to let them know an arrest has been made and informs the victim that an advocate will be in contact. How that contact occurs varies according to how the AIR has been set up. It might be a phone call at the scene initiated by the responding officer, a follow-up phone call after the officer leaves, or, in some circumstances, an advocate coming to the scene. However the link with advocacy is made, AIR offers the victim confidential services related to her immediate safety needs, information about the court process, what she wants to have happen in court, and her wishes regarding contact with her partner.

4. SURE AND SWIFT CONSEQUENCES

Research into domestic violence suggests that sure and swift sanctions are more important than severe punishment in confronting this crime.[19] Evidence points to building sure and swift consequences into the infrastructure of case processing[20] as a path to reducing recidivism in some cases and the severity of ongoing abuse in others.[21]

The national data is encouraging,[22] although day-to-day work in the criminal justice system can leave many practitioners frustrated and skeptical that the changes made over the past several decades have actually reduced violence.[23]

Batterers tend to push against any boundary set for them.[24] The clearer the message about what behavior is and is not acceptable, the more likely the abuser is to live within those boundaries.[25] Each policy and administrative protocol in the Blueprint, from the initial law enforcement contact through case closure, is designed with the goal of sure and swift consequences in mind, but also with the recognition that sometimes intervention goals can conflict. For example, if a probationer is arrested for assaulting his former partner, that new case may take months to resolve. The decision to pursue an immediate probation violation for committing a new offense is weighed against the possibility that the violation hearing might pose problems for the new case, which carries a more substantial and enhanced penalty. A prosecutor might prefer to wait for the new conviction to avoid such complications. Waiting, however, might result in the defendant having free license to harass the victim. One course of action—pursuing the probation violation—reinforces swift consequences. The other course of action—pursuing an enhanced charge—may reinforce more substantial consequences.[26] The Blueprint policies and protocols address these dilemmas, sometimes with a mandate requiring practitioners to take certain actions, sometimes with a set of guiding principles or procedures, and sometimes with a training memo suggesting how to weigh the different outcomes.

The Blueprint

uses interagency policies, protocols, case processing procedures, and information sharing to (a) maximize the state's ability to gain a measure of control over a domestic violence offender; (b) use that control to intervene quickly when there are new acts of violence, intimidation or coercion; and (c) shift the burden of holding the offender accountable for violence or abuse from the *victim* to the *system*.

5. MESSAGES OF HELP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The single greatest obstacle to the criminal justice system's effective intervention in battering cases is the degree of psychological and physical control the abuser has over the victim.[27] Batterers rely on this power to shield themselves from legal interventions. Therefore, engaging with a victim of battering hinges on our success in conveying that (a) our intervention will counteract that power, (b) as practitioners we understand the reality of living with battering, (c) we have a genuinely collaborative approach, and (d) we are here to help, however long it takes.

The state, and by extension the practitioners who represent it, have a powerful influence over people. The messages given to victims, offenders, and children at each point of intervention can have a deterrent effect or, alternatively, can fail to deter and therefore act as an opening for more violence.[28]

Consider two linchpin characteristics of battering cases involving heterosexual men. First is the batterer's sense of entitlement to his actions.[29] His partner is the target of his violence not so much because of *what she did* as *who she is*. Research has shown that a cognitive behavioral approach that challenges the abuser's belief systems about his rights and entitlements in intimate relationships is more effective than any other rehabilitation approach.[30] This approach can begin with the dispatcher and responding officer. If they and every subsequent practitioner are coherently and consistently "on-message" about the batterer's accountability for the harm he has caused, the expectations of the rehabilitation program will be set before he enters his first group[31]. This reinforcement cannot happen when each practitioner offers his or her distinct and often competing message about what lies at the root of the problem and what will fix it.

Effective interventions with an offender who is a batterer are respectful and fair, but also clear and consistent that there will be a consequence every time the offender violates a sanction or requirement.[32] This consequence will be sure and swift and it will be linked to what the person chose to do. Batterers need to know that the system is coordinated, the players speak to each other, and it will be futile to try and play one off against the other.[33] Most importantly, batterers have to see that the violence, coercion, and intimidation are the focus of the state's intervention, not the victim's behavior. In this regard, there is no neutrality available to law enforcement officers, prosecutors, or judges: every message either challenges an abuser's sense of entitlement or reinforces it.

The second linchpin characteristic of battering is domination: not only physical, but often economic, social, emotional, psychological, and legal.[34] The practitioner who says to a victim, "look what happened: he hit you once, he'll hit you again," misses the complex nature of batterers' domination of their victims and its far-reaching implications in the lives of women and their children. The abuser's messages to his partner are often linked to her cultural, economic, religious, or spiritual identity.[35] "No one will believe you . . . no one will help you . . . they all know you're crazy . . . you're disgracing the clan (or family) . . . they'll take your kids . . . a good (Native, African American, Christian, Hmong, Jewish) woman doesn't shame her husband this way . . . what about the things you've done: your drinking, your visits to the shrink . . . everyone knows you're bipolar . . . I'm a (cop, minister, lawyer, doctor, hero, trusted businessman in this town), no one will believe you over me . . . think of the family . . . the children need a father, you're taking that away." To counter the power of such messages, system practitioners must

be cognizant of the relentlessly destructive messages that victims hear and, on some level, may have come to believe. Every action taken and every statement made in processing a case can and should be aimed at an efficient, consistent, coherent, clear message that strips the batterer of his most powerful weapon: namely, his insistence that "they can't and won't help you."[36]

Two caveats require attention here. First, not all cases of domestic violence involve heterosexual men battering women. Some involve gay men battering their partners. People with significant mental health problems may assault partners outside of the context of battering. Similarly, a small percentage of drug addicted domestic violence offenders do stop abusing their partners when they stop using drugs. Victims of battering who fight back illegally do not fit the definition of battering either: i.e., resisting is not battering. There are also women who batter their partners—primarily in lesbian relationships, but sometimes, though rarely, in heterosexual relationships. While cases involving battering by men are the prevailing type in the criminal legal system, the Blueprint provides a framework for intervention that benefits all types of intimate partner relationships.

The second caveat is a reminder that in the courtroom, everyone charged with a crime is presumed innocent until proven guilty. Practitioners relay messages at every point of contact and most of those points of contact are pre-conviction. Practitioners must walk a fine line between presuming guilt and being helpful and clear with suspects and victims.

Practitioners have the opportunity to counteract the messages associated with a batterer's defense of the violence and abuse.[37] A batterer (i.e., someone who engages in a continuous pattern of violence and abuse) has seven basic defenses, each with a supporting message. Those messages are: (a) I didn't do it; someone else did, (b) the victim is lying, (c) it was an accident, (d) it was self-defense, (e) it can't be proved, (f) yes, I did it, but you'd do it too in my situation, or (g) I did it, but the officer messed up; they can't convict me of anything. Batterers do not even need to present these defenses when they can rely on their victims to be unavailable to counter or challenge the defenses. Most abusers discourage the victim's participation and reinforce the message that interveners cannot or will not help. Sometimes they do this in blatantly illegal ways; other times they rely on their power over the victim. The criminal legal system's encouragement to a victim to participate in the prosecution and the protection it might offer is typically matched and often overpowered by the pressures a batterer can apply and the consequences he or she can impose for that cooperation.

The Blueprint is embedded with a set of messages that, if coordinated across practitioners and intervening agencies, can contribute to lower recidivism, increased engagement with victims, and less resistance from abusers to the state's role in confronting the abuse. The Blueprint extends messages of help to protect victims and to provide offenders with opportunities for change[38]. It also extends messages of accountability: individual accountability for the harm caused by battering; interagency accountability in building and sustaining an effective response; and intervention's accountability to ensuring protection for victims and fair, respectful treatment of offenders.

Community-based advocacy has a key role in the Blueprint in reinforcing accountability, particularly the accountability of the system overall to the strengthening safety and well-being for victims of battering.

No one else in the community is positioned to hear so directly and candidly from a wide range of victims about their experiences with the criminal legal system response. Advocates are also positioned to see the full range of the response at all steps of case processing, from an initial call to 911 through the span of probation. Again, the advocacy organization(s) serves as a bridge between victims and the system and can help identify whether and how victim engagement practices are working at each step of the criminal case process. For this reason, the Blueprint sets an expectation that public agencies will involve community-based advocacy in implementing and monitoring the new policies and protocols. Advocacy contributions occur via such activities as participation in assessment of current practices, review of proposed policy and protocol revisions, interagency problem-solving and training, and membership on monitoring work groups.

6. REDUCING UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF INTERVENTIONS AND THE DISPARITY OF IMPACT

We do not all experience the world in the same way. People's social realities are constructed by differences in class, age, race and ethnicity, immigration status, sexual orientation, history, privilege, and many other aspects of culture and identity. As a result, we do not all experience battering in the same way, or the actions of interveners or the impact of policies in the same way.[39] An effective domestic violence intervention accounts for the realities of peoples' unique circumstances and social standing. For example, intervention strategies must address the relationship between violence, poverty, homelessness, gender, and race. An effective interagency approach must reduce rather than emphasize the disparity between groups of people with different social realities. Reducing disparity requires us to find ways to sustain compassion for the people we encounter. Working in and around the criminal legal system in general—and responding to domestic violence in particular—is stressful, demanding work. We are constantly dealing with aspects of peoples' lives that are harmful, chaotic, and cruel. It is far too easy for a corrosive cynicism to set in that dismisses those before us as unworthy of help and attention, and diminishes the kind of problem solving that fosters safety and accountability on both individual and systemic levels.

Almost every practitioner in the system can cite a case where everyone did his or her job and every policy was followed, but the outcome of the case was neither just nor protective of the victim. In these familiar cases, the poor outcome is as much due to failures in our intervention strategies as it is about specific abusers. Effective intervention cannot be a blanket, one-dimensional response. Truly implementing the concept of equal treatment under the law requires thoughtful legal interventions that produce just outcomes. Under what circumstances should we adjust for the impact of policy and practice on peoples' different social realities? Whenever possible, the Blueprint introduces ways in which practitioners can reduce the level of disparity produced by their interventions. The ongoing experience of the early Blueprint adaptation communities is helping to identify strategies and tools to discover, talk about, and address the complex issues of disparity.[40]

CONCLUSION

The Blueprint's design incorporates input from hundreds of experts, beginning with dozens of victims of battering who attended focus groups and pinpointed specific ways that interventions could better

promote their safety. Practitioner experts included 911 call takers and dispatchers, warrant officers and jail staff, law enforcement officers, prosecutors, probation agents, and judges. Community-based advocates and prosecution-based advocates contributed critical perspectives on the experiences of victims in the criminal legal system. The Blueprint's designers consulted with a national team of researchers and deliberated nearly every line of the policy and protocol templates with supervisors from each participating agency.

In the past forty years, many communities have come a long way toward building working relationships, alliances, and collaboration among advocates, law enforcement, prosecutors, probation agents, and other interveners, both with one another and with victims of battering. These relationships have produced a far more intentional and effective approach to public intervention in what was once considered a private crime. This effort has significantly reduced intimate partner homicides overall and introduced options for victims of domestic violence that were unheard of in our parents' and grandparents' time. It has meant that women, who are most often the victims of domestic violence, live for far shorter periods of time in an abusive relationship, as do their children.

Nonetheless, the work is by no means complete. According to analysis by the Violence Policy Center, 1,615 females were murdered by male perpetrators in the United States in 2013 (in single victim/single offender incidents). Ninety-four percent of women killed nationwide knew their assailants, who were usually current or former husbands or boyfriends.[41] Among homicides overall, female victims are substantially more likely than male victims to have been killed by an intimate, a percentage that has unfortunately increased since 1980.[42] Women have been shot, stabbed, strangled, and/or beaten to death, often with great brutality and often in the presence of or during an attack against their children as well. Similarly, with collateral homicides and assaults of the children, allies (e.g., family members, friends, attorneys), and new partners of victims of battering. Unreported are the countless "near homicides"—non-fatal often thanks to prompt medical attention—and the even greater unknown number of people who endure ongoing and daily coercion, intimidation, and violence with devastating impacts on their safety, health, and well-being. Many victims of battering are reluctant to call police for help, fearing that the police—and, by extension, the criminal legal system—would not believe them or do nothing to help them.[43]

The Blueprint for Safety is the next wave of change in addressing the persistent and pervasive form of violence against women that has come to be known as battering. The Blueprint is change grounded in decades of knowledge and experience. We have learned that each encounter between someone living with this violence and a practitioner in the criminal legal system is an opportunity to interrupt the actions and patterns that sustain battering. The Blueprint organizes us to present a cohesive set of messages to victims and perpetrators.

To adult victims:

We're here to help when you're ready for that help.

The violence is not your fault and you are not responsible for the perpetrator's actions.

We're concerned for your safety—by working together we have the best chance of stopping the violence.

To children:

You haven't done anything wrong—it's not your fault.

We want everyone to be safe and we're here to help you and your family.

We won't hurt your father or mother.

To perpetrators:

The violence must stop—there is help for you to do that and there will be consequences if you don't.

This arrest (or prosecution or probation) is a result of your actions and not the actions of others.

This is an opportunity for you to change, to reject the violence and repair the harm you have caused, and we can help you do that.

In its structure and content, the Blueprint prepares agencies and practitioners across the criminal legal system to carry these messages with one voice.

Underlying Assumptions in the Blueprint

In our grandparents' generation, women had few options for finding safety from battering. There were no organized shelters or religious or community support systems challenging the abuser (although informal confrontations occurred in many communities). Law enforcement was expected to calm the situation and leave. All but the most serious assaults were screened out of the criminal legal system and the few arrests that occurred were rarely prosecuted. That all changed, beginning with the opening of the first shelter for battered women and the first interagency intervention project. The last forty years have seen enormous changes in the state's response to intimate partner violence. For the first time in history, the state's obligation to protect its citizens was applied to "wives."[44]

In any society, widespread use of violence, aggression, and coercion in families is a cultural phenomenon. Such violence is rooted in unjust social structures which the criminal legal system alone cannot unravel. The criminal legal system plays two important roles in reducing violence in families, however, by (1) enforcing laws which challenge a once accepted cultural practice (similar to the legal system's impact on drinking and driving, child labor, sexual harassment in the workplace, and exposure to secondhand smoke); and by (2) stopping individual abusers from doing more harm. It is one of many public institutions that convey social norms and rein in unacceptable behavior. It strives to accomplish this by responding with sure and swift consequences to those whose battering makes the home a place of fear rather than a place of refuge.

For almost four decades, survivors and community-based advocates have raised the voice of concern that too little is being done to stop the violence. Researchers have sent mixed messages about what works and what does not work. Organized opposition to reform has grown. As one criminal court judge shared with a colleague:

> *I've always thought that in domestic violence cases I could be the only person in the courtroom—no defendant, no victim, no attorneys; not a clerk or deputy in sight, not a motion to rule on or decision to make—and still I'd be absolutely sure I was doing something wrong.*

The judge's frustrations are shared by many in the criminal legal system. Intimate partner violence is a complex type of crime. The offender's control over the victim can make effective intervention incredibly difficult and time-consuming. The good news is that our overall strategy of using the legal system to stop the violence appears to be making a difference, particularly in homicide rates. Spousal homicides overall dropped by 46% between 1976 and 2004. The number of black males killed by their partners dropped an astounding 82%, black females by 56%, and white males by 55%.[45] Between 1994 and 2011, the rate of serious intimate partner violence against females declined by 72% for females and 64% for males.[46] Battered women and their children face a very different reality today than did our grandmothers.[47]

Few in the criminal legal system are comforted by such statistics when law enforcement calls and courtroom calendars are still overflowing with domestic violence–related cases. The Blueprint proposes the next level of change. It rests on years of experience in interagency coordination; research on arrests, sentencing, and treatment of batterers; statistical trends; a year-long process of interagency negotiation in Saint Paul; and the experience of the adaptation demonstration initiative. Blueprint policies and protocols are designed to guide every practitioner to do everything possible each time a person reaches out to this mammoth institution for help. Each assumption underlying the Blueprint is supported by research (see Chapter 9, Endnotes: Research, Literature, and Intervention Models). The Blueprint is an attempt to integrate what we have collectively come to understand as recommended practice in the criminal justice system response to domestic violence.

- When work is coordinated within and across agencies, the overall capacity to protect is increased.
- The action of one practitioner is strengthened by the cumulative effect of coordinated actions across the criminal justice system.
- When the system is organized to treat a case as part of an ongoing pattern of criminal activity rather than a singular event, outcomes improve.
- Interagency coordination is strengthened when information is organized around common risk markers that are uniformly collected and shared.
- Not all domestic violence is the same; interventions are different for violent acts that lack a context of coercion, intimidation and control (e.g. cases of mental illness, isolated events, victims of abuse reacting).
- Sending clear and consistent messages of offender accountability and victim safety can reduce the violence.

- Whenever possible the criminal legal system must shift the burden of confrontation from the victim to the intervening practitioner.
- Danger and repeat violence from the perpetrator can be anticipated when certain actions and behaviors are visible.
- It is important for every act of aggression by the offender to be met with sure and swift consequences.
- Intervention policies and protocols should be adapted to diminish unintended consequences that adversely affect marginalized populations.

Human rights leader Archbishop Desmond Tutu tells us that justice demands three things: (1) that the truth be told, (2) that the harm be repaired to whatever extent humanly possible, and (3) that the conditions that gave rise to the injustice be changed.[48] The Blueprint envisions and builds a path to all three elements of justice for those subjected to violence, aggression, and coercion in their intimate relationships and families.

PRACTITIONERS' GUIDE TO RISK AND DANGER

The following is an abbreviated list of factors related to risk and danger in domestic violence. Most of the research is based on violence toward women, which reflects the majority of cases coming into the criminal justice system. The presence of these indicators suggests that one of the following outcomes is likely without effective intervention: the violence will (1) continue, (2) escalate, and/or (3) become lethal.

Practitioners **should not assume** that the Guide to Risk and Danger lists every possible risk marker for continued violence or lethality. Instead, the guide uses key categories of risk to identify the indicators of severe violence or lethality. Each practitioner should be familiar with, look for, and document the key categories of risk and danger included in the guide. They can then weigh this information from the research with their own experience in domestic violence cases and the conditions highlighted in the guide as particularly associated with increased risk and lethality. When there is violence without these risk factors, practitioners should consider the probability that this is a case of either resistive violence or non-battering related domestic violence.[49]

While a victim's perception of danger can be a very powerful predictor of re-assault, 47% of victims of femicide failed to recognize the potential for lethal violence or attempted murder.[50] **At a minimum, an intervening practitioner should always seek to determine**[51]**:**

- How recent was the last violence?
- Is the violence increasing in frequency?
- What types of violence and threats is the victim experiencing?
- Does the victim think [the offender] will seriously injure or kill her or her children?

Under the Blueprint, assessing for risk and danger is built into each step in the response. From the 911 call-taker to the judge and the supervising probation officer, everyone is positioned to understand, collect, and communicate information about the kind of violence that is occurring (context) and the level of harm that has occurred and is likely to occur in the future (dangerousness). The Blueprint seeks to provide practitioners at each point of intervention with the knowledge, authority, and capacity to adjust responses along a continuum of interventions, moving to an elevated and then maximum response depending upon the circumstances surrounding the case[52].

The Blueprint approach differs from that of actuarial tools designed to measure specific acts or factors, such as prior assaults or employment status, and produce a score[53]. The Blueprint seeks to "connect the dots," i.e., to paint a picture of the violence in context and make that picture visible throughout the criminal case process. In that sense, the Blueprint takes a qualitative approach to analyzing risk and danger, using a more narrative framework that adds to, but does not replace, any actuarial tools used to complete certain tasks, such as making pretrial release recommendations.

When a batterer

combines threats or force (coercion) with control, such as "micro-regulating" and "micro-surveillance," the result is entrapment.

- E. Stark (2007)

Practitioners' Guide to Risk and Danger

Using this risk guide

- ❑ Each Blueprint protocol includes specific instructions for documenting and responding to risk. Practitioners should also read *Appendix 1B: Training Memo—Risk and Dangerousness.*
- ❑ Elicit and document the risk factors contained in this guide. Whenever possible, talk with the victim; engage in a discussion about danger rather than just asking if these things have happened. Victim perceptions and interpretations are important.
- ❑ Communicate risk factors to other intervening practitioners in a timely manner.
- ❑ Be attentive to the factors in a given case; use experience, common sense, and training to make judgments about the level of danger that both the offender and the set of circumstances pose.
- ❑ Adjust the response to each case based on the level of risk and dangerousness.
- ❑ Protect the victim from retaliation when soliciting or using safety and risk information.
- ❑ Link victims with risk factors to an advocate.
- ❑ Stay alert; the level and type of risk will likely change over time and as circumstances change. Determining and managing risk is an ongoing process.
- ❑ A victim's attempt to terminate the relationship is a major change that poses increased risk.
- ❑ Victims' perceptions of high danger are typically accurate; their perceptions of low danger are often not.

Acts or threats of violence associated with risk & lethality

Factors listed in italics are particularly associated with lethal violence

- *Stalking*
- *Strangulation; attempts to "choke"*
- *Threats to kill the victim*
- *Threats to kill that the victim believes or fears*
- *Threats to kill that are conveyed to others*
- *Threats of suicide*
- *Forced sex or pressuring for sex even when separated*
- *Serious injury to the victim*
- *Carries, has access to, uses, or threatens with a weapon*
- *Violence outside of the home*
- Aggression toward interveners
- Threats to family, coworkers, victim's new partner
- Animal abuse or killing pets
- Damages victim's property
- Violent during pregnancy or shortly after birth
- Hostage-taking; restraint
- Acts exhibiting extreme hostility toward the victim

Coercion

Violence with a pattern of coercion is a serious marker of high risk violence. Coercion may be displayed as control of children, finances, or activities; sexual aggression; intimidation; hurting pets; or isolating the victim from support systems.

Risk is higher when the violence is accompanied by:

- *An increase in frequency, severity, or type of violence over recent months*
- *Almost daily impairment by alcohol or drugs*
- *The victim attempting a permanent break*
- *Estrangements, separations, and reunions*
- *Failure of prior interventions to affect the offender*
- *A victim who expresses fear of threats to kill*
- *A victim making no attempt to leave despite severe abuse*
- *Prior arrests, law enforcement calls, and/or protection order(s)*
- Isolation of victim (physical or social)
- A victim seeking outside help in the past year
- A victim has a child who is not the offender's
- An abuser leaves before law enforcement arrive; eludes warrants
- An abuser's:
  - Lack of remorse
  - Mental health issues
  - Financial difficulty; unstable housing
  - Generalized aggression or violent acts
  - Ongoing efforts to take children from their mother
  - History of violence in multiple relationships
  - First act of violence is life-threatening or brutal
  - Obsessive control of victim's daily activities
  - Obsessive jealously
  - Significant and harmful use of a child
  - Drawing others into the abuse (e.g., children, family, friends)
  - Non-compliance with probation or pre-trial release conditions

Homicide-Suicide (for male offenders) accounts for 27-32% of the lethal domestic violence incidents

Predominant risk markers include: *guns, patterns of estrangement and reunion and offender's poor mental health*. Additional risk markers are:

- Obsession or jealousy
- Alcohol impairment (23 to 38% of perpetrators)
- History of domestic violence
- Suicide attempts or threats
- Personality disorder
- Depression of offender (46%)

Women who kill male partners

Predominant risk markers include: *severe, increasingly frequent, and recent violence by male partner against the defendant; a defendant who is isolated and has few social resources*. Additional risk markers are:

- Access or prior use of weapons
- More than 10 violent incidents in the last year at the hands of the person killed
- Law enforcement intervention in one or more domestic violence calls in past year
- Prior strangulation by person killed
- Traditional relationship (married, children, lengthy relationship)
- Trapped and isolated in violent relationship
- Defendant sought help

Note: The absence of any of these factors such as "defendant sought help" should not lead to a conclusion that there is no risk. These are not absolute correlations.

J.C. Campbell, D. Webster, et al., "Assessing Risk Factors for Intimate Partner Homicide," NIJ Journal No. 250 (2003): 15-19.
P.R. Kropp, Intimate Partner Violence Risk Assessment and Management, Violence and Victims 23(2), (2008): 202-220.
J. Roehl, C. O'Sullivan, et al., "Intimate Partner Violence Risk Assessment Validation Study, Final Report," (2005).
N. Websdale, "Lethality Assessment Tools: A Critical Analysis," (2000).

ADAPTING THE *BLUEPRINT FOR SAFETY*

The Blueprint is a distinct blend of approach, process, and document. As an **approach**, the Blueprint is a shared way of thinking about battering and domestic violence. It gets everyone on the same page under a common understanding of the intimidation and violence that characterize battering and how to intervene most successfully. The Blueprint is also a **process** for shared problem identification and problem solving based on regular monitoring and adjustments to practice. As a **document**, the Blueprint is a set of written policies, protocols, and training memos drawn from research and best-known practice. While each agency writes its own policy and protocols, the Blueprint framework and templates connect agencies in a unified, collective policy.

The Blueprint envisions a system in which each practitioner is tuned in to what others can and will likely do when intervening in domestic violence cases. We therefore recommend one reading of the published *Blueprint for Safety: An Interagency Response to Domestic Violence Crimes* from start to finish, rather than looking only at a single agency or role.

Chapters 2 – 8 of the Blueprint include policies and protocols that are anchored in the specific agency and practitioner roles in responding to domestic violence cases. Readers will find some repetition in content as the protocols further articulate and define the broad policy language and interagency response.

Chapter endnotes referenced throughout expand upon and buttress the Blueprint approach and process. The endnotes and references prepare those seeking to become a Blueprint community to be well-versed in the research, commentary, and national experience that supports the Blueprint. The endnotes integrate data from empirical studies, academic research, domestic violence and criminal justice literature, and national resources developed by and for practitioners. The concluding chapter includes a bibliography of cited research, academic literature, and intervention models.

Two questions are commonly asked regarding adaptation of the published document and its templates, training memos, and other supplemental material:

Can the *Blueprint for Safety: An Interagency Response to Domestic Violence Crimes* be copied?

Yes, absolutely. All chapters and related materials can be copied and adopted as-is, with the required citation. The front cover, title page, and back cover or page must include the following: *Adapted from the Blueprint for Safety as created by the City of Saint Paul, Minnesota, the St. Paul/Ramsey County Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, and Praxis International.*

Can the *Blueprint for Safety: An Interagency Response to Domestic Violence Crimes* be altered?

Yes, and no.[54] Any jurisdiction wishing to implement Blueprint policies and protocols is encouraged to use and adapt the language in Chapters 2-8 of the template. While most communities will have to alter the content based on state law and local conditions, some elements of the published document cannot be altered. This includes the foundational narrative and principles in Chapter 1, since they are essential to the meaning of the

Blueprint as an approach to battering and domestic violence-related crimes. Chapter 1 must be included in its entirety, without alteration. In addition, the *Blueprint Guide* (see below) includes an overview of essential elements that must be included regardless of the specific policy format and language used by a particular agency or jurisdiction.[55] Finally, because of the need for precision and consistency, some of the supplemental training memos cannot be altered and are clearly marked as such.

As a result of the national demonstration initiative, communities now have a collection of tools available in the *Blueprint Guide*. *This Guide* supports communities throughout the core phases of a local adaptation. The phases include:

1. Explore community readiness and prepare an adaptation plan.
2. Assess current policy and practice and identify problems that the Blueprint will address.
3. Adapt agency policies to reflect the Blueprint's essential elements.
4. Implement and institutionalize the Blueprint as the new way of working together.
5. Monitor progress and revise the Blueprint as necessary to address gaps in practice and new problems that emerge.

For questions regarding adaptation and use of published Blueprint materials, please contact Praxis International at blueprint@praxisinternational.org.

A victim's decision

to use the criminal justice system in the future was connected to financial dependence on the perpetrator, safety from abuse during prior interventions, and previous support from practitioners.

– R.E. Fleury-Steiner, et al. (2006)

ENDNOTES

1. Published as *The Blueprint for Safety: An Interagency Response to Domestic Violence Crimes* and available with related documents and resources at http://praxisinternational.org/blueprint-home/blueprint-materials/.
2. Available at http://praxisinternational.org/blueprint-home/. Referenced as *Blueprint Guide*.
3. The Blueprint differentiates **battering**, characterized by ongoing, patterned coercion, intimidation, and violence; **resistive** violence, used by victims of battering to resist or defend themselves or others; and **non-battering** violence resulting from such causes as a physical or mental health condition or traumatic brain injury. The legal system's category of "domestic violence" includes many types of abusive behavior and relationships. When the Blueprint refers to "domestic violence crimes," it is primarily concerned with those that occur in the context of battering, although the policies, protocols, and tools included benefit the response to all forms of domestic violence.
4. "The core tenet of most coordinated criminal justice responses [is] the belief that a criminal justice system that predictably and routinely entangles offenders in multiple ways improves the odds that any given offender will encounter a response that may alter his behavior." (Worden, 2003, p. 14)

   Shepard (1999) offers a brief overview of the components of a coordinated community response (CCR) and how they work. Shepard and Pence (1999) provide more in-depth information on building a CCR.

   A number of studies found that a coordinated intervention in domestic violence cases could have a positive, even cumulative, effect on the behavior of the offender. (Murphy, et al., 1998, pp. 278-279; Saunders, 2008, p. 165; Syers and Edleson, 1992, p. 484; Tolman and Weisz, 1995, p. 482; Worden, 2003, p. 13; 2001)

   Sullivan (2006, p. 205) reports an increased responsiveness to victims and improved interagency interactions through a CCR.

   Some studies found CCRs did not fully accomplish their goals or encountered unintended consequences for some victims. These studies are useful to those crafting interagency responses as they help to understand and avoid the pitfalls of this work.

   Bouffard and Muftie (2007) report that the effectiveness of a CCR was related to the quality of the batterer's treatment.

   - Salazar et al. (2007) found unintended consequences of CCR efforts when an increase in domestic violence arrests led to a rise in victim arrests.
   - An audit of five jurisdictions in CA concluded that batterer intervention programs were not working as intended. (California State Auditor, 2006)
   - A study of ten CCRs funded by the Centers for Disease Control found great variation in CCR quality, but no significant impact on domestic violence rates overall. (Klevens et al., 2008)

   The *Greenbook* reports on interagency coordination efforts around the intersection of domestic violence and child maltreatment in six demonstration communities across the U.S. (Edleson et al., 2004, pp. 62-63) While the CCRs were one of the successes of the project, they faced problems with

differences in agency structures, philosophies, power, and trust. Participants reported obstacles to collaboration, including: length of the process, lack of time, and differences in organizational cultures.

In a study of interagency coordination, Gondolf (2009) found a number of problems related to personnel issues: new staff and leadership who were unfamiliar with the goals and history of the CCR, varying levels of involvement or resistance, and loss of trained personnel leaving gaps in institutional knowledge. While caseloads increased, there were also interagency barriers: differing intervention priorities, communication breakdowns, and financial stressors.

Worden (2003) mentions unintended consequences and resistance from key leadership as detriments to coordinated intervention. This author recommends caution in selecting outcome measures and definitions of success.

A study of 48 different domestic violence community collaborations (Nowell, 2009) suggests that the presence of stakeholders who are perceived to be out of sync by other stakeholders with regards to their understanding of domestic violence, but do not acknowledge this apparent disconnect, can negatively impact the effectiveness of the collaborative. In other words, a CCR-type entity is more effective when members have a shared understanding of domestic violence.

The literature also demonstrates facets of CCRs that work well.

“One large scale study of women in the justice system found that the more battered women perceived different agencies as working together, the more highly they rated them in terms of helpfulness and effectiveness and the more satisfied they were both with the legal system in general and with their own individual case outcomes in particular.” (Goodman and Epstein, 2008, p. 85)

Russell and Light (2006) found that victims responded well to police when officers were proactive and part of an integrated team.

Zweig and Burt (2006) found that women’s perceptions of whether community agencies were working together to assist her and her case significantly and positively related to arrests in domestic violence and sexual assault cases and to convictions in domestic violence cases. Perceptions that agencies were working together also increased women’s beliefs that law enforcement and prosecution are effective agencies.

Sullivan (2006, p. 205) says “strong leadership, a shared mission, shared power, and a membership extending across more fields” are needed to accomplish goals.

Worden (2003) recommends building on current relationships and resources with a committed core group.

In a review of 41 coordinating councils, Allen (2006, p. 48) concludes that to create an effective CCR requires an inclusive environment, broad participation, and shared decision-making.

CCR-related qualities and activities were correlated with higher rates of victim contact with intimate partner violence services in CCR communities when compared to communities without this intervention. These qualities and activities included: developing goals based on community needs, selecting priorities based on the salience of the need in the community, efforts to coordinate services, and disseminating information on the frequency of intimate partner violence in the community. (Klevens, et al., 2008)

5. "Offenders should receive swift, clear, meaningful, predictable, and certain consequences for violating probation." (Henderson 2014)

In regards to consistency and fairness see R. Paternoster, R. Brame, R. Bachman, and L. W. Sherman, 1997, p. 164-204.

If offenders perceive the process to be fair, they are less likely to be arrested for domestic violence again. F. S. Taxman, D. Soule, and A. Gelb, 1999, p. 3.

6. While the law brackets physical violence as specific criminal acts, other professional fields use a definition of battering that includes a variety of physical, sexual, and emotional behaviors. For examples, see Asmus et al., 1991; Dutton and Goodman; Follingstad et al., 1990; Johnson and Ferraro; Ptacek, 1999; Russell, 1990; Sullivan, 2006; Stark, 2007; Shepard and Campbell, 1992; Stark and Flitcraft, 1996; Tjaden, 2005.

7. "A more discriminating understanding of the nature of specific IPV [intimate partner violence] crimes, including the element of coercion, would help secure more appropriate sentencing, as well as treatment for the perpetrators, and more effective safety planning for victims (Erskine, 1999)," (as cited in Dutton, et al., 2005, p. 2).

   A major debate in the literature is the efficacy of mandated policies—for both practitioners and victims.

   Victims face economic and extralegal household realities that may depend on an intact family unit. (Hotaling and Buzawa, 2003, p. 33) For some victims, the ability to drop charges may give them the power they need to negotiate for change in the relationship. (Ford, 1991) Other victims face retaliation and rage from offenders for the system's intervention and expectations of accountability. (Ptacek, 1999)

   Goodman and Epstein (2008, p. 93) note that, "survivors who are forced into ... inflexible models may well reject them altogether." In Indianapolis, Ford and Breall (2000, p.8) found that when victims were given a choice of whether or not to drop the charges against the offender, and they chose not to drop the charges, they were less likely to experience re-abuse over the next 6 months.

   While some victims are more satisfied with an intervention if they have some control over the system's response to their case, O'Sullivan, et al. (2007) lay out the complex legal and ethical dilemmas for practitioners facing such requests for flexibility. Their work evaluates victim safety, empowerment, and recidivism for two prosecutorial approaches to filing domestic violence cases.

8. For example, see the following fatality reports:

   - Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women
     http://www.mcbw.org/files/u1/2008_Femicide_Report_ FINAL_0.pdf
   - Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence

     http://dvfatalityreview.org/
   - Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence
     http://www.endabusewi.org/ourwork/homicide-reports
   - Additional information and links to domestic violence homicide studies in other states are available from the National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission at www.ndvfri.org

9. Stark (2007) estimates that coercive control is involved in at least 60% of domestic violence cases and is probably higher in criminal justice system cases where women seek help.

Dutton, et al. (2005, p. 2) argue "that measurement of violent acts alone cannot adequately characterize violence in intimate partner relationships (DeKeseredy and Schwartz, 1998; Dutton, 1996; Edleson and Tolman, 1992; Smith, Smith, and Earp, 1999; Yoshihama, 2000). Rather it is necessary to understand the use of, and response to, IPV in the context of the relationship and the cultural, social, and institutional systems within which the perpetrator and victim live (Dutton, 1996; Edleson and Tolman, 1992)."

Johnson and Ferraro (2000) point out the importance of making distinctions in the motives of the batterer, types of violence that are used, and cultural or social positions of the victim and the perpetrator.

Belknap and Sullivan (2003) reported on non-physical behaviors perpetrated against women in the six months before their partner was arrested. Table 1.6 shows how victims ranked frequency of occurrence for such items as "Tried to control her activities," "Discouraged her contact with family/ friends," and "Forbid her from leaving her home."

Dutton and Goodman (2005) report on the development of a measurement of coercion, demands, and surveillance. Examples of items on their Demand Subscale include "Wearing certain clothes," "Using street drugs," "Bathing or using the bathroom." Coercion Subscale items include threatening harm to partner, self, or others. Surveillance Subscale items include "Kept track of telephone/cell phone use," "Checked or opened your mail," or checked the odometer on the car.

