

Retooling Your Community Coordinated Response: How Institutional Analysis Can Transform Your Approach to System Reform

Maren Woods, Praxis International

with Rhonda Matrinson, Praxis Technical Assistance Partner, Kristine King, San Mateo Assessment Coordinator, Dept. Laura Sharp, San Mateo Police Department and Assessment Team Member

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hello, everybody, and welcome to this webinar, the first of 2015, on institutional analysis, community assessments and safety and accountability audits provided by PRAXIS.

My name is Marion woods, I work with PRAXIS international on the institutional analysis and I'm happy that you joined us this afternoon. Our topic today is retooling your CCR, how institutional analysis can transform your -- efforts. And I'm going to go over a little bit more about the session and introduce speakers in a little bit, but I wanted to pass this over to Liz, my coworker here. Liz.

thanks, Marion. Hello, everyone. Just a couple of things to touch base with you about today. So since this is a webinar, the phone lines will be muted for the session today, but for anyone who is participated by telephone only, we want to be inclusive of your comments and your questions, so if you have an opportunity to send an e-mail to Marion at PRAXIS international.org. That would be the best way for us to be able to incorporate your thinking into our presentation today. For the rest of you, logged into the webinar system, we would encourage you to look at the lower left hand portion of your screen, you will see a chat box and is your opportunity to interact with everyone else in the session today. So if you have a question or a comment, feel free to add that to the chat box at any time. And let's just pause for a quick minute if we would, and anyone who would like to say a quick hello, to just chat it into that box right there. Let us know where you're calling from, if you have any colleagues who are joining now, it's just good to make those connections between us. if you happen to have an issue that you would like to chat privately with one of PREBT presenters today, you will notice there's a tab that says private. When you click on that tab, there is a list of presenters, for today's session, and you can double click on one of those presenters and that will open just a direct feed with that person. So that is available for your use today as well. Just two other brief things, and that is to say, if you get disconnected either by telephone or by webinar, simply rejoin through the original process, and we always like you to know that this session is being recorded and will be available, the institutional analysis PA pages of the PRAXIS websitement so Marion, with that, I'm going turn this session back to you and you can further introduce our presenter too.

thanks, Liz.

so a good deal of many grantees on the office of vile lens against women, to change institution L practices that give rise to poor outcomes for survivors of violence against women. A community assessment or a institutional analysis -- how work is organized in ways that impede attention to victim's safety and well being and accountability. In this process, community assessment practitioners and advocates work side by side to look at policies, case files, work practices, and the steps in case processing, improve outcomes for survivors. This webinar is focussing on the work of one community to assess how the documentation of initial police response to domestic violence calls aids subsequent intervenors in domestic violence cases. We'll discuss how they

transitioned from the assessment process findings, to actually elementing the changes that were -- as a result of their assessment process. I wanted to pause here for a minute, though, and for folks who aren't familiar with the practice safety and accountability audit or community assessment, or institutional analysis, a lot of times those phrases are used interchangeably and generally, referred to the same process and hopefully, you had a chance to look at introductory video that was included in the reminder, yesterday. As well as the report from this particular communities safe SDPI accountability assessment that details the work -- assessment that details the work that they went through in their community. We're not going to go over the details about what the audit is or what an assessment looks like, but we're going to hear from a team of folks today in about a year, maybe less than a year, implemented a process, and transitioned from the findings of that process implementation.

We have the assessment coordinator for communities overcoming relationship abuse in San Mateo, California. Christine King.

Hi, how are you guys doing.

We have a member of the San Mateo team, Laura Sharp from the San Mateo police department. Hello Detective Sharp, COMBLAD you're with us -- glad you're with us.

Hello.

A consultant who has worked on over 30 or 40 safety and accountability audits.

That's right.

In the last 10 or 15 years, she's one of the key experts on this the process, and has provided a lot of guidance in communities for implementing it and she worked very intensively with the San Mateo assessment project from the beginning to the end of their project and have continued to support them in implementing the recommendations. So I'm going to pass this over now to Rhonda to get us started and give us an introduction to the path that led San Mateo county to the assessment process. Go ahead, Rhonda.