10. Regarding risk as dynamic and changing at each point of intervention and risk assessment as a process where there is "use of dynamic factors of behavior and circumstances that vary over time." (Gondolf 2012, p. 193)

11. Websdale (1999) reminds us that homicides are often preceded by multiple criminal justice interventions.

    In the Quincy study, Buzawa et al. (1998, p. 189) found about half of the offenders had prior arrests for violent offenses and within two years of the last criminal justice intervention, 44% of the offenders were rearrested for domestic violence.

    Hart notes that between the arrest and prosecution, 30% of offenders may re-assault (Goldsmith, 1991, p. 7) and as many as half of domestic violence victims may be threatened with retaliation for cooperation with prosecutors. (Davis, et al., 1990, p. 19)

    Batterers can reoffend quickly. Goodman and Epstein (2008, p. 75) say that "20% to 30% of arrested offenders re-assault their partners before the court process has concluded or shortly afterward, often as retaliation for involving them in the court system (M.A. Finn, 2003; Ford & Regoli, 1992; Goodman, Bennett, & Dutton, 1999; Hart, 1996)."

    According to Gondolf and White (2001, p. 361), 20% of offenders will re-assault regardless of the intervention.

    In another study, 14% of the victims reported threats from the perpetrator since disposition of their case, 8% had property damaged, 9% experienced new violence, and 37% of perpetrators had been verbally abusive. (Smith, et al., 2001, p. 72)

    Batterers can be very resistant to change despite arrest, intervention, or group treatment. (Goodkind, et al., 2004, p. 515)

    Offenders with a 'stake in conformity' (employed, married, stable housing) are least likely to reoffend after interaction with the justice system. (Roehl, et al., 2005, p. 14)

However, the high-risk offender with a criminal history tends not to change their behavior with criminal justice intervention. "For high risk offenders, even a 'model' court has not broken their pattern of intimidation and control and the interventions they have used to date are insufficient. Stopping chronic and/or serial batterers is apt to be a long, difficult process, not easily impacted by any one criminal justice intervention, especially one that is fundamentally compromised by long prosecutorial and judicial delays and restricted to misdemeanor type sentences." (Hotaling and Buzawa, 2003, p. 26)

From their study of batterers in four cities, Heckert and Gondolf (2004, p. III-15-8) concluded that "men in the repeat re-assault category were slightly more likely to use a chain of tactics, or multiple tactics, in their violent incidents. That is, their violence was more likely to be excessive and unrelenting."

Buzawa et al. (1998, pp. 205 and 198) found that courts are most likely to see entrenched batterers who have had prior involvement with the system and are less likely to see those batterers who use occasional violence and have no criminal record. They suggest that the level and conditions of an intervention could be linked to risk markers made visible for each offender.

12. Stark (2007, p. 94) points out that the harm in domestic violence is not only due to the number of violent events, but to an accumulation of multiple harms. It is the cumulative effect, rather than a set of isolated acts that impact the victim of battering.

    Erskine (1999, pp. 1207-1232) discusses the importance of exploring ongoing patterns of intimidation and coercion to determine appropriate charges for a range of criminal or violent behaviors.

    A critical part of accurate risk assessment is discussing with the victim her experiences over time and marking changes in frequency and severity. (Block, 2000, p. 290)

13. When victims are satisfied and work well with the prosecutor's office, prosecution rates increase, there are a greater number of guilty verdicts, and victims are more likely to report continued abuse. (Buzawa and Buzawa, 2003; Belknap and Graham, 2003; O'Sullivan et al., 2007)

    However, when a prosecutor and victim want or need different outcomes from intervention, a victim's "nonparticipation may be chosen in response to the prosecutor's noncooperation with her plan for securing herself from continuing violence." (Ford and Breall, 2000, p. 7)

    80% of the women who called police wanted protection (Ford and Breall, 2000). But "a battered woman who has made prior attempts to seek prosecution of civil protection orders, only to have the perpetrator escalate his violence, may be unwilling to face the risk that prosecution will further endanger rather than protect her." (Roehl et al., 2005, p. 15)

    Goodman and Epstein (2008, p. 92) explain that when a victim perceives that her needs do not fit what the system offers, "she is likely to feel disserved or even betrayed by the police. [Police] actions may expose her to a wide range of future harms, including retaliatory violence, poverty, homelessness, and loss of community. As a result, [she] may well decline to call the police if she ever again finds herself subjected to intimate partner violence. Her friends, hearing her story, may well do the same."

    Goodman and Epstein (2008, p. 94) go on to explain that "one study ... found that participants who reported feeling in control of the process of working with service providers were far more likely to rate the services they received as helpful and to use them again. (Zweig, Burt, & Van Ness, 2003) Similarly, a study within the criminal justice system found that victims who chose not to report

recidivist abuse to officials were those who felt they had 'no voice' in a previous prosecution." Also see Belknap and Sullivan (2003, p. 6).

14. In Indianapolis, Ford and Breall (2008, p. 92) found that any action by the prosecutor lowered the risk of re-abuse by 50% for 6 months.

    A victim's cooperation is affected by delayed hearings, threats, and violence that continue during the process, and perceived lack of attention or support from prosecutors. (Tolman and Weisz, 1995, p. 482) Ultimately, a victim needs to determine whether the system can provide adequate protection against the offenders' violence.

    Fleury-Steiner et al. (2006, pp. 339 and 338) interviewed 178 women whose partners had been through the court system. 19% of these women had been assaulted between the time of the arrest and the closure of the case. The re-abuse continued for 38% of these victims during the first six months after the case closed and 35% experienced continued abuse in the second six-month period. These researchers concluded that if the system is not able to protect the victim while a case is pending, batterer and victim both receive clear messages about the lack of offender accountability and victim safety.

    In making decisions about collaborating in a criminal justice case against the perpetrator, victims face "practical and relational obstacles" such as exposure to retaliation, escalating violence, forced separation, or the financial hardship of an arrest. (Goodman and Epstein, 2008, p. 97; Johnson, 2007, pp. 498-510; Dugan et al., 2003, pp. 20-25; Hart, 1996)

    When the case proceeds, a victim may face an increase in controlling behaviors including stalking the loss of victim status, and fears of being arrested or losing custody of the children. (McFarlane, et al., 1999, p. 311; Belknap and Sullivan, 2003, p.10)

15. See Johnson and Ferraro (2000, p. 949); Stark (2007).

16. Worden (2003, p. 10) suggests that "the efficacy of many innovations [in intervention] may be contingent on the consistency of the messages that are exchanged among the victims, offenders, and practitioners."

    Interactions with the police create an important baseline for the victim's level of trust in the rest of system. Belknap and Sullivan (2003) found that whether victims believed the state was a resource for their help seeking was based on positive interaction with an officer who listened without judgment and communicated empathy. Victims saw police as helpful when they provided legal information, advocacy support, attended to medical care, and paid attention to the needs of the children.

    Goodman and Epstein (2008, p. 78) note, "Other research has shown that women who experience government officials as listening to their stories and responding to their individual needs are more likely to feel treated fairly and therefore to cooperate with the prosecutor's requests than are women who feel forced into a mandatory model dismissive of their input (Erez & Belknap, 1998; Ford & Regoli, 1993)." A perpetrator may not stop battering the victim, but victims do not stop working toward non-violence. (Campbell et al., 1998, pp. 743-762)

    Goodkind et al. (2004) studied the safety planning strategies victims with children used; in particular, see Table 1: Safety Planning Strategies Endorsed and Consequence of Using Strategy (p. 520).

    Researchers at Texas Women's University (2003) designed a one-hour phone contact for use with the victim during the processing of a protection order. Their study demonstrated that "abused women offered a safety intervention at the time of applying for a protection order quickly adopt safety behaviors and continued to practice those safety behaviors for eighteen months." (p.8)

Practitioners can support a victim's safety planning by providing tactical information about the legal process, legal options, appropriate referrals, and specific communication about the risk of severe violence and lethality. (Johnson, 2007; Kropp, 2008, p. 213)

17. One of the first studies to examine community-based outreach in the context of an interdisciplinary community coordinated response to police-reported intimate partner violence found that community-based outreach by victim advocates results in decreased distress levels, greater readiness to leave abusive relationships, and greater perceived helpfulness of services relative to system-based referrals. (DePrince, et al., 2012a)

    A randomized longitudinal study found that an outreach program was effective in increasing women's engagement with prosecution, as well as the likelihood of their participating in the prosecution of their abusers. Results were particularly robust among women marginalized by ethnicity and class, and those still living with their abusers after the target incident. (DePrince, et al., 2012b)

18. As part of its contribution to development of the Blueprint, the Saint Paul and Ramsey County Domestic Abuse Intervention Project published *The Distinct and Vital Role of a Legal and System Advocate*, available on its website: www.stpaulblueprintspip.org. This publication helps a community adapting the Blueprint to work with independent advocacy programs in an interagency approach to intervention.

19. Domestic violence research on how to reduce recidivism and reabuse through criminal justice interventions has a long history, beginning with Sherman and Berk's 1984 study which concluded that arrest and [swift] incarceration, was a deterrent "regardless of how the courts treat such cases." (p. 270) The field of juvenile justice reports a history of success with deterrence models that combine swift, certain, and graduated sanctions. The rich data in that field supports extensive, system wide, coordinated interventions and implementation of accountability based sanctions focused on redirecting behaviors and reducing recidivism. (see *Effective Program Services and Models Associated with the Five Graduated Sanction and Intervention Levels for Juvenile Justice.* (2001). Available at www.ncjfcj.org/our-work/juvenile-graduated-sanctions-e-tool)

20. Discussing the need for graduated sanctions to be delivered swiftly and with certainty, Taxman et. al (1999, p. 13) include concepts of swift, certainty of response, and proportional severity as key elements of accountable systems. Paternoster et al. (1997) focus on the importance of perceptions of fairness on domestic violence related cases.

21. Gondolf (2004) noted a reduction in no-shows and improved completion rates of batterer intervention programs when offenders moved through the system quickly. When intervention was swift and certain, the rate of offenders entering the groups increased from 70% to 95% and the completion rate rose to 70% (p. 619). Gondolf linked the effectiveness of batterer programs to a streamlined system where violations were treated with a 'swift and certain' response, offenders identified as high risk received increased sanctions, and risk markers were monitored throughout the intervention (see discussion on page 624).

    Two additional studies by Gondolf (2000; 1999) verify the impact of swift and sure responses for domestic violence offenders. In 2012, Gondolf concluded that their study "left us with an appreciation of the behaviorist axiom that says a swift and certain response improves outcomes." (p. 211)

    In domestic violence cases, the specific language of swift and sure is not commonly used, but several authors do recommend aggressive or prompt response to violations of court orders. (Buzawa et al., 2000; Hofford, 1991, pp. 12-17) One of the four lessons reported from the Judicial Oversight Demonstration project was the importance of "procedures to monitor or educate defendants and

provide a quick court response to violations of no-contact orders and other bond conditions." (Visher et al., 2007, p. 9)

To review a theoretical frame for choice theory and negative sanctions see Pratt (2008) and Kurbrin, et al. (2009). A research study conducted by Weisburd, et al. (2008) demonstrated the impact of swift and certain responses to probation violators.

22. A number of federal agencies now promote swift, certain and graduated sanctions as effective interventions. For instance,

    - NIJ solicitation, Evaluation of a Multi-site Demonstration for Enhanced Judicial Oversight of Domestic Violence Cases, NIJ solicitation (May 1999): p. 2. https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/sl000357.pdf
    - Crime and Justice Institute at Community Resources for Justice

      http://b.3cdn.net/crjustice/5364fc66efa31368e0_g6m6iyhv9.pdf
    - National Council on Juvenile and Family Court Judges

      http://www.ncjfcj.org/our-work/juvenile-sanctions

23. The experience of two communities where the criminal justice system instituted sure, swift, and escalating sanctions show promise. (Hamner, et al., 1999; Sumner, 2014) These programs emphasize interagency coordination, attention to context and severity, messages of help and accountability, victim advocacy, and community involvement in holding offenders responsible. A preliminary summary concludes "The measureable impact of this strategy so far includes a dramatic reduction in IPV-related homicides, lower recidivism rates for IPV offenders notified, reduction in IPV arrests, reduction in victim harm reported in IPV assaults, and fewer repeat calls for service." (Sumner, 2014)

24. In their seminal study of the criminal justice system in Quincy, MA, Buzawa et al. (2000, pp. 9, 10, 18, and 12) found that 84% of offenders had prior arrests, 54% had six or more prior charges, and 14% had at least 30 criminal charges. In the Quincy study, nearly three-quarters of the victims had made prior calls to the police about that perpetrator. "Less than half the victims were living with the offender at the time of incident, but three-fourths of victimizations occurred in their homes." Even as a model proactive court, in Quincy "the system does not appear to prevent recidivism among 'hard-core' re-offenders." The population of batterers in that study recidivated within one month after arrest.

    Bouffard and Muftie (2007, p. 364) reported that batterers who had been in the system with a prior domestic violence case were significantly more likely to be no-shows for batterer group intake than those without a domestic violence record.

25. "Swift, certain, and progressive responses to non-compliant behavior sends offenders a clear message that such behavior is not tolerated and that offenders are accountable for their own behavior." (Taxman, 1999, p. 3)

    "Offenders should receive swift, clear, meaningful, predictable, and certain consequences for violating probation." (Henderson 2014)

26. Klein, et al. (2014) found that prosecution and sentencing of domestic violence cases can significantly reduce re-abuse for the majority of more chronic abusers who also commit non-DV crimes. The research suggests that what matters is the comparative severity of the domestic violence sentencing compared to non-DV sentencing, not the severity of the sentence itself. The researchers recommend

that prosecutors and judges sanction crimes against person appropriately, namely more severely than typical non-DV crimes abusers may be arrested for.

27. Dutton and Goodman (2005) describe a process of coercion and control created by both demands and threats: threats that the victim knows from past experience to be credible. In summary, a history of exposure to negative consequences from previous threats assures compliance with future demands. This dynamic of threats and consequences form a "cumulative pattern" of control that is not dependent on physical contact. To break that pattern, the victim assesses resources and options for safety that are as credible as the perpetrator's threats. For additional information about the process of coercion and control, see Dutton et al. (2005) and Stark (2007).

28. In his observation of courtroom interactions in domestic violence cases, Ptacek (1999, pp. 172-178) studied how the interaction between judges, victims, and offenders can support or deter the battering dynamic. He points out that the behaviors demonstrated in the courtroom can (intentionally or not) become another resource the perpetrator can use for intimidation or coercion in the future. To that extent, a victim's experience of the criminal justice intervention can reaffirm the perpetrator's messages. Ptacek created a graphic titled "Judicial Responses that Reinforce Women's Entrapment" to describe some of the behaviors he observed. To demonstrate the potential parallels that victims may find in criminal justice interventions, he lays the judge's behaviors alongside behaviors used by perpetrators. Ptacek's graphic is available in a report by Stekeete, et al. (2000, p. Appendix I-2)

29. Descriptors of entitlement are found in the writings of practitioners with extensive experience facilitating batterer intervention programs. These practitioners are in agreement about entitlement as a foundational element of battering. Bancroft (2002, p. 54) describes entitlement as a belief (and attitude) that the batterer alone has the right to privilege and status in this relationship.

    F. Mederos (2004, p. 15) adds that entitlement is the expectation that a partner will fulfill a specific (gendered) role in the relationship and that the perpetrator has the right to use violence, anger, or other forms of abuse for failure to meet those expectations.

    Also see Pence and Paymar (1993).

30. 49% of batterer groups use a cognitive-behavioral approach. (Saunders, 2008. p.157)

    From a longitudinal study of batterer programs, Gondolf (2004, p. 623) concluded that cognitive-behavioral programs for batterers were the most commonly used, effective for most offenders, and less costly to administer. Also see Gondolf (2012); Hamberger (1997); Pence and Paymar (1993); Sullivan (2006, p. 204); White and Gondolf (2000).

31. "Criminal justice agencies should communicate directly with offenders about the community's intent to act decisively to stop domestic violence, and specifically, that increased surveillance of their individual actions is now in effect." (Sumner 2015)

32. See Paternoster et al. (1997).

    If offenders perceive the process to be fair, they are less likely to be arrested for domestic violence again. F. S. Taxman, D. Soule, and A. Gelb, 1999, p. 3.

33. Robinson and Tregidga (2007) found that taking a holistic multiagency approach to domestic violence can reduce recidivism, even among the population most at risk. The research was conducted with very high-risk victims of domestic violence to determine levels of victimization one year after being referred to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and their perceptions of this type of intervention. Nearly all victims acknowledged the importance of having multiagency support once they were ready to change their situations.

34. "Violence is simply a tool ... that the perpetrator uses to gain greater power in the relationships to deter or trigger specific behaviors, win arguments, or demonstrate dominance." (Dutton, et al. 2005) In the development of a coercion scale, these same authors identified nine areas where offenders focused demands on victims: personal activities and appearance, support systems, household responsibilities, economic resources and work, health, physical intimacy, legal help seeking, immigration, and children or parenting (pp.1-3).

    Stark (2007, pp. 228-278) argues that in large part the historic concept of domination has been replaced by coercive control: coercion as force or threats used to yield a desired response and control as both structural and tactical. Control could involve deprivation, manipulation, demanding compliance while controlling resources, behaviors, and support systems. Stark uses the terms microregulating and microsurveillance to emphasize the intrusion of coercive acts in the lives of victims. When combined, the product of coercion and control is entrapment.

35. Dutton and Goodman (2005, p. 747) point out that a victim's cultural, religious, and economic realities give coercive tactics and threats their meaning.

    For a listing of control tactics embedded in messages that are used by perpetrators before and after criminal justice intervention. See Table 1.6 in Belknap and Sullivan. (2003, n.p.)

36. Fleury-Steiner et al. (2006, p. 329) found that a victim's decision to use the criminal justice system in the future was connected to their financial dependence on the perpetrator, safety from abuse during prior interventions, and support from practitioners.

    One of the conclusions from the Judicial Oversight Demonstration Initiative was that judges can make a difference in victim safety and offender accountability. (Visher et al., 2007, p. 2)

    From observations of restraining order hearings in Dorchester and Quincy, MA, Ptacek (1999) identified five types of authority judges present to victims and offenders. The messages carried by the court's demeanor can be of believability, support, seriousness of the charge, or a dismissive 'wink and a nod.' The court's response to a victim can counteract messages of the batter, but are particularly important information for the victim's strategic planning.

    Victims fear that criminal justice practitioners will believe the offender, not make an arrest, or take no action. (Russell and Light, 2006, p. 389)

    Prosecutors send clear messages by communicating to the victim how the criminal justice system works and just what it can and cannot do. (Hotaling and Buzawa, 2003, p. 38)

    Messages of support are also sent through the types of institutional resources that are offered: advocacy, culturally sensitive programs and referrals, translation and TDDY services, etc.

37. Colia Ceisel (Public Defender Ramsey County, Retired), Presentation at Saint Paul Police Department Training, June 28, 2009. For more discussion on batterers' defenses of violence, see Bancroft (2002, pp. 296-301); Buzawa and Buzawa (2003, pp. 147-148); and Loue (2001, p. 119).

38. High Point, NC Offender Focused Domestic Violence Initiative matches graduated sanctions with escalation of services available to victims and opportunities for offenders to change (GED, fee waivers for BIP, and job training). (Sumner 2015)

39. Colia Ceisel (Public Defender Ramsey County, Retired), Presentation at Saint Paul Police Department Training, June 28, 2009. For more on batterers' defenses of violence, see Bancroft (2002, pp. 296-301); Buzawa and Buzawa (2003, pp. 147-148); and Loue (2001, p. 119).

40. See “Principles and Complex Realities,” *Blueprint Guide*, at http://praxisinternational.org/blueprint-home/.
41. Violence Policy Center (2014, p. 6), analyzing Supplemental Homicide Report data submitted to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.
42. Cooper and Smith (2011).
43. National Domestic Violence Hotline (2015).
44. Violence Policy Center (2014, p. 6).
45. Stark 2007, p. 55. Referencing Durose, et al. (2005) and Fox and Zawitz (2004).
46. Catalano (2013).
47. For a discussion of national data sources and statistics, see Stark (2007 pp. 53-56).
48. Archbishop Desmond Tutu received the Nobel Peace prize in 1984 for his contributions to ending apartheid in South Africa and to global hum an rights.
49. For more information on using the Practitioners’ Guide to Risk and Danger, see *Training Memo – Risk and Dangerousness: Managing Severe or Lethal Violence*, at http://praxisinternational.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/BPTrainingMemoRiskandDangerousness1BOct2013.pdf.
50. Roehl, et al. (2005, p. 15). Also see Weitz, et al. (2000) and Heckert & Gondolf (2004).

    Regarding caution against relying too heavily on women’s perceptions and need to combine with other methods. (Gondolf 2012, p. 260)

51. Regarding risk assessment as a process that includes the “use of dynamic factors of behavior and circumstances that vary over time,” and the perception of the victim. Ibid., p. 193.
52. Gondolf emphasizes that a one-time, stand-alone assessment is not enough. He argues that risk is dynamic, it changes at each point of intervention and with each shift in a relationship. As a process of assessment then, the dynamic nature of risk needs to be *managed*. "The goal is to assess risk, identify needs, respond with services, reassess, and revise - all with supervision and accountability." This requires "a functioning system, with established procedures, policies, and linkages." The key to effectively addressing risk is clearly and strongly linked to a systems' adoption of best practices into which risk assessment(s) is integrated. "A coordinated response is needed to do risk assessment thoroughly, wisely, and effectively." Risk assessment “increases the communication, alertness, awareness, and attention to those working with batterers and their partners. All of these changes can help improve the response to high-risk men and reduce recidivism.” Ibid., p. 193, 194, 197.
53. Process of risk assessment is not a “mechanical routine.” Ibid., p. 193.

    “The sense that the research evidence somehow endorses one instrument over another, or a pat set of interpretations based on cutoff scores, is unfounded.” Ibid., p. 259.

54. All Blueprint publications, supplemental material, and the adaptation guide and tools can be found and downloaded at http://praxisinternational.org/blueprint-home/.
55. See “Essential Elements – Annotated,” *Blueprint Guide* (2015).

SAMPLE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

Blueprint for Safety – Participating Agencies

I. BACKGROUND

A. The St. Paul Blueprint for Safety was developed in Saint Paul, MN, in 2010 by the City of Saint Paul, Praxis International and the Saint Paul Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (a local advocacy program), and is the first comprehensive inter-agency guide for criminal justice practitioners who process cases of domestic violence.

B. The Blueprint for Safety identified in this MOU is an adjunct generic document, developed by Praxis International and the City of Saint Paul in 2010, as a template for use by any community to follow to create a cohesive set of criminal justice system policies, protocols and procedures to improve victim safety and offender accountability in domestic violence cases.

C. In a Blueprint community, practitioners collaborate to develop written policies and protocols outlining each practitioner's role, responsibilities, specific actions, and documentation duties. They are linked through an articulated commitment: first, to a positive case outcome for victims, and second, to each other in an inter-agency partnership in case processing.

II. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AGREED TO BY PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

A. The following agencies are partners to this MOU: (Adapt this portion of the document to reflect local structure)

1. (Agency) is the local emergency communications center. It receives calls and dispatches for [police, fire, emergency medical, and sheriff's office]. The agency takes approximately (number) domestic violence-related calls per year.

2. (Law enforcement agency) has (number) sworn officers. Last year the department responded to (number) domestic-assault-related calls. Domestic assault follow-up investigations are assigned to (number) investigators, who investigated (number) cases last year. [OR: (Agency) has no dedicated investigators. Any follow-up investigation is handled by patrol officers.]

3. Repeat #2 if more than one law enforcement agency.

4. (Agency) prosecutes [misdemeanor/felony/all] domestic assault-related cases. It has (number) attorneys and (number) non-attorney staff members assigned to these duties, including (number) victim-witness specialists. Last year the office prosecuted approximately (number) [misdemeanor/felony] domestic-assault-related cases.

5. Repeat #4 if more than one prosecutor's office.

6. (Agency) is responsible for conducting bail evaluations, making recommendations to the court regarding bail and conditions of release, and pretrial supervision of defendants who

are out-of-custody pending trial. (Number) staff members are assigned to these duties. Last year the agency conducted (number) bail evaluations and supervised (number) defendants on pretrial supervised release.

7. (Agency) is responsible for jail operations. The agency has (number) sworn personnel and (number) non-sworn personnel assigned to the jail. Last year (number) offenders were booked into the jail.

8. (Agency) is responsible for processing warrants. The agency has (number) sworn personnel and (number) non-sworn personnel assigned to those duties. Last year, (number) warrants were processed and (number) offenders apprehended on warrants.

9. (Agency) is responsible for courtroom security. The agency has (number) sworn personnel and (number) non-sworn personnel assigned to those duties. There are (number) courtrooms where domestic violence cases are heard.

10. (Agency) conducts presentence investigations (PSI) or presentence reports (PSR) and supervises defendants on probation or parole post-conviction. (Number) officers are assigned to these duties. Last year they conducted (number) domestic assault-related PSIs and supervised (number) defendants on probation or parole.

B. Agencies signing this MOU agree to work with other participating agencies to:

1. Examine, redraft, and enhance policies, protocols, and documentary practices governing each practitioner who has a significant role in processing domestic violence cases.

2. Participate in an assessment of current agency practice compared to the Blueprint template, to include interviews and observation of agency staff, and reading of case files and other documents. Agencies agree to make staff available for interviews and observations, and to have case files and other documents examined by team members under a negotiated confidentiality agreement.

3. Produce policies, procedures, and implementation processes that conform to the Blueprint Essential Elements and are consistent with the six Blueprint Principles:

   - Adherence to an interagency approach
   - Attention to context and severity of the violence
   - Recognition of domestic violence as a patterned crime requiring continuing engagement
   - Providing swift and sure consequences
   - Sending messages of help and accountability
   - Reducing unintended consequences and disparity of impact

4. Ensure that the community-based advocacy program is included in interagency planning and implementation meetings and in policy and protocol development.
5. Build practices into policies and procedures to reduce unintended harmful consequences of reform efforts for certain groups of people, such as undocumented immigrants, victims of ongoing abuse who use violence against their abusers, people with disabilities, or homeless men and/or women.

6. Gather and disseminate data related to the response to domestic violence-related calls for service and crimes.

III. IMPLEMENTATION

Signing agencies agree to:

A. Actively participate in planning and coordination meetings.

B. Assign one or more agency representatives to:

   1. Actively participate on the Blueprint adaptation and implementation teams.
   2. Work with the Blueprint team coordinator and participate in the development, assessment, implementation and monitoring phases.
   3. Assist with writing policies and procedures.
   4. Oversee internal agency implementation of the agreed-upon changes to local policy, protocol and practice.

C. Evaluate and monitor the Blueprint implementation process and seek a high rate of compliance with the policies, protocols, and procedures specific to their section of the Blueprint.

   1. Adopt a monitoring protocol that will ensure a high rate of practitioner compliance to the community's Blueprint policies and protocols.
   2. Provide supervisory oversight and regular quality checks and compliance reviews of adherences to Blueprint-specific policies and protocols.
   3. Gather and disseminate data per MOU section B6.
   4. Assess agency practice for compliance with Blueprint policies and protocols, per MOU section B2.

D. Commit to an ongoing process of working with other Blueprint agencies in the community to continually monitor effectiveness of the Blueprint and make modifications as needed.

BLUEPRINT FOR SAFETY – MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Signatures of Agency Directors or Designees (Adjust as appropriate for the community)

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

Authorized representative (print name)	Title
Signature	Date

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Authorized representative (print name)	Title
Signature	Date

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Authorized representative (print name)	Title
Signature	Date

PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

Authorized representative (print name)	Title
Signature	Date

VICTIM WITNESS

Authorized representative (print name)	Title
Signature	Date

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

Authorized representative (print name)	Title
Signature	Date

PRETRIAL SERVICES

Authorized representative (print name)	Title
Signature	Date

PROBATION

Authorized representative (print name)	Title
Signature	Date

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BLUEPRINT FOR SAFETY COORDINATOR – ROLE, RESPONSIBILITIES AND SKILLS

The Blueprint for Safety ensures that each agency and each practitioner—from 911 operators and patrol officers on through to courts and probation—is "on the same page" in maximizing safety and well-being for victims and accountability for offenders. Instead of a fragmented response, the Blueprint establishes a common foundation, collective policy, and consistent attention to risk and danger. Realizing these goals requires skilled facilitation, organization, and persuasion. While that role is filled in part by each Blueprint team member and the team working as a whole, it is the Blueprint coordinator who keeps the focus on managing the Blueprint and moving it forward. The coordinator provides the glue and guidance that helps the partner agencies and work groups assess current practice, adapt the Blueprint to local conditions, implement and monitor the resulting changes in practice, and keep battered women's experiences central to the process.

In some communities, one person will act as the Blueprint coordinator, while in others the responsibilities and tasks will be shared by a two-member or other small coordinating team. Whatever the configuration that best fits local conditions, the scope of work and specific tasks outlined here are essential to adapting and implementing the Blueprint for Safety in any community.

BLUEPRINT COORDINATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Organize a process to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the roles and responsibilities of each project partner.
    a. Sell policymakers and agency directors on the Blueprint for Safety.
    b. Secure the participation of partner agencies.
2. Help organize and staff a Blueprint team and related work groups to adapt the Blueprint to fit local conditions and realities.
3. Coordinate Blueprint team and work group activities to assess current practice, including:
    a. Produce a current case processing map of each step in a criminal domestic violence related case (conducted with the Blueprint team).
    b. Create a source book of local policies, administrative forms and protocols for current case processing of criminal cases.
    c. Guide the information-gathering process with the Blueprint team (see Attachment A), including:
        i. Compiling policy and procedure comparison charts
        ii. Analyzing case files and records

iii. Observing current practice

iv. Interviewing practitioners and agency heads

d. Assemble all materials necessary to conduct the assessment: policies, protocols, forms laws, statistical information, case records (e.g., files, tapes, reports).

e. Schedule activities related to information-gathering activities (case analysis, observations, and interviews) and/or provide the work group with details on how to make those arrangements.

f. Maintain notes of discussions and conclusions related to the current-practice assessment.

4. Coordinate all Blueprint team and work group activities to adapt Blueprint policies, protocols, and memos, including:

   a. Utilize practice-specific work groups (e.g., 911, patrol response, prosecution, etc.) to identify and recommend specific local adaptations to the Blueprint policies, protocols, and supplemental training and procedural memos.

   b. Ensure Blueprint team and agency directors' review and feedback of recommended changes.

   c. Assist agency directors in the process of accepting or modifying the recommended language changes to Blueprint policies, protocols, and memos.

   d. Maintain notes of Blueprint team and work group discussions and decisions.

5. Coordinate all Blueprint team and work group activities to implement and monitor the local Blueprint, including:

   a. Help organize the process of changing the adaptation team to an implementation team, including:

      i. Consult with agency directors to assign implementation team members.

      ii. Provide implementation team members who were not involved in the adaptation phase with an orientation to Blueprint principles/practices.

   b. Coordinate and staff the implementation team to put into practice the local Blueprint policies, such as (but not limited to) new:

      i. Documentation requirements

      ii. Procedures, forms, checklists

      iii. Database revisions

   c. Assist agency directors to formally and publicly launch the local Blueprint.

      i. Organize the logistics for training days for all practitioners on the implementation of the Blueprint.

ii. Organize press releases and events to launch the local Blueprint.

d. Coordinate meetings of the implementation team to review cases going through the system and monitor compliance with the local Blueprint:

i. Determine compliance with new policies and protocols.

ii. Troubleshoot low compliance with agency directors and practitioners.

6. Keep the experiences of battered women visible and central throughout the adaptation and implementation processes.

a. Support the leadership of community-based advocates.

b. Organize surveys, focus groups, and interviews with survivors.

c. Consult with community-based organizations and agencies that regularly work with battered women.

BLUEPRINT COORDINATOR QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS

- Well-organized, analytical, and diplomatic
- Strong verbal and written communication skills
- Experience providing logistical support for meetings and training events
- Able to analyze and synthesize complex information from multiple sources
- Strong group facilitation and negotiation skills
- Demonstrated experience in working with diverse groups of people toward common goals
- Working knowledge of the local criminal legal system process and the capacity to work effectively with each participating agency
- Working knowledge of battered women's experiences and the dynamics of battering and other forms of domestic violence

STEPS IN COORDINATING AN ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT PRACTICE

The Blueprint team or a designated work group(s) conducts the assessment, with facilitation and organization provided by the Blueprint coordinator.

1. Produce a current case processing map of steps involved in processing a domestic violence case in the criminal legal system. Begin with 911 and carry through to probation monitoring. Pay particular attention to:

a. Whether and how practitioners are linked between each step

   b. The kinds of forms and documentation used

   c. Whether and how victims are linked with community-based advocates

   d. Assessment of risk and danger

2. Create a source book of local policies, administrative forms and protocols for current case processing of criminal cases, from 911 through probation monitoring.
3. Compile basic statistical information on domestic violence-related cases: e.g., 911 calls, arrests, crimes charged, disposition, sentencing, demographics.
4. Conduct focus groups with victims/survivors about their experiences with the criminal legal system.
5. Compile a policy and procedure comparison chart that analyzes local practices alongside recommended Blueprint polices and protocols.
6. Analyze case records (e.g., 911 calls, patrol reports, prosecution files, probation records, etc.) to compare current practice with recommended practice
7. Observe current practices via patrol ride-alongs, 911 "sit-alongs," court observations, and other practitioner observations.
8. Interview agency directors, supervisors, and practitioners about current practice.
9. Coordinate and facilitate meetings to review, interpret, and analyze assessment data throughout the process.
10. Maintain a written record of all discussions, conclusions, and recommendations related to the current-practice assessment.

RESOURCES

Praxis International has a variety of materials available to help prepare for coordinating and guiding a current-practice assessment at www.praxisinternational.org.

Best-Practice Assessment Guides

Instructions on how to organize a work group to analyze current practice; includes step-by-step instructions on mapping case processing, analyzing case records, and policy analysis. The guides cover 911, police patrol and investigations, and prosecution charging.

Checklists for Best Practice

An abbreviated version of the assessment guides.

Safety and Accountability Audit Toolkit

The current-practice assessment is similar to a Safety and Accountability Audit. Designed for coordinators, the Toolkit includes instructions on how to develop a case processing map, conduct focus groups, interview practitioners, observe practitioners on the job, and analyze case records.

Essential Skills in Coordinating Your Community Response to Battering: An E-Learning Course for CCR Coordinators

A self-paced course that can help a Blueprint coordinator prepare to facilitate interagency work groups in a current-practice assessment or in other facets of Blueprint adaptation.

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BLUEPRINT FOR SAFETY ADVOCATE – ROLE, RESPONSIBILITIES AND SKILLS

The Blueprint for Safety ensures that each agency and each practitioner—from 911 operators and patrol officers on through to courts and probation—is "on the same page" in maximizing safety and well-being for victims and accountability for offenders. The Blueprint replaces a fragmented response with a common foundation, collective policy, and consistent attention to risk and danger. It is grounded in the experiences of victims of battering and an understanding of how criminal legal system intervention affects their lives.

A Blueprint community engages with a range of community members, from victims and survivors to populations overrepresented and/or underserved in the system. Securing and maintaining that engagement is the primary role of the Blueprint for Safety Advocate (Blueprint Advocate). The Blueprint Advocate ensures that the voices and experiences of battered women are represented at all stages of the process. In collaboration with the coordinator and the adaptation team, the Blueprint Advocate also plays a lead role in establishing the Advocacy-Initiated Response emphasized throughout the Blueprint.

The Blueprint Advocate is not a crisis advocate; that is, does not act on behalf of and provide support to individual victims of battering. Rather, the Blueprint Advocate is a systems change advocate, identifying problems and seeking new ways for the criminal legal system to produce better outcomes for all battered women.

The following broad summary illustrates the type of work and kinds of knowledge and skills related to the role of Blueprint Advocate.

BLUEPRINT ADVOCATE RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Represent the experiences of battered women through all phases of becoming a Blueprint community:
    a. Participate in practice assessment activities for all points of intervention in the criminal justice system's response to domestic violence (* Steps in coordinating an assessment of current practice).
    b. Participate in policy analysis and adaptation discussions for all agencies.
    c. Contribute to policy adaptation and writing for all agencies, as appropriate.
    d. As part of a Blueprint training team, conduct training on new Blueprint policies and practices, where relevant and appropriate.
    e. Participate in monitoring of Blueprint policies and practices.
2. Engage with survivors of battering to contribute to the Blueprint development:

   a. Recruit, establish, and maintain a survivor's advisory group.

   b. Facilitate communication between the survivor advisory group and the Blueprint Coordinator and the Blueprint Adaptation Team.

   c. Recruit, facilitate, and report on focus groups with survivors about their experiences with the criminal justice system's response to domestic violence.

   d. Maintain knowledge of the broadest range of survivors' experiences in the community.

   e. Collect and maintain knowledge of the full scope and scale of violence against women in the community.