Thank you Marion, and hello, everyone. Good to hear and see so many of you online, interested to learn what San Mateo built from this audit process. And I really enjoyed working with them and I thought they came up with a great project, and I'm glad we're able to catch a couple of them online ask on the phone to talk to us today. One of the things that I like about the title of this part of their report was, is also now posted on the website that's final report of the audit process in San Mateo is this first chapter calling the work, the beginning of our past of the system. As Marion said, we're not going to talk about the whole wide world of safety and assessment audit today. But it is important for those on the line to know that one of the things that made this the good quality project that it was is the willingness and the taking of time of that particular community in gathering information and exploring

this process first. And so if you could just kind of envision this path here that I chose, it made me think of the work that the group did. People did not simply go Willie nilly into this SXROJT quickly grab a bunch of people and said go. There was a great deal of exploration in this process, as well as others that might better investigate how a community is doing as it reSPOBDs to -- responds against violence against women. To the response to it. So there was a really thorough exploration process, information gathering, including not only going to trainings, but also bringing a training on a good quality coordinated community reSPOPS to violence, to the community itself. A task force FORPed around thisish -- formed around this issue. So you have leaders and experts from the various agencies really involved in, again, not simply bringing a process to the community, but exploring and discussing whether this was the best fit for the community. And very quickly, after that, people as they got together and researched the best ininvestigative process for their system, realized that it was not helpful to simply do a broad based, I would say a scatter approach, doing something like how are we responding to domestic violence? how are we doing keeping victims safe? it was recognized very quickly that that was very broad and not helpful through this system. So, again, going beyond exploration and forming, also realizing we have to create a question, a focus, what is it actually that we're going to look at? and we're going to turn to that in a moment. But I wanted to wrap up here by saying that theres was also a careful thought given to forming a team. Again, not just any person will do. But there was buy in from all of the relevant agencies as well as a willingness to bring the best people to the discussion table and the work table of doing activities to investigate the response to domestic violence. And so before we leave this slide and really get into what is the question that San Mateo asked. One of the other things that they did in exploring and preparing for this process was utilizing the help of PRAS, to help create a job description for someone that was going to coordinate it. I've never had that experience before, being asked input as to what the best quality would be of someone that we were going to ask to coordinate this during a project and what is it that we were going to ask that person to do and so after helping build a job description, very fortunate to encounter Kristine, who became the coordinator, and so I thought this would be with a good point to stop and ask her, someone hire at the end of this exploratory process, how helpful it was as a new coordinator to have this level of exploration and information gathering already done, to have training for team members and other people involved, already done. And to have a team of peel that -- team of people that were -- already FORPed? .

it was very helpful, Rhonda, I know, for, gosh, nearly a year before I was hired, this project was in the works. Through your executive director. And through our domestic violence task force in San Mateo county. So having that focus of the question that we wanted to focus on throughout the project, was really helpful. Our executive director already had a list of agencies and some potential people that she said would probably be interested in participating. So when I reached out to these agencies or these individuals, they pointed me in the right direction or they thought of other agencies and other individuals that might be interested. So it was very helpful to have that information for me to hit the ground running. And, yeah I think that's it. .

well, that, again, it's sometimes both of you on the phone, I think I've heard such things before that when there's a desire to engage in a project like this, that requires a bringing together of a multidisciplinary group of people, doing a variety of activities, trying to evaluate how our system is doing or how our community is doing, we often forget there is a need for someone to coordinate all of that. Meetings don't happen by themselves, activities don't get done unless they're scheduled or unless someone helps to do them. I THOIT it was so - - thought it was so full of good planning and boding well for success, as they say, that there was that instinct meanly that we needed someone to coordinate this and I had neated to be the right person. So kudos to San Mateo for starting out well. Another thing that I thought was important to bring out at the beginning is many of you practice fans and I recognize many of those names in the box on the left, so I know you'll know what I'm talking about. Is a story we often tell, a story we often show as training, called the story of Rachael. And it really depicts in a way that no lecture can, no dry piece of paper can. The impact of all of the variety of institutional interventions, all of the -- what that has opinion the person. It's like a small creature running through a maze at times, so I remember being around PRAXIS work at the time that this one page map in front of you was created. And that's what we AUCH referred to it as as the maze that women had to go to for all of the services. The story of -- Rachael, you have pressure s to contact police. Pressures to stay in contact with the follow up investigators. Pressures to go get a restraining order, whatever the proper term is in your jurisdiction. Get a divorce. Cooperate with the prosecutor. Stay in contact with the probation officer. And then not to mention, all the other things in noncriminal justice world that are going on at the same time, housing, like paying bills and so on. And so women have said it's like I've now been hired to fulfill a full time job for which I don't get paid, for fulfilling all of these appointments, meeting all of these criteria, and so on. And so one of the things that I was going to ask Laura, our detective on the phone today, is Laura has, she is a detective, but of a unique kind of detective and special victims unit of the San Mateo police department. And I remember asking Laura if she would describe her job to me. And how some of the differences, some of the things that she did, some of a kinds of communication and rapport building and building that she had with the victims that isn't necessarily typical of other investigators in law enforcement officers. So Laura, Is was wondering if you could look at this map O institutional intervention in Rachael's life and think about the things you told me you do in your job and perhaps share that with the audience, describe your job a bit, and maybe apply it to your knowledge of this sort of map of victim's lives.