3. Engage with other community-based organizations representing populations overrepresented and/or underserved in the criminal legal system.

   a. In collaboration with the Blueprint Coordinator, brief community organizations on the Blueprint for Safety.

   b. Gather and convey information about the experiences of victims of battering from overrepresented and/or underserved communities in seeking help from the criminal legal system.

   c. Include members from overrepresented and/or underserved communities in survivor focus groups and the survivor advisory board.

4. Regularly meet with and advise the Blueprint Coordinator and the Blueprint Adaptation Team.

5. Coordinate, establish, and implement an Advocacy-Initiated Response across the criminal legal system (** Overview of Advocacy-Initiated Response).

BLUEPRINT ADVOCATE QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS

- Knowledge of battered women's experiences and the dynamics of battering and other forms of domestic violence
- Experience working with diverse groups of people toward common goals
- Connections with diverse community-based organizations, particularly those representing underserved and marginalized people
- Group facilitation and negotiation skills
- Ability to analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources
- Knowledge of the local criminal legal system process or a comparable complex system

*STEPS IN COORDINATING AN ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT PRACTICE

The Blueprint Adaptation Team or a designated work group(s) conducts the assessment, with facilitation and organization provided by the Blueprint Coordinator and participation of the Blueprint Advocate.

1. Produce a current case processing map of steps involved in processing a domestic violence case in the criminal legal system. The map begins with 911 and carries through to probation monitoring. The goal is to develop a clear picture of whether and how practitioners are linked between each step; the forms and documentation used; whether and how victims are linked with community-based advocacy; and assessment of risk and danger.
2. Create a source book of local policies, administrative forms and protocols for current case processing of criminal cases, from 911 through probation monitoring.
3. Compile basic statistical information on domestic violence-related cases: e.g., 911 calls, arrests, crimes charged, disposition, sentencing, demographics.
4. Conduct focus groups with victims/survivors about their experiences with the criminal legal system.
5. Compile a policy and procedure comparison chart that analyzes local practices alongside recommended Blueprint polices and protocols.
6. Analyze case records (e.g., 911 calls, patrol reports, prosecution files, probation records, etc.) to compare current practice with recommended practice.
7. Observe current practices via patrol ride-alongs, 911 “sit-alongs,” court observations, and other practitioner observations.
8. Interview agency directors, supervisors, and practitioners about current practice.
9. Coordinate and facilitate meetings to review, interpret, and analyze assessment data throughout the process.
10. Maintain a written record of all discussions, conclusions, and recommendations related to the current-practice assessment.

**OVERVIEW OF ADVOCACY-INITIATED RESPONSE

We know that victims experience better outcomes when linked with confidential advocacy: psychological distress is reduced and court outcomes are enhanced. Just knowing a resource is available, though, doesn’t guarantee that a person will actually access it. Not knowing what an advocate is, or not wanting to bother anyone, most victims will also refuse an offer from law enforcement to have an advocate contact them.

However, when an advocate calls a victim and offers confidential services, although they have the right to refuse, most are willing to talk, at least once, to an advocate. This opportunity can lay the foundation for continued involvement and support as a victim processes her experiences; thereby increasing safety for more victims. Because of this, communities across the country are moving toward implementing an

advocacy-initiated response (AIR) to increase the connections between victims and community-based advocates.

The AIR involves a working agreement between the law enforcement agency and the community-based advocacy program. The arresting officer contacts the community-based advocacy program to let them know an arrest has been made and lets the victim know that an advocate will be calling. An advocate then calls the victim, and after receiving permission from the victim to proceed, the advocate provides confidential services to:

- Assess and plan for her immediate safety needs.
- Provide information regarding the court process.
- Determine what she wants to have happen in court and her wishes regarding contact with her partner.

One of the riskiest and most stressful times in a victim's life is when the criminal justice system gets involved. Using the advocacy-initiated response model, more victims receive crucial information to reduce stress and anxiety and enhance safety.

Additional information: http://praxisinternational.org/library_advocacy.aspx

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Blueprint Adaptation Team: Role & Activities

Role

A Blueprint Adaptation Team is a group that forms once a decision has been made to establish a Blueprint for Safety. The adaptation team develops the Blueprint for Safety collective policy.

The adaptation team asks:

- What is the current scope and scale of domestic violence in our community?
- How do current policy and practice line up with the Blueprint's essential elements?
- What are victims' experiences with current practice?
- Where are problems located and how will the Blueprint help address them?
- How will each agency's policy and practice change?

Blueprint for Safety collective policy: shared purpose and goals among criminal legal system agencies that reflect the Blueprint foundational principles, with agency-specific policies and protocols for processing domestic assault cases

Members

The adaptation team includes the Blueprint coordinator, advocate, and one or more representatives from each criminal legal system agency, plus community-based advocates and representatives for organizations working on behalf of marginalized communities. It convenes ad hoc work groups and invites others to participate as needed.

In some communities, members of the adaptation team may shift to the role of implementation team once the Blueprint has been established. In others, the implementation team will involve many new representatives from the criminal legal system agencies. See Blueprint Implementation Team: Role and Activities.

Activities

These are the activities of the adaptation team as a group. Individual members will not necessarily complete all activities. The Blueprint coordinator provides overall management and organization.

1. Conduct an assessment of current policy and practice in response to domestic violence-related crimes.

a. Compare current policy with Blueprint essential elements.

b. Collect baseline statistical data for domestic violence-related crimes.

c. Use information from the Blueprint advocate, multiple focus groups, and a survivors' advisory group to learn about victims/survivors' experiences with the criminal legal system.

d. Map each point of criminal case processing (911 through to probation monitoring), with specific attention to how risk and danger and advocacy are addressed.

e. Analyze case records to compare current practice with recommended practice.

f. Interview agency directors, supervisors, and practitioners about current practice.

g. Observe criminal case processing.

h. Review, interpret, and analyze assessment data throughout the process.

i. Document all discussions and recommendations.

2. Adapt agency policies to produce a collective Blueprint policy.

    a. Determine differences between current policy and Blueprint essential elements.

    b. Identify what will need to change in order to adapt the Blueprint to each agency.

    c. Present proposed Blueprint policy changes to each agency head.

    d. Identify any areas of disagreement and barriers to adaptation.

    e. Propose solutions and options to address barriers and areas of disagreement.

3. Contribute to activities related to the launch and release of the Blueprint collective policy.

    a. Accompany Blueprint coordinator to brief criminal legal system agency heads, interagency/CCR group, and other relevant community agencies and organizations on the Blueprint collective policy and agency-specific changes.

    b. Attend and participate in Blueprint launch events as needed.

    c. Participate in Blueprint implementation training to agency-specific, interagency, and community audiences.

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Planning a Blueprint for Safety Proposal

The following discussions, groundwork, and information gathering help position a community to submit a grant for funding to develop and launch the Blueprint. In addition, many of the questions lead to the kind of reflection that can benefit any coordinated community response or similar interagency effort.

If you are applying to the Office on Violence Against Women under a FY 2015 solicitation, you will need to meet special requirements set by OVW.

Background

Become familiar with the Blueprint for Safety principles, process, and templates available via the Praxis International website: www.praxisinternational.org.

Readiness Questions

Communities that can answer "yes" to the following questions are well-positioned to adapt and implement the Blueprint. How does your community compare? What are your strengths and where will you need to pay more attention?

- Community-based advocates have a central role in commenting on and shaping the criminal legal system's response to domestic violence.
- Community-based advocates and key leaders in the criminal legal system are accustomed to working together to identify and solve problems.
- We are curious and transparent about our response to domestic violence crimes.
- We seek out best practice rather than assuming that what we have been doing is the most effective approach.
- We are committed to a united approach with a shared purpose and goals.
- We can agree upon adhering to the Blueprint foundational principles to guide the response to domestic violence crimes.
- We can establish the necessary coordination.
- We can establish sufficient authority and resources to sustain the Blueprint.

PREPARATION

By discussing and gathering the following information, you will be prepared to develop the narrative, goals, and objectives for a proposal.

- Statistical data related to numbers and dispositions of domestic violence-related crimes
- Composition of interagency group/CCR addressing criminal legal system intervention in domestic violence crimes (members and who is missing)
- Capacity of community-based advocacy to lead the interagency group/CCR and the Blueprint adaptation
- Foundation for institutional/systems change work
    - Experience in assessing and investigating how community systems and institutions respond to domestic violence crimes (e.g., conducting a Praxis Safety and Accountability Audit, Fatality Review, research studies, other assessment projects)
    - Examples of problems addressed successfully via changes in policy and practice—and the challenges
    - Criminal legal system agencies with domestic violence policies currently in place and those that are missing
    - Role of community-based advocacy in leading and sustaining institutional change work
    - Successes and problems in monitoring and maintaining changes in policy and practice
    - Extent to which criminal legal system agencies are likely to see the Blueprint adaptation as an intrusion
    - Willingness of the interagency group/CCR and criminal legal system agencies to be transparent and forthcoming about shortcomings in current practice
- Current issues that the interagency group/CCR is dealing with and how the Blueprint will help address them
- How the community is positioned—or not—to produce policy and practice consistent with the Blueprint Foundation Principles
- How the community is positioned—or not—to build a framework of justice for vulnerable populations in the criminal legal system response to domestic violence crimes
- One or more examples of a harmful unintended consequence of current practice that the Blueprint might help address

BUDGET AND RESOURCES

- Personnel and coordination resources currently available
- Salary and fringe benefits for the participation of one or more community-based advocates and the Blueprint coordinator
- Office space and equipment
- Costs involved in recruiting and facilitating community focus groups
- Training and launch events
- Printing and distributing Blueprint documents
- Web-site development and maintenance
- Other likely costs related to adapting, implementing, and sustaining the Blueprint

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BLUEPRINT FOR SAFETY: POLICY ADAPTATION PHASES

POLICY ADAPTATION PHASES

PHASES	PROCESS NOTES	ASSIGNED TO
Learning the Blueprint	• Understand state laws that governs CJS response to domestic violence • Read all Blueprint policies • Review Blueprint Essential Elements and Rationale • Review training memos • Begin to identify places where agencies may have issues/differences of opinion • Set up work groups for next steps	Blueprint coordinator and advocate
Current practice assessment	• Compare current policy with Blueprint essential elements • Collect baseline statistical data for domestic violence-related crimes. • Use multiple focus groups and a survivors' advisory group to learn about victims/survivors' experiences with the criminal legal system. • Map each point of criminal case processing (911 through to probation monitoring. • Analyze case records to compare current practice with recommended practice. • Interview agency directors, supervisors, and practitioners about current practice. • Observe criminal case processing. • Coordinate and facilitate meetings to review, interpret, and analyze assessment data throughout the process.	Blueprint coordinator and advocate and work groups

PHASES	PROCESS NOTES	ASSIGNED TO
	• Keep a written record of all discussions and recommendations.	
Adapting Policy to the Blueprint Essential Elements	• Work though and identify what they will change, what coordinator and advocate will need to negotiate in adapting the Blueprint to each agency • Work group members review policy and highlight questions/concerns • Discuss questions/concerns • Come to agreement on policy changes • For areas of continuing disagreement, coordinator and advocate may need to seek outside help to come to agreement • Summarize options and arguments to present to agency heads	Blueprint coordinator and advocate and work groups

POLICY ADAPTATION WORK GROUPS

AGENCY	BLUEPRINT POLICY ADAPTATION WORK GROUPS	
	Attend every meeting (Coordinator and advocate and…)	**Attend meetings as required**

911	• 911 designee to the project
	• 911 staff
	  o Operator
	  o Dispatcher
		• Prosecution
		• Patrol officer
		• Bail evaluator
		• Others as needed

Law Enforcement (LE)	• LE designee to the project • LE staff	• Prosecution • Probation officer

AGENCY	BLUEPRINT POLICY ADAPTATION WORK GROUPS	
	Attend every meeting (Coordinator and advocate and…)	**Attend meetings as required**
	o Patrol o Investigation	• 911 • Others as needed

AGENCY	BLUEPRINT POLICY ADAPTATION WORK GROUPS	
	Attend every meeting (Coordinator and advocate and…)	**Attend meetings as required**

Sheriff (SO)	• SO designee to the project
	• SO staff
	  o Warrants
	  o Jail
	  o Courtroom security
		• Prosecution
		• Bail evaluation/pretrial release
		• Police Investigator
		• Others as needed

Prosecution ***(including bail evaluation)***	• Prosecution designee to the project • Charging and prosecuting attorneys • Police Investigator	• Probation officer • Bail evaluators/pretrial release • Court administration • Others as needed

Probation	• Probation designee to the project
	• Probation staff (one rep per function)
	  o Pre-trial (PSI writer)
	  o Post-conviction (supervising agent)
		• Prosecution
		• Law Enforcement (Police records or investigator)
		• Others as needed

Court Administration and the Bench	• Chief judge • Court administrator • At least one additional judge	• Prosecution • Probation • Others as needed

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Blueprint for Safety Adaptation Process and Timeline: Tracking Checklist

Tracking the players, activities, and timelines involved in adapting the Blueprint is essential. The entire process benefits from understanding how each of the eight or more agencies in the criminal legal system contributes to assessment activities, writes and approves policy, and trains its personnel.

Who sets up the tracking system?

The Blueprint coordinator. A tracking system is an essential coordination tool.

When should the tracking system be set up?

Get the tracking system in place early on, ideally in the explore-and-prepare phase.

How should the tracking system be organized?

The format is up to the coordinator, but it will work best if organized according to what the coordinator is familiar and prepared to work with. Options include:

1. Simple tables, one for each agency
2. Spreadsheet that tracks all agencies in one place
3. Database that can be queried to produce reports for one or all agencies

What should the tracking system include?

Whatever the format, the tracking system will include the elements included in the following list, along with anything specific to local conditions. For example, a community with a specialized domestic response team or high risk offender team may want to specifically include tracking data for that team, in addition to the police department.

Tracking Fields

- Agency name
- Primary Blueprint liaison for each agency; name and contact information
- Blueprint teams and work groups, including individual names, agency affiliation, and contact information
    - Primary agency liaisons

  - Practice and policy assessment work groups
  - Policy writing work groups
  - Implementation committee
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed
- Existing written policy on response to domestic violence crimes (pre-Blueprint)
- Copy of all policies, directives, or standard operating procedures related to the agency's response to domestic violence collected
- Copy of all report forms, checklists, screening tools, risk assessments, etc., used in domestic violence cases collected
- Description of the agency's policy approval process
  - Who is involved, time frame, format requirements, role of any outside body involved in policy, accreditation, or certification[1]
  - Policy approval deadlines
- Description of the agency's training development and approval process
  - Who is involved, time frame and scheduling deadlines, new hires and current employees, role of any accrediting or certification body[2]
  - Training development due dates and deadlines
- Baseline statistical data on domestic violence cases collected
- Agency policies compared to Blueprint Essential Elements
- All practice assessment activities complete
  - Mapping
  - Community consultation

[1] For example, some law enforcement agencies and prosecutors participate in a voluntary accreditation process via a state or national entity, such as CALEA (Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies). Some law enforcement agencies utilize services and models from Lexipol or the International Association of Chiefs of Police to develop policy.

[2] For example, an agency may want or need to have training certified by a state or professional agency in order for it to count toward mandated training hours, professional licensing, or salary reimbursement. Such approval processes typically involve a specific time frame and documentation.

  - Case reviews
  - Interviews
  - Observations
- Blueprint policy adaptation complete and approved
- Implementation plan developed and approved
  - Implementation committee established
  - Launch event completed
  - Revised or new documentation; procedures, forms, checklists; database revisions, etc., in place
  - Agency training scheduled
  - Agency training completed
- Ongoing monitoring plan developed for each agency and overall
  - Timeline for data collection, monitoring activities, and anticipated reports
  - Highlight agency-specific revisions to Blueprint
- Adapt and add other elements specific to local conditions

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Coordinating the Blueprint for Safety: Strategies to Stay Focused and Move Forward

A Blueprint coordinator leads a process, whether working one-on-one with a key ally or whether utilizing a work group or convening an interagency or community-wide meeting. Meetings of all shapes, sizes, and configurations are a main tool for getting things done in a Blueprint community. To build and sustain a Blueprint for Safety requires skilled organizing and facilitation in many settings, from persuading agency administrators to supporting the adaptation team; from managing practice assessment and policy writing activities to dealing with resistance, personalities, and unexpected events.

Blueprint coordinators come to the position with many relevant skills, but with different levels of experience in applying those skills. Some will be seasoned social change advocates with lengthy experience in negotiation, coalition-building, analysis, and managing change. Others will be relatively new to the work and familiar with such skills more in theory than in practice. The following strategies help expand and reinforce necessary coordination skills.

Strategy: Seek Advice

Seeking advice is a hallmark of skilled organizing and facilitation. Sources available to a Blueprint coordinator include:

- **Blueprint Advocate**

The Blueprint advocate is a problem-solving partner: someone with whom the coordinator can explore issues and scenarios in relation to the possible impact on victims of battering.

- **Blueprint organizers and supporters**

Along with members of the adaptation team, those most invested in the Blueprint are also likely to be knowledgeable about key partners and processes.

- **Knowledgeable community members and leaders**

A person can have little direct connection with the Blueprint adaptation process, but be a valuable source of information and advice about the community or systemic advocacy and change. For example, a coordinator might seek advice from the director of the YWCA or local rape crisis center, retired system practitioners, a former tribal chair, or community organizers affiliated with social justice issues.

- **OVW-designated technical assistance (TA) providers**

A TA provider can consult on community-specific problems related to organizing the Blueprint and connect a coordinator with in-person training, webinars, and publications. For example, the following

kinds of assistance via Praxis International can help expand the knowledge and skills related to organizing and facilitating the interagency, systemic change that is at the center of the Blueprint: Essential Skills in Coordinating Your Community Response to Battering: An E-Learning Course for CCR Coordinators, in-person training institutes, webinars related to advocacy and to criminal legal system change, and guides to analyzing institutional practice.[1]

- **Non-profit and social change resource centers, university extension programs, and community colleges**

Classes, conferences, and publications provided by these kinds of organizations can be helpful sources of advice on such topics as responding to group dynamics, facilitating effective discussions, crafting messages, and expanding cultural awareness and respect.

- **Tribal and state coalitions working to end violence against women**

Coalitions can provide expertise and advice on issues related to data collection, legislation, and policy issues.

GOOD ADVICE: THE COMMUNITY TOOL BOX

http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents

A public service of the Work Group for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas, the Community Tool Box provides free on-line tool kits related organizing and coordinating community change, such as that involved in establishing a Blueprint for Safety. The Tool Box provides step-by-step guidance in community-building skills, from creating and maintaining partnerships and assessing community needs and resources to building leadership, enhancing cultural competence, and evaluating an initiative. For example, Chapter 16 in the Leadership and Management tool kit provides how-to advice on group facilitation and problem-solving: (1) conducting effective meetings, (2) developing facilitation skills, (3) capturing what people say, and (4) techniques for leading group discussions.

http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/leadership/group-facilitation

[1] For details on available resources and technical assistance, go to www.praxisinternational.org.

STRATEGY: USE THE RULES

From its decades of work with communities seeking to change the response to violence against women, Praxis has defined four "rules" for institutional or systems change advocacy. Attention to the rules helps a coordinator keep each phase of the Blueprint focused and moving a forward.

#1: Centralize victim safety and engagement.

- Knowing the scope and scale of violence against women in our communities is one way that we help to centralize the Blueprint's principles of victim safety and engagement.
- Workers analyzing problems will drift toward increasing efficiency and away from what works for victims. It is easy to focus on making the system run more effectively from the agency's perspective. This happens not out of bad intentions but because of how institutions typically organize how cases are processed.
- Advocates centralize women and children's experiences within in their organizations. They have a key role in leading interagency work to focus on the needs, safety, and well-being of women/survivors.

#2: Develop a strong knowledge base.

- In other words, homework is critical. Effective coordination rests on knowledge of the Blueprint as an approach and process, the structure and function of community systems, local political and interpersonal dynamics, and the scope and scale of domestic violence.
- We cannot assume that anecdotes, advice from individuals, personal experience, statistics, etc., show the whole picture. There are many dimensions to developing a strong knowledge base, including statistical data, studying how institutions process cases, and learning about victims' lived experiences with the criminal legal system.
- Research the issues and know:
    - Statistical and demographic data for battering and domestic violence-related crimes
    - Circumstances victims of battering face
    - Institutional responses and their outcomes
    - How workers are organized to act on cases
    - Institutional assumptions, theories, and concepts

#3 Use a systemic and social change analysis.

- In assessing and analyzing current practice, seek to expose systemic problems, not individual behavior.

- Focus on case processing and weaknesses in case processing that contribute to poor outcomes for victims/survivors.
- Know and recognize how community systems standardize their responses to battering.

#4 Use a model of constructive engagement.

- Be respectful. An atmosphere of criticism or personal attack is counter-productive to the Blueprint's emphasis on mutual, interagency problem-solving.
- Assume that practitioners and others participating in Blueprint adaptation and implementation can and will help.
- Build relationships and trust. Work with people as true colleagues.
- Understand the consequences for victims and survivors of using a judgmental approach with practitioners: i.e., judgement and blame discourage practitioner openness and engagement with victims/survivors.
- Remain solution-oriented and avoid backing a practitioner or agency into a corner.
- As a leader, facilitate analysis and problem solving.

STRATEGY: BE ALERT TO COMMON PITFALLS

A Blueprint coordinator who is prepared—i.e., who seeks advice and follows the use-the-rule strategies outlined above—will keep the work moving forward. A skilled coordinator will also stay alert and try to avoid common pitfalls related to organizing and facilitating a multifaceted effort such as the Blueprint. These pitfalls include:

- The temptation to "go it alone" rather than face the often messy and frustrating realities of group process and investment or utilize the adaptation team
- Overreliance on a one-to-one approach at the expense of building an effective, involved adaptation team
- Reluctance to question how and why things happen as they do in the criminal legal system: i.e., limited curiosity about how the system works or does not work for people
- Doing only those tasks that the easiest or most comfortable to do
- Accepting historic conflicts as current process: i.e., assuming that because agencies or individuals have had a bad experience in past that they cannot work together now
- Relying solely on an official body—e.g., prosecutor or sheriff's office or probation agency—to conclude that a policy or practice is "good," without gauging the actual implications and impact on people's lives

- Failing to keep practitioners and agency staff at all levels informed about and involved in Blueprint adaptation and implementation, from those in a central policy-making and supervisory role to first responders
- Overreliance on e-mail communication at the expense of personal contact, particularly when announcing important work or inviting people to a critical discussion
- Lack of sufficient distribution, review, and comment time for policy documents, leaving people feeling left out of the process
- Haphazard welcome and introductions to those attending Blueprint meetings and events, leaving people feeling ignored and slighted
- Leaving under-served or over-scrutinized communities out of the process or invited to participate as an afterthought.
- Limited or sloppy data-gathering and presentation
- Allowing one agency or individual to use the Blueprint approach and process to "get" another
- Drifting away from ongoing victim-survivor input and guidance
- Lack of advance preparation (i.e., facilitation, attendance, roles, process) and clear goals for meetings

The best way to avoid these kinds of common pitfalls brings a coordinator full circle: seek advice and follow the rules.

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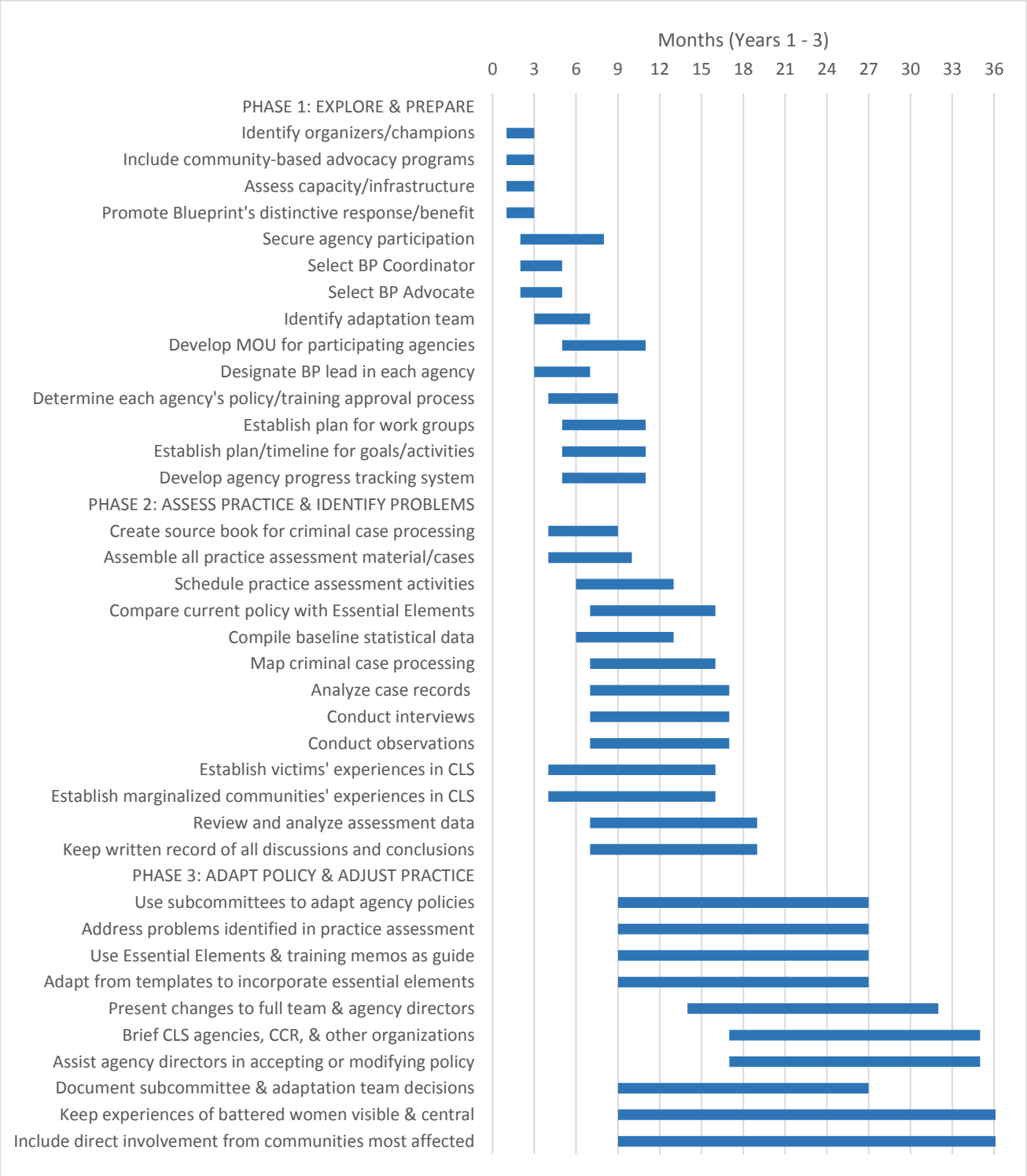
BLUEPRINT ADAPTATION TASKS AND TIMELINE

BLUEPRINT ADAPTATION & IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: PHASES 1 – 3



BLUEPRINT ADAPTATION & IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: PHASES 4 – 5

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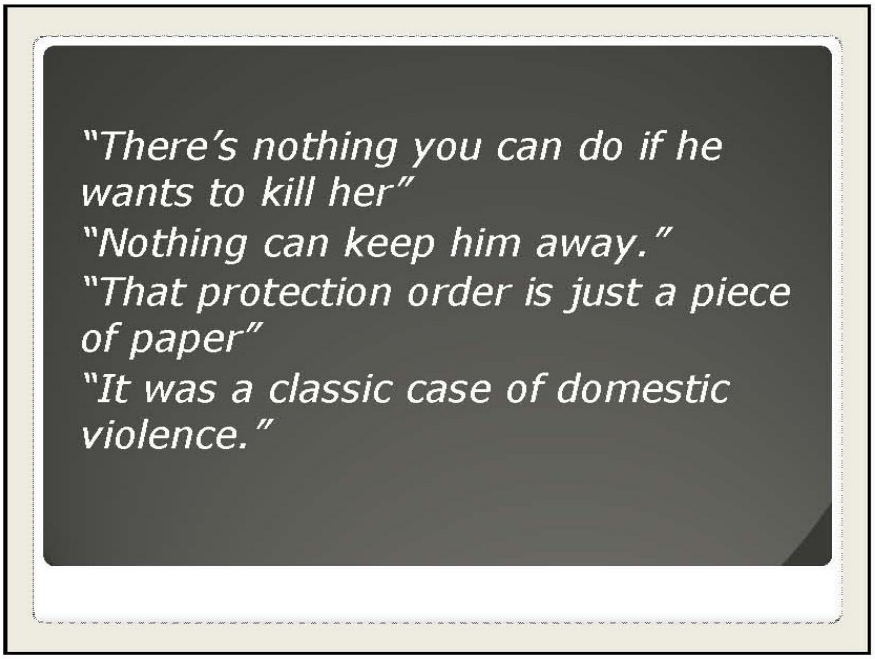
PRESENTATION TEMPLATE: BECOMING A BLUEPRINT COMMUNITY

(Available in electronic format from Praxis: blueprint@praxisinternational.org)

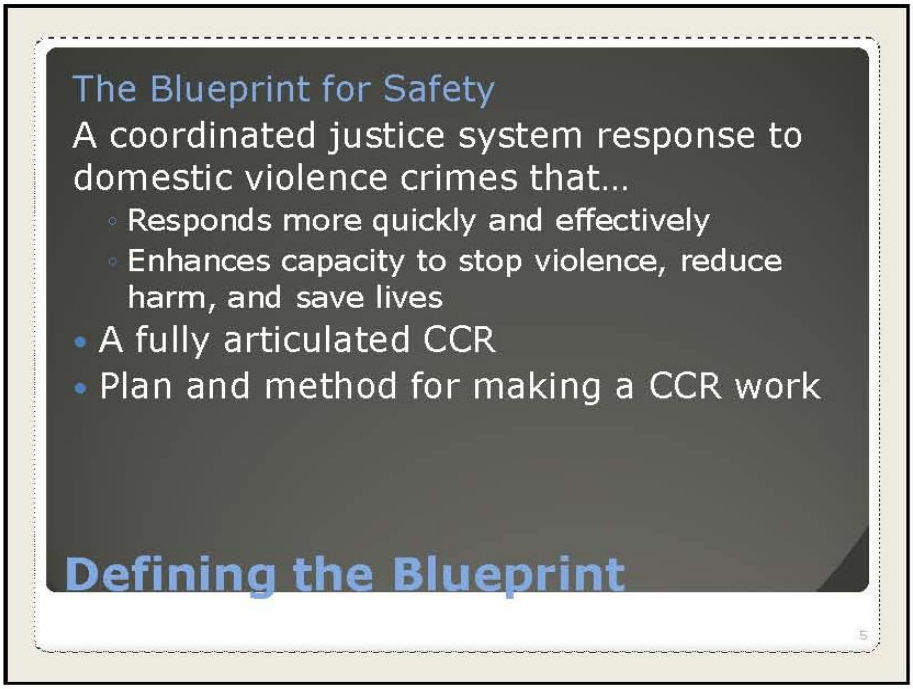


DEVELOP basic statistical picture for your community, including:

- Calls to 911
- Proportion of police work
- Prosecution & probation data
- # crisis calls – data from community-based organizations
- Etc.

Scope & scale of domestic violence in [Local]

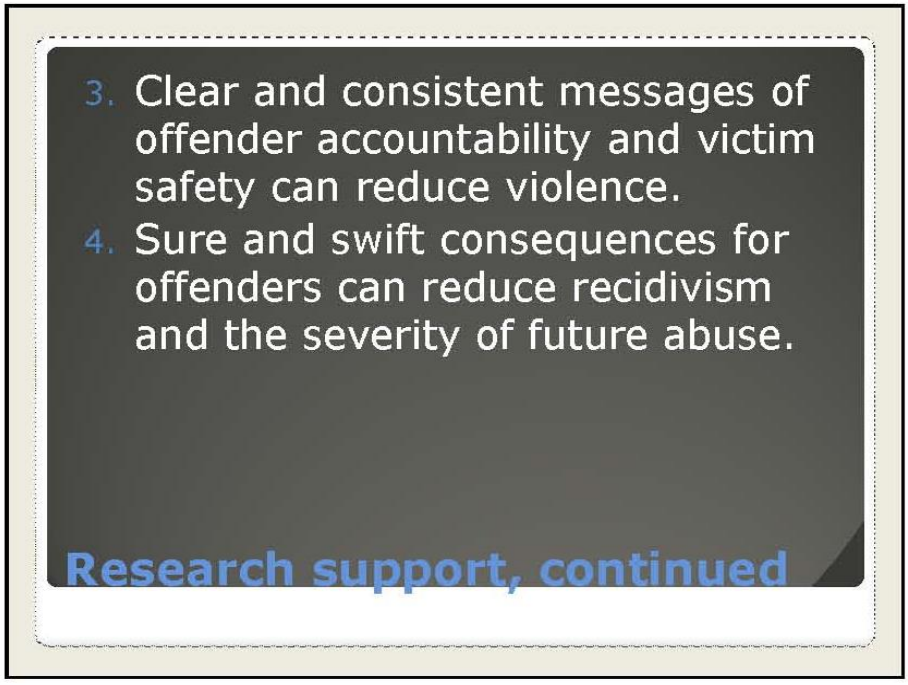
The faces behind the numbers


The Blueprint for Safety
A coordinated justice system response to domestic violence crimes that…
Responds more quickly and effectively
Enhances capacity to stop violence, reduce harm, and save lives
A fully articulated CCR
Plan and method for making a CCR work
Defining the Blueprint
5

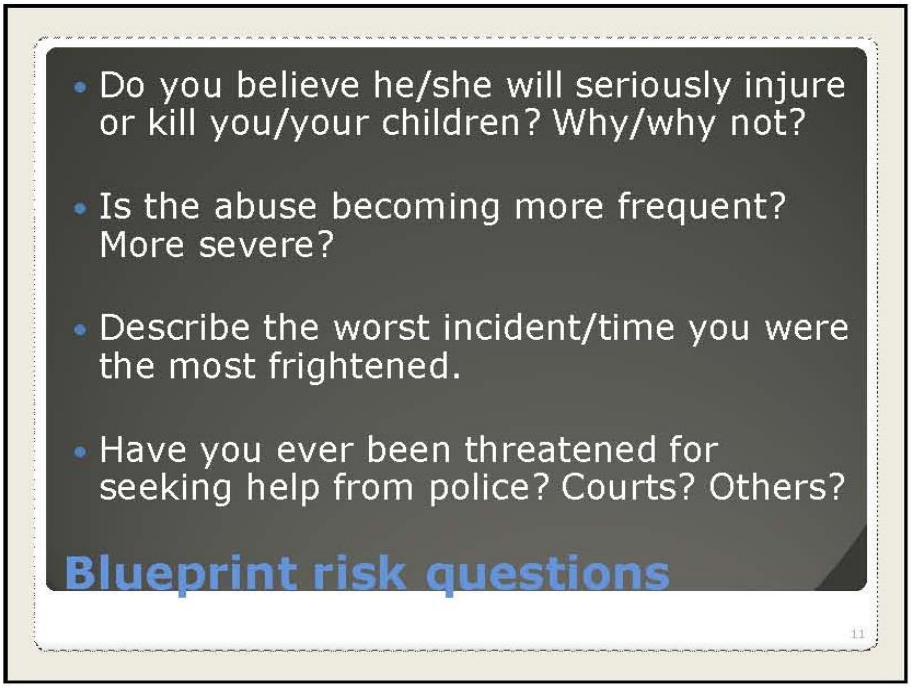
An approach: shared, coherent way of thinking about domestic violence cases and what types of intervention are effective
A document: collection of interagency practices designed to guide our collective approach
A process: ongoing evaluation and adjustments to practices
Defining the Blueprint
6

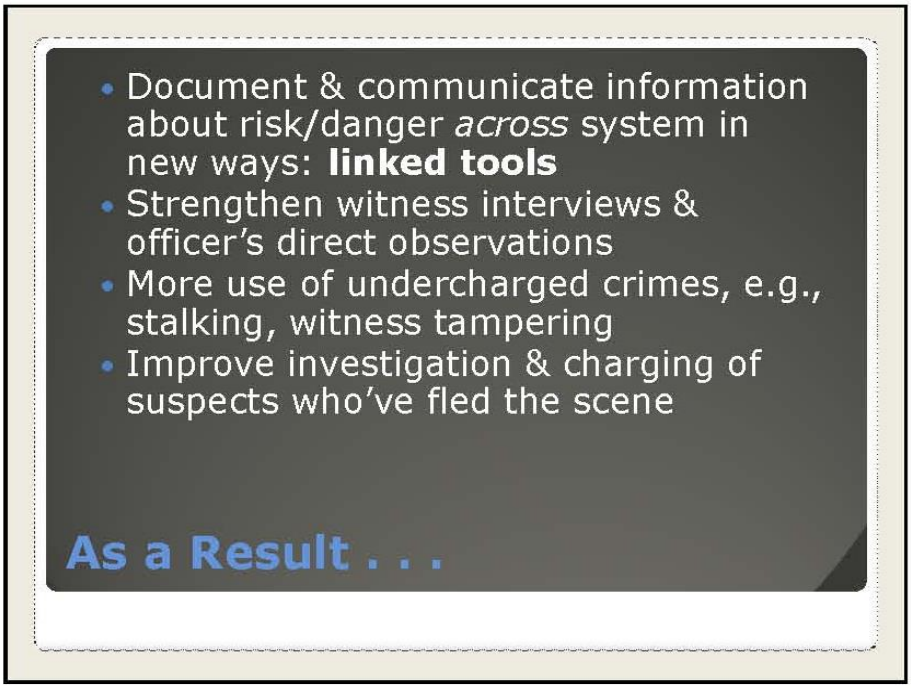
• 2007 – 2010: Blueprint for Safety created and tested in St. Paul, MN (and continues today)
• 2011 - 2015: OVW-funded adaptation demonstration initiative
◦ Duluth, MN
◦ New Orleans, LA
◦ Shelby County/Memphis, TN
Designed & tested

1. Coordinated work across and within agencies increases protection
2. Outcomes improve when the system treats a domestic violence case as part of ongoing pattern of criminal activity vs. a single event
Research supports the Blueprint approach

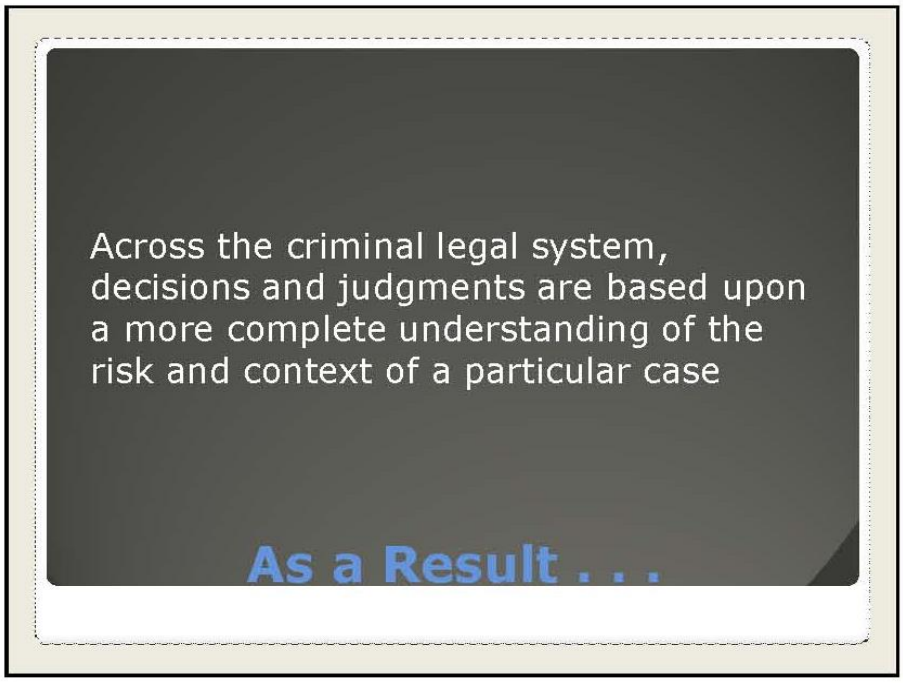

3. Clear and consistent messages of offender accountability and victim safety can reduce violence.
4. Sure and swift consequences for offenders can reduce recidivism and the severity of future abuse.
Research support, continued

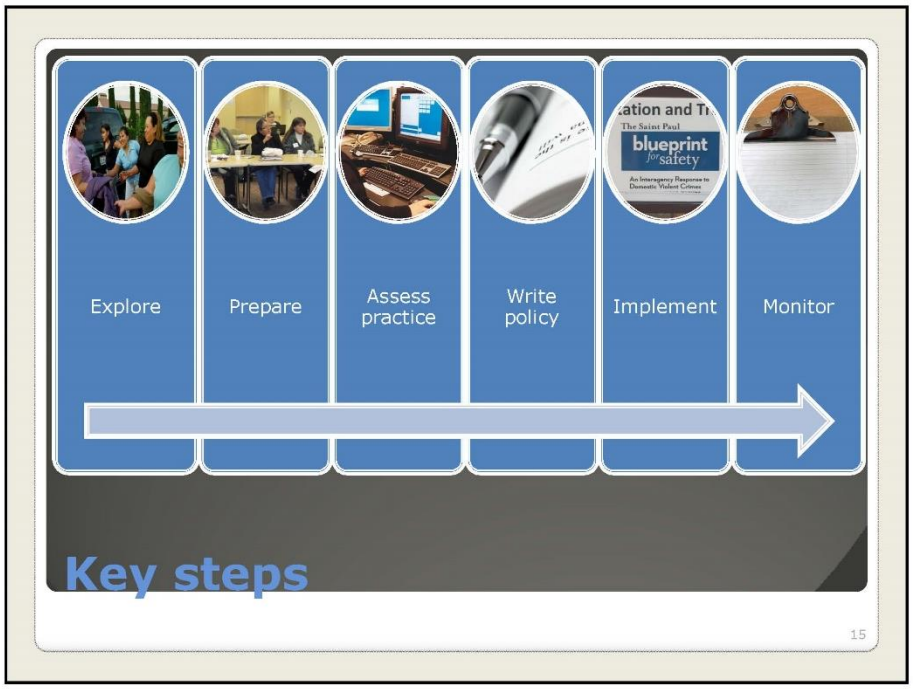
• Single, overarching policy
• Best practices grounded in research
• All agencies identify, document, act on risk/danger
• Employs victim *engagement strategies*
• Pays attention to *disparity* of impact and unintended consequences
• *Inter- and intra-agency monitoring* built in= ongoing problem solving among practitioners
Key features of the Blueprint
10


Do you believe he/she will seriously injure or kill you/your children? Why/why not?
Is the abuse becoming more frequent? More severe?
Describe the worst incident/time you were the most frightened.
Have you ever been threatened for seeking help from police? Courts? Others?
Blueprint risk questions
11

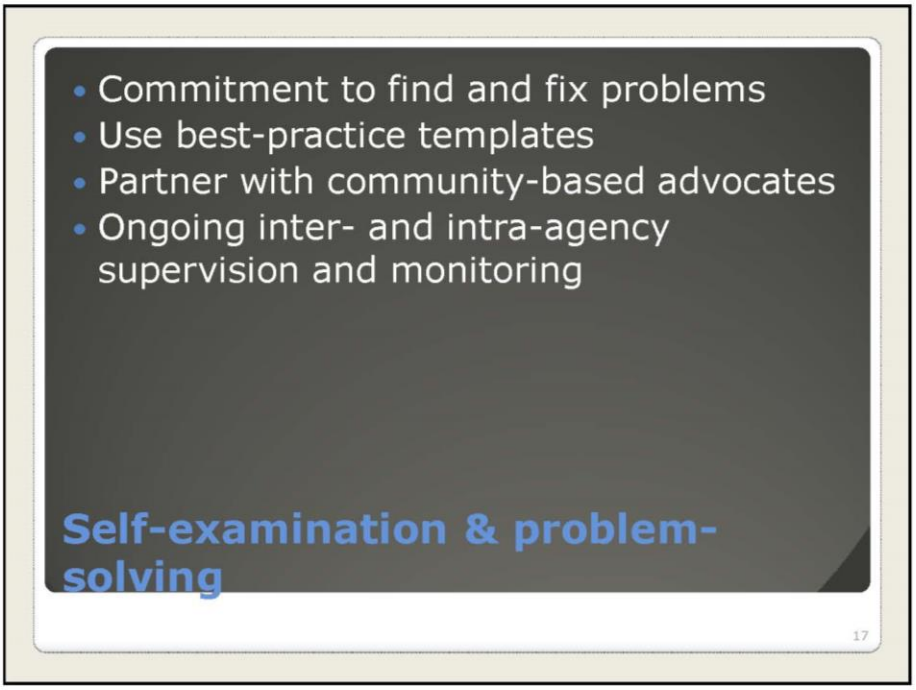

Document & communicate information about risk/danger *across* system in new ways: **linked tools**
Strengthen witness interviews & officer's direct observations
More use of undercharged crimes, e.g., stalking, witness tampering
Improve investigation & charging of suspects who've fled the scene
As a Result . . .

Framework for pretrial release conditions that reflect risk/danger & include victim input where possible; swift response to violations
Position probation to differentiate context/severity & fit sanctions & supervision accordingly
More detail to judges about pattern, type, scope, & severity of abuse
As a Result . . .

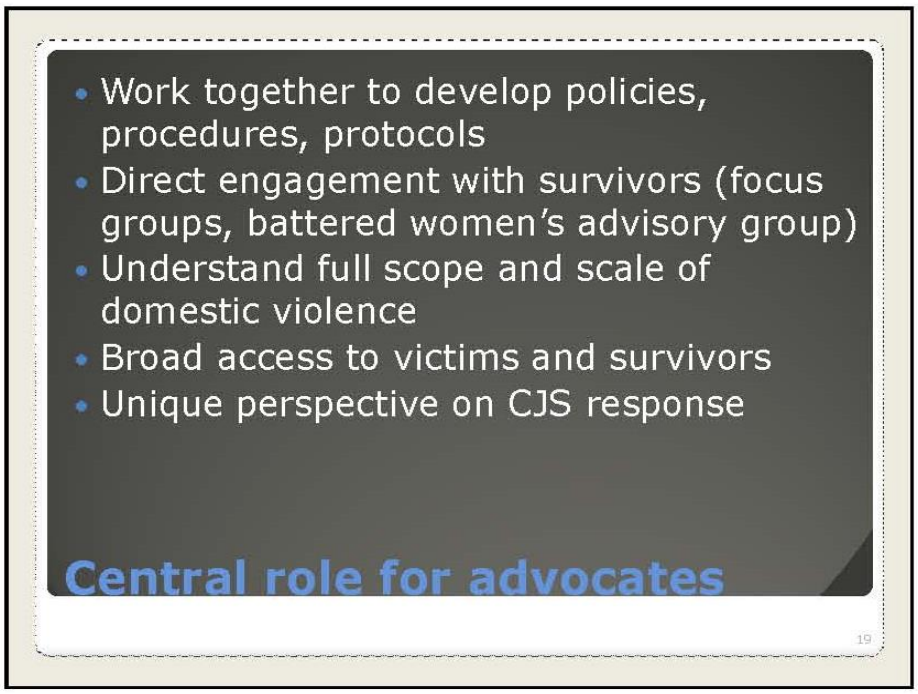

Across the criminal legal system, decisions and judgments are based upon a more complete understanding of the risk and context of a particular case
As a Result . . .


Explore
Prepare
Assess practice
Write policy
Implement
Monitor
Key steps
15

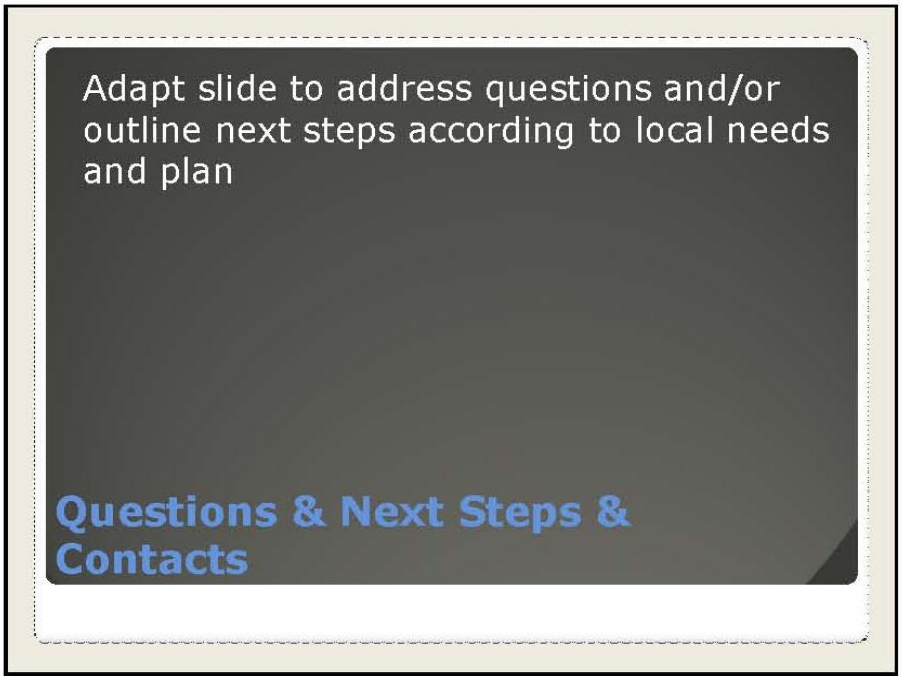
Essential commitments of a Blueprint community
• Self-examination & problem-solving
• Foundational principles
• Central role for community-based advocacy
Essential commitments
16


Commitment to find and fix problems
Use best-practice templates
Partner with community-based advocates
Ongoing inter- and intra-agency supervision and monitoring
Self-examination & problem-solving
17

Interagency approach and collective intervention goals
Reduce unintended consequences and disparity of impact
Attention to context and severity
Messages of help and accountability
Domestic violence is a patterned crime requiring continuing engagement
Sure and swift consequences
Foundational principles
18


Work together to develop policies, procedures, protocols
Direct engagement with survivors (focus groups, battered women's advisory group)
Understand full scope and scale of domestic violence
Broad access to victims and survivors
Unique perspective on CJS response
Central role for advocates
19

Becoming a Blueprint community requires:
Currently functioning interagency group
Ongoing leadership by advocates
Coordinator
Time
Agencies understand this is a process of assessment and change
Leadership and commitment
Spirit of trying new things
Blueprint requirements
20



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BLUEPRINT FOR SAFETY: POLICY AND PRACTICE ASSESSMENT GUIDE

ADAPTED FROM COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL – PRAXIS INTERNATIONAL

This assessment guide is a supplement to the Blueprint guide, *Becoming a Blueprint Community: A New Response to Battering and Domestic Violence Crimes*. Related tools referenced here will be found in the Appendix to the Blueprint guide.

The material included here is based on the Institutional Analysis (IA) method developed by Praxis International. The approach will be familiar to any community that has conducted a Praxis Safety and Accountability Audit or used other applications of IA or to those who have completed the Advocacy Learning Center.[1] For those new to this method of analyzing policy and practice, the Blueprint version included here provides the basics and positions a Blueprint coordinator and team to answer:

1. How does the current criminal legal system response meet the Blueprint's essential elements for recommended practice in battering and domestic violence related crimes?
2. What are the range of victims' needs and experiences with the current response?
3. What are the experiences of victims from communities that are over-represented and/or underserved in the criminal legal system?
4. What policy and practice changes should be made to address gaps in recommended practice and better meet victims' needs within the framework of the Blueprint for Safety?

What are the benefits of a policy and practice assessment in adapting the Blueprint?

- Compare the current response to recommended practice and identify strengths and gaps (see Blueprint Essential Elements - Annotated, Appendix 10 in Becoming a Blueprint Community).
- Paint a clear picture of what is actually happening versus what agencies assume is happening.
- Introduce new ways of working together via emphasis on advocate-practitioner work groups and an approach to ongoing monitoring of cases against a set of recommended practices.
- Uncover ways in which policy and practice might be contributing to unintended consequences and disparity of impact for different communities.
- Introduce and strengthen skills that support the Blueprint as an ongoing process of finding and fixing problems in the criminal legal system response.

[1] See Institutional Analysis/Community Assessment and Advocacy Learning Center at www.praxisinternational.org.

Who conducts the policy and practice assessment?

The Blueprint adaptation team and/or designated work groups conduct the assessment, with facilitation and organization provided by the Blueprint coordinator and representation from the Blueprint advocate and community-based advocacy organizations. See **Blueprint Policy Adaptation Phases and Work Groups, Appendix 17** in *Becoming a Blueprint Community*.

What contributes to a successful policy and practice assessment?

- Work groups of manageable size (typically, four to eight members) that include a mix of people with expertise in the day-to-day work

Generally, agency heads do not participate in the assessment work groups, although in small communities or agencies they might be included.

- Setting a tone of respect and curiosity

A message of "how can we work together to strengthen our work" versus "so-and-so screwed up" contributes to success. The assessment is not about individual worker or agency performance, but about how the response is organized and compares to the Blueprint essential elements.

- Skilled facilitation that helps keep the focus, tone, and message on track

Facilitating the policy and practice assessment is among the Blueprint coordinator's key roles.

- Using the case mapping step to anchor the process

As the Blueprint adaptation team develops a detailed picture of how cases move through the criminal legal system they build new working relationships and begin to see where and how the response may not be meeting victims' needs.

- Ready access to agency case records

Access to agency records is included in the Memorandum of Understanding, Appendix 12, in Becoming a Blueprint Community) because the case review is fundamental to a thorough assessment.

Where do we start . . . and how much policy and practice assessment is enough?

Policy and practice assessment occurs for each key step in the criminal legal system process. This involves a combination of community consultation, basic data collection, policy comparison, mapping, and case review. Interviews and observations add depth to the assessment whenever possible or when something is unclear or there is a need to learn more about a particular step.

Possible places to begin the policy and practice assessment include:

1. Begin with community consultations to identify areas of most concern to victims. Focus the practice assessment on those areas and the agencies involved. Map the process and conduct case reviews for those steps that raise the most concern. Include a system-wide policy comparison.

2. Complete the policy comparison step and focus the practice assessment on areas where there seem to be the biggest gaps between the essential elements and current practice. Include community consultations to check the policy and practice assessment discoveries against victim/survivors' experiences.

3. Focus the practice assessment on the front end of the criminal legal system, from the 911 response through charging. If many essential elements are missing at these critical early points, such gaps will impact the response at later stages of the criminal case process. Use community consultations, basic data collection, policy review, mapping, and case reviews to construct a clear picture of where and how problems are occurring or have been avoided.

4. Start at the front end of the criminal legal system, at the 911 response, and go through to post-sentencing. Utilize all assessment steps and methods (i.e., community consultations, basic data collection, mapping, policy review, case file analysis, interviews, and observations). This approach is a full system-wide Safety and Accountability Audit. If your community is positioned to do so, this option will provide the most complete picture of current practice and any gaps. It is where St. Paul started and the results led to the Blueprint for Safety.

The Bottom Line

Conduct some level of practice assessment at each key step in the criminal case process. Be as thorough as possible and use the most complete array of assessment tools at primary decision points: arrest, pretrial release, charging, and sentencing. At other points—such as jail booking, warrant service, courtroom security, and victim/witness services—complete the policy comparison and mapping, at a minimum, and include case reviews in as many places as possible.

Case review at all points in the criminal case process is highly encouraged; it is a rich source of information about what is actually happening. The case review does not necessarily require a large number of calls, cases, reports, or documents from each agency. Because the focus of the case review—and the practice assessment overall—is on how the local criminal legal system response compares to recommended practice, the case review does not need the kinds of broad representative samples and numbers that a research study might require. The case review requires enough examples to be confident that what is found reflects how the agency's response is organized and not isolated or

individual practice. The number of any one type of case or document varies, depending upon the focal point of the policy and practice assessment. The number is typically higher for single, uncomplicated types of forms and files, such as a 911 emergency call recordings or bail screening forms. A 911 or bail screening case review might include thirty calls or screening forms. With more complex case documents that include many reports and forms from different sources, such as prosecution case files or presentence investigation files, a half-dozen might be sufficient. More detailed guidance is included in the case review section of Steps and Tools.

To learn more about Institutional Analysis

The Blueprint tools introduced in Phase 2 of the Blueprint guide, Assess Practice and Identify Problems, provide the basics on how to organize and conduct the policy and practice assessment. The Phase 2 steps and tools are intended to be self-guided without requiring additional training or preparation. For Blueprint coordinators and others who seek additional support or information about the approach, however, Praxis International offers a variety of supplemental material, in addition to a schedule of webinars and an annual in-person training institute. The listed resources can be found at www.praxisinternational.org under Institutional Analysis/Community Assessment.

The following items provide how-to discussions related to policy and practice assessment:

- **Essential Skills in Coordinating Your Community Response to Battering: An E-Learning Course for CCR Coordinators**: a self-paced course that can help a Blueprint coordinator prepare to facilitate interagency work groups in a current-practice assessment or in other facets of Blueprint adaptation.
- **Videos: (1) Overview of Best Practice Assessment Tools and (2) Building a Team to Conduct a Best Practice Assessment**. The steps and tools in this Blueprint guide have been adapted from the process described in the videos.
- Archived webinars and other presentations cover a variety of topics related to institutional analysis and practice assessment.

The following publications provide more in-depth guidance related to Institutional Analysis:

- **Safety and Accountability Audit Toolkit**: the Blueprint policy and practice assessment is similar to a Safety and Accountability Audit. The Audit Toolkit includes instructions on how to develop a case processing map, conduct focus groups, interview practitioners, observe practitioners on the job, and analyze case records.
- **Safety and Accountability Audit Logistics Guide**: on-line tools that supplement the Audit Toolkit with additional planning and organizational support.
- **Text Analysis as a Tool for Coordinated Community Response: Keeping Safety for Battered Women and Their Children at the Center** presents the foundation, logistics, and applied

examples of studying case files and other documents as a way to examine current practice and identify problems.

STEPS AND TOOLS

Tools referenced in the steps are included with the Policy and Practice Assessment Guide, unless otherwise noted.

1. **Mapping Domestic Violence Case Processing**
2. **Source Book Contents**
3. **Data-Gathering Template**
4. **Community Consultation**
5. **Policy Comparison Worksheets**
6. **Analyzing Case Records**
7. **Practice Assessment Case Review Worksheet**
8. **Practitioner Interviews and Observations**
9. **Analysis and Reporting**
10. **Notes and Documentation**

This list of key steps assumes that the necessary agency-specific work groups are in place. Some of the steps may be underway simultaneously in different agencies or phases of the criminal legal system response.

Step 1

Produce a current case processing map of steps involved in processing a domestic violence case in the criminal legal system. Begin with 911 and carry through to probation monitoring.

☞ See tool **Mapping Domestic Violence Case Processing**

Step 2

Create a source book of local policies, administrative forms and protocols for current case processing of criminal cases, from 911 through probation monitoring.

☞ See tool **Source Book Contents**

Step 3

Compile basic statistical information on domestic violence-related cases: e.g., 911 calls, arrests, crimes charged, disposition, sentencing, demographics.

☞ See tool **Data-Gathering Template**

Step 4

Conduct community consultations with victims/survivors about their experiences with the criminal legal system.

☞ See tool **Community Consultation**

Step 5

Complete a policy comparison that analyzes local policies alongside the recommended response defined in the Blueprint Essential Elements.

☞ See tool **Policy Comparison Worksheets**

Step 6

Analyze case records (e.g., 911 calls, patrol reports, prosecution files, probation records, etc.) to compare current practice with the recommended practice in the Blueprint Essential Elements.

☞ See tool **Analyzing Case Records**

Step 7

Interview agency directors, supervisors, and practitioners about current practice.

☞ See tool **Practitioner Interviews and Observations**

Step 8

Observe current practices via patrol ride-alongs, 911 “sit-alongs,” court observations, and other practitioner observations.

☞ See tool **Practitioner Interviews and Observations**

Step 9

Coordinate and facilitate meetings to review, interpret, and analyze assessment data throughout the process.

☞ See tool **Analysis and Reporting**

Step 10

Maintain a written record of all discussions, conclusions, and recommendations related to the current-practice assessment.

☞ See tool **Policy and Practice Assessment Notes and Documentation**

BLUEPRINT ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

The Blueprint Essential Elements provide a foundation for the policy and practice assessment. The essential practice elements are used in different formats for different purposes, with the core information for each agency staying the same. Blueprint Essential Elements Annotated (Appendix 10, in Becoming a Blueprint Community) provides the rationale for each element and why it has been included. The policy and practice assessment guide includes three versions of the essential elements that can be used as follows:

5. Policy Comparison Worksheets: use to compare local policies to the essential elements.
6. Case Review Worksheets: use to analyze case records (e.g., forms, reports, checklists, case files, etc.) alongside the essential elements
7. Policy and Practice Assessment Notes and Documentation Tool: essential elements organized to provide the Blueprint coordinator with an option for tracking the results of policy comparison, case review, and other aspects of the policy and practice assessment.

[1] MAPPING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASE PROCESSING

Mapping is a core tool of Institutional Analysis. Praxis has developed and utilized this process in many Community Assessments, such as Safety and Accountability Audits, and in its Best-Practice Assessment guides.

A community coordinated response (CCR) team or work group can also use mapping as a stand-alone activity to develop a picture of whether and how attention is paid to the following aspects of intervention:

- Recognizing and understanding battering
- Establishing the context and severity of the violence (i.e., who is most at risk from whom and in what ways)
- Communicating knowledge about the case and the context and severity of the violence across the criminal justice system
- Identifying and matching services to individual circumstances and needs

1. Advance preparation
    a. Select a facilitator who will guide the exercise and be well-versed in the instructions.

   b. Read any applicable policies and protocols for the point(s) of intervention being mapped.

2. Select a format to record the mapping that can be brought to subsequent meetings for reference and revision. For example:

   a. Flip chart paper that can be taped together as needed

   b. A long, wide sheet of paper taped to a chalk board or wall

   c. Electronic copy board that captures and prints the map

NOTE: Attachments 1 through 3 illustrate different case processing maps. Your map does not need to be printed, however, and most likely you will not have the time to take that extra step. The map will be just as useful to the team, and perhaps most useful, if it is a kind of poster that can be carried to and displayed at each meeting.

3. Begin by directing questions to the team members who are most involved as practitioners at the point of intervention under review. For example, if the assessment concerns 911, direct questions to the call receivers/dispatchers.

NOTE: Depending upon the points of intervention being mapped, it might be necessary to invite others to participate. Prepare them in advance about what to expect. Emphasize that the mapping exercise is not a grilling or critique, but a process of learning about how things work.

4. Start with this question: How and when do you first get involved in a domestic violence case? Diagram the initial point of contact and first step in case processing.

5. Ask: then what happens; what's the next step? For each step, ask the following kinds of questions to develop specific details about case processing:

   a. What happens at this point?

   b. Who is involved and how?

   c. What kinds of policies or protocols govern this step?

   d. What kinds of forms or reports are involved?

   e. Where do those forms and reports go; who gets copies, and how?

   f. What kind of inquiry into the type and severity of violence occurs? Where does that information go?

   g. How are victims connected with advocacy at this point?

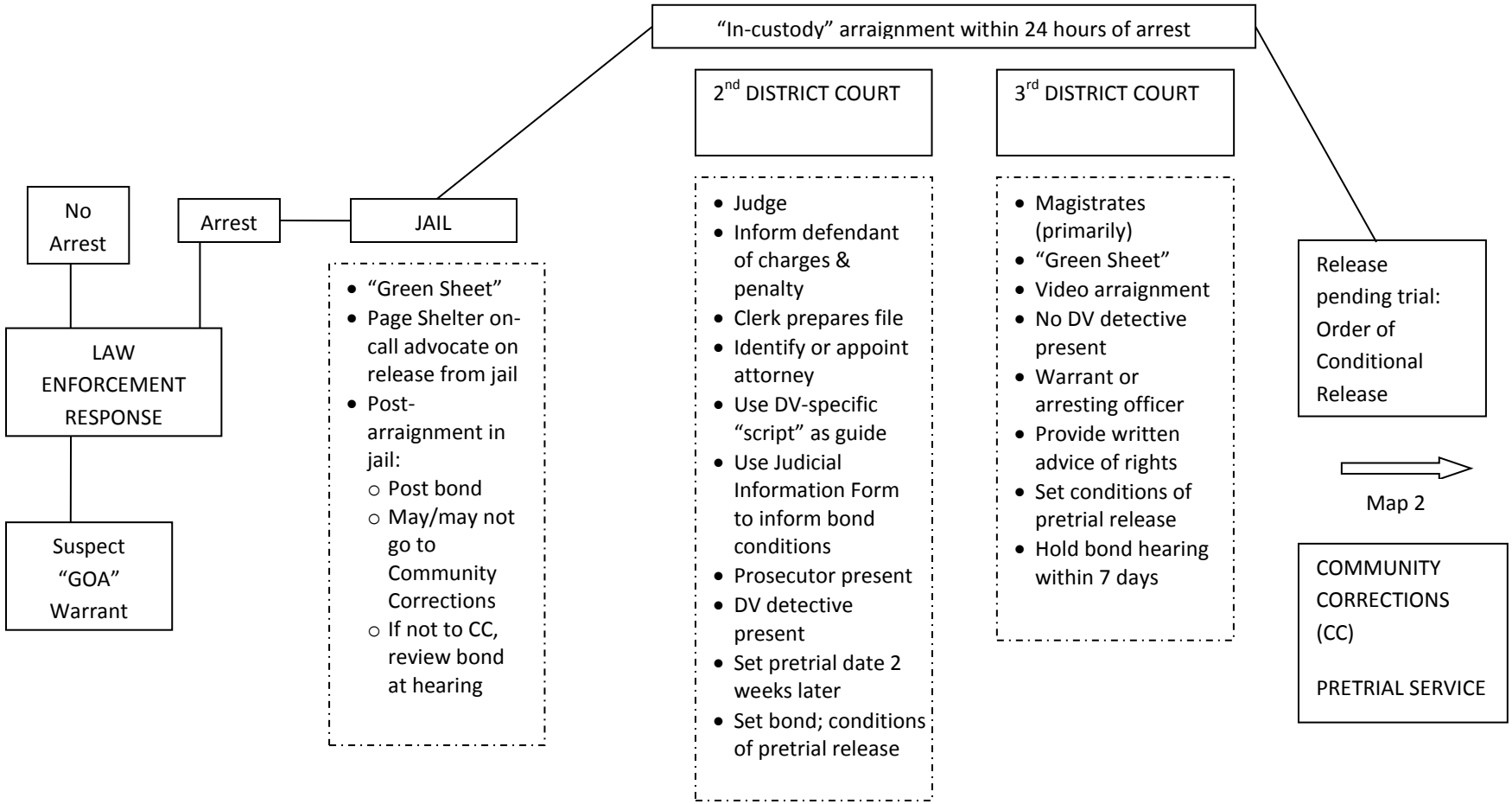
   h. What kind of messages regarding help for victims and offender accountability get relayed?

   i. Where and how do victims appear and have a voice in the process?

   j. How do defendants understand what is required of them?

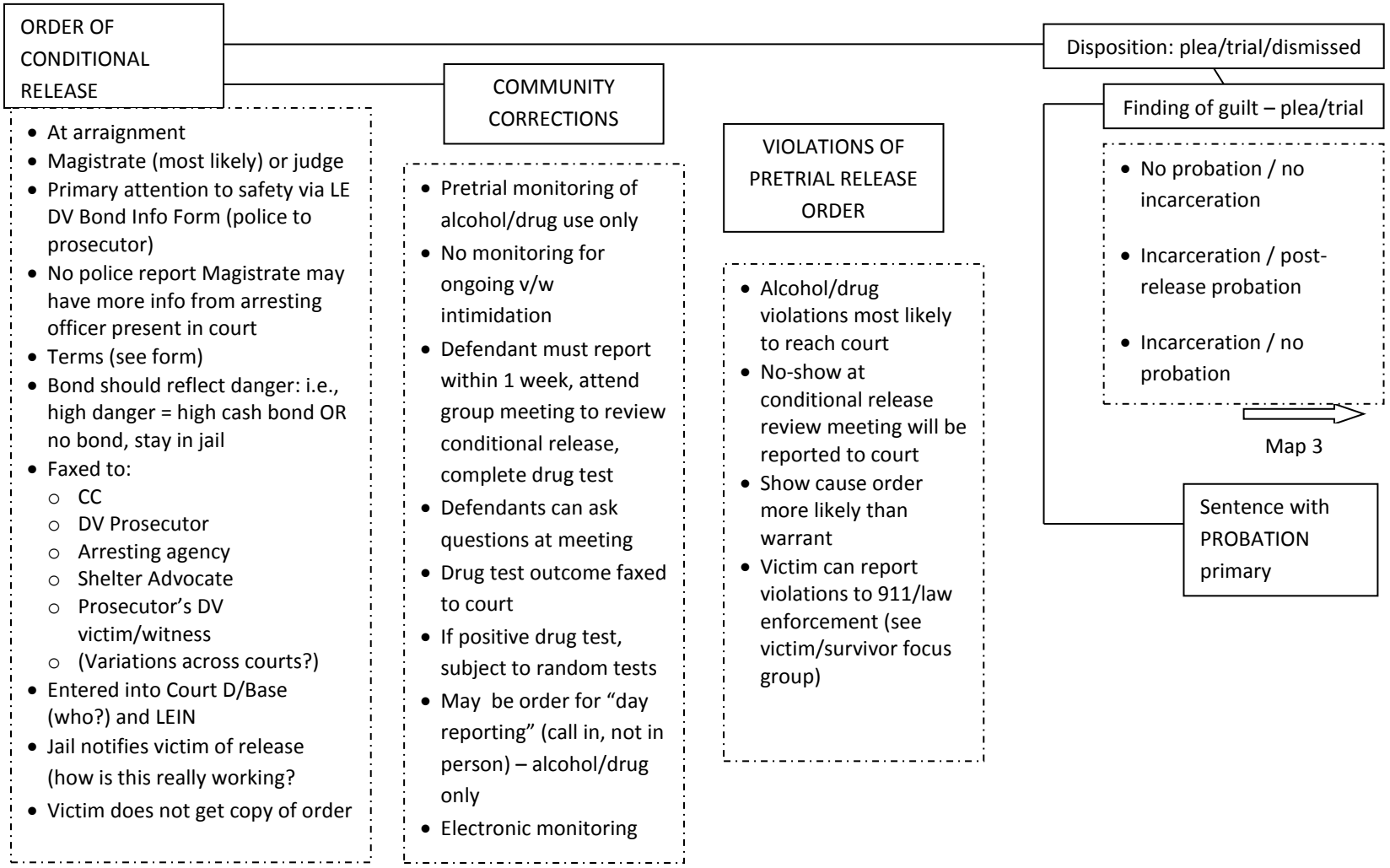
6. Encourage questions. Mapping benefits from the team members' participation, experiences, and perceptions.
7. Identify key themes and questions that need to be answered.
    a. Prioritize questions and identify who to contact for more information.
    b. Assign each team member one or more questions to address and report back on at the next meeting.
8. Bring the map to each team meeting. Use it as a point of reference when discussing case files and make additions or changes as new information becomes available.