sure. Just to kind of start. Basically, most calls related to domestic violence come in through 911. And are handled by our patrol divisions R or pretty much any patrol division. At that time, it's determined if there's an arrest made. Or there's not an arrest made. Etcetera. And then the initial investigation of the case. What's unique about my position as a special unit's unit, detective, I'm to follow up on many of the patrol cases or especially the more a GREEJ YOUS cases -- a GREEJ YOUS cases -- cases involving strangulation, child abuse, also in there, child neglect or child endangerment. And to follow up on those cases. Those are the

cases where it's most likely the victims will tend to start kind of back pedalling a bit and not want to continue into the process. Through the prosecution process. Or through any of the other processes. With my job, I'll reach out and make connection with the victim, usually the day after or within two days after. And try and explain the process to them. If I feel it's, for instance, a strangulation case, I try and determine if we can come out and make sure they get a medical exam, if that Z has not been done and try and get a more in-depth interview with herself, or himself, or if there were children present, to try and follow up with the children. It's the biggest part of what I do is kind of a hand holding. Between the time the initial report was taken and until the time district attorney office is starting to prosecute the case. Because there's a lot of questions that go on at the beginning part of the process. .

And thank you for that. And so the point I wanted to make here was that another colleague that often trains with me and sometimes for PRAAXIS has said that one of the biggest indicators of a system that has gaps, according to the community response, that isn't working or has some issues, is that you can see the places that victims fall through. And offenders crawl through to evade responsibility and continue to create danger and safety problems for victims in the community. And so if you think of a map like this, you can see where victims get discouraged and feel shut off from access from the system because it's too overwhelming and how helpful it was to have different kinds of law enforcement representation on the team, certainly have patrol officers and other kinds of detectives, but it was very helpful to have a special victim's detective like Laura who tries to close those gaps, by making the sorts of can tacts that she described. Very good insight provided throughout the course of our activities, and debriefing and forming of recommendations. So I thought I would get to it. Here it is. The question formed in San Mateo was how does the documentation of the initial police response, Laura said, the patrol response, to a domestic violence call help sub is subsequent intervenor, in other words, all of the other people that now have to perform some act, whether it's a prosecutor, a probation officer that now is going to be looking at revoking someone, an advocate, a parole officer, the dispatcher perhaps, a battered program provider, there are many -- a child advocate -- there are many people that might use information contained in this report and documentation of patrol officers do. So that is what San Mateo hit on was you know, in order to avoid the breadth of activity that sometimes happens from being too broad in your focus is this is what you would like to find out. Another thing at the beginning of this process that set a good foundation and, again, bodes well for success, is being invited to meet individually with the police chief that permitted their staff involvement in this project. So in this particular project, you have three police departments and San Mateo county, there are many police departments in San Mateo county but we had 3 that participated in the audit. San Mateo, where Laura works and daily city and redwood city. And in meeting the police chiefs and describing what this process was like, what they could expect as far as the time commitment from their staff and what they would be doing, one of the chiefs said, you know, as you're forming the focus that we're going to be conducting our activities around as you're sharpening the questions that you've been mentioning, I'd really like to know and I'd really like to see something that is helpful, she said, in other