Misdemeanor Case Processing Map 1: ARRAIGNMENT



Misdemeanor Case Processing Map 2: PRETRIAL RELEASE ("DV BOND")

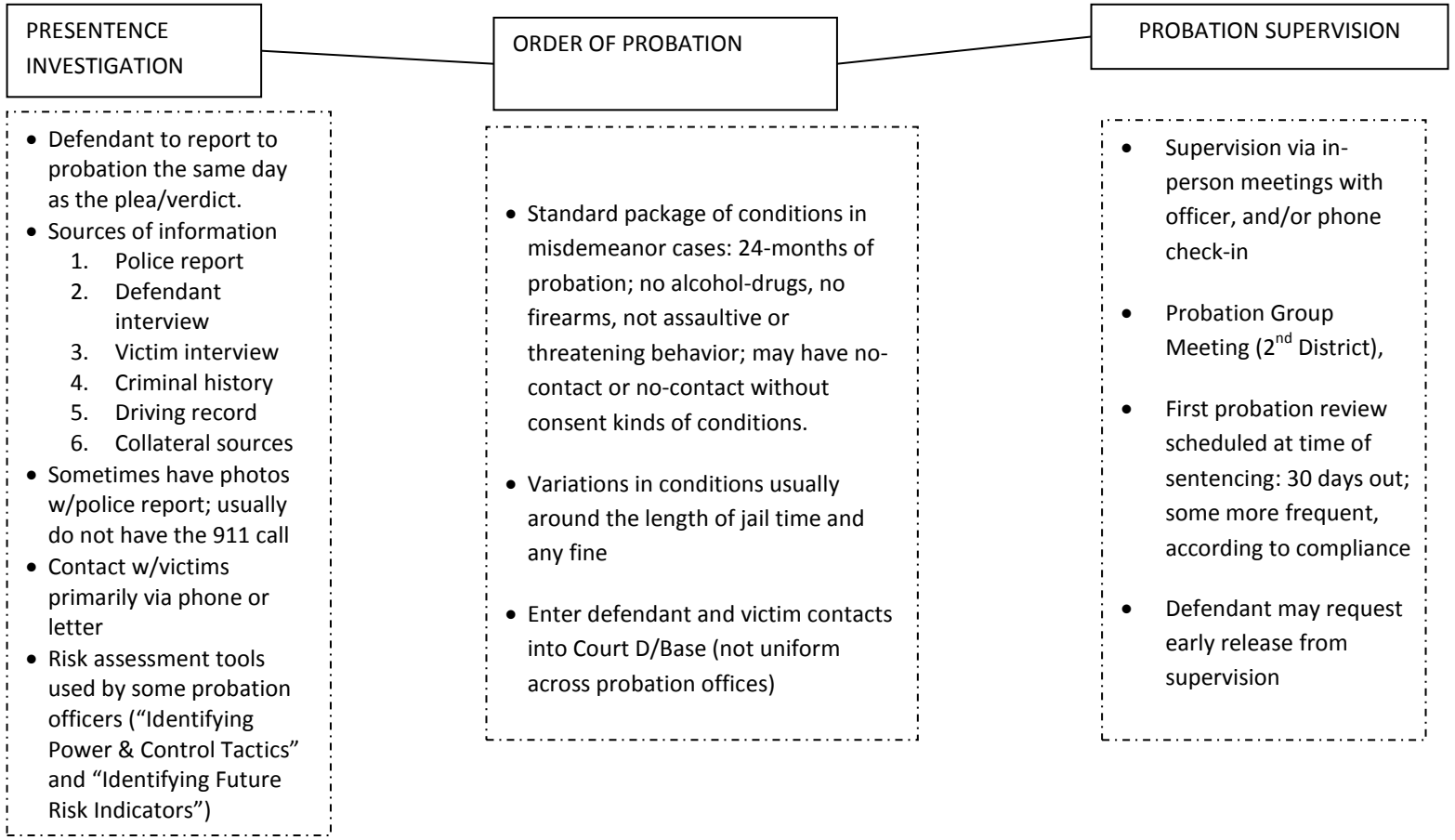
Purpose (1) SAFETY*: Public / victim* *Purpose (2) APPEAR at subsequent proceedings*



⇨⇨⇨*Time from assault to sentencing: 4 to 10 to 24 months (per case file review)* = opportunities *for victim/witness intimidation* ⇨⇨⇨

Misdemeanor Case Processing Map 3: PROBATION

Specialized Enforcement Officer (1st): Involved throughout: primary responsibility in making link between victim and probation; contacts prior to PSI and ongoing probation reviews.



[2] SOURCEBOOK CONTENTS

The sourcebook gathers agency policies together in one place. It also includes administrative forms and protocols and other material related to criminal case processing. The sourcebook provides a reference for the Blueprint coordinator, primarily, and for the adaptation team and work groups.

1. Blueprint for Safety brochure and/or overview
2. Contact information for Blueprint coordinator, advocate, and adaptation team and work group members
3. Map of the criminal legal system's response to domestic violence-related cases (as developed under Step One)
4. Criminal laws related to domestic violence case processing
5. Policies and related administrative documents (e.g., protocols, forms, checklists, assessment tools, computer screen capture) for each key agency and step of criminal case processing:
    a. 911 Emergency Communications
    b. Law enforcement (all agencies within the jurisdiction)
    c. Sheriff's Office (or other administrator of jail, courtroom security, and warrant service)
    d. Prosecutor
    e. Victim/Witness
    f. Pretrial release/bail screening and monitoring
    g. Probation
    h. Criminal court
6. Informational material provided to victims in domestic violence-related cases, such as brochures, victims' rights and compensation forms, advocacy resources
7. Any available statistical data for each key agency

[3] DATA-GATHERING TEMPLATE

Scope and Scale of Battering & Domestic Violence in Our Community

Adapted from copyrighted material – Rural Technical Assistance on Violence Against Women – Praxis International

A Note on "Data"

We commonly think of "data" as equaling numbers. Counting things related to the criminal legal system response is important, such as the number of calls to 911 or misdemeanor arrests or cases charged or convictions. In understanding and articulating what is happening in a Blueprint community, however, we want more than numbers. Other sources of data—other ways of knowing—are also essential to drawing a full picture of what is happening. These other sources include: survivors' accounts of how community systems have responded to their needs, mapping the steps in case processing, talking with practitioners and observing them at work, and analysis of the extent to which policies and protocols reflect recommended practice.

Strategies and Sources

Statistical Data

Statistical data includes counts gathered from a variety of sources to:

- Develop a picture of "how many ____"
- Raise questions about possible problems to be further investigated (e.g., 500 domestic violence-related arrests but 100 cases resulting in charges; 50% of those arrested on domestic assault charges are women)
- Compare types of case dispositions
- See who overrepresented and/or underserved in the criminal legal system

Sources of statistical information:

- Community-based advocates
- Tribal law enforcement agencies
- Tribal justice system offices
- Police
- Prosecutor
- Victim/Witness
- Specialized domestic violence response team (e.g., "DVRT" or high risk offender team)
- Fatality Review Board
- Family Justice Center
- Other community-based organizations working with victims/survivors
- Organizations representing marginalized

- Jail
- Sheriff's Office
- Pretrial Supervision
- Courts
- Probation
- communities
- Batterer intervention programs
- Other

Institutional Analysis

The Blueprint Policy and Practice Assessment Guide utilizes Praxis Institutional Analysis (IA) methods and tools. IA can be used in whole or in part to discover information about:

- Victims/survivors' actual lived experience and how intervention is/is not meeting their needs
- The organization and function of current practice
- Contrasts between the stated official process and the actual process
- Problems to be addressed via Blueprint policies and protocols
- Whether policies and protocols have been implemented as intended
- Where harmful unintended consequences and disparity of impact might exist
- The impact of Blueprint changes and implementation over time

IA methods are used throughout Phase 2 (Assess Practice and Identify Problems) in building a Blueprint for Safety and from implementation onward to monitor and evaluate the Blueprint as a "living," sustainable response to battering-related crimes. The methods and corresponding tools in this assessment guide include:

- Talking with victims/survivors of battering (Community Consultation, Appendix 22-4)
    - Focus groups / listening circles
    - Individual interviews
- Talking with community-based advocates & other organizations that work with women/survivors (Community Consultation, Appendix 22-4)
    - Battered women's programs / domestic abuse programs
    - Other women's advocacy organizations
    - Culturally-specific organizations

- Comparing policy and practice to Blueprint Essential Elements (Policy Comparison Worksheets, Appendix 22-5)
- Mapping the steps in criminal case processing, with specific attention to how victims are connected to advocacy and how information about risk and danger is collected and communicated (Mapping Domestic Violence Case Processing, Appendix 22-1)
- Analyzing case records, such as calls, recordings, electronic screens, reports, case files, forms (Analyzing Case Records, Appendix 22-6)
- Observing actual practice, such as sit along with 911 call-takers, ride with patrol officers, sit in on arraignment and sentencing hearings in court, observe probation intake (Practitioner Interviews and Observations, Appendix 22-8)
- Interviewing workers (Practitioner Interviews and Observations, Appendix 22-8). For example:
    - 911 call-takers
    - Patrol officers
    - Investigators
    - Specialized high risk teams
    - Prosecutors
    - Victim/witness specialist
    - Judges & court staff
    - Probation agents
    - Tribal attorney
    - Tribal court judge & staff
    - Batterer intervention group facilitators

Establishing a baseline and ongoing data collection

The template worksheets include data elements that contribute to a comprehensive picture of the scope and scale of battering and other forms of domestic violence. At the front end of building a Blueprint for Safety, this information sets a baseline from which the impact of new policies and procedures can be tracked. While presented here in a worksheet format that can be used as-is, the fields can be adapted to construct or modify a customized database.

Few communities are likely to be able to compile all of the data listed here, particularly in the early stages of adapting the Blueprint. The comprehensive set of elements illustrates the kinds of information

that can be built over time to develop as complete a picture as possible of the scope and scale of the violence. The worksheets are a goal to work toward. In the meantime, seek out the following key statistical data on domestic violence-related crimes as a baseline:

- 911-Emergency calls
- Arrests on domestic violence-related charges
- Prosecution referrals and dispositions (by type of charge and outcome)
    - Charged
    - Declined or dismissed cases
    - Plea
    - Trial
- Data related to arrest and prosecution of victims of battering
    - Dual arrests
    - Break down by female and male suspect/defendant
- Orders for protection
    - Petitions filed
    - Temporary and permanent orders issued
- Requests for advocacy services
    - Crisis line/help line calls
    - Requests for emergency shelter

In addition to compiling baseline statistical data, the policy and practice assessment introduces methods of community consultation (Appendix 22-4) to help keep victim/survivors' needs and experiences at the center of the Blueprint and to discover what is occurring in communities that have been traditionally overrepresented and underserved in the criminal legal system.

For communities operating under grants from the Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women, many of the data elements included in the template are similar those in the required semi-annual progress reports submitted to the Muskie School of Public Service, such as data related to 911-

emergency calls, arrests, and prosecution.[2] The template includes other information that the "Muskie report" does not ask about, such as arrest data related to victims of battering charged with crimes and victim/survivor lived experience in relation to battering and the community response.

Blueprint communities are encouraged to explore partnerships with university-based researchers who may be able to assist in establishing baseline data and methods of tracking ongoing data and evaluating the Blueprint's impact on local practice (see Phase Five, Monitor and Revise). Researcher partnerships can also help a Blueprint community gather and analyze data related to disparity.

Using data to identify disparity and unintended consequences

Preventing and addressing disparity and unintended consequences of criminal legal system intervention in battering and other domestic violence crimes begins with data.

- Who is being affected and in what ways?
- What is the experience of victims/survivors from marginalized communities that have been overrepresented and/or underserved in the criminal legal system?
- Are victims of battering being arrested and charged as if they were batterers?
- What is the experience of immigrant women who are being battered?
- What kinds of language access are in place or absent—and with what impact?

The baseline data noted above and in the following worksheets is helpful in drawing one kind of picture—the volume and type of violence—but not very useful in relation to questions of disparity and unintended consequences. Answering such questions begins in part by "disaggregating" or breaking apart general statistical data to learn more about who is in the criminal legal system, and in what ways. The more specific data is then compared to a people's representation in the larger population. Is a people or a community overrepresented or underrepresented in the total, and in what ways and with what meaning?

Many agencies in the criminal legal system disaggregate some of the statistical data they collect. For example, most law enforcement agencies voluntarily submit crime data via either UCR (Uniform Crime Report) or NIBRS (National Incident Based Reporting System) and can break down general arrest data according to race, ethnicity, sex, and age, for victims and offenders.[3] Unless there is some feature in the

[2] For information on the reporting requirements, go to http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/vawamei/.

[3] NIBRS and UCR are both regulated by the FBI. NIBRS goes into greater detail about types of offenses than UCR. NIBRS differentiates between completed and attempted crimes, unlike UCR. NIBRS data can be submitted electronically; UCR written documents have to be hand entered into a computer system for analysis. See http://blog.spotcrime.com/2012/03/difference-between-ucr-and-nibrs.html.

local data-gathering process that flags domestic violence-related cases, figuring out the nature and demographics of domestic violence-related arrests, however, requires searching. While there may be a state-level crime of "domestic battery," for example, no such category exists in UCR or NIBRS; agencies have to determine whether to classify an arrest for domestic battery under aggravated assault or other assaults (UCR) or aggravated assault or simple assault or intimidation (NIBRS). "Stalking" might go under the category of other assault or under intimidation. A wide range of crime categories can include acts related to battering and domestic violence: arson, assault, burglary/breaking and entering, destruction/damage to property, homicide, kidnapping/abduction, rape and other sex offenses, and disorderly conduct. Sorting out the full scope of domestic violence-related crimes is one step. The domestic violence crimes then need to be broken down according to race, ethnicity, sex, and age—at a minimum—to provide a basic picture of who is being drawn into the criminal legal system via what types of domestic violence-related crimes.

Figuring out how data related to domestic violence-crimes can be further taken apart to examine disparity and unintended consequences requires attention and planning by the Blueprint coordinator and adaptation team. The following first steps help set a foundation from which to develop and pursue ways of establishing the scope and scale of violence in relation to disparity and unintended consequences in the context of the Blueprint.

1. Learn who is in the community.

What are the demographics of the larger community? Who are the distinct communities within the larger community? What is the history of each community and its experience with the criminal legal system?

2. Build relationships with those in the community who can guide and inform the data collection and analysis.

Who are the advocates working in each distinct community, both specific to issues of battering and in general? Who are the researchers and scholars in the community who have knowledge about the criminal legal system and/or data collection and analysis?

3. Find out how data in the criminal legal system is obtained, stored, shared, and changed—and find out early on in the planning and assessment stages.

What do we know about the data? What kind of data is collected and used at each key decision point in the criminal legal system process? Where is the data located? Who has access to it? What is the process for obtaining the data? Can data be retrieved and compared across years. Does the data track or flag all domestic violence-related crimes? Can data be sorted and queried by relationship, gender, race, ethnicity, immigration status, tribal enrollment, or factors related to specific communities? What is the process for adding data fields or features?

4. Request basic data about domestic violence cases and demographics from each agency in the criminal legal system process.

How many domestic violence-related cases (calls, arrests, cases charged, presentence investigations, pleas, convictions, etc.)? How does the overall case data break down according to UCR/NIBRS race, ethnicity, sex, age, and victim to offender relationship data values? What, if any, other demographic or identity features are recorded and available (e.g., gender identity, preferred language, income)?

UCR/NIBRS categories[4]

Race	*Ethnicity*	*Sex*
White	Hispanic or Latino	Female
Black or African American	Not Hispanic or Latino	Male
American Indian or Alaska Native	Unknown	Unknown
Asian		
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander		
Unknown		

Relationship of Victim to Offender (examples most relevant to domestic violence)

Spouse	In-law	Boyfriend/Girlfriend
Common-Law Spouse	Stepparent	Child of Boyfriend/Girlfriend
Parent	Stepchild	
Sibling	Stepsibling	
Child	Ex-Spouse	
Grandchild	Homosexual Relationship	

[4] See the data values in section 4.4, Clarification of Specific Data Elements & Data Values, in National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) User Manual, January 17, 2013; access at http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/nibrs/nibrs-user-manual.

5. Take the data-gathering and analysis deeper into common issues related to disparity of impact and unintended consequences.

What issues have different communities of victims/survivors identified? What does the data say about victims of battering charged with crimes? About language access? About the response to immigrant women? About the impact of blanket, mandatory no-contact orders?

BATTERING AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY: SECTION 1

Data elements	A. Baseline Year Totals	B. If unknown, how might the information be obtained? Is it available?
Law enforcement		
DV homicides (intimate partner or collateral)		
DV homicides (non-intimate partner: e.g., family violence)		
911 calls (following or similar types of coding): • **Domestic violence/abuse** • **Stalking** • **Sexual assault** • **Bail violations (DV-related charge)** • **Order for protection violations** • **Domestic abuse – "verbal only"**		
Patrol response: no arrest – report written		
Patrol response: no arrest – no report		
Patrol response: suspect gone-on-arrival		
Patrol response: arrest o **Misdemeanor** o **Felony**		
Cases referred to investigator for follow-up		
Referred to prosecutor o **Misdemeanor** o **Felony**		
Arrests of female offenders (intimate partner		

BATTERING AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY: SECTION 1

Data elements	A. Baseline Year Totals	B. If unknown, how might the information be obtained? Is it available?
Law enforcement		
relationship) ○ **Male victim** ○ **Female victim**		
Arrests of male offenders (intimate partner relationship) ○ **Female victim** ○ **Male victim**		
To what extent can the above data, if available, be reported according to race, ethnicity, gender, age, and relationship of those involved? Other characteristics and aspects of identity?		

BATTERING AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY: SECTION 2

Data elements	A. Baseline Year	B. If unknown, how might the information be obtained? Is it available?
Prosecution		
Charged by prosecution: # of cases charged as: ○ **Misdemeanor** ○ **Felony**		
Declined by prosecution ○ **Misdemeanor arrest charge** ○ **Felony arrest charge**		

BATTERING AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY: SECTION 2

Data elements	A. Baseline Year	B. If unknown, how might the information be obtained? Is it available?
Prosecution		
Dismissed after charging – victim's request ○ **Misdemeanor** ○ **Felony**		
Dismissed after charging – other reasons ○ **Misdemeanor** ○ **Felony**		
Guilty plea as charged ○ **Misdemeanor** ○ **Felony**		
Guilty plea to lesser charge ○ **Misdemeanor** ○ **Felony**		
Trial & guilty verdict ○ **Misdemeanor** ○ **Felony**		
Trial & acquittal – not guilty verdict ○ **Misdemeanor** ○ **Felony**		
Diversion / deferred prosecution agreement		
Cases prosecuted with female offender		

BATTERING AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY: SECTION 2

Data elements	A. Baseline Year	B. If unknown, how might the information be obtained? Is it available?
Prosecution		
(intimate partner relationship) ○ **Male victim** ○ **Female victim**		
Cases prosecuted with male offender (intimate partner relationship) ○ **Female victim** ○ **Male victim**		
To what extent can the above data, if available, be reported according to race, ethnicity, gender, age, and relationship of those involved? Other characteristics and aspects of identity?		

BATTERING AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY: SECTION 3

Data element	A. Baseline Year	B. If unknown, how might the information be obtained? Is it available?
Advocacy		
Crisis/help line calls		
Requests for emergency shelter		
Legal advocacy – assistance with protection order process		

BATTERING AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY: SECTION 3

Data element	A. Baseline Year	B. If unknown, how might the information be obtained? Is it available?
Advocacy		
Legal advocacy – court accompaniment (criminal case)		
To what extent can the above data, if available, be reported according to race, ethnicity, gender, age, and relationship of those involved? Other characteristics and aspects of identity?		

VICTIM/SURVIVOR LIVED EXPERIENCE

Summarize:	What is known	How to address gaps in that knowledge
Victim/survivors' needs related to the harm caused by battering and other forms of domestic violence		
A clear picture of how needs are being met by the criminal legal system response		
A clear picture of how needs are *not* being met by the criminal legal system response		
Are battered women being arrested?		
What is happening to battered women who are arrested?		

VICTIM/SURVIVOR LIVED EXPERIENCE		
Summarize:	**What is known**	**How to address gaps in that knowledge**
Who are the culturally distinct and/or marginalized communities within the wider community?		
Is the criminal legal system response working for all survivors in all communities? ○ **If yes, in what ways and for whom?** ○ **If no, in what ways and for whom is it not working?**		

[4] COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Definition

One of the Blueprint's distinctive features is its commitment to grounding the approach and process in the experiences of victims of battering. The Blueprint calls on advocacy organizations and criminal justice agencies to work together to develop procedures and protocols. It also calls for including and consulting with those in the community who are most impacted by such public policies. Along with practitioner-advocate partnerships, a Blueprint community engages with a range of community members, from victims and survivors to populations overrepresented and/or underserved in the system, to develop, implement, and monitor Blueprint policies and practice.

Actions by the criminal legal system affect victims in different ways, sometimes with unintended harmful impacts. The Blueprint seeks to build this awareness into policy and practice, with attention to the complex and often dangerous implications of a victim's collaboration with interveners. The Blueprint acknowledges the realities of peoples' unique circumstances and experiences and seeks a criminal legal system response that best fits victims' needs as it helps stop violence, reduce harm, and save lives.

To keep victims of battering at the center of the Blueprint requires connecting and talking with survivors and others in the community as a matter of routine practice. In other words, community consultation must be a regular, sustained way of doing the business of the Blueprint. In the context of the Blueprint, community consultation is the process of engaging with and seeking guidance from survivors of battering and others in the community who represent the broadest range of life experiences, circumstances, and identities. Community consultation is not a one-time meeting or focus group or the

presence of a token survivor on a team or work group. It is an active, intentional, and ongoing process that utilizes a variety of methods to help keep the Blueprint grounded in the realities of living with battering and the experiences of those who are overrepresented and/or underserved in the criminal legal system. A fully developed and sustainable Blueprint for Safety rests on community consultation.

Forms of community consultation used in the Blueprint adaptation

Community consultation can be informal, via the encounters that advocates have with battered women and with one another and other practitioners. Sharing what we are hearing and seeing in the moment can point to questions that need to be answered or potential problems that the Blueprint might need to address. In addition, community consultation must take more specific forms in order to build the ongoing practice into a local Blueprint. Some of these forms overlap. Your community is likely to come up with a customized version that fits local conditions. While not all of the forms need to be developed and utilized—or in place simultaneously—the first two are essential. The Blueprint cannot proceed as intended without active leadership by community-based advocacy and the first-person perspectives of survivors.

- **<u>Essential</u>: Regular conversations and policy/practice review with community-based advocacy organizations**

  Community-based advocacy located in nonprofit, nongovernmental or tribal organizations, such as a local program for battered women, is essential to grounding the Blueprint in the scope and scale of battering and in victims' lives and experiences. Community-based advocacy provides a setting where victims of battering can speak confidentially, freely, and openly. No one else plays this role, which is distinct from that of the important support provided by victim assistance or legal services within government agencies. Community-based advocacy typically has broader access to victims and survivors, many of whom are fearful of and try to avoid public institutions such as the criminal legal system.

  The Blueprint advocate has the key role of ensuring that the voices and experiences of battered women are represented at all stages of developing a local Blueprint. This role is fulfilled in part via regular consultation with a wide range of community-based advocates. It includes frequent and focused conversations about what advocates are learning from the victims of battering that they work with. What is working and not working for battered women in the criminal legal system response? Are victims of battering getting arrested? What is happening for immigrant women? What are victims' experiences with no-contact orders?

  The Blueprint advocate is a bridge between advocacy organizations and the adaptation team. Ideally, the adaptation team and related work groups will include several community-based advocates. At a minimum, the Blueprint advocate, together with the Blueprint coordinator, ensures that a wide range of advocates are fully informed about proposed changes in policy and practice and have ample opportunity to review the proposals and recommend revisions. Consultation with community-based advocacy is not limited to those organizations that are the most well-known for working with victims of battering. It includes seeking out organizations that may have a great deal of

contact with victims in different advocacy settings, such as housing, health care, and economic security. Because of their distance from the criminal legal system, these "non-DV" advocates might offer particularly useful insights into survivors' experiences.

- **Essential: Regular conversations and policy/practice review with survivors via individual interviews and group discussions such as listening sessions and talking circles**

  While community-based advocates can provide critical information about victims' needs and experiences, talking directly with survivors adds depth and confirmation to what advocates report. First-person conversations are particularly important in understanding when and how the criminal legal system is experienced as unhelpful or unsafe by survivors from overrepresented or underserved communities. The Blueprint advocate has a key role here, too, in organizing and ensuring direct feedback from survivors. Note: interviews or other direct conversations with survivors are not about grilling women on the details of the violence that they have experienced. The purpose is to learn about experiences with and problems in the system's response and to review and make recommendations on how the Blueprint can address those problems.

  ☞ Resource: Discussion group guide and related information at http://www.praxisinternational.org/iata_audit_coordinators_resources.aspx#LogisticsGuideSection3

- **Essential: Regular conversations and policy/practice review with communities that are overrepresented and/or underserved in the criminal legal system.**

  The ongoing consultation with community-based advocates provides one link to communities that are overrepresented and/or underserved in the criminal legal system. In addition, a more direct and focused consultation with individuals and organizations from specific communities will add to the understanding of current and historical experience with the criminal legal system in general. Regular conversations with diverse communities helps connect the Blueprint coordinator, organizers, and adaptation team with local and national efforts to reduce disparity within the criminal legal system overall. Such conversations also encourage those focused on criminal legal system change to pay attention to the experiences and needs of victims of battering and the impact of proposed changes on women from marginalized communities.

- **Useful: Questionnaires**

  Questionnaires can be quick and inexpensive ways of surveying a large number of survivors about a specific issue, such as access to advocacy at the time of a police call, the use of mandatory no-contact orders, or experiences with one or more steps in the criminal case process. Many people are familiar with giving feedback in this way and are often more open in their responses because of the impersonal and anonymous format. A questionnaire can be designed so that it is easy to fill out and questions can be asked in a uniform way that makes it easy to tabulate and summarize responses. The availability of low- or no-cost online survey tools (such as SurveyMonkey, Zoomerang, or Google Forms) means that survivors, other community members, and practitioners can complete the survey

at home, at an advocacy office, public library, or place of employment. Advocates can distribute or call attention to flyers and posters with information on the website and process. Questionnaires can also be distributed via postcards or paper forms that are deposited at a convenient collection point or returned via regular mail.

- **Optional: Survivors' advisory group**

  Communities that are positioned to bring survivors' together in a formal advisory role will benefit from the insight and guidance that this form of community consultation can provide. Establishing a survivors' advisory group for the Blueprint is more likely when community-based advocacy programs already have a similar approach in place within their organizations. Survivors' groups oriented to policy and practice review rarely emerge spontaneously, but grow from the intention—and attention and facilitation—of advocacy organizations that value survivors' voice and guidance. Such a group can be challenging to establish and maintain over time as a fixed body with consistent membership. A more ad hoc approach can be more sustainable, with a group brought together as needed several times a year to analyze Blueprint adaptations and recommend changes. This approach can take advantage of any core membership and leadership that has emerged while also providing flexibility to bring in new members. For example, two or three times a year the Blueprint coordinator and advocate could partner with advocacy organizations to hold a dinner program that invites a diverse range of survivors to comment on specific questions or aspects of the Blueprint or criminal legal system response.

  ☞ Resource: Blueprint for Safety Survivors' Advisory Group: Role and Activities

- **Optional: Disparate impact advisory group**

  The benefits and challenges in establishing a disparate impact advisory group to the Blueprint are similar those for a survivors' advisory group. There is the potential for deeper insight and guidance that will help adapt and implement the Blueprint in ways that reduce unintended consequences and disparity of impact. It can be equally challenging to establish and maintain such a group over time as a fixed body with consistent membership. It can perhaps be even more challenging. The experience of being overrepresented in and/or underserved by the criminal legal system has left many people and organizations representing marginalized communities wary about the motivations and sincerity of that system. Their participation in policy discussions and development has often been at a token level. Blueprint communities that are positioned to form and sustain a disparate impact advisory group will most likely have already begun such work in meaningful ways elsewhere in the community. Blueprint organizers will have a foundation of relationships and trust that persuade individuals and organizations to join the effort.

  ☞ Resource: Blueprint for Safety Disparity Impact Advisory Group: Role and Activities

Confidentiality – consent & safety

Community consultation in the context of the Blueprint and its focus on people's experiences with battering requires specific attention to confidentiality, consent, and victim safety. Anyone completing a questionnaire or participating in an individual interview or focus group, for example, should be clearly informed of the purpose of the activity and how the information collected will be used. Victims of battering and others in the community—including those charged with domestic violence-related crimes—must understand that their participation in such activities is voluntary and that refusing to talk or otherwise provide information will have no impact whatsoever on their ability to use advocacy services or their case or any criminal legal system action. While the purpose of direct consultation with survivors and others is to learn about experiences with and problems in the system's response, personal information about their lives and circumstances may be revealed. Personal information must be treated confidentially and collected it in such a way that individuals are not identified (unless a person has granted clear, specific permission to do so).

Consultation with victims of battering should not put them at risk for further abuse. For example, when contacting victims by phone or mail with interview requests, focus group announcements, or questionnaires, consider who else is present in the home and has access to mail and phone messages. The Blueprint advocate and community-based advocacy organizations should be involved in planning any direct consultation with victims.

Option: Survivors' advisory group – role and activities

Role

A distinctive feature of the Blueprint for Safety is its commitment to ground policy and practice in the experiences of victims of violence, with particular attention to the complex and often dangerous implications of a victim's collaboration with the criminal legal system. Because community-based advocacy is uniquely situated to bring victims' experiences and concerns forward, it has a central role in Blueprint leadership and partnerships. Another way the Blueprint stays grounded in victims' experiences is via an advisory group of survivors who provide ongoing guidance and help direct the process of adapting and implementing the Blueprint. The Survivors' Advisory Group (survivors' group) acts as a touchstone to uncover problems that the Blueprint seeks to solve and test the Blueprint's solutions.

Members

The Survivors' Advisory Group should reflect the broadest, most diverse range of battered women in the community. Recruiting a broad range of members requires reaching out to culturally-specific and other organizations working with survivors, perhaps around issues that are not directly identified as a "domestic violence" program, such as employment or post-incarceration programs. The structure and format of meetings should be established in consultation with the Blueprint Advocate and other advocates who can strategize on how to best provide flexibility and consistency, meet any necessary childcare and transportation needs, and compensate members for sharing their expertise.

Activities

1. Meet regularly with the Blueprint advocate and the coordinator to provide guidance on strengthening victim engagement and avoiding unintended harmful consequences.
2. Review Blueprint policies and protocols from the perspective of survivor experience to identify potential harmful consequences of Blueprint interventions.
3. Contribute to building a knowledge base about violence against women in the community and the impact of criminal legal system intervention on the lives of battered women.
4. Act as a kind of "standing" focus group that can provide feedback on specific questions related to Blueprint policy and practice. Note: This is not in place of community focus groups with battered women.
5. Support ongoing conversations with victims of battering in the community by contributing to the organization and facilitation of focus groups and similar discussions.
6. Participate in policy and practice assessment activities, such as case file reviews and observations.
7. Recommend changes in Blueprint policy and practice to address any unintended consequences.
8. Contribute to ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and revision of Blueprint policy and practice.

Option: Disparity impact advisory group – role and activities

Blueprint for Safety Foundational Principle 6: Act in ways that reduce unintended consequences and the disparity of impact on victims and offenders.[5]

Role

The Blueprint for Safety faces three complex interconnected realities as it seeks to honor Principle Six: (1) the deep and pervasive harm of mass incarceration and its impact on marginalized communities, (2)

[5] ***Unintended consequences***: Reforms to institutional policy and practice that are meant to increase safety and well-being for victims of battering instead jeopardize safety and well-being and contribute to disparity of impact. Unintended consequences may affect a broad range of victims of battering or fall more heavily on a specific group or community. ***Disparity of impact***: Exists when the proportion of a specific group within the control of the criminal legal system is greater than its proportion in the general population or when criminal legal system intervention has a more negative impact on a specific group. The group may reflect a particular characteristic or, more likely, reflect the intersectionality of different aspects of identity, such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, poverty, ability, health status. Harmful disparity may result from overt bias or it may reflect unintended consequences, such as policy or practice that appears identity-neutral but that has a different impact on specific groups and communities.

the deep and pervasive harm of violence against women, and (3) the ways in which victims of battering are routinely caught up in the criminal legal system. The realities are interconnected.

The Disparate Impact Advisory Group (disparity impact group) identifies and analyzes issues of disparity in the community in relation to the Blueprint. It recommends adjustments to Blueprint policy adaptation and practice in order to avoid magnifying disparity. The disparity impact group provides an avenue for direct involvement in the adaptation process by communities that are overrepresented and/or underserved in seeking help from the criminal legal system.

Members

The disparity impact group's core members include individuals affiliated with community-based organizations that represent and work directly with marginalized communities. The group includes meaningful representation from those most affected by disparity in the criminal legal system (i.e., sufficient numbers so that one or two individuals are not expected to represent an entire community). Possible sources to recruit core members include culturally-specific advocacy and civil rights organizations, legal aid services, and faith-based justice system reform groups. The specific make-up will depend upon local conditions related to current and historical disparity. The Blueprint coordinator and advocate also participate, along with a mix of Blueprint organizers and practitioners. The disparity impact group might also include one or more local researchers who study issues of disparity.

Activities

1. Provide analysis and recommendations related to unintended consequences and disparity of impact in the criminal legal system's response to battering.
2. Contribute to building a knowledge base about the current and historic nature of disparity within the larger community and the criminal legal system.
3. Hold focus group or similar community discussions to gather information from victims of battering about the criminal legal system response and recommendations for change.
4. Participate in policy and practice assessment activities, such as case file reviews and observations.
5. Review Blueprint adaptations to policy and practice for any potential harmful consequences or disparity of impact.
6. Recommend changes in Blueprint policy and practice to address any unintended consequences or disparity of impact.
7. Contribute to ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and revision of Blueprint policy and practice.

[5] POLICY COMPARISON WORKSHEETS

Using this tool

- Provide the relevant section to the workgroup that will be examining policy for that agency (e.g., the 911 work group uses the 911 section, the police department work group uses the law enforcement section, etc.).
- NOTE: Communities are neither expected nor likely to have all elements present in local policy and protocol. The essential elements reflect recommended standards. They provide a starting point for assessing the local response and establishing a foundation for changes and adaptations as a Blueprint community.
- "Policy" includes any written directive that tells practitioners what they must do. Directives that function as policy can appear under different names, such as "standard operating procedure" or "protocol." If an agency insists that it does not have a policy (i.e., no written policy) use the worksheet to ask about and examine whatever informal policy exists. What are workers required to do, however the expectation gets conveyed?
- Instructions: How does current POLICY compare?
    - Under this column, note where each element listed in the first column can be found in the agency's domestic violence policy (e.g., "policy sections 1A and 3C") and add any notes or comments about the policy.
    - The language used in local policies is unlikely to be the same as the wording in this tool. Look for and reference similar content and meaning in local policy that reflects the intended Blueprint element.
    - If the essential element is located outside of the domestic violence policy (e.g., in the investigations section of the police department's policy rather than in the domestic violence section), note where it can be found.
    - If the essential element is entirely missing, note any barriers to including it (e.g., including the element would require a change in legislation or new technology).
- Notes: the coordinator or a member of the work group records the analysis. Recommended: use a blank version of the policy comparison in an electronic format to take notes. This facilitates sharing the results with agency liaisons and administrators and the adaptation team. It also facilitates transferring information to the notes and documentation tool if the coordinator has selected that option to track the results of the policy comparison, case reviews, and other findings from the practice assessment.

Related tools:

- To address questions about why a particular element is included, see the explanation in **Blueprint Essential Elements Annotated** (Appendix 10 in Becoming a Blueprint Community).
- To document the policy and practice reviews using a single worksheet, see the **Notes and Documentation Tool** (Appendix 22-10).
- See corresponding **Case Review Worksheets** (Appendix 22-6).

Blueprint Essential Elements – Policy Comparison Worksheet: 911 Emergency Communications

911 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** **Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy?** *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
1. Set priority-level response for domestic assault calls.	
2. Elicit and relay to responding officers information about: • **Type & level of danger, weapons, types of violence used, etc.** • **Exact report of what caller saw/heard/experienced** • **Who is at the scene**	
3. Collect and relay information to aid officers in apprehending suspects who have left the scene.	
4. Communicate effectively and respectfully with callers.	
5. Tell callers when a squad has been dispatched.	
6. Determine how and when to safely keep callers on the line.	
7. Respond to people having difficulty with communication.	
8. Safely respond to interrupted calls.	
9. Safely respond to children on the line.	
10. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency; provide access to language interpretation & TTY/TDD when required.	

911 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** **Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy?** *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
11. Utilize all available databases and information sources to obtain history on suspect.	
12. Code calls accurately when domestic violence-related.	
13. Record and keep calls and related documents in a manner which allows later access by bail evaluators, investigators, prosecutors, probation, and defense attorneys.	
14. Foster engagement with people seeking help: • **Avoid placing the victim in a position of confrontation with the offender.** • **Protect the victim from retaliation when communicating with the offender.** • **Treat each interaction with the victim as an opportunity to build a partnership over multiple contacts.** • **Demonstrate awareness of signs that violence may be resuming or escalating.** • **Inform caller before placing him/her on hold.**	
15. Conduct regular supervisory review of calls and practice according to Blueprint policies and protocols.	