words, the experience of policing today is being evaluated a lot. Being looked at a lot. Being CHAS TIEZed a lot. Being -- a lot of oversight and a lot of critique of policing and in a lot of different ways. She said we're used to that, and simply creating a report card, domestic violence police report, is not helpful. You know, maybe 20 years ago when people weren't trained well on documentation, may have been true, but not now. And so the inputs was it would really be more helpful to have not just a what are police doing wrong and where are some problems, but what good would it do if we were to do the thing that you would like us to do? so for example, if we talk about some of the gaps that we found, you would hear things like the fact that -- a child's presence was often documented very thoroughly, a child that was present at the scene of a domestic violence, and several other gaps, too. But instead of just stopping there, the team went on to ask and what good would it do, what help does it give, if you did have that information, and so that's what I think, again, is something really great, really unique, and particularly helpful and good quality about this project T is it didn't SICHly articulate -- simply articulate problems, but went on to say if we had this documentation, this is what it would have accomplished. So if you get a chance to read the report, you can expect to find is not only what was look lacking -- lack, but what it would have accomplished, were it there. So we talked about the multidisciplinary nature of the team. And here again, I would like to ask Kristine and Laura a quick question about the nature of the work and the quality of the work that was presented by having this level of multidisciplinary team. We had people that you don't often see on teams, for example, a representative of a child advocacy center and a marriage and family therapist.

It was really interesting, especially for me. Before I started working at KORA, I wasn't with Sam with San Mateo county and people that worked within these kind of possessions, and so for me to hear from people, for example, from the district attorney's office, was very interesting and that you know, these people offered just a wealth of information and perspectives that I had never thought about before. Same with probation officers, they had a lot of great information to contribute as well. Having people more from the child advocacy side, from the Keller center, to have them. As well as people from a police called star Vista, who they assist victims of domestic violence as well. So it was great to have people from law enforcement agencies, as well as places that weren't so focused on law enforcement. Because you could get opinions, and experience from all ends of the spectrum. So.

And as for me, from a law enforcement perspective, you don't really realize how far fetching an initial police report is or how far fetching it's go to go. Who's trying to glean information from that to do their jobs. We understand the prosecution and the probation end, and the domestic violence advocacy of it, but we don't really see where our report goes to with regards to marriage and family therapy and in home family services or some of the other community based resources that are out there for the victims and the family. So for me, it was a nice eye opener to kind of revamp on how I would investigate a case. So that with these other agencies in mind, so that they can do the best to their ability.

And I would wholeheartedly agree with that, because if you're going to have a question about who does this documentation, don't just tell us we should have had this on our report, and should have that, but who it would have helped is in addition to being able to say that, because we ask those kinds of questions and get that information out. We also have those kind of variety of people on the team, people that could actually tell us that. So we were actually able to hear from people, for example, from the child advocacy center, while had we had this information about the reaction of a child to violence as it was perceived on scene by the patrol officer, that would have added to the risk assessment that we do for families who come into our center. And we heard many things like that. That we would not have heard had we not had this great variety of people on our team.

Well, let's move forward into what people actually did and what they found. And I've already mentioned that the team received training, the institutional responses and how that impacts victims. That was certainly carried through with their work and how they looked at their work and analyzed the work that they did. One of the first things that the team did was map a patrol response to domestic violence. And this is very small and difficult to read. We're aware of that. But we thought it was a really good comparison for you -- comparison for you to see the story of Rachael and all the experiences she has from all of the different interventions that are being asked of her and imposed upon her. If you look at what people, because this is only part one, if you look at the extensive nature of the map of the patrol response in San Mateo county. And so one of the things that was helpful here is, as Kristine and Laura have alluded to, not everyone on the team is a police officer. And so their input on the police report is important, and so then it became important for us, well, let's map not only the response of police, but what are the potential things that could happen depending on how something is documented. You know, where does -- where does this case go, where does this person go after the patrol officer touches that case? he or she first goes to the scene. And so if you can think of this being a map that you have in front of you as you do your activities, you're going to see things that you missed. Like, oh, I didn't know that they did a report at that stage, that's something we could look at. Oh, I didn't realize there was a person or position at this junction or juncture in this system. I could observe that person, do a ride along with that person. I didn't know that that person existed basically in our system. And so these are the kinds of things that are learned by mapping out the response if you're going to examine, not as some sort of, a kindergartener XER but depict the things. I remember this being so difficult to put together because there were so many more steps than what you and I had anticipated. I was wondering if you could comment on putting this map together was not very easy or low on time resources, was it.

no, it was. Because this was not just from the point of view of those who work at a law enforcement agency. This was the whole team participating in this mapping process. So I started with just the, O someone called 911 and a DV incident is happening. What could happen next we hear from the dispatcher, the detective, a police officer, someone from CP -- someone was a counselor chimed in. This is not just from the point of view of

someone who works at a law enforcement agency. This was a whole team effort. So it was a little DICH difficult to put together -- little difficult to put together afterwards because my initial notes didn't look as neat and organized as this. So it took a while to get it to look nice and pretty the way it does now. But it's just so many different perspectives and how they flow together was a little difficult, but after going over it a few times, it all came together pretty well, so.