911 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** **Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy?** *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
16. Provide structure for managers to participate in ongoing interagency monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.	
17. Meet regularly with law enforcement, prosecution, and community-based advocates to discuss and resolve problematic cases and responses.	
18. Other observations in comparing current policy and practice with Blueprint Essential Elements: • **Strengths** • **Other gaps**	

Blueprint Essential Elements – Policy Comparison Worksheet: Law Enforcement

LAW ENFORCEMENT	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** **Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy?** *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
1. Obtain or request enhanced information from dispatch, including: • **Type & level of danger, weapons, types of violence used, etc.** • **Exact report of what caller saw/heard/experienced** • **Who is at the scene** • **Information to aid in locating suspect who has left the scene**	

LAW ENFORCEMENT	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** **Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy?** *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
2. Separate the parties and minimize sight and sound contact between suspect and victim(s) as safety permits.	
3. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.	
4. Interview everyone at the scene (including children) and obtain contact information for all. • **Obtain detailed contact information for the victim.** • **Obtain suspect's statement if present at the scene or if s/he can be located.**	
5. Identify and check on the welfare of all children at the scene.	
6. Document and collect all available evidence, including photographs of all injuries, the scene, broken or damaged belongings, weapons, witness statements, electronic (e.g., recordings of text messages, voice-mail, social media), indicators of strangulation, indicators of stalking. • **Do not seize telephone if it would leave victim without a working phone.** • **Request the victim sign a medical release if medical treatment will be sought.**	

LAW ENFORCEMENT	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** **Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy?** *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
• **Collect and secure evidence related to probable cause regardless of suspect's absence from the scene.** • **Note spontaneous statements by those at the scene.** • **Note physical appearance and emotional demeanor of parties.**	
7. Determine the existence of civil protection orders, harassment restraining orders, and criminal no-contact orders.	
8. Ask about and document past history of violence and stalking. • **Victim and witness informants** • **Law enforcement and criminal history records**	
9. Ask and document responses to the 3 Blueprint risk questions and follow-up: **a) Do you think he/she will seriously injure or kill you, your children, or someone else close to you? What makes you think so? What makes you think not?** **b) How frequently does he/she intimidate, threaten, or assault you? Is it changing? Getting worse? Getting better?** **c) Describe the time you were the most frightened or injured by him/her.**	

LAW ENFORCEMENT	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** **Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy?** *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
10. Ask about and document threats to victim for seeking help or attempts to dissuade victim from seeking help.	
11. When both parties have used violence: • **Assess <u>first</u> for self-defense; arrest the party who was not acting in self-defense.** • **If cannot determine self-defense, assess for and arrest the predominant aggressor.** • **Discourage dual arrest.**	
12. Mandatory arrest with probable cause & one or more of the following conditions: • **Felony-level crime** • **Injury or impairment to victim** • **Dangerous weapon involved** • **Violation of order for protection, harassment restraining order, or no-contact order** • **Victim fears imminent bodily harm**	
13. Whether or not there has been an arrest, provide assistance to victims before clearing the scene: • **At a minimum address: medical care, transport to a safe place, notice of victim's rights & compensation, advocacy & community resources, civil protection orders.** • **Encourage victim to call 911 if suspect returns to the scene.**	

LAW ENFORCEMENT	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** **Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy?** *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
14. When probable cause exists to make an arrest and the suspect has left the scene, collect all evidence, take measures to locate the suspect and protect the victims; submit an investigation report.	
15. Document patrol response and arrest decision in a report utilizing information in the Domestic Violence Patrol Report Checklist (attached).	
16. If there is insufficient probable cause for an arrest, write a brief report to document the complaint and the response. Do not recode a call dispatched as domestic abuse-related to a non-domestic category.	
17. If the suspect is gone from the scene (GOA), collect evidence in the same way as when an arrest has taken place and search for suspect as is reasonably possible.	
18. Conduct prompt supervisory review and (1) assign follow-up investigation when patrol has determined probable cause for an arrest or (2) forward to charging attorney without further investigation.	
19. Cases with one or more of the following receive high priority regardless of whether offender is in custody or out of custody (GOA): • **Imminent time deadline**	

LAW ENFORCEMENT	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** **Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy?** *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
• **Significant injury or impairment** • **Strangulation or stalking alleged** • **Victim's response to risk questions indicates significant risk**	
20. In gross misdemeanor and felony cases: • **Conduct an expanded domestic violence risk assessment as warranted, starting from responses to the three risk questions.** • **Evaluate for all possible charges.**	
21. Be alert to and investigate types of crimes associated with domestic violence: • **Stalking/harassment** • **Strangulation** • **Sexual coercion/sexual aggression** • **Witness tampering**	
22. Promptly notify the victim when a case is declined for referral to prosecution.	
23. Determine if the suspect is on probation; if so, notify probation of the circumstances of the case, including any offenses where the suspect left the scene and has not been located.	
24. Engage with victims in ways that protect victims from retaliation, prioritize safety, offer resources, build collaboration over time, and increase access to services and protection.	

LAW ENFORCEMENT	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** **Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy?** *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
25. Conduct regular supervisory quality and compliance review of departmental practice. • **Patrol and investigation supervisors conduct regular review of reports and files** • **Refer reports to supervisors and commanders for review, redrafting, and policy/protocol clarification** • **Approve officers' actions when exceptions to arrest policy are contemplated**	
26. Provide structure for supervisors to participate in ongoing interagency monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.	
27. Meet regularly with 911, prosecution, and probation to discuss and resolve problematic cases and responses.	
28. When an incident involves department employees: • **Investigate, make arrest decision, process evidence, and conduct follow-up investigation to ensure safety and accountability.** • **Send a supervisor of higher rank than the suspect to the scene.** • **Supervisor shall recover arrestee's badge, law enforcement identification card, and weapon.**	

LAW ENFORCEMENT	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** **Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy?** *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
29. Incidents involving public figures: • **Investigate, make arrest decision, process evidence, and conduct follow-up investigation to ensure safety and accountability.** • **Send a supervisor to the scene.** • **Take precautions to protect the victim's safety and confidentiality.**	
30. Other observations in comparing current policy and practice with Blueprint Essential Elements: • **Strengths** • **Other gaps**	

Attachment to Law Enforcement Essential Elements – Policy Comparison

Domestic Violence Patrol Report Checklist

Background and officers' actions:

- ❑ Time of officers' arrival and time of incident
- ❑ Relevant 911 information, including specific details about any violence or threats in the 911 call
- ❑ Immediate statements of either party and any witnesses at the scene
- ❑ A complete description of the scene
- ❑ Note any existing protection or no-contact orders, probation, warrants, prior convictions
- ❑ Summarize actions taken by responding officers (e.g., entry, arrest, non-arrest, use of force, attempts to locate, transport, advocacy contact and referrals, victim notification, seizing firearms, rationale for self-defense or primary aggressor determination)
- ❑ Account of evidence collected (e.g., pictures, statements, weapons, other)

For each witness and party involved:

- ❑ His/her account of events and responses to follow-up questions
- ❑ Officer observation related to the person's account of events
- ❑ Identification, address, and means of locating the person for follow-up, including:
  - Home address and phone number
  - Place of employment, work address and phone number
  - Cell phone number(s)
  - Relationship to other parties

For each party involved:

- ❑ Injuries or impairment, (including pain, strangulation effects, breathing, movement impairment)
- ❑ Emotional

Information from the victim, including history of violence and stalking and contact information:

- ❑ Responses to the risk questions:

1. Do you think he/she will seriously injure or kill you or your children? What makes you think so? What makes you think not?
2. How frequently and seriously does he/she intimidate, threaten, or assault you? Is it changing? Getting worse? Getting better?
3. Describe the time you were the most frightened or injured by him/her.
4. Have you ever been threatened or intimated by him/her for seeking help or attempting to seek help from police, the courts or others? How?

- ❑ Threats to the victim for seeking help, particularly from law enforcement or courts, and stalking behaviors
- ❑ Name and phone numbers of someone who can always reach the victim

Attachment to Law Enforcement Essential Elements – Policy Comparison

Domestic Violence Patrol Report Checklist

- ❑ Presence of risk factors (see below)
- ❑ If an arrest was not made, the reason why
- ❑ When possible, issue a squad pick-up and hold on suspects not on the scene ("gone-on-arrival" or GOA) that are on probation.

state/demeanor

- ❑ Acts of intimidation or aggression
- ❑ Presence or use of weapons
- ❑ Alcohol or drug consumption and impairment of those involved

NOTE: Record victim contact information in the confidential section of the report.

- ❑ Inform the victim that every effort will be made to protect this information, but that it is possible that the suspect could gain access via court order

Additional information related to the suspect:

- ❑ GOA: details about where the suspect might be and where he/she stays when not at the address of the incident; physical and vehicle descriptions; aliases
- ❑ Suspect's county and state of residence during the past ten years
- ❑ Whether Miranda is given and/or request for attorney and when this occurred
- ❑ Whether a custodial taped interview of the suspect was conducted
- ❑ Any spontaneous statements given by the suspect after the arrest

Additional information related to the case:

- ❑ Details regarding presence, involvement, and welfare of children at the scene
- ❑ Existence of language, communication, or cognition barriers
- ❑ Medical help offered or used, facility, and medical release obtained
- ❑ Presence or involvement of elderly people or people with disabilities

RISK & DANGER FACTORS

Caveat: Not a complete list:

- Stalking
- Strangulation; attempts to "choke"
- Threats to kill the victim
- Victim believes or fears threats to kill
- Threats to kill conveyed to others
- Threats of suicide
- Forced sex or pressuring for sex even when separated
- Serious injury to the victim
- Carries, has access to, uses, or threatens with a weapon

Attachment to Law Enforcement Essential Elements – Policy Comparison **Domestic Violence Patrol Report Checklist**	
	• Violence outside of home • Increase in frequency, severity, or type of violence • Frequent impairment by alcohol or drugs • Victim attempting a permanent break • Estrangements and separations • Failure of prior interventions • Prior arrests, law enforcement calls, and/or protection order(s) • Obsessive control of victim's daily activities; obsessive jealousy **Violence with a pattern of coercion is a serious marker of high risk violence.** *For more information see Blueprint for Safety Appendix 1A: Practitioners' Guide to Risk and Danger in Domestic Violence Cases*

Blueprint Essential Elements – Policy Comparison Worksheet: Pretrial Release / Bail Evaluation

PRETRIAL RELEASE / BAIL EVALUATION	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** **Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy?** *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
1. Present a bail evaluation that includes severity and context, criminal history, risk to the victim and community as well as likelihood of reappearance.	
2. Inform the victim of limits of confidentiality; put procedures in place to protect information obtained from victim to the extent possible under law.	
3. Differentiate recommendations for bail and conditions of release based on risk, context, and severity.	
4. Contact the victim about the incident, history of violence, and wishes concerning conditions of release, including no- contact orders.	
5. Inform the victim promptly of ordered conditions of release.	
6. Supervise defendants granted conditional release, monitor for compliance with conditions of release, and respond promptly to violations of conditional release; take action based on the nature of the violation and risk and danger.	
7. Inform victim of who to contact and how to report violations or harassment by defendant.	

PRETRIAL RELEASE / BAIL EVALUATION	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** **Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy?** *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
8. Respond promptly to violations of conditional release; take action based on the nature of the violation and risk and danger.	
9. Adopt Blueprint victim engagement protocols.	Victims will be more likely to use the criminal legal system in the future if they feel partnership with interveners. Research shows that victims who have support within the system and from advocates are more likely to be able to be successful in ending the violent relationship sooner.
10. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.	
11. Conduct supervisory quality and compliance review of pretrial/bail evaluation practice.	
12. Provide structure for managers to participate in ongoing interagency monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.	
13. Meet regularly with prosecution, court administration, and community-based advocates to discuss and resolve problematic practices and responses.	
14. Other observations in comparing current policy and practice with Blueprint Essential Elements: • **Strengths** • **Other gaps**	

Blueprint Essential Elements – Policy Comparison Worksheet: Sheriff's Office

SHERIFF'S OFFICE	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** **Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy?** *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
1. Use widest possible sources of information to locate defendant.	
2. Obtain and act upon information from victims related to locating the defendant.	
3. Prioritize warrants based on crime level and risk and danger.	
4. When new information is received, reactivate dormant warrants and renew attempts to locate defendant.	
5. Capture and report to law enforcement the defendant's behavior at time of service regarding threats, intimidation, risk and danger.	
6. Capture and report to law enforcement information regarding threats and risk and danger during booking and defendant's stay in the jail.	
7. Provide prompt notification to victim of defendant's impending release.	
8. Prohibit visits, correspondence, and phone calls between defendant and victim if a no-contact order is issued.	
9. Block victim's phone number unless victim wants contact and a no-contact order is not in place.	

SHERIFF'S OFFICE	How does current ***POLICY*** compare? **Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy?** *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
10. Make jail audio readily available to law enforcement and prosecution.	
11. Establish procedures to obtain, accept, and act on victims' reports of harassment or threats.	
12. Alert courtroom security to the existence of a protection order or no-contact order.	
13. Establish procedures to act upon violations of court orders or victim intimidation.	
14. Provide a secure area for victims in the courthouse.	
15. Report to prosecutors any intimidation or harassment of victim by defendant.	
16. Engage with victims and defendants in ways that protect victims from retaliation, prioritize safety, offer resources, build collaboration for victim safety over time, and increase access to services and protection.	
17. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.	
18. Conduct supervisory quality and compliance review of Sheriff's Office practice.	
19. Provide structure for managers to participate in ongoing interagency monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.	

SHERIFF'S OFFICE	How does current *POLICY* compare? Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
20. Meet regularly with law enforcement, prosecution, court administration, and community-based advocates to discuss and resolve problematic practices and responses.	
21. Other observations in comparing current policy and practice with Blueprint Essential Elements • **Strengths** • **Other gaps**	

Blueprint Essential Elements – Policy Comparison Worksheet: Prosecution

PROSECUTION	How does current *POLICY* compare? Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
1. Approach charging in ways that minimize dependence on the victim and maximize other sources of information. • **Post-arrest witness intimidation is very common in domestic violence cases. Know the doctrine of forfeiture by wrongdoing and prepare the case accordingly.** • **Expand the focus to include illegal behavior after patrol arrives.** • **Charge all relevant crimes except where victim safety, including safety of victim-defendants, warrant otherwise.**	

PROSECUTION	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** **Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy?** *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
2. Evaluate the risk and lethality factors and the context of the violence and adjust prosecutorial response accordingly.	
3. Request further investigation rather than decline a case that might be charged with additional evidence.	
4. Reevaluate the case for additional charges or amended charges as additional evidence is gathered.	
5. Be aware of potentially undercharged crimes in domestic violence cases: strangulation, stalking, sexual coercion/sexual aggression, and witness tampering.	
6. Relay charging decisions, including declining charges, promptly to law enforcement, victim, and victim/advocate.	
7. Engage with victims in ways that protect victims from retaliation, prioritize safety, offer resources, build collaboration for victim safety over time, and increase access to services and protection.	
8. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.	
9. Engage in and document early and continuing contact with victims.	
10. Adopt process to obtain and consider input from victim and/or victim's advocate about pretrial conditions of release.	

PROSECUTION	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** **Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy?** *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
11. Consider each no-contact order individually.	
12. Do not threaten to or place a victim in custody to ensure witness availability.	
13. Approach cases with the understanding that the victim may not appear for trial or may recant.	
14. Do not file criminal charges against a recanting victim.	
15. Make recommendations for bail and pretrial conditions of release that reflect context and severity of the offense, the risk and danger, and safety needs of the victim and public.	
16. Unless provided by another agency, keep victim informed of bail and pretrial release conditions and procedures.	
17. Take prompt action upon notice of violation of conditional release to ensure sure and swift consequences.	
18. Obtain and take into account input from victim and advocate about plea and sentencing recommendations.	
19. Ensure access to victim's rights protections under state statutes, including the right to restitution, compensation and offering victim impact statements.	
20. Adjust the response when considering plea agreements and sentencing with victim/defendants.	

PROSECUTION	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** **Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy?** *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
21. Request a probationary no-contact order at the victim's request, overriding this request only in rare cases where the suspect poses significant danger to the victim or the community.	
22. Provide information on plea and sentencing to appropriate persons and agencies including the victim.	
23. Provide probation PSI writer with already gathered information.	
24. Take prompt action to address violations of probation conditions to ensure sure and swift consequences.	
25. Conduct regular supervisory quality and compliance review of prosecution practice.	
26. Provide structure for managers and supervisors to participate in ongoing interagency monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.	
27. Meet regularly with 911, law enforcement, court administration, and community-based advocates to discuss and resolve problematic practices.	
28. Other observations in comparing current policy and practice with Blueprint Essential Elements: • **Strengths** • **Other gaps**	

Blueprint Essential Elements – Policy Comparison Worksheet: Victim/Witness

VICTIM/WITNESS	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** **Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy?** *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
1. Inform victim that communication is not confidential.	
2. Make contact as soon as possible and maintain contact throughout the criminal court process.	
3. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.	
4. Connect victims with community-based advocates who can provide assurance of confidentiality.	
5. Seek input from the victim at all stages of the process and communicate information to prosecutor.	
6. Facilitate victim's access to the prosecutor and legal system to ensure that the victim has a voice in process and that her/his expressed concerns are communicated and considered.	
7. Explore victim's concerns about safety and problem-solve to address question and concerns, including the implications of a no-contact order.	
8. Provide required victim notifications related to the criminal case process pursuant to state law and assist victims in exercising their rights.	

VICTIM/WITNESS	How does current *POLICY* compare? Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
9. Work with prosecutors to ensure access to victim's rights protections under state statutes, including the right to restitution, compensation and offering victim impact statements.	
10. Offer support, information and resources throughout the process.	
11. Arrange assistance as needed to facilitate victim's participation in court proceedings.	
12. Facilitate victim's connection to probation throughout presentence investigation, sentencing, and supervision.	
13. Provide for post-conviction assistance, information, and support.	
14. Engage with victims in ways that protect victims from retaliation, prioritize safety, offer resources, build collaboration for victim safety over time, and increase access to services and protection.	
15. Conduct regular supervisory quality and compliance review of Victim/Witness practice.	
16. Provide structure for managers to participate in ongoing interagency monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.	

VICTIM/WITNESS	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** **Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy?** *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
17. Meet regularly with law enforcement, prosecution, and community-based advocates to discuss and resolve problematic cases and responses.	
18. Other observations in comparing current policy and practice with Blueprint Essential Elements: • **Strengths** • **Other gaps**	

Blueprint Essential Elements – Policy Comparison Worksheet: Probation

PROBATION	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** **Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy?** *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
1. Establish procedures to obtain victim input regarding presentence investigation (PSI) and conditions of probation, including no-contact orders and response to violations.	
2. Conduct PSIs that search all available records and capture complete information about the current offense and defendant's past use of violence.	
3. Incorporate history, context, severity, risk and danger in the PSI report, with particular attention to those cases involving apparent victim-defendants (i.e., where the defendant appears to have been abused in the past by the identified victim in the case).	
4. Make PSI recommendations based on context, severity, risk and danger.	
5. Attempt to meet with or contact the victim prior to first meeting with the defendant.	
6. Meet promptly with offender to review all probation conditions and obtain signed releases.	

PROBATION	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** **Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy?** *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
7. Provide supervision that is appropriate to risk and danger and consistent in holding offender accountable. • **Ensure that supervision of victim-defendants does not make the defendant more vulnerable to further violence.** • **Identify high risk offenders and utilize enhanced supervision.**	
8. Provide immediate response to probation violations, differentiated based on risk posed to the victim and the community.	
9. Establish procedures to hear probation violations based on new criminal activity before the new charge is resolved, if the activity is associated with increased risk to victim.	
10. Provide timely & thorough notification to victims of the terms & conditions of probation.	
11. Seek information from victims about their concerns during supervision, including how to report violations in a manner that does not increase risk.	
12. Ensure programming, including appropriate domestic violence treatment, that accounts for the level of risk & danger.	
13. Coordinate and share information with treatment programs; monitor compliance with probation conditions.	

PROBATION	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** **Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy?** *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
14. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.	
15. Engage with victims and defendants in ways that protect victims from retaliation, prioritize safety, offer resources, build collaboration for victim safety over time, and increase access to services and protection.	
16. Conduct regular supervisory quality and compliance review of practice.	
17. Provide structure for managers to participate in ongoing interagency monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.	
18. Meet regularly with law enforcement, prosecution, and community-based advocates to discuss and resolve problematic cases and responses.	
19. Other observations in comparing current policy and practice with Blueprint Essential Elements: • **Strengths** • **Other gaps**	

Blueprint Essential Elements – Policy Comparison Worksheet: The Bench and Court Administration

THE BENCH AND COURT ADMINISTRATION	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** **Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy?** *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
1. Allow prosecutors/probation to present relevant information regarding the violence, risk, context, and severity at all stages of criminal process.	
2. Determine pretrial conditions of release and bail based on risk factors present, victim safety, public safety and likelihood of reappearance.	
3. Determine the issuance of no-contact orders on an individual basis.	
4. If victim objects to issuance of a no-contact order, assess both the context and risk to victim if the no-contact order is not issued and the difficulty for victim if it is ordered.	
5. Set conditions of release and bail when suspect cannot be arrested on scene ("gone-on- arrival") on same basis as in-custody cases.	
6. State pretrial and probationary conditions in clear and precise language.	
7. Provide a prompt response to violations of conditions of pretrial release.	
8. Read key conditions of probation aloud during sentencing.	
9. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.	

THE BENCH AND COURT ADMINISTRATION	How does current *POLICY* compare? Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
10. Establish a process to allow victims to request modification or dismissal of no-contact orders.	
11. Distribute court orders, including conditions of pretrial release, no-contact orders (and any modifications or cancellations), and probation conditions to involved parties and agencies, including to victim unless provided by another agency.	
12. Order a presentence Investigation (PSI) in all cases where the original charge is a domestic violence-related offense, regardless of conviction charge.	
13. Issue a disposition that reflects risk, context and severity.	
14. Except in rare cases involving particularly dangerous defendants who place victims or the community at high risk of serious or lethal harm, do not issue warrants for victims who do not appear in court pursuant to a subpoena.	
15. Obtain victim input on pleas and sentencing.	
16. Except in very rare cases after an assessment of risk and danger, do not order a probationary no-contact order over the victim's objection.	
17. Hear probation violations promptly.	
18. Establish procedures to order surrender of firearms based on state and federal law.	

THE BENCH AND COURT ADMINISTRATION	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** **Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy?** *If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.*
19. Engage with victims and defendants in ways that protect victims from retaliation, prioritize safety, offer resources, build collaboration for victim safety over time, and increase access to services and protection.	
20. Establish a courtroom atmosphere that enhances criminal justice system intervention to support victim safety and offender accountability.	
21. Conduct regular supervisory quality and compliance review of court practices.	
22. Provide a structure for court administration to participate in ongoing interagency monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.	
23. Other observations in comparing current policy and practice with Blueprint Essential Elements: • **Strengths** • **Other gaps**	

[6] ANALYZING CASE RECORDS

Overview

- The case review is a guided look at current agency practice and how that practice compares to the Blueprint's essential elements. Communities are neither expected nor likely to have all elements present in local practice. The essential elements reflect recommended practice and provide a starting point for assessing the local response. Discoveries from the case review—as well as the overall policy and practice assessment—establish a foundation for changes and adaptations as a Blueprint community.
- A "case" is the official story of what happened. How a case is put together—how the incident is documented and the story told—shows the ways in which the context, history, and impact of the violence is established, how safety considerations are identified, decisions practitioners make, and whether and how practice conforms to policy and standards. Case documents include such things as:
    - 911 call recordings, transcripts, dispatch records
    - Patrol arrest and incident reports; investigation and supplemental reports
    - Jail booking sheets and phone logs
    - Bail screening reports; forms documenting conditions of bail and pretrial release
    - Prosecution case files (which include reports and forms from many sources)
    - Presentence investigation reports
    - No-contact orders
    - Sentencing forms and reports
    - Victim information brochures and forms
    - Risk and danger assessment forms and reports
- The Blueprint coordinator works with the agency's representative on the adaptation team—and others as needed—to locate and prepare cases for review, per agreements in the Memorandum of Understanding established in Phase One.
- Small agency-specific work groups convene to review and analyze cases. The worksheet provides a guide to help the group look for certain elements and identify any gaps between recommended and current practice. By applying the same questions to a number of cases, the work group discovers questions and patterns related to how the agency is organized to respond to domestic violence-related crimes.

- The Blueprint coordinator or another facilitator guides the work group in analyzing and summing up what it learns during the review and making recommendations for Blueprint adaptations.

Related Tools

- To address questions about why a particular element is included, see the explanation in **Blueprint Essential Elements Annotated**, (Appendix 10 in Becoming a Blueprint Community).
- To document the results of the case review, use the **Notes and Documentation Tool** (Appendix 22-10).
- See corresponding agency-specific policy review worksheets (Appendix 22-5).

Advance Preparation by Blueprint Coordinator

1. **Become familiar with the case records that each agency maintains.**
   - When compiling the source book and during the mapping step, note what kinds of forms, reports, checklists, documentation, and case records, etc., are used at each step. Collect examples of blank forms.
   - Read through a sample of cases from each agency to become familiar with what a "case file" includes and how the agency documents its response and actions. As Blueprint Coordinator, in the process of selecting a pool of cases to review you will read more cases and become more familiar with them than any other member of the adaptation team.
2. **Decide which of the following approaches to the case review to use; each option impacts how the case records will be assembled:**
   - Option: Each member of the case review team reads all of the selected case records—calls, forms, reports, or files, and so forth—and completes the worksheet for each case. The advantage of this approach is that all members of the team are seeing all cases and paying attention to the full range of recommended practices included on the worksheets. Everyone has a common base of information to bring to the discussions. This approach can require more time.
   - Option: All team members complete a full review of two case records and discuss the cases together in order to become familiar with the process and develop a common base for the analysis. The team then splits into pairs, with different cases assigned to each pair. This approach can be a way to include more cases in the review while still providing a level of common grounding for the process and ensuring that at least two members of the larger team are familiar with any one case. Because all members have not completed at least a preliminary review of all case records, however, they will not share an understanding of each case.

3. Assemble and select case records for the work group's analysis.

How many calls and reports and files? There is no fixed answer to this question. It depends in part on the complexity and volume of the type of record under review. A work group listening to 911 calls or analyzing bail screening forms, for example, can work through thirty cases relatively quickly. Ten cases might be the most that a work group analyzing prosecution or probation case files can reasonably handle. In some small, rural communities, ten cases might comprise a third of the all cases prosecuted in a year. In an urban jurisdiction, ten cases might be insufficient to adequately see how the response is organized. The following guidelines provide a general framework for compiling case records.

- Select a time frame from which to pull case records, such as single week or month.
- Search or sort for all cases of adult intimate partner violence within the selected time frame. Because the Blueprint is primarily a response to battering, adult intimate partner cases will be more likely to involve battering than the category of family violence.
- From the pool of intimate partner violence cases, listen to the calls or read the forms, reports, or other case records and build a set that reflects general agency practice.
- Complete any necessary redaction and copying.
- Convene the case review work group(s) and provide cases for review.
    - Case records consisting of 911 emergency calls or forms or reports of ten pages or less: start with 15 cases
    - Case records consisting of files comprised of multiple reports and forms from different sources, such as prosecution, probation, or court files: start with 8 cases
- Add cases as needed to establish a solid picture of how the agency's response is organized or to explore a specific kind of case or aspect of case processing (e.g., to learn more about declined or dismissed cases or to look more closely at risk and danger assessment).

4. Draft a confidentiality form for the case review process.

Because the work group will have access to detailed information about specific cases, individuals, and practitioners, it is crucial that its members agree to a set of ground rules governing how information will be treated and when and to whom it will be released. The Memorandum of Understanding template included in the Phase One tools requires such an agreement: "Agencies agree to make staff available for interviews and observations, and to have case files and other documents examined by team members under a negotiated confidentiality agreement." The confidentiality agreement template has been used in a variety of practice assessment settings. It provides a place to begin and finalize with agency administrators.

5. Decide the extent to which case records will be redacted.

The Blueprint practice assessment assumes that the case records the assessment team works with will not be redacted (i.e., information identifying a specific person or place will not be removed from the records). The confidentiality template requires keeping case information confidential and secure; it restricts identifying or discussing any person named in the case outside of the team's meetings. Redacting case records is helpful, but the cost and expense is beyond the reach of most communities conducting a Blueprint practice assessment. It is time-consuming to redact most case records used in the case review, unless they are in an electronic format where a find-and-replace function can make it a relatively quick process.

Redacted case material is the preferred approach whenever possible, however. As well as helping to safeguard personal identifying information, masking the identities of the people involved (victims, suspects, children, and practitioners) can help take the focus off of particular individuals or personalities and shift it to the practices involved. Redacting names of practitioners handling the case is particularly helpful in keeping the case review focused on systemic practices rather than individual performance. Consult agency administrators in advance to determine whether or not to redact the case material that is distributed to the team and, if so, to what extent. For example, prosecution case files that a work group reads in place, without photocopying, and that do not leave the prosecutor's office might be entirely un-redacted. Copies of 911 transcripts or arrest reports that team members read off-site would, at a minimum, have birthdates redacted and Social Security numbers removed. See the case review instructions template.

6. Compile case files, worksheets, instructions, and mapping notes for each group member.

- Use the template to prepare instructions.
- Provide or confirm that each work group member has the Blueprint brochure or similar material available as a reference.
- For large case files or reports, construct a timeline of events to include.
- Have a set of any applicable policies and protocols available for reference during the work group meetings.
- Have the **Blueprint Essential Elements Annotated** (Appendix 10 in Becoming a Blueprint Community) available for reference.

7. Orient any work group members who are new to the Blueprint to its purpose and goals.

8. Note: the coordinator or a member of the work group records the analysis.

Recommended: use a blank version of the case review worksheet in an electronic format to record a summary of the case review analysis for each agency and element of practice. This approach facilitates sharing the results with agency liaisons and administrators and the adaptation team. It also facilitates transferring information to the notes and documentation tool if the coordinator has

selected that option to track the results of the policy comparison, case reviews, and other findings from the practice assessment. Whatever the method of taking notes and tracking each work group's analysis, a summary of the case review must be available when the team meets to review the policy and practice assessment findings and identify gaps for the Blueprint to address.

Blueprint for Safety Policy and Practice Assessment: Confidentiality Agreement Template

The [community name] Blueprint for Safety Policy and Practice Assessment (hereinafter Blueprint Practice Assessment) of the [agency name] response to domestic violence will involve reviewing case records and other documents. To ensure the integrity of the process, respect the role of individual agency employees, and protect the privacy of community residents, assessment team members agree to the following:

1. The material collected and distributed to assessment team members is intended only for use in conducting the Blueprint Practice Assessment and to inform the Blueprint coordinator, adaptation team, and policy makers on the need for changes in intervention practices.
2. Team members will keep any materials containing case information confidential, in a secure location, and will return materials to the Blueprint Coordinator as requested on designated dates.
3. Team members will not identify or discuss any person named in any case materials, except as necessary within assessment team meetings.
4. Team members will not remove or copy any non-public forms, files, or other records containing personal identifying information.
5. Team members will adhere to agreed-upon procedures for releasing information about the assessment to agency administrators.

Blueprint Assessment Team Member Signature: _____

Print Name: _____ Date: _____

PLEASE RETURN THE SIGNED ORIGINAL TO [Blueprint Coordinator]

Questions? Contact [enter contact information for Blueprint Coordinator]

Instructions to Case Review Work Group - Template

1. Review the instructions and become familiar with the case review worksheet(s) and the essential elements.

2. Note the following cautions and procedures related to un-redacted and original case records.

*Any **un-redacted case records**, copied or original (records include actual names and personal identifying information)*	***Original, onsite case records** (records are in un-redacted and original form and available only on agency premises)*

• Use the redacted case number.
• Avoid using actual names in notes; use abbreviations, such as:
  ○ VIC = Victim / VIC1, VIC2, etc.
  ○ DEF = Defendant
  ○ J = Judge
  ○ MAG = Magistrate
  ○ CH = Child
  ○ WIT = Witness
  ○ PROS = Prosecutor
  ○ LE = Law enforcement officer
  ○ PROB = Probation agent
• Do not use or record addresses, birthdates, Social Security numbers, driver's license numbers or other personal identifying information.
	• Follow all cautions for working with un-redacted case records.
	• Use the sticky notes provided to flag/highlight contents, forms, questions.
	• Do not write on the file or anything in it.
	• Do not reorder or remove any documents included in the case file.

3. Listen to the first call or read the first report or case file or document without stopping to take many notes on the worksheet or jumping into the analysis.

    a. Read page by page as if you were reading a story of the events.

    b. Let the words do the talking.

    c. Highlight or flag what catches your ear or eye in relation to the overall response and the essential elements included on the worksheet.

   d. Highlight or flag key forms (e.g., police report, conditions of release, presentence investigation report, order of probation, victim impact statement).

4. Read through the case record a second time; pay close attention to whether and how it reflects the essential elements listed on the worksheet (use one worksheet per case).

   a. Check off all practices that are evident in the call, report, or file.

      Not every practice will be evident or applicable. For example, if no children are present or the suspect has not left the scene, elements related to the welfare of children or searching for a suspect would not apply.

   b. Under the column: How does current PRACTICE compare?

      i. Note what actually happens in practice. Is the element visible in practice or missing? What has actually happened in this particular case?

      ii. Pay attention also to what is unknown, not applicable, or not possible in the case. Such information points the way to areas where the adaptation team might need to take a closer look, as well as to areas of possible change that will be necessary to fully implement the Blueprint essential elements.

   c. Record any additional observations, questions, or examples related to the case and the practitioner's response.

   d. Pay attention to whether and how the response reflects the Blueprint goals and principles (use the Blueprint brochure as reference).

   e. Use quotes and concrete examples to illustrate key points and questions.

5. Repeat steps 2 through 4 for each case record assigned.

6. Review and discuss each case record together as a work group.

Identify themes and common gaps that emerge through the discussion. Note where essential practices are consistently occurring as well as where there are gaps.

7. Compile a summary of the discussion for each essential practice element.

   a. Option: Use a blank version of the case review worksheet in an electronic format to record a summary of the case review analysis for each agency and element of practice. The coordinator can use the cut-and-paste feature to transfer information to the notes and documentation tool.

   b. Option: Blueprint coordinator uses the notes and documentation tool during the work group's discussion to summarize the results of the case.

   c. Option: Select a work group member to record the summary discussion on a blank case review worksheet and submit it to the Blueprint coordinator.

[7] CASE REVIEW WORKSHEETS

Case review worksheets are included for the following key steps in the criminal legal system process. The worksheets are organized by step or function and each one generally corresponds to the related agency. Where more than one local agency performs the same or similar functions—e.g., multiple police departments; a city and a county prosecutor; local and state probation—adapt the worksheet header to indicate the specific agency.

1. **911 Emergency Communications**
2. **Law Enforcement**
3. **Pretrial Release / Bail Evaluation**
4. **Sheriff's Office**
5. **Prosecutor**
6. **Victim/Witness**
7. **Probation**
8. **Bench and Court Administration**

Blueprint Practice Assessment – Case Review: 911 Emergency Communications

911 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens in this call/case?** ☐ ***Check all practices demonstrated; give examples*** ☐ ***Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)***
1. Set priority-level response for domestic assault calls.	
2. Elicit and relay to responding officers information about: • **Type & level of danger, weapons, types of violence used, etc.** • **Exact report of what caller saw/heard/experienced** • **Who is at the scene**	
3. Collect and relay information to aid officers in apprehending suspects who have left the scene.	
4. Communicate effectively and respectfully with callers.	
5. Tell callers when a squad has been dispatched.	
6. Determine how and when to safely keep callers on the line.	
7. Respond to people having difficulty with communication.	
8. Safely respond to interrupted calls.	
9. Safely respond to children on the line.	

911 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens in this call/case?** ☐ ***Check all practices demonstrated; give examples*** ☐ ***Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)***
10. Communicate in person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency; provide access to interpretation, including TTY/TDD, when required.	
11. Utilize all available databases and information sources to obtain history on suspect.	
12. Code calls accurately when domestic violence-related.	
13. Record and keep calls and related documents in a manner which allows later access by bail evaluators, investigators, prosecutors, probation, and defense attorneys.	
14. Foster engagement with people seeking help: • **Avoid placing the victim in a position of confrontation with the offender.** • **Protect victim from retaliation when communicating with offender.** • **Treat each interaction with the victim as an opportunity to build a partnership over multiple contacts.** • **Demonstrate awareness of signs that violence may be resuming or escalating.** • **Inform caller before placing him/her on hold.**	

911 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens in this call/case?** ☐ ***Check all practices demonstrated; give examples*** ☐ ***Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)***
15. Conduct regular supervisory review of calls and practice according to Blueprint policies and protocols.	
16. Provide structure for managers to participate in ongoing interagency Blueprint monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.	
17. Other observations related to the response to this call/case: • **Strengths** • **Other gaps**	

Blueprint Policy and Practice Assessment: Law Enforcement

LAW ENFORCEMENT **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens in this call/case?** ☐ *Check all practices demonstrated; give examples* ☐ *Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)*
1. Obtain or request enhanced information from dispatch, including: • **Type & level of danger, weapons, types of violence used, etc.** • **Exact report of what caller saw/heard/experienced** • **Who is at the scene** • **Information to aid in locating suspect who has left the scene**	
2. Separate the parties and minimize sight and sound contact between suspect and victim(s) as safety permits.	
3. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.	
4. Interview everyone at the scene (including children) and obtain contact information for all. • **Obtain detailed contact information for the victim.** • **Obtain suspect's statement if present at the scene or if s/he can be located.**	
5. Identify and check on the welfare of all children at the scene.	

LAW ENFORCEMENT **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens in this call/case?** ☐ *Check all practices demonstrated; give examples* ☐ *Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)*
6. Document and collect all available evidence, including photographs of all injuries, the scene, broken or damaged belongings, weapons, witness statements, electronic (e.g., recordings of text messages, voice-mail, social media), indicators of strangulation, indicators of stalking. • **Do not seize telephone if it would leave victim without a working phone.** • **Request the victim sign a medical release if medical treatment will be sought.** • **Collect and secure evidence related to probable cause regardless of suspect's absence from the scene.** • **Note spontaneous statements by those at the scene.** • **Note physical appearance and emotional demeanor of parties.**	
7. Determine the existence of civil protection orders, harassment restraining orders, and criminal no-contact orders.	
8. Ask about and document past history of violence and stalking. • **Victim and witness informants** • **Law enforcement and criminal history records**	

LAW ENFORCEMENT **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens in this call/case?** ☐ *Check all practices demonstrated; give examples* ☐ *Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)*
9. Ask and document responses to the risk questions and follow-up: **a) Do you think he/she will seriously injure or kill you, your children, or someone else close to you? What makes you think so? What makes you think not?** **b) How frequently does he/she intimidate, threaten, or assault you? Is it changing? Getting worse? Getting better?** **c) Describe the time you were the most frightened or injured by him/her.** **d) Have you ever been threatened or intimated by him/her for seeking help or attempting to seek help from police, the courts or others? How?**	
10. When both parties have used violence: • **Assess <u>first</u> for self-defense; arrest the party who was not acting in self-defense.** • **If cannot determine self-defense, assess for the predominant aggressor; arrest the predominant aggressor.** • **Discourage dual arrest.**	

LAW ENFORCEMENT **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens in this call/case?** ☐ *Check all practices demonstrated; give examples* ☐ *Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)*
11. Mandatory arrest with probable cause and any one or more of the following conditions: • **Felony-level crime** • **Injury or impairment to victim** • **Dangerous weapon involved** • **Violation of order for protection, harassment restraining order, or no-contact order** • **Victim fears imminent bodily harm**	
12. Ask about and document threats to victim for seeking help or attempts to dissuade victim from seeking help.	
13. Whether or not there has been an arrest, provide assistance to victims before clearing the scene: • **At a minimum, address: medical care, transport to a safe place, notice of victim's rights and compensation, advocacy and community resources, civil protection orders.** • **Encourage victim to call 911 if suspect returns to the scene.**	
14. When probable cause exists to make an arrest and the suspect has left the scene, collect all evidence, take measures to locate the suspect and protect the victims; submit an investigation report.	

LAW ENFORCEMENT **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens in this call/case?** ☐ *Check all practices demonstrated; give examples* ☐ *Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)*
15. Document patrol response and arrest decision in a report utilizing information in the Domestic Violence Patrol Report Checklist (attached).	
16. If there is insufficient probable cause for an arrest, write a brief report to document the complaint and the response. Do not recode a call dispatched as domestic abuse-related to a non-domestic category.	
17. If the suspect is gone from the scene (GOA), collect evidence in the same way as when an arrest has taken place and search for suspect as is reasonably possible.	
18. Conduct prompt supervisory review and (1) assign follow-up investigation when patrol has determined probable cause for an arrest or (2) forward to charging attorney without further investigation.	
19. Cases with one or more of the following receive high priority regardless of whether offender is in custody or out of custody ("gone-on-arrival"): • **Imminent time deadline** • **Significant injury or impairment** • **Strangulation or stalking alleged** • **Victim's response to risk questions indicates significant risk**	

LAW ENFORCEMENT **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens in this call/case?** ☐ *Check all practices demonstrated; give examples* ☐ *Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)*
20. In gross misdemeanor and felony cases: • **Conduct an expanded domestic violence risk assessment as warranted, starting from responses to the three risk questions.** • **Evaluate for all possible charges.**	
21. Be alert to and investigate types of crimes associated with domestic violence: • **Stalking/harassment** • **Strangulation** • **Sexual coercion/sexual aggression** • **Witness tampering**	
22. Promptly notify the victim when a case is declined for referral to prosecution.	
23. Determine if the suspect is on probation; if so, notify probation of the circumstances of the case, including any offenses where the suspect left the scene and has not been located.	
24. Engage with victims in ways that protect victims from retaliation, prioritize safety, offer resources, build collaboration over time, and increase access to services and protection.	

LAW ENFORCEMENT **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens in this call/case?** ☐ *Check all practices demonstrated; give examples* ☐ *Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)*
25. Conduct regular supervisory quality and compliance review of departmental practice according to adapted Blueprint policies and protocols. • **Patrol and investigation supervisors conduct regular review of reports and files** • **Refer reports to supervisors and commanders for review, redrafting, and policy/protocol clarification** • **Approve officers' actions when exceptions to arrest policy are contemplated**	
26. Provide structure for supervisors to participate in ongoing interagency Blueprint monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.	
27. Meet regularly with 911, prosecution, and probation to discuss and resolve problematic cases and responses.	
28. When an incident involves department employee: • **Investigate, make arrest decision, process evidence, and conduct follow-up investigation to ensure safety and accountability.** • **Send a supervisor of higher rank than the suspect to the scene.** • **Supervisor shall recover arrestee's badge, law enforcement identification card, and weapon.**	

LAW ENFORCEMENT **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens in this call/case?** ☐ *Check all practices demonstrated; give examples* ☐ *Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)*
29. Incidents involving public figures: • **Investigate, make arrest decision, process evidence, and conduct follow-up investigation to ensure safety and accountability.** • **Send a supervisor to the scene.** • **Take precautions to protect the victim's safety and confidentiality.**	
26. Other observations related to the response to this call/case: • **Strengths** • **Other gaps**	

Attachment to Law Enforcement Essential Elements – Practice Assessment Case Review

Domestic Violence Patrol Report Checklist

Background and officers' actions:

- ❑ Time of officers' arrival and time of incident
- ❑ Relevant 911 information, including specific details about any violence or threats in the 911 call
- ❑ Immediate statements of either party and any witnesses at the scene
- ❑ A complete description of the scene
- ❑ Note any existing protection or no-contact orders, probation, warrants, prior convictions
- ❑ Summarize actions taken by responding officers (e.g., entry, arrest, non-arrest, use of force, attempts to locate, transport, advocacy contact and referrals, victim notification, seizing firearms, rationale for self-defense or primary aggressor determination)
- ❑ Account of evidence collected (e.g., pictures, statements, weapons, other)

For each witness and party involved:

- ❑ His/her account of events and responses to follow-up questions
- ❑ Officer observation related to the person's account of events
- ❑ Identification, address, and means of locating the person for follow-up, including:
  - Home address and phone number
  - Place of employment, work address and phone number
  - Cell phone number(s)
  - Relationship to other parties

For each party involved:

- ❑ Injuries or impairment, (including pain, strangulation effects, breathing, movement impairment)

Information from the victim, including history of violence and stalking and contact information:

- ❑ Responses to the risk questions:

5. Do you think he/she will seriously injure or kill you or your children? What makes you think so? What makes you think not?
6. How frequently and seriously does he/she intimidate, threaten, or assault you? Is it changing? Getting worse? Getting better?
7. Describe the time you were the most frightened or injured by him/her.
8. Have you ever been threatened or intimated by him/her for seeking help or attempting to seek help from police, the courts or others? How?

- ❑ Threats to the victim for seeking help, particularly from law enforcement or courts, and stalking behaviors
- ❑ Name and phone numbers of someone who can always reach the victim

Attachment to Law Enforcement Essential Elements – Practice Assessment Case Review

Domestic Violence Patrol Report Checklist

- ❑ Presence of risk factors (see below)
- ❑ If an arrest was not made, the reason why
- ❑ When possible, issue a squad pick-up and hold on suspects not on the scene ("gone-on-arrival" or GOA) that are on probation.
- ❑ Emotional state/demeanor
- ❑ Acts of intimidation or aggression
- ❑ Presence or use of weapons
- ❑ Alcohol or drug consumption and impairment of those involved

NOTE: Record victim contact information in the confidential section of the report.

- ❑ Inform the victim that every effort will be made to protect this information, but that it is possible that the suspect could gain access via court order

Additional information related to the suspect:

- ❑ GOA: details about where the suspect might be and where he/she stays when not at the address of the incident; physical and vehicle descriptions; aliases
- ❑ Suspect's county and state of residence during the past ten years
- ❑ Whether Miranda is given and/or request for attorney and when this occurred
- ❑ Whether a custodial taped interview of the suspect was conducted
- ❑ Any spontaneous statements given by the suspect after the arrest

Additional information related to the case:

- ❑ Details regarding presence, involvement, and welfare of children at the scene
- ❑ Existence of language, communication, or cognition barriers
- ❑ Medical help offered or used, facility, and medical release obtained
- ❑ Presence or involvement of elderly people or people with disabilities

RISK & DANGER FACTORS
Caveat-Not a complete list:

- Stalking
- Strangulation; attempts to "choke"
- Threats to kill the victim
- Victim believes or fears threats to kill
- Threats to kill conveyed to others
- Threats of suicide
- Forced sex or pressuring for sex even when separated
- Serious injury to the victim
- Carries, has access to, uses,

Attachment to Law Enforcement Essential Elements – Practice Assessment Case Review **Domestic Violence Patrol Report Checklist**	
	or threatens with a weapon • Violence outside of home • Increase in frequency, severity, or type of violence • Frequent impairment by alcohol or drugs • Victim attempting a permanent break • Estrangements and separations • Failure of prior interventions • Prior arrests, law enforcement calls, and/or protection order(s) • Obsessive control of victim's daily activities; obsessive jealousy **Violence with a pattern of coercion is a serious marker of high risk violence.** *For more information see Blueprint for Safety Appendix 1A: Practitioners' Guide to Risk and Danger in Domestic Violence Cases*

Blueprint Policy and Practice Assessment: Pretrial Release / Bail Evaluation

PRETRIAL RELEASE / BAIL EVALUATION **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens in this case?** ☐ *Check all practices demonstrated; give examples* ☐ *Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)*
1. Present a bail evaluation that includes severity and context, criminal history, risk to the victim and community as well as likelihood of reappearance.	
2. Inform the victim of limits of confidentiality; put procedures in place to protect information obtained from victim to the extent possible under law.	
3. Differentiate recommendations for bail and conditions of release based on risk, context, and severity.	
4. Contact the victim about the incident, history of violence, and wishes concerning conditions of release, including no-contact orders.	
5. Inform the victim promptly of ordered conditions of release.	
6. Supervise defendants granted conditional release, monitor for compliance with conditions of release, and respond promptly to violations of conditional release; take action based on the nature of the violation and risk and danger. ☐	
7. Inform victim of who to contact and how to report violations or harassment by defendant.	

PRETRIAL RELEASE / BAIL EVALUATION **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens in this case?** ☐ *Check all practices demonstrated; give examples* ☐ *Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)*
8. Engage with victims and defendants in ways that protect victims from retaliation, prioritize safety, offer resources, and increase access to services and protection.	
9. Respond promptly to violations of conditional release; take action based on the nature of the violation and risk and danger.	
10. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.	
11. Conduct regular supervisory review of pretrial/bail evaluation practices according to Blueprint policies and protocols	
12. Provide structure for managers to participate in ongoing interagency Blueprint monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.	
13. Meet regularly with prosecution and court administration to discuss and resolve problematic practices and responses.	
14. Other observations related to the response to this case: • **Strengths** • **Other gaps**	

Blueprint Policy and Practice Assessment: Sheriff's Office

SHERIFF'S OFFICE **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens? Based on:** ☐ *Check all practices demonstrated; give examples* ☐ *Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)*
1. Use widest possible sources of information to locate defendant.	
2. Obtain and act upon information from victims related to locating the defendant.	
3. Prioritize warrants based on crime level and risk and danger.	
4. When new information is received, reactivate dormant warrants and renew attempts to locate defendant.	
5. Capture and report to law enforcement the defendant's behavior at time of service regarding threats, intimidation, risk and danger.	
6. Capture and report to law enforcement information regarding threats and risk and danger during booking and defendant's stay in the jail.	
7. Provide prompt notification to victim of defendant's impending release.	
8. Prohibit visits, correspondence, and phone calls between defendant and victim if a no-contact order is issued.	
9. Block victim's phone number unless victim wants contact and a no-contact order is not in place.	

SHERIFF'S OFFICE **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens? Based on:** ☐ *Check all practices demonstrated; give examples* ☐ *Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)*
10. Make jail audio readily available to law enforcement and prosecution.	
11. Establish procedures to obtain, accept, and act on victims' reports of harassment or threats.	
12. Alert courtroom security to the existence of a protection order or no-contact order.	
13. Establish procedures to act upon violations of court orders or victim intimidation.	
14. Provide a secure area for victims in the courthouse.	
15. Report to prosecutors any intimidation or harassment of victim by defendant.	
16. Engage with victims and defendants in ways that protect victims from retaliation, prioritize safety, offer resources, build collaboration for victim safety over time, and increase access to services and protection.	
17. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.	
18. Conduct regular supervisory review of Sheriff's Office practice according to Blueprint policies and protocols.	

SHERIFF'S OFFICE **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens? Based on:** ☐ *Check all practices demonstrated; give examples* ☐ *Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)*
19. Provide structure for managers to participate in ongoing interagency Blueprint monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.	
20. Other observations related to the response to this case: • **Strengths** • **Other gaps**	

Blueprint Policy and Practice Assessment: Prosecution

PROSECUTION **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens in this case?** ☐ *Check all practices demonstrated; give examples* ☐ *Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)*
1. Approach charging in ways that minimize dependence on the victim and maximize other sources of information. • **Post-arrest witness intimidation is very common in domestic violence cases. Know the doctrine of forfeiture by wrongdoing and prepare the case accordingly.** • **Expand the focus to include illegal behavior after patrol arrives.** • **Charge all relevant crimes except where victim safety, safety of victim-defendants, warrant otherwise.**	

PROSECUTION **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens in this case?** ☐ *Check all practices demonstrated; give examples* ☐ *Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)*
2. Evaluate the risk and lethality factors and the context of the violence and adjust prosecutorial response accordingly.	
3. Request further investigation rather than decline a case that might be charged with additional evidence.	
4. Reevaluate the case for additional charges or amended charges as additional evidence is gathered.	
5. Be aware of potentially undercharged crimes in domestic violence cases: strangulation, stalking, sexual coercion/sexual aggression, and witness tampering.	
6. Relay charging decisions, including declining or dismissing charges, promptly to law enforcement, victim, and victim/advocate.	
7. Engage with victims in ways that protect victims from retaliation, prioritize safety, offer resources, build collaboration for victim safety over time, and increase access to services and protection.	
8. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.	
9. Engage in and document early and continuing contact with victims.	

PROSECUTION **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens in this case?** ☐ *Check all practices demonstrated; give examples* ☐ *Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)*
10. Adopt process to obtain and consider input from victim and/or victim's advocate about pretrial conditions of release.	
11. Consider each no-contact order individually.	
12. Do not threaten to or place a victim in custody to ensure witness availability.	
13. Approach cases with the understanding that the victim may not appear for trial or may recant.	
14. Do not file criminal charges against a recanting victim.	
15. Make recommendations for bail and pretrial conditions of release that reflect context and severity of the offense, the risk and danger, and safety needs of the victim and public.	
16. Unless provided by another agency, keep victim informed of bail and pretrial release conditions and procedures.	
17. Take prompt action upon notice of violation of conditional release to ensure sure and swift consequences.	

PROSECUTION **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens in this case?** ☐ *Check all practices demonstrated; give examples* ☐ *Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)*
18. Obtain and take into account input from victim and advocate about plea and sentencing recommendations.	
19. Ensure access to victim's rights protections under state statutes, including the right to restitution, compensation and offering victim impact statements.	
20. Adjust the response when considering plea agreements and sentencing with victim/defendants.	
21. Request a probationary no-contact order at the victim's request, overriding this request only in rare cases where the suspect poses significant danger to the victim or the community.	
22. Provide information on plea and sentencing to appropriate persons and agencies including the victim.	
23. Provide probation PSI writer with already gathered information.	
24. Take prompt action to address violations of probation conditions to ensure sure and swift consequences.	

PROSECUTION **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens in this case?** ☐ *Check all practices demonstrated; give examples* ☐ *Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)*
25. Conduct regular supervisory review of prosecution files and practices according to Blueprint policies and protocols.	
26. Provide structure for managers/supervisors to participate in ongoing interagency Blueprint monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.	
27. Other observations related to the response to this case: • **Strengths** • **Other gaps**	

Blueprint Policy and Practice Assessment: Victim/Witness

VICTIM/WITNESS **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens in this case?** ☐ *Check all practices demonstrated; give examples* ☐ *Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)*
1. Inform victim that communication is not confidential.	
2. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.	
3. Make contact as soon as possible and maintain contact throughout the criminal court process.	
4. Connect victims with community-based advocates who can provide assurance of confidentiality.	
5. Seek input from the victim at all stages of the process and communicate information to prosecutor.	
6. Facilitate victim's access to the prosecutor and legal system to ensure that the victim has a voice in process and that her/his expressed concerns are communicated and considered.	
7. Explore victim's concerns about safety and problem-solve to address question and concerns, including the implications of a no-contact order.	

VICTIM/WITNESS **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens in this case?** ☐ *Check all practices demonstrated; give examples* ☐ *Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)*
8. Provide required victim notifications related to the criminal case process pursuant to state law and assist victims in exercising their rights.	
9. Work with prosecution to ensure access to victim's rights protections under state statutes, including the right to restitution, compensation and offering victim impact statements..	
10. Offer support, information and resources throughout the process.	
11. Arrange assistance as needed to facilitate victim's participation in court proceedings.	
12. Facilitate victim's connection to probation throughout presentence investigation, sentencing, and supervision.	
13. Provide for post-conviction assistance, information, and support.	
14. Engage with victims in ways that protect victims from retaliation, prioritize safety, offer resources, build collaboration for victim safety over time, and increase access to services and protection.	
15. Conduct regular supervisory review of Victim/Witness agency practice according to Blueprint policies and protocols.	

VICTIM/WITNESS **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens in this case?** ☐ *Check all practices demonstrated; give examples* ☐ *Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)*
16. Provide structure for managers to participate in ongoing interagency Blueprint monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.	
17. Meet regularly with law enforcement and prosecution to discuss and resolve problematic cases and responses.	
18. Other observations related to the response to this case: • **Strengths** • **Other gaps**	

Blueprint Policy and Practice Assessment: Probation

PROBATION **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens in this case?** ☐ *Check all practices demonstrated; give examples* ☐ *Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)*
1. Establish procedures to obtain victim input regarding presentence investigation (PSI) and conditions of probation, including no-contact orders and response to violations.	
2. Conduct PSIs that search all available records and capture complete information about the current offense and defendant's past use of violence.	
3. Incorporate history, context, severity, risk and danger in the PSI report, with particular attention to those cases involving apparent victim-defendants (i.e., where the defendant appears to have been abused in the past by the identified victim in the case).	
4. Make PSI recommendations based on context, severity, risk and danger.	
5. Attempt to meet with or contact the victim prior to first meeting with the defendant.	
6. Meet promptly with offender to review all probation conditions and obtain signed releases.	

PROBATION **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens in this case?** ☐ *Check all practices demonstrated; give examples* ☐ *Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)*
7. Provide supervision that is appropriate to risk and danger and consistent in holding offender accountable. • **Ensure that supervision of victim-defendants does not make the defendant more vulnerable to further violence.** • **Identify high risk offenders and utilize enhanced supervision.**	
8. Provide immediate response to probation violations, differentiated based on risk posed to the victim and the community.	
9. Establish procedures to hear probation violations based on new criminal activity before the new charge is resolved, if the activity is associated with increased risk to victim.	
10. Provide timely and thorough notification to victims of the terms and conditions of probation.	
11. Seek information from victims about their concerns during supervision, including how to report violations in a manner that does not increase risk.	
12. Ensure programming, including appropriate domestic violence treatment, that that accounts for risk and danger.	

PROBATION **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens in this case?** ☐ *Check all practices demonstrated; give examples* ☐ *Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)*
13. Coordinate and share information with treatment programs; monitor compliance with probation conditions.	
14. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.	
15. Engage with victims and defendants in ways that protect victims from retaliation, prioritize safety, offer resources, build collaboration for victim safety over time, and increase access to services and protection.	
16. Other observations related to the response to this case: • **Strengths** • **Other gaps**	

Blueprint Policy and Practice Assessment: The Bench and Court Administration

THE BENCH AND COURT ADMINISTRATION **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens in this case?** ☐ *Check all practices demonstrated; give examples* ☐ *Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)*
1. Allow prosecutors/probation to present relevant information regarding the violence, risk, context, and severity at all stages of criminal process.	
2. Determine pretrial conditions of release and bail based on risk factors present, victim safety, public safety and likelihood of reappearance.	
3. Determine the issuance of no-contact orders on an individual basis.	
4. If victim objects to issuance of a no-contact order, assess both the context and risk to victim if the no-contact order is not issued and the difficulty for victim if it is ordered.	
5. Set conditions of release and bail when suspect cannot be arrested on scene ("gone-on- arrival") on same basis as in-custody cases.	
6. State pretrial and probationary conditions in clear and precise language. ☐	
7. Read key conditions of probation aloud during sentencing.	
8. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.	

THE BENCH AND COURT ADMINISTRATION **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens in this case?** ☐ *Check all practices demonstrated; give examples* ☐ *Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)*
9. Establish a process to allow victims to request modification or dismissal of no-contact orders.	
10. Provide a prompt response to violations of conditions of pretrial release.	
11. Distribute court orders, including conditions of pretrial release, no-contact orders (and any modifications or cancellations), and probation conditions to involved parties and agencies, including to victim unless provided by another agency.	
12. Order a presentence Investigation (PSI) in all cases where the original charge is a domestic violence-related offense, regardless of conviction charge.	
13. Issue a disposition that reflects risk, context and severity.	
14. Except in rare cases involving particularly dangerous defendants who place victims or the community at high risk of serious or lethal harm, do not issue warrants for victims who do not appear in court pursuant to a subpoena.	
15. Obtain victim input on pleas and sentencing.	

THE BENCH AND COURT ADMINISTRATION **Essential Elements** **Call/Case ID# _____**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** **What actually happens in this case?** ☐ *Check all practices demonstrated; give examples* ☐ *Note if unknown or not applicable or possible in this call/case (explain)*
16. Except in very rare cases after an assessment of risk and danger, do not order a probationary no-contact order over the victim's objection.	
17. Hear probation violations promptly.	
18. Establish procedures to order surrender of firearms based on state and federal law.	
19. Engage with victims and defendants in ways that protect victims from retaliation, prioritize safety, offer resources, build collaboration for victim safety over time, and increase access to services and protection.	
20. Establish a courtroom atmosphere that enhances criminal justice system intervention to support victim safety and offender accountability.	
21. Conduct regular supervisory review of court practices according to Blueprint policies and protocols.	
22. Provide a structure for court administration to participate in ongoing interagency Blueprint monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.	
23. Other observations related to the response to this case: • **Strengths** • **Other gaps**	

[8] PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWS AND OBSERVATIONS

In a Blueprint for Safety Policy and Practice Assessment, interviews and observations with those working in the criminal legal system supplement information gained via the mapping and case review steps. Interviews and observations are useful in learning more about a specific step in case processing and to answer questions and clarify what the team is learning. Practitioner interviews and observations are also a way to further explore issues and gaps for victims/survivors that emerge via community consultation activities.

Interviews: "Talking"

Interviews provide insight into how the criminal legal system response is organized or "put together" in ways that that workers are required or authorized to take certain actions and restricted from taking others. Talking with line staff and administrators helps build more in-depth knowledge about the kinds of rules, administrative procedures, training, documents and forms, links, and other factors that influence what happens.

Interviews can help a Blueprint adaptation team expand its understanding of:

- Where and how the essential elements are included in or missing from practice
- An agency's mission and goals and how those impact the response to battering and domestic violence crimes
- The purpose of different steps in the criminal legal system process
- Functions of an worker's specific tasks
- Historical trends related to the criminal legal system and/or agency's response
- Data collection practices
- Ways in which the response is organized or unorganized to address the needs of victims of battering and their children
- How and where victims are linked with community-based advocacy
- Choices that a practitioner is authorized to make at specific points in case processing
- Responses that might reinforce gaps in safety or accountability
- How an agency's response is documented and communicated to other interveners
- Whether and how safety and accountability measures are reflected in case documents

Observations: "Watching"

Watching practitioners at work provides a more detailed and often more accurate picture of the criminal legal system response by focusing on what actually happens in the moment, on the job. In interviews, people tend to convey what agency policy and their job description say they should do. Observations help an assessment team see what actually happens in the response to battering and domestic violence crimes. What the team observes may confirm or contradict what they have learned at other stages of the assessment. Observations are often on opportunity to talk with practitioners as well and conduct a kind of abbreviated interview.

Observations can help a Blueprint adaptation team expand its understanding of:

- Where and how the essential elements are included in or missing from practice
- The small things that practitioners do every day or intuitively that are routine and outside of the official job description
- The conditions under which those responding to battering and domestic violence crimes actually work, such as the case-loads, time, tools and equipment involved and the short cuts workers take
- Practitioners actual interactions with the people who are involved in battering and domestic violence crimes
- The human emotions, strains, and vulnerabilities that are rarely accessible in case files and difficult to fully explore in interviews
- How specific steps and processes in the criminal legal system work and the kinds of forms, reports, and other documents that impact the process
- The full range of the ways in which criminal legal system practitioners are organized to response both within and across each key agency

Who to talk with . . . what to watch

A Blueprint policy and practice assessment might involve any of the following kinds of interviews and observations and others specific to local needs.

Practitioner Interviews

- Line staff and supervisors, such as:
    - Emergency communications call-takers and dispatchers
    - Patrol officers
    - Investigators/detectives
    - Jail booking and monitoring staff
    - Prosecution charging attorneys
    - Victim/witness specialists
    - Bail/pretrial release screeners and monitors
    - Presentence investigation writers
    - Probation supervisors
    - Public defenders
    - Batterer intervention program facilitators
- Members of specialized response teams or high-risk offender teams
- Staff and practitioners affiliated with family safety center-type agencies
- Staff assigned to training and policy development/management: e.g., the police training academy director; manager of the law enforcement agency accreditation process
- Agency administrators and policy-makers:

Practitioner Observations

- Sitting in with emergency communications call-takers and dispatchers
- Riding with patrol officers
- Shadowing investigators as they review and follow-up on cases
- Observing courthouse security
- Shadowing prosecutors as they make charging decisions and negotiate plea agreements
- Watching court hearings related to all facets of the case through final disposition
    - Arraignment
    - Bail setting and review
    - Pleas and sentencing
    - Trials
    - Specialized domestic violence monitoring court or hearings
- Shadowing probation supervisors
- Sitting in on meetings of specialized response or high-risk offender teams

Practitioner Interviews

- Emergency communications center director
- Chief of police and command staff
- Sheriff
- Jail administrator
- Pretrial screening and monitoring agency director
- Family safety center director
- Probation services manager
- Lead public defender
- Judges

Practitioner Observations

Scope and approach

In a Blueprint policy and practices assessment, a mix of people conduct interviews and observations: the Blueprint coordinator, advocate, adaptation team, and/or members of agency-specific work groups. Who does what kinds of interviews or observations and how many will vary greatly. In some communities, the Blueprint coordinator and one or two members of the adaptation team might do a few follow-up interviews to clarify something that has emerged from the mapping or case review. Other communities might do interviews and observations when such questions come up. Still others might emphasize observations over interviews and focus on key points of intervention that are relatively easy to observe, such as sitting in at the 911-emergency communication center, patrol ride-along, or observations of a variety of court hearings.

In order to track and manage the overall assessment and its results, the Blueprint coordinator has the central role in scheduling and managing interviews and observations, regardless of who is assigned to a specific activity. As with access to case records, the Memorandum of Understanding secured in the planning phase sets the expectation that agencies will make staff available for interviews and observations.

The following steps and tips help guide the process, regardless of how narrow or broad the use of interviews and observations.

Practitioner Interviews and Observations: Steps and Tips

1. Expect to spend an hour for most interviews and two hours for most observations.

You need enough time to discuss the essential elements and explore the response to battering and domestic violence crimes.

2. Prepare ahead of time.

If unsure about the focus or purpose of the interview or observation, clarify it with the Blueprint coordinator. Review the Blueprint brochure, essential elements, and results of any mapping or case review that has occurred.

3. Consider the person to be interviewed or observed as an extension of the Blueprint adaptation team.

Their perspectives into the criminal legal system process is a significant source of information. They will have many contributions to understanding whether and how the essential elements are reflected in policy and practice.

4. Provide a brief overview of the Blueprint for Safety and the policy and practice assessment.

Ask about the person's familiarity with the Blueprint for Safety and provide a brief overview as needed. Leave a copy of the Blueprint brochure or similar local document. Explain the policy and practice assessment phase and emphasize that the interviews and observations are not assessments of individual effectiveness or actions.

5. Use the Blueprint mapping as a guide for asking questions and watching what is happening.

The map provides a reference point about what is currently happening—or what the assessment team thinks is happening, based on its inquiry thus far.

6. Use the Blueprint essential elements for the agency as a guide for asking questions and watching what is happening.

The essential elements provide a clear, useful framework for talking with a practitioner about what may or may not be happening under current policy and practice.

7. Seek concrete examples.

Ask for specific example of what you are discussing: show me the case file, report, form, computer screen, etc. Describe the last two cases where you saw this essential element in practice . . . where the policy didn't work. Note concrete details from cases you observe.

8. Ask about the uses of policies, forms, and technology; how information is collected and routed; how this practitioner is linked to others.

Use the interview or observation to fine-tune the policy and practice assessment's discoveries about how the criminal legal system response to battering and domestic violence crimes is organized.

9. Avoid arguing or disagreeing about practices you observe or opinions that differ from your own.

Arguing or judging diverts attention away from the goal of fully understanding what is happening at a certain point in case processing and how the essential elements are present or absent. The more relaxed you stay, the better the person being interviewed or observed will be at sharing their perspective and contributing to the assessment.

10. Prepare, review, and submit notes promptly to the Blueprint coordinator.

The longer you wait to sum up the interview or observation, the more likely you are to miss the flow and forget key insights to share with the assessment team. In addition, the Blueprint coordinator has a big job in managing and tracking the results of the policy and practice assessment, as well as the Blueprint adaptation process overall. Prompt completion of assignments and notes help keep the process moving forward.

[9] ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

Analysis is the process of gathering the insights and ideas that emerge from the policy and practice assessment in order to identify problems, support the statements with documentation, and define the kinds of changes that need to occur. Analysis occurs in a dynamic, ongoing way as part of the information-gathering, from community consultation and mapping to policy comparison, case review, and any interviews and observations. Through analysis, the Blueprint coordinator and work groups answer the four questions that frame the assessment:

1. How does the current criminal legal system response meet the Blueprint's essential elements for recommended practice in battering and domestic violence related crimes?
2. What are the range of victims' needs and experiences with the current response?
3. What are the experiences of victims from communities that are over-represented and/or underserved in the criminal legal system?
4. What policy and practice changes should be made to address gaps in recommended practice and to better meet victims' needs within the framework of the Blueprint for Safety?

The assessment provides the foundation for Phase Three: Adapt Policy and Adjust Practice. The primary need for reporting the assessment outcomes is to prepare the work groups that will identify agency-specific policy revisions and changes to current practice and produce the collective Blueprint policy. In addition, the full Blueprint adaptation team, organizers and key champions, agency heads, and others in the community need to know how the current legal system response compares to the Blueprint's recommended practice. Reporting does not require a complex, formal document but it should address the four questions that frame the assessment and highlight how current practice compares to the Blueprint's essential elements.

Coordinating the analysis and reporting

1. Utilize Coordinating the Blueprint for Safety: Strategies to Stay Focused and Move Forward (Appendix 19 in Becoming a Blueprint Community).

   This tool provides a reference point and strategies for facilitating the assessment process.

2. Meet frequently during the assessment to discuss what the work groups and team members are learning.

Regular check-in meetings help capture what the assessment is learning, keep the process moving, and identify where additional information-gathering is needed. Ask and document:

- What have we learned . . .
  - About how current practice reflects the essential elements?
  - Victims' needs and experiences with the current response?

    - Experiences of victims from over-represented and/or underserved communities?

- Where do we need more information? What kind of information?
- What are the potential gaps in recommended policy and practice? What changes will help solve these problems?

3. Build the analysis over time.

Initial conclusions may not hold up. Expand the understanding of what is happening in the response by asking more questions and gathering additional information where needed. Revise or eliminate problem statements accordingly.

4. Draw on the Blueprint Essential Elements as a primary frame of reference, in both the annotated form and as policy comparison and case review worksheets.

The essential elements help focus attention and provide an anchor for discussions and examples of what the assessment team is learning about policy and practice.

5. For each problem that emerges, apply the following four-step process to sum up the nature and likely sources of the problem.

    A. Identify and document the problem.

        - Where in the process does it occur?
        - What data sources contribute to identifying the problem?
            - Statistical
            - Mapping
            - Community consultation
            - Policy comparison
            - Case reviews
            - Interviews
            - Observations

    B. Address who is most affected by the problem and in what ways.

        - Are there different impacts according to people's life circumstances, cultural identities, communities?
        - How does the problem affect those overrepresented and/or underserved in criminal legal system?

C. Expand understanding of the problem via additional information as needed.

- What additional information needs to be developed?
- Who needs to be involved?

D. Identify the sources of the problem in the ways in which the response is organized.

- Rules & regulations
- Administrative practices
- Resources
- Linkages
- Education & training
- Concepts & theories
- Mission, purpose, & function
- Accountability

Use the Problem Analysis Worksheet and the related reference, Primary Ways of Organizing Work, to guide the work groups' discussions and analysis.

6. Collect individual and group notes; document discussions and recommendations.

Making recommendations for policy and practice adaptations is a smoother process when there is a clear record of what the assessment discovered. The Policy and Practice Assessment Notes and Documentation template (Appendix 22-10) provides an all-in-one tool for a coordinator to maintain a record of the assessment. Use the template as-is, customize it, or use it as a framework for building a database to document and query the results of the assessment.

7. Draft reports as needed to prepare the Phase Three policy adaptation work groups and to update the Blueprint adaptation team, Blueprint organizers and champions, and agency heads.

"Reports" can take different forms, depending upon the purpose and level of detail needed. For example:

- Printed or electronic version of the completed Policy and Practice Assessment Notes and Documentation Tool (Appendix 22-10)

  If used to track assessment results, the information included in the notes and documentation template will benefit the Phase 3 policy adaptation work groups as they determine what kind of policy changes to recommend. Generate agency-specific reports for individual work groups. Provide the entire report to the Blueprint adaptation team.

Include a face sheet that summarizes the highest priorities and discoveries related to the four questions that frame the assessment.

- Oral presentation plus a one-page handout with highlights of the assessment

  This format is useful for updates to agency administrators and to the Blueprint adaptation team, organizers, and champions. Use the four questions to organize the information. Such a report can be agency-specific (e.g., briefing to police department command staff or the district attorney's office) or include the full scope of the Blueprint. The handout provides a take-away for the audience to

- Web site platform

  Updates can be distributed via a password link that the Blueprint adaptation team and other authorized users have access to. Any public reports should be cleared with the agencies involved.

Policy and Practice Assessment: Problem Analysis Worksheet	
Step	**Notes**

<u>Step 1</u>:
 	
Identify and document the problem.
 	
• **Where in the process does it occur?**
 	
• **What data sources contribute to identifying the problem?**
 	
  ○ **Statistical**
 	
  ○ **Mapping**
 	
  ○ **Community consultation**
 	
  ○ **Policy comparison**
 	
  ○ **Case reviews**
 	
  ○ **Interviews**
 	
  ○ **Observations**	

<u>Step 2</u>: **Address who is most affected by the problem and in what ways.** • **Different impacts according to people's life circumstances, cultural identities, communities?** • **Those overrepresented and/or underserved in criminal legal system?**	
<u>Step 3</u>: **Expand understanding of problem.** • **What additional information needs to be developed?** • **Who needs to be involved?**	

Policy and Practice Assessment: Problem Analysis Worksheet	
Step	**Notes**
<u>Step 4</u>: **Identify the sources of the problem in how the agency's and/or system's response is organized.** **1) Rules & regulations** **2) Administrative practices** **3) Resources** **4) Linkages** **5) Education & training** **6) Concepts & theories** **7) Mission, purpose, & function** **8) Accountability**	

Primary Ways of Organizing Work

No one working in the criminal legal system—or any other complex system—arrives at work each day and decides what to do and how to do it. While there are degrees of discretion according to role and job function, no one gets to make up her or his own job; no one has total discretion. Institutions organize and direct what workers do in order to standardize the response.