Yes, it did. It looks great. So as we leave the maps, a quick comment here is an addition to mapping, the team also put together a site book, SITE, of things like policies, forms and things of that nature that everyone uses so that we would be aware of those things. Again R it wouldn't a very credible team effort if one suggested at the end of it all, for example, hey, you folks should be using a checklist on this or a form on that, only to find out that there is such a form or a checklist. And so that sort of -- in addition to mapping, that sort of collection of forms, papers and policies was also collected. Similarly, we, during our training, we tried to provide, what I would call not just training verbally, information verbally, but things that would be easy reminders of what we had talked about such as they graphics. So as a reminder to the team, that safety issues for battered women are more than just -- don't mean to minimize those when I say that. But safety can also be compromised by the system itself. And its gaps and failures as I mentioned earlier. Also by a woman's unique life circumstances. So for example, if you have a domestic violence victim who also has a disability of some sort. Or a language proficiency issue. Or in a community that I just came from a few weeks ago, a significant place where victims had MRIT RA SI problems. These are all kinds of things that access your to justice, your access to getting help and thus compound any dangers they might be facing. And begins that's certainly knowledge that the team plugged into their collective head and kept at the forefront of their brains as they did activities and gathered information. Kristine, here's where I'd like to ask you another question about the kinds of data collection we did, very briefly, for those of you who haven't had any training on doing an assessment or a safety audit, the idea is not to rely on one source of information, but to gather different kinds of information. So we watch people do their work. We might do a ride along, for example. We talk to people about their work. So we would interview someone like detective sharp about their response or follow up to the domestic violence cases. And we look at what -- how people document their work. So the word text analysis that you see there, is kind of a research sounding term for things reviewing police reporting together, prosecution files together and so on. Kristine, could you give us a few examples of some of the interviews that we did, some of the observations that were done and some of the text that was looked at?

yeah. We had quite a lot of observations, interviews, focus groups, and activities. Some of our observations included an observation for the San Mateo domestic violence council meeting, domestic violence pretrials reviews and hearings, three or four of those. Domestic violence progress reports in court. Laura actually attended one or two of those as well. Police department briefings at the different law enforcement agencies. Ride alongs with the different law enforcement agencies. Oh, yeah, we had a -- some people sit and observe the dispatch center that law enforcement

agencies as well as one-on-one interviews with those dispatchers, we also had a dispatcher focus group, we had a focus group with the Keller center forensic staff. Probation officers, batter intervention, practitioners, also a series of victim's focus groups in the summer of 2013, before this project started, one of the interviews we had was deputy district attorneys, firearms compliance investigators, crisis counselors, probation officers, a San Mateo county sheriff's deputy. A detective from the special victims unit. A victim advocate. A lieutenant as well. A management analyst from human service agency that worked with child protective services, a family law judge. The dispatch services supervisor. Our text analysis included domestic violence felony and misdemeanor reports, reports that had arrests and no arrests, people that were gone on arrival. TPO reports, and that's -- that was the bulk of it. I think. There was quite a lot.

Yes, have a fantastic memory. Thank you for that. That was great. And so you can see that there was quite a thorough coverage of different sources of positions and work being done. And one more thing before we get into what actually was found and how we're proceeding on that is just reminder, again, to those of you that haven't yet had training or much involvement with assessment or audit process is that we don't look at individual workers and make a judgment of some sort as to their efficiency or if this person is doing things well or good or bad. Or indifferent. But we assume, rather, that each individual would like to do good work. And that any safety issues are more a matter of what that worker does or doesn't have available to him or her to do that level of work. What that worker -- how that worker is organized or not organized by his or her agency to do that work. And so these are the 8 things that we focus on when people are asking questions, doing observations, reading reports. We're not rolling our eyes and giving sharp exhale LAGSs of breath in disgust of that person, what rules or regulations are setting parameters about this type of work? why is this person writing this the way that he or she is or why is this being omitted? what linkages is there with other experts in the system, other system agencies, other resources, you know, if there is a linkage, but it's only on from 9:00-5:00, Monday through Friday and all your domestic violence cases are happening nights and weekends. That's not helpful for police officers. resources are things not just in time or -- in money and staff, which is what people often assume. But also things like time. The time to do a job. The technology to do a job. The space in which to do your work. Those kinds of things are also resources. And education and training, of course, how your work is conceptualized is your view of violence, that's caused by substance abuse, that's how you're going to be organizing your system and organizing the work of your staff. It won't be around things like victim safety, whether or not there should be contact, whether or not we should incorporate batterers programming, that's what we mean by being aware of how each agency had -- is conceptualizing their work or what work theories they have around it. And mission, of course, if you're a child protective service agency, your mission may be around child safety. Not necessarily an adult victim's safety. So things are often connected to each other, so I don't mean to say that one or the other is ignored. It means that agencies are operating under different mission statements, but are often legislated by your state legislature. So that also is providing a guidance for perhaps a lack of guidance

sometimes in how workers do their work. And the last but not least, accountability, which today means not just a -- accountability, but also systemic accountability. And again, those are the things that -- in the mind of the San Mateo team as they're doing their observations, interviews and text analysis. And how they're debriefing at the end of it all. Using analysis that incorporates those things that I just said. So let's get to the good stuff, right? we've taken too long with the background already. So there were four gaps discovered. When you think of the audit questions, how is police documentation helpful to the next persons in the system that has to act on it, the next service providers that have to act on it. We found four gaps. We feel we have time to talk about two of them today. But, again, you can look at the report, it's not posted on PRAXIS if you'd like to read more about the other gaps found. The first one one that I referred to already, little was documented about the pose sure and impact of domestic violence experienced by children at the scene. And so, as requested by the police chiefs who permitted their staff to be involved in this project, we started out the first page of each chapter about gaps with not just a statement, but who it would have helped. So a guy gram that could then -- diagram that could be used, someone like Laura would like to use that training. A simplified verse about what the report says. If it were DOSHGmented, it -- documented, it would have helped prosecutors file charges. We had prosecutors tell us even a small bit of information helps substantiate or corroborate the victim's versions of events and makes it easier and more likely to go forward. We had judges indicate -- judges -- that that you can promisest promise to avoid using a child as a witness, but if there were service something documented abwhat the child says or what the child experienced, it may alleviate the need, at least in a mediator's mind or civil court judge's mind to ask for a child to be made available as a witness. If there's at least some little bit of documentation that indicates that the impact that this matter was having on the child, those other folks that need to act later on in civil proceedings may not feel the need to call the child as a witness. Probation in San Mateo county views most domestic violence offenses that offenders are on probation for, as needing intensive supervision, intensive soup missions that home -- supervisions, that home visions will be done on a regular basis, once and twice a month. Probation officers said, gee, if we had the information, we would be looking for that when we go to the home of the person we're now supervising, because the kids we -- if there's nothing in there about kid, we don't know what to look for. Or look for the fact to see if there's any negative impact on the family. And so I could go on, but you get the idea. That there many places in the criminal justice system that actually were able to evidence to the San Mateo team as they did interviews, observations, and reviewed reports that, yes, we have this, we can accomplish -- if we had this, we could have done this. And that was documented over and over again. So just to give you a sense of this wasn't just one or two reports we were talking about, of the 83 police reports that were collected from the three participating agencies, 28 indicated that minor children were present. And so team members, including Kristine and Laura, when reviewing the reports, noted there wasn't any identifying information about the kids, names, ages and so on, any detail about their involvement or any detail about the physical, emotional trauma that the kids may have suffered or experienced. And so Laura, I remember that you gave an example of why that would be

important, you told -- you gave an example of a child that was stuttering and I was wondering if you recall that example and if you could share that with us?

absolutely. Those are one of those calls where you don't forget. I was in patrol dispatched to an in progress domestic violence. It was a one -- studio apartment, and there were two kids. After talking with both sides, one of my partners was also talking to one of the children. In order to gain report, the child -- the child seemed fine and was acting normal. The officer was talking to her fun things like playing football or ice cream or school, and the child was completely fine. So we weren't exactly sure about what -- whether or not they were impacted or even witnessed the incident. But luckily, we questioned further, and we asked the child, you know, did you see what happened between mommy and daddy today, and the child just began stuttering so bad that we could not understand a word the child was saying. And it's that kind of information that I believe really needs to be noted in a report. For a variety of reasons. I mean, you're not going to get a statement from the child, but just noting that the child became so upset and traumatized in trying to relive that moment in order to answer the question, that needs to be documented. And for me, that would be something that I'd probably would want to review a child later about. Calm down a little bit more.

And so, an important point is being made here is when you're -- reading the reports and seeing the lack of documentation over and over, Laura told that story and then that prompted another detective to say, you know, we need these indicators, even if they're just little, you know, one sentence descriptors, but something that indicates the emotional, physical or mental state. Even something as simple as the child was trembling. Or the child was hiding behind her mother. Or that the child was overheard to say I'm tired of the hitting. Those little things, even though they don't seem like much at the time, can be huge later on. And so Kristine, I wanted to ask you a question about how this, the formation of this, the gap, and the first instance, because this was something that came up rather quickly and seemed to be identified by all of the team members rather quickly. As a coordinator, I was wondering if you could comment on how this was a gap, first and foremost about the others.

throughout the observations and interviews, focus groups, all the activities that we did, at the end of each of our data collection week, we had two of those weeks, we would sit down at the end of every day to have debriefing meetings and Rhonda helped me facilitate those. To talk about what people saw that day, what they heard, the discussions that they had with the different practitioners and this was something that came up, I don't want to say in every single observation, and interview, but almost every one. There was always some mention about children. Information about them in the report, information about them at the scene, or during the Court process or whatnot. So it was very clear from the beginning that that was something that, A, people were passionate about in our group, and B with, that we needed to take a closer look at, because it was evident that there was some, you know, possible changes needed in our system county wide to kind of improve that situation. So does that answer the question for you?

yes, absolutely. And I think before we leave this area, another value in having the right people on the team, and having the variety of people on the team, and also creating the focus of our work, so that it was as helpful and KRUTHive as it could -- constructive as it could be instead of problem seeking or finger pointing, it gave a lot of credibility to them, the gapping identified as they're writing the report and sharing it with the police chief. You have detective sharp, who is a special victims detective, sitting on our team, reviewing reports, and hearing the same concerns from the child advocates, from the prosecutor that -- gee, is it me, but there doesn't seem to be very much documentation about kids here. And then you have another detective following up on Laura's example with yes, we need this. And so how credible that then evolved in the report that you can indicate that you had these detectives on the team, joining this activity of looking at reports, come to the same conclusion as everyone else. And again, I can't speak to the amount of credibility that that attaches, whereas if you didn't have people, yes, you would have still observed a gap, but it may have been more difficult to impress on agency leaders at the end of it all, how credible that finding was. If people like Laura and the other detectives weren't on the team can and able to par PIS Tate in that discussion and recognition themselves. The other gap that we had like to talk about today is -- excuse me, the other aspect of this particular gap, and there were many, the chapter in the report is actually rather long, so I don't mean to imply these are the only two things there are to talk about. But also, that in thinking about the things that Laura and Kristine just said, in addition to simply being able to talk about the impact on kids, you also may in effect identify other witnesses. We know that best practice in holding O FEPDer's -- offenders guilty until domestic violence, we try not to lay the responsibility on that victims and families. Locate and think of and identify other ways to gather evidence about the crime and against the offender, that's going to be best for victims less pressuring for victims and their families. And so one of the things that I was acquainted with, made in the decision, it isn't just the documentation, it's also that in talking to kids, at least at times identify other witnesseses or other evidence. The kids might -- not only making their own statement, but might identify someone else was there, someone overheard something or that the pieces from the broken glass are lying under the couch, things of that nature. So it's another overlooked advantage of speaking to children that you might find additional evidence by doing so. Again, I'm probably going to ask you a question in a moment, but when looking at what contributes to the gap, as the chief said, it is not helpful to simply identify a problem. We'd like to know what good it would have done, but also like what is it that you're suggesting that we do? and so in order to do that, most intelligently and most helpfully, part of the team discussion was not simply uncovering the problem, but what perhaps contributed to it? looking at the audit trail, such as resources and training, it was identified over and over again, from the interviews conducted with law enforcement folks that there wasn't -- there wasn't always a great deal of confidence about interviewing children. And I think the best -- I don't mean to sound that the person was unknowledgeable or weak willed, but just that many people didn't feel confident in interviewing kids of different ages, didn't feel they had those skills of forming age appropriate questions or communications, hadn't received training and so on. And one of the other team members

gave the example of, you know, everyone if kids don't see something, they often hear something. And so it can still be impacted and Laura, what I remember is that in addition