What workers must do and how they do it are shaped by laws and policies, roles and functions, procedures, training, concepts, and other factors. Identifying these factors is a key strategy in analyzing problems discovered by a Blueprint policy and practice assessment—and in solving the problems. Changing the ways in which work is organized changes the response.

1. **Rules & regulations**

   Laws, administrative rules, court rulings, policies, and directives, etc., that direct and guide management of the institution and tell workers what they must do.

2. **Administrative practices**

   All ways that standardize how workers do what rules and regulations require them to do—e.g., forms, reports, screening tools, routing instructions.

3. **Resources**

   Funding, materials, processes, and personnel needed to accomplish the work.

4. **Linkages**

   Ways that workers are connected to other workers and processes, to the people who seek or drawn into its services, and to other institutions, such as state or federal regulating agencies.

5. **Education & training**

   Formal and informal ways that workers learn their jobs and are exposed to different concepts and theories and professional thinking and practice.

6. **Concepts & theories**

   Theories, assumptions, language, categories, etc., that organize workers to act on cases in authorized and approved ways.

7. **Mission, purpose, & function**

   Overarching purpose of a system (e.g., criminal court), a specific process within that mission (e.g., arraignment), and a specific practitioner role (prosecutor).

8. **Accountability**

   Person to person (e.g., offender to victim), practitioner to practitioner (e.g., 911 call-taker to patrol officer), agency to agency (e.g., prosecutor's office to probation), agency to person (e.g., police to victim/survivor), and institutions to due process.

[10] NOTES AND DOCUMENTATION TOOL

Using this tool

This tool provides an option for the Blueprint coordinator to document the policy and practice assessment. Assessment activities occur over a period of months, using a variety of work groups. The coordinator can use the tool to update findings as they become available. The coordinator will often keep notes as a member of the work group. In other settings, a summary will be entered from notes provided by the work group.

- Option: Download the document template from www.praxixinternational.org and use as-is. [ADD more specific location and/or instructions when final]
- Option: Incorporate the content fields into any agency profile and tracking database or other system set up during Phase One.
- Bottom line: Maintain a written record of all policy and practice assessment findings and recommendations that can be shared with or used to generate reports (whether formal or informal) to the Blueprint adaptation team and work groups, organizers, and agency administrators.

To address questions about why a particular element is included, see the explanation in **Blueprint Essential Elements Annotated**, Appendix 10 in *Becoming a Blueprint Community*.

The tool is also designed to enable a coordinator to keep track of who is involved and the scope of assessment activities. For example:

Summary of the 911 Emergency Communications assessment activities	
Work groups	1 team completed all activities; members included: Susan Smith, EEC supervisor; designee to Blueprint Adaptation Team John Jones, EEC deputy director (policy comparison only) Gail Green, EEC call-taker Fred Flower, EEC dispatcher (case review only) Brenda Brown, Blueprint Coordinator

	Tara Tate, Blueprint Advocate (case review only)
Policy review	Included EEC Standard Operating Procedures 12 and 15
Case review	Listened to 25 911 call recordings; read corresponding CAD reports
Community consultation	3 team members (Blueprint Coordinator, Advocate, and EEC supervisor) met with local advocates for victims of battering and advocates for the Deaf and the Latino community
Interviews	Lt. Deborah Dorn, City Police Department Patrol Division District Attorney Anthony Apple
Observations	1 observation (2 hours) of second shift in ECC
Other activities	No other activities

Blueprint Policy and Practice Assessment: 911 Emergency Communications – Notes & Documentation

Summary of the 911 Emergency Communications assessment activities	
Work groups	
Policy review	
Case review	
Community consultation	
Interviews	
Observations	
Other activities	

Policy & Practice Assessment **Notes & Documentation** **911 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of call recordings and dispatch records ☐ Interviews with call-takers and dispatchers ☐ Observations in the 911 center ☐ Information from victims/survivors
1. Set priority-level response for domestic assault calls.		
2. Elicit and relay to responding officers information about: • **Type & level of danger, weapons, types of violence used, etc.** • **Exact report of what caller saw/heard/experienced** • **Who is at the scene**		
3. Collect and relay information to aid officers in apprehending suspects who have left the scene.		

Policy & Practice Assessment **Notes & Documentation** **911 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of call recordings and dispatch records ☐ Interviews with call-takers and dispatchers ☐ Observations in the 911 center ☐ Information from victims/survivors
4. Communicate effectively and respectfully with callers.		
5. Tell callers when a squad has been dispatched.		
6. Determine how and when to safely keep callers on the line.		
7. Respond to people having difficulty with communication.		
8. Safely respond to interrupted calls.		
9. Safely respond to children on the line.		

Policy & Practice Assessment **Notes & Documentation** **911 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of call recordings and dispatch records ☐ Interviews with call-takers and dispatchers ☐ Observations in the 911 center ☐ Information from victims/survivors
10. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency; provide access to language interpretation and TTY/TDD when required.		
11. Utilize all available databases and information sources to obtain history on suspect.		
12. Code calls accurately when domestic violence-related.		
13. Record and keep calls and related documents in a manner which allows later access by bail evaluators, investigators, prosecutors, probation, and defense attorneys.		

Policy & Practice Assessment **Notes & Documentation** **911 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of call recordings and dispatch records ☐ Interviews with call-takers and dispatchers ☐ Observations in the 911 center ☐ Information from victims/survivors
14. Foster engagement with people seeking help: • **Avoid placing the victim in a position of confrontation with the offender.** • **Protect the victim from retaliation when communicating with the offender.** • **Treat each interaction with the victim as an opportunity to build a partnership over multiple contacts.** • **Demonstrate awareness of signs that violence may be resuming or escalating.** • **Inform caller before placing him/her on hold.**		

Policy & Practice Assessment **Notes & Documentation** **911 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of call recordings and dispatch records ☐ Interviews with call-takers and dispatchers ☐ Observations in the 911 center ☐ Information from victims/survivors
15. Conduct regular supervisory quality and compliance review of calls and practice.		
16. Provide structure for managers to participate in ongoing interagency monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.		

Policy & Practice Assessment **Notes & Documentation** **911 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of call recordings and dispatch records ☐ Interviews with call-takers and dispatchers ☐ Observations in the 911 center ☐ Information from victims/survivors
17. Meet regularly with law enforcement, prosecution, and community-based advocates to discuss and resolve problematic cases and responses.		
18. Other observations in comparing current policy and practice with Blueprint Essential Elements: • **Strengths** • **Other gaps**		

Blueprint Policy and Practice Assessment: Law Enforcement

Summary of the law enforcement assessment activities	
Work groups	
Policy review	
Case review	
Community consultation	
Interviews	
Observations	
Other activities	

LAW ENFORCEMENT **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of patrol and investigation reports ☐ Interviews with patrol officers and investigators ☐ Observations (e.g., patrol ride-along) ☐ Information from victims/survivors
PATROL		
1. Obtain or request enhanced information from dispatch, including: • **Type & level of danger, weapons, types of violence used, etc.** • **Exact report of what caller saw/heard/experienced** • **Who is at the scene** • **Information to aid in locating suspect who has left the scene**		
2. Separate the parties and minimize sight and sound contact between suspect and victim(s) as safety permits.		

LAW ENFORCEMENT **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of patrol and investigation reports ☐ Interviews with patrol officers and investigators ☐ Observations (e.g., patrol ride-along) ☐ Information from victims/survivors
3. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.		
4. Interview everyone at the scene (including children) and obtain contact information for all. • **Obtain detailed contact information for the victim.** • **Obtain suspect's statement if present at the scene or if s/he can be located.**		
5. Identify and check on the welfare of all children at the scene.		

LAW ENFORCEMENT **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of patrol and investigation reports ☐ Interviews with patrol officers and investigators ☐ Observations (e.g., patrol ride-along) ☐ Information from victims/survivors
6. Document and collect all available evidence, including photographs of all injuries, the scene, broken or damaged belongings, weapons, witness statements, electronic (e.g., recordings of text messages, voice-mail, social media), indicators of strangulation, indicators of stalking. • **Do not seize telephone if it would leave victim without a working phone.** • **Request the victim sign a medical release if medical treatment will be sought.** • **Collect and secure evidence related to probable cause regardless of suspect's absence from the scene.**		

LAW ENFORCEMENT **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of patrol and investigation reports ☐ Interviews with patrol officers and investigators ☐ Observations (e.g., patrol ride-along) ☐ Information from victims/survivors
• **Note spontaneous statements by those at the scene.** • **Note physical appearance and emotional demeanor of parties.**		
7. Determine the existence of civil protection orders, harassment restraining orders, and criminal no-contact orders.		
8. Ask about and document past history of violence and stalking. • **Victim and witness informants** • **Law enforcement and criminal history records**		

LAW ENFORCEMENT **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of patrol and investigation reports ☐ Interviews with patrol officers and investigators ☐ Observations (e.g., patrol ride-along) ☐ Information from victims/survivors
9. Ask and document responses to the 3 Blueprint risk questions and follow-up: **a) Do you think he/she will seriously injure or kill you, your children, or someone else close to you? What makes you think so? What makes you think not?** **b) How frequently does he/she intimidate, threaten, or assault you? Is it changing? Getting worse? Getting better?** **c) Describe the time you were the most frightened or injured by him/her.**		

LAW ENFORCEMENT **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of patrol and investigation reports ☐ Interviews with patrol officers and investigators ☐ Observations (e.g., patrol ride-along) ☐ Information from victims/survivors
10. When both parties have used violence: • **Assess <u>first</u> for self-defense; arrest the party who was not acting in self-defense.** • **If cannot determine self-defense, assess for the predominant aggressor; arrest the predominant aggressor.** • **Discourage dual arrest.**		
11. Mandatory arrest with probable cause and any one or more of the following conditions: • **Felony-level crime**		

LAW ENFORCEMENT **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of patrol and investigation reports ☐ Interviews with patrol officers and investigators ☐ Observations (e.g., patrol ride-along) ☐ Information from victims/survivors
• **Injury or impairment to victim** • **Dangerous weapon involved** • **Violation of order for protection, harassment restraining order, or no-contact order** • **Victim fears imminent bodily harm**		
12. Ask about and document threats to victim for seeking help or attempts to dissuade victim from seeking help.		
13. Whether or not there has been an arrest, provide assistance to victims before clearing the scene: • **At a minimum, address: medical care, transport to a safe place,**		

LAW ENFORCEMENT **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of patrol and investigation reports ☐ Interviews with patrol officers and investigators ☐ Observations (e.g., patrol ride-along) ☐ Information from victims/survivors
notice of victim's rights and compensation, advocacy and community resources, civil protection orders. • **Encourage victim to call 911 if suspect returns to the scene.**		
14. When probable cause exists to make an arrest and the suspect has left the scene, collect all evidence, take measures to locate the suspect and protect the victims; submit an investigation report.		
15. Document patrol response and arrest decision in a report utilizing information in the Domestic Violence Patrol Report Checklist (attached).		

LAW ENFORCEMENT **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of patrol and investigation reports ☐ Interviews with patrol officers and investigators ☐ Observations (e.g., patrol ride-along) ☐ Information from victims/survivors
16. If there is insufficient probable cause for an arrest, write a brief report to document the complaint and the response. Do not recode a call dispatched as domestic abuse-related to a non-domestic category.		
17. If the suspect is gone from the scene (GOA), collect evidence in the same way as when an arrest has taken place and search for suspect as is reasonably possible.		
18. Conduct prompt supervisory review and (1) assign follow-up investigation when patrol has determined probable cause for an arrest or (2) forward to charging attorney without further investigation.		

LAW ENFORCEMENT **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of patrol and investigation reports ☐ Interviews with patrol officers and investigators ☐ Observations (e.g., patrol ride-along) ☐ Information from victims/survivors
19. Cases with one or more of the following receive high priority regardless of whether offender is in custody or out of custody (GOA): • **Imminent time deadline** • **Significant injury or impairment** • **Strangulation or stalking alleged** • **Victim's response to risk questions indicates significant risk**		
20. In gross misdemeanor and felony cases: • **Conduct an expanded domestic violence risk assessment as warranted, starting from responses**		

LAW ENFORCEMENT **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of patrol and investigation reports ☐ Interviews with patrol officers and investigators ☐ Observations (e.g., patrol ride-along) ☐ Information from victims/survivors
to the three risk questions. • **Evaluate for all possible charges.**		
21. Be alert to and investigate types of crimes associated with domestic violence: • **Stalking/harassment** • **Strangulation** • **Sexual coercion/sexual aggression** • **Witness tampering**		
22. Promptly notify the victim when a case is declined for referral to prosecution.		

LAW ENFORCEMENT **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of patrol and investigation reports ☐ Interviews with patrol officers and investigators ☐ Observations (e.g., patrol ride-along) ☐ Information from victims/survivors
23. Determine if the suspect is on probation; if so, notify probation of the circumstances of the case, including any offenses where the suspect left the scene and has not been located.		
24. Engage with victims in ways that protect victims from retaliation, prioritize safety, offer resources, build collaboration over time, and increase access to services and protection.		

LAW ENFORCEMENT **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of patrol and investigation reports ☐ Interviews with patrol officers and investigators ☐ Observations (e.g., patrol ride-along) ☐ Information from victims/survivors
SUPERVISION		
25. Conduct regular supervisory quality and compliance review of departmental practice. • **Patrol and investigation supervisors conduct regular review of reports and files** • **Refer reports to supervisors and commanders for review, redrafting, and policy/protocol clarification** • **Approve officers' actions when exceptions to arrest policy are contemplated**		

LAW ENFORCEMENT **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of patrol and investigation reports ☐ Interviews with patrol officers and investigators ☐ Observations (e.g., patrol ride-along) ☐ Information from victims/survivors
26. Provide structure for supervisors to participate in ongoing interagency monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.		
27. Meet regularly with 911, prosecution, and probation to discuss and resolve problematic cases and responses.		
28. When an incident involves department employees: • **Investigate, make arrest decision, process evidence, and conduct follow-up investigation to ensure safety and accountability.** • **Send a supervisor of higher rank than the suspect to the scene.**		

LAW ENFORCEMENT **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of patrol and investigation reports ☐ Interviews with patrol officers and investigators ☐ Observations (e.g., patrol ride-along) ☐ Information from victims/survivors
• **Supervisor shall recover arrestee's badge, law enforcement identification card, and weapon.**		
29. Incidents involving public figures: • **Investigate, make arrest decision, process evidence, and conduct follow-up investigation to ensure safety and accountability.** • **Send a supervisor to the scene.** • **Take precautions to protect the victim's safety and confidentiality.**		

LAW ENFORCEMENT	**How does current *POLICY* compare?**	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?**
Essential Elements	Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of patrol and investigation reports ☐ Interviews with patrol officers and investigators ☐ Observations (e.g., patrol ride-along) ☐ Information from victims/survivors
30. Other observations in comparing current policy and practice with Blueprint Essential Elements: • **Strengths** • **Other gaps**		
SEE ATTACHMENT: Domestic Violence Patrol Report Checklist		

Attachment to Law Enforcement Essential Elements: Blueprint for Safety – Domestic Violence Patrol Report Checklist

Background and officers' actions:

- ❑ Time of officers' arrival and time of incident
- ❑ Relevant 911 information, including specific details about any violence or threats in the 911 call
- ❑ Immediate statements of either party and any witnesses at the scene
- ❑ A complete description of the scene
- ❑ Note any existing protection or no-contact orders, probation, warrants, prior convictions
- ❑ Summarize actions taken by responding officers (e.g., entry, arrest, non-arrest, use of force, attempts to locate, transport, advocacy contact and referrals, victim notification, seizing firearms, rationale for self-defense or primary aggressor determination)
- ❑ Account of evidence collected (e.g., pictures, statements, weapons, other)

For each witness and party involved:

- ❑ His/her account of events and responses to follow-up questions
- ❑ Officer observation related to the person's account of events
- ❑ Identification, address, and means of locating the person for follow-up, including:
  - Home address and phone number
  - Place of employment, work address and phone number
  - Cell phone number(s)
  - Relationship to other parties

For each party involved:

- ❑ Injuries or impairment, (including pain, strangulation effects, breathing, movement impairment)
- ❑ Emotional state/demeanor

Information from the victim, including history of violence and stalking and contact information:

- ❑ Responses to the risk questions:
  9. Do you think he/she will seriously injure or kill you or your children? What makes you think so? What makes you think not?
  10. How frequently and seriously does he/she intimidate, threaten, or assault you? Is it changing? Getting worse? Getting better?
  11. Describe the time you were the most frightened or injured by him/her.
  12. Have you ever been threatened or intimated by him/her for seeking help or attempting to seek help from police, the courts or others? How?
- ❑ Threats to the victim for seeking help, particularly from law enforcement or courts, and stalking behaviors
- ❑ Name and phone numbers of someone

Attachment to Law Enforcement Essential Elements: Blueprint for Safety – Domestic Violence Patrol Report Checklist

- ❑ Presence of risk factors (see below)
- ❑ If an arrest was not made, the reason why
- ❑ When possible, issue a squad pick-up and hold on suspects not on the scene ("gone-on-arrival" or GOA) that are on probation.
- ❑ Acts of intimidation or aggression
- ❑ Presence or use of weapons
- ❑ Alcohol or drug consumption and impairment of those involved
- ❑ Inform the victim that every effort will be made to protect this information, but that it is possible that the suspect could gain access via court order who can always reach the victim

NOTE: Record victim contact information in the confidential section of the report.

Additional information related to the suspect:

- ❑ GOA: details about where the suspect might be and where he/she stays when not at the address of the incident; physical and vehicle descriptions; aliases
- ❑ Suspect's county and state of residence during the past ten years
- ❑ Whether Miranda is given and/or request for attorney and when this occurred
- ❑ Whether a custodial taped interview of the suspect was conducted

Additional information related to the case:

- ❑ Details regarding presence, involvement, and welfare of children at the scene
- ❑ Existence of language, communication, or cognition barriers
- ❑ Medical help offered or used, facility, and medical release obtained
- ❑ Presence or involvement of elderly people or people with disabilities

RISK & DANGER FACTORS

This is **not a complete list**, but for illustration.

- Stalking
- Strangulation; attempts to "choke"
- Threats to kill the victim
- Victim believes or fears threats to kill
- Threats to kill conveyed to others
- Threats of suicide
- Forced sex or pressuring for sex even when separated

Attachment to Law Enforcement Essential Elements: Blueprint for Safety – Domestic Violence Patrol Report Checklist

- ❑ Any spontaneous statements given by the suspect after the arrest

- Serious injury to the victim
- Carries, has access to, uses, or threatens with a weapon
- Violence outside of the home
- Increase in frequency, severity, or type of violence
- Frequent impairment by alcohol or drugs
- Victim attempting a permanent break
- Estrangements and separations
- Failure of prior interventions
- Prior arrests, law enforcement calls, and/or protection order(s)
- Obsessive control of victim's daily activities; obsessive jealousy

Violence with a pattern of coercion is a serious marker of high risk violence.

For more information see Blueprint for Safety Appendix 1A: Practitioners' Guide to Risk and Danger in Domestic Violence Cases

Blueprint Policy and Practice Assessment: Pretrial Release / Bail Evaluation

Summary of the pretrial release/bail evaluation assessment activities	
Work groups	
Policy review	
Case review	
Community consultation	
Interviews	
Observations	
Other activities	

PRETRIAL RELEASE / BAIL EVALUATION **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of completed release/bail forms/conditions ☐ Interviews with bail evaluators ☐ Observations in court or pretrial release facility ☐ Information from victims/survivors
1. Present a bail evaluation that includes severity and context, criminal history, risk to the victim and community as well as likelihood of reappearance.		
2. Inform the victim of limits of confidentiality; put procedures in place to protect information obtained from victim to the extent possible under law.		
3. Differentiate recommendations for bail and conditions of release based on risk, context, and severity.		
4. Contact the victim about the incident, history of violence, and wishes concerning conditions of release, including no- contact orders.		

PRETRIAL RELEASE / BAIL EVALUATION **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of completed release/bail forms/conditions ☐ Interviews with bail evaluators ☐ Observations in court or pretrial release facility ☐ Information from victims/survivors
5. Inform the victim promptly of ordered conditions of release.		
6. Supervise defendants granted conditional release, monitor for compliance with conditions of release, and respond promptly to violations of conditional release; take action based on the nature of the violation and risk and danger.		
7. Inform victim of who to contact and how to report violations or harassment by defendant.		
8. Respond promptly to violations of conditional release; take action based on the nature of the violation and risk and danger.		

PRETRIAL RELEASE / BAIL EVALUATION **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of completed release/bail forms/conditions ☐ Interviews with bail evaluators ☐ Observations in court or pretrial release facility ☐ Information from victims/survivors
9. Engage with victims and defendants in ways that protect victims from retaliation, prioritize safety, offer resources, and increase access to services and protection.		
10. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.		
11. Conduct supervisory quality and compliance review of pretrial/bail evaluation practice.		
12. Provide structure for managers to participate in ongoing interagency monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.		

PRETRIAL RELEASE / BAIL EVALUATION **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of completed release/bail forms/conditions ☐ Interviews with bail evaluators ☐ Observations in court or pretrial release facility ☐ Information from victims/survivors
13. Meet regularly with prosecution, court administration, and community-based advocates to discuss and resolve problematic practices and responses.		
14. Other observations in comparing current policy and practice with Blueprint Essential Elements: • **Strengths** • **Other gaps**		

Blueprint Policy and Practice Assessment: Sheriff's Office

Summary of the Sheriff's Office assessment activities	
Work groups	
Policy review	
Case review	
Community consultation	
Interviews	
Observations	
Other activities	

SHERIFF'S OFFICE **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of warrant and jail notification documents ☐ Interviews with warrant, jail, and courtroom staff ☐ Observations in the courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors
Warrants		
1. Use widest possible sources of information to locate defendant.		
2. Obtain and act upon information from victims related to locating the defendant.		
3. Prioritize warrants based on crime level and risk and danger.		
4. When new information is received, reactivate dormant warrants and renew attempts to locate defendant.		
5. Capture and report to law enforcement the defendant's behavior at time of service regarding threats, intimidation, risk and danger.		

SHERIFF'S OFFICE **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of warrant and jail notification documents ☐ Interviews with warrant, jail, and courtroom staff ☐ Observations in the courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors
Jail		
6. Capture and report to law enforcement information regarding threats and risk and danger during booking and defendant's stay in the jail.		
7. Provide prompt notification to victim of defendant's impending release.		
8. Prohibit visits, correspondence, and phone calls between defendant and victim if a no-contact order is issued.		
9. Block victim's phone number unless victim wants contact and a no-contact order is not in place.		
10. Make jail audio readily available to law enforcement and prosecution.		

SHERIFF'S OFFICE **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of warrant and jail notification documents ☐ Interviews with warrant, jail, and courtroom staff ☐ Observations in the courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors
Court Security		
11. Establish procedures to obtain, accept, and act on victims' reports of harassment or threats.		
12. Alert courtroom security to the existence of a protection order or no-contact order.		
13. Establish procedures to act upon violations of court orders or victim intimidation.		
14. Provide a secure area for victims in the courthouse.		
15. Report to prosecutors any intimidation or harassment of victim by defendant.		

SHERIFF'S OFFICE **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of warrant and jail notification documents ☐ Interviews with warrant, jail, and courtroom staff ☐ Observations in the courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors
CROSS-DIVISION / AGENCY-WIDE		
16. Engage with victims and defendants in ways that protect victims from retaliation, prioritize safety, offer resources, build collaboration for victim safety over time, and increase access to services and protection.		
17. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.		
18. Conduct supervisory quality and compliance review of Sheriff's Office practice.		

SHERIFF'S OFFICE **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of warrant and jail notification documents ☐ Interviews with warrant, jail, and courtroom staff ☐ Observations in the courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors
19. Provide structure for managers to participate in ongoing interagency monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.		
20. Meet regularly with law enforcement, prosecution, court administration, and community-based advocates to discuss and resolve problematic practices and responses.		
21. Other observations in comparing current policy and practice with Blueprint Essential Elements: • **Strengths** • **Other gaps**		

Blueprint Policy and Practice Assessment: Prosecution

Summary of the prosecution assessment activities	
Work groups	
Policy review	
Case review	
Community consultation	
Interviews	
Observations	
Other activities	

PROSECUTION **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review prosecutions cases of various dispositions ☐ Interviews with prosecutors ☐ Observations in the courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors
1. Approach charging in ways that minimize dependence on the victim and maximize other sources of information. • **Post-arrest witness intimidation is very common in domestic violence cases. Know the doctrine of forfeiture by wrongdoing and prepare the case accordingly.** • **Expand the focus to include illegal behavior after patrol arrives.** • **Charge all relevant crimes except where victim safety, including safety of victim-defendants, warrant otherwise.**		

PROSECUTION **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review prosecutions cases of various dispositions ☐ Interviews with prosecutors ☐ Observations in the courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors
2. Evaluate the risk and lethality factors and the context of the violence and adjust prosecutorial response accordingly.		
3. Request further investigation rather than decline a case that might be charged with additional evidence.		
4. Reevaluate the case for additional charges or amended charges as additional evidence is gathered.		
5. Be aware of potentially undercharged crimes in domestic violence cases: strangulation, stalking, sexual coercion/sexual aggression, and witness tampering.		

PROSECUTION **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review prosecutions cases of various dispositions ☐ Interviews with prosecutors ☐ Observations in the courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors
6. Relay charging decisions, including declining charges, promptly to law enforcement, victim, and victim/advocate.		
7. Engage with victims in ways that protect victims from retaliation, prioritize safety, offer resources, build collaboration for victim safety over time, and increase access to services and protection.		
8. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.		
9. Engage in and document early and continuing contact with victims.		

PROSECUTION **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review prosecutions cases of various dispositions ☐ Interviews with prosecutors ☐ Observations in the courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors
10. Adopt process to obtain and consider input from victim and/or victim's advocate about pretrial conditions of release.		
11. Consider each no-contact order individually.		
12. Do not threaten to or place a victim in custody to ensure witness availability.		
13. Approach cases with the understanding that the victim may not appear for trial or may recant.		
14. Do not file criminal charges against a recanting victim.		

PROSECUTION **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review prosecutions cases of various dispositions ☐ Interviews with prosecutors ☐ Observations in the courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors
15. Make recommendations for bail and pretrial conditions of release that reflect context and severity of the offense, the risk and danger, and safety needs of the victim and public.		
16. Unless provided by another agency, keep victim informed of bail and pretrial release conditions and procedures.		
17. Take prompt action upon notice of violation of conditional release to ensure sure and swift consequences.		
18. Obtain and take into account input from victim and advocate about plea and sentencing recommendations.		

PROSECUTION **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review prosecutions cases of various dispositions ☐ Interviews with prosecutors ☐ Observations in the courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors
19. Ensure access to victim's rights protections under state statutes, including the right to restitution, compensation and offering victim impact statements.		
20. Adjust the response when considering plea agreements and sentencing with victim/defendants.		
21. Request a probationary no-contact order at the victim's request, overriding this request only in rare cases where the suspect poses significant danger to the victim or the community.		

PROSECUTION **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review prosecutions cases of various dispositions ☐ Interviews with prosecutors ☐ Observations in the courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors
22. Provide information on plea and sentencing to appropriate persons and agencies including the victim.		
23. Provide probation PSI writer with already gathered information.		
24. Take prompt action to address violations of probation conditions to ensure sure and swift consequences.		
25. Conduct regular supervisory quality and compliance review of prosecution practice.		

PROSECUTION **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review prosecutions cases of various dispositions ☐ Interviews with prosecutors ☐ Observations in the courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors
26. Provide structure for managers and supervisors to participate in ongoing interagency monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.		
27. Meet regularly with 911, law enforcement, court administration, and community-based advocates to discuss and resolve problematic practices.		
28. Other observations in comparing current policy and practice with Blueprint Essential Elements: • **Strengths** • **Other gaps**		

Blueprint Policy and Practice Assessment: Victim/Witness

Summary of the victim/witness assessment activities	
Work groups	
Policy review	
Case review	
Community consultation	
Interviews	
Observations	
Other activities	

VICTIM/WITNESS **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of case files ☐ Interviews with V/W staff ☐ Observations in the V/W office and courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors
1. Inform victim that communication is not confidential.		
2. Make contact as soon as possible and maintain contact throughout the criminal court process.		
3. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.		
4. Connect victims with community-based advocates who can provide assurance of confidentiality.		
5. Seek input from the victim at all stages of the process and communicate information to prosecutor.		

VICTIM/WITNESS **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of case files ☐ Interviews with V/W staff ☐ Observations in the V/W office and courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors
6. Facilitate victim's access to the prosecutor and legal system to ensure that the victim has a voice in process and that her/his expressed concerns are communicated and considered.		
7. Explore victim's concerns about safety and problem-solve to address question and concerns, including the implications of a no-contact order.		
8. Provide required victim notifications related to the criminal case process pursuant to state law and assist victims in exercising their rights.		
9. Ensure access to victim's rights protections under state statutes, including the right to restitution, compensation and offering victim impact statements.		

VICTIM/WITNESS **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of case files ☐ Interviews with V/W staff ☐ Observations in the V/W office and courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors
10. Offer support, information and resources throughout the process.		
11. Arrange assistance as needed to facilitate victim's participation in court proceedings.		
12. Facilitate victim's connection to probation throughout presentence investigation, sentencing, and supervision.		
13. Provide for post-conviction assistance, information, and support.		
14. Engage with victims in ways that protect victims from retaliation, prioritize safety, offer resources, build collaboration for victim safety over time, and increase access to services and protection.		

VICTIM/WITNESS **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of case files ☐ Interviews with V/W staff ☐ Observations in the V/W office and courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors
15. Conduct regular supervisory quality and compliance review of Victim/Witness practice.		
16. Provide structure for managers to participate in ongoing interagency monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.		
17. Meet regularly with law enforcement, prosecution, and community-based advocates to discuss and resolve problematic cases and responses.		
18. Other observations in comparing current policy and practice with Blueprint Essential Elements: • **Strengths** • **Other gaps**		

Blueprint Policy and Practice Assessment: Probation

Summary of the probation assessment activities	
Work groups	
Policy review	
Case review	
Community consultation	
Interviews	
Observations	
Other activities	

PROBATION **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of PSIs and supervision cases ☐ Interviews with probation staff ☐ Observations in the probation office/courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors
1. Establish procedures to obtain victim input regarding presentence investigation (PSI) and conditions of probation, including no-contact orders and response to violations.		
2. Conduct PSIs that search all available records and capture complete information about the current offense and defendant's past use of violence.		
3. Incorporate history, context, severity, risk and danger in the PSI report, with particular attention to those cases involving apparent victim-defendants (i.e., where the defendant appears to have been abused in the past by the identified victim in the case).		

PROBATION **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of PSIs and supervision cases ☐ Interviews with probation staff ☐ Observations in the probation office/courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors
4. Make PSI recommendations based on context, severity, risk and danger.		
5. Attempt to meet with or contact the victim prior to first meeting with the defendant.		
6. Meet promptly with offender to review all probation conditions and obtain signed releases.		
7. Provide supervision that is appropriate to risk and danger and consistent in holding offender accountable. • **Ensure that supervision of victim-defendants does not make the defendant more vulnerable to further violence.**		

PROBATION **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of PSIs and supervision cases ☐ Interviews with probation staff ☐ Observations in the probation office/courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors
• **Identify high risk offenders and utilize enhanced supervision.**		
8. Provide immediate response to probation violations, differentiated based on risk posed to the victim and the community.		
9. Establish procedures to hear probation violations based on new criminal activity before the new charge is resolved, if the activity is associated with increased risk to victim.		
10. Provide timely and thorough notification to victims of the terms and conditions of probation.		

PROBATION **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of PSIs and supervision cases ☐ Interviews with probation staff ☐ Observations in the probation office/courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors
11. Seek information from victims about their concerns during supervision, including how to report violations in a manner that does not increase risk.		
12. Ensure programming, including appropriate domestic violence treatment, that fits risk and danger.		
13. Coordinate and share information with treatment programs; monitor compliance with probation conditions.		
14. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.		

PROBATION **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of PSIs and supervision cases ☐ Interviews with probation staff ☐ Observations in the probation office/courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors
15. Engage with victims and defendants in ways that protect victims from retaliation, prioritize safety, offer resources, build collaboration for victim safety over time, and increase access to services and protection.		
16. Conduct regular supervisory quality and compliance review of practice.		
17. Provide structure for managers to participate in ongoing interagency monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.		

PROBATION **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of PSIs and supervision cases ☐ Interviews with probation staff ☐ Observations in the probation office/courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors
18. Meet regularly with law enforcement, prosecution, and community-based advocates to discuss and resolve problematic cases and responses.		
19. Other observations in comparing current policy and practice with Blueprint Essential Elements: • **Strengths** • **Other gaps**		

Blueprint Policy and Practice Assessment: The Bench and Court Administration

Summary of the bench and court administration assessment activities	
Work groups	
Policy review	
Case review	
Community consultation	
Interviews	
Observations	
Other activities	

THE BENCH AND COURT ADMINISTRATION **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of conditions of release, probation, orders ☐ Interviews with judges and court staff ☐ Observations in the courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors.
1. Allow prosecutors/probation to present relevant information regarding the violence, risk, context, and severity at all stages of criminal process.		
2. Determine pretrial conditions of release and bail based on risk factors present, victim safety, public safety and likelihood of reappearance.		
3. Determine the issuance of no-contact orders on an individual basis.		
4. If victim objects to issuance of a no-contact order, assess both the context and risk to victim if the no-contact order is not issued and the difficulty for victim if it is ordered.		

THE BENCH AND COURT ADMINISTRATION **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of conditions of release, probation, orders ☐ Interviews with judges and court staff ☐ Observations in the courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors.
5. Set conditions of release and bail when suspect cannot be arrested on scene ("gone-on- arrival") on same basis as in-custody cases.		
6. State pretrial and probationary conditions in clear/precise language.		
7. Read key conditions of probation aloud during sentencing.		
8. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.		
9. Establish a process to allow victims to request modification or dismissal of no-contact orders.		

THE BENCH AND COURT ADMINISTRATION **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of conditions of release, probation, orders ☐ Interviews with judges and court staff ☐ Observations in the courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors.
10. Provide a prompt response to violations of conditions of pretrial release.		
11. Distribute court orders, including conditions of pretrial release, no-contact orders (and any modifications or cancellations), and probation conditions to involved parties and agencies, including to victim unless provided by another agency.		
12. Order a presentence Investigation (PSI) in all cases where the original charge is a domestic violence-related offense, regardless of conviction charge.		

THE BENCH AND COURT ADMINISTRATION **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of conditions of release, probation, orders ☐ Interviews with judges and court staff ☐ Observations in the courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors.
13. Issue a disposition that reflects risk, context and severity.		
14. Except in rare cases involving particularly dangerous defendants who place victims or the community at high risk of serious or lethal harm, do not issue warrants for victims who do not appear in court pursuant to a subpoena.		
15. Obtain victim input on pleas and sentencing.		
16. Except in very rare cases after an assessment of risk and danger, do not order a probationary no-contact order over the victim's objection.		

THE BENCH AND COURT ADMINISTRATION **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of conditions of release, probation, orders ☐ Interviews with judges and court staff ☐ Observations in the courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors.
17. Hear probation violations promptly.		
18. Establish procedures to order surrender of firearms based on state and federal law.		
19. Engage with victims and defendants in ways that protect victims from retaliation, prioritize safety, offer resources, build collaboration for victim safety over time, and increase access to services and protection.		
20. Establish a courtroom atmosphere that enhances criminal justice system intervention to support victim safety and offender accountability.		

THE BENCH AND COURT ADMINISTRATION **Essential Elements**	**How does current *POLICY* compare?** Where is this element found in the agency's domestic violence policy? If missing, explain where located elsewhere in agency policy or any barriers to including it.	**How does current *PRACTICE* compare?** What actually happens? Based on: ☐ Review of conditions of release, probation, orders ☐ Interviews with judges and court staff ☐ Observations in the courtroom ☐ Information from victims/survivors.
21. Conduct regular supervisory quality and compliance review of court practices.		
22. Provide a structure for court administration to participate in ongoing interagency monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.		
23. Other observations in comparing current policy and practice with Blueprint Essential Elements: • **Strengths** • **Other gaps**		

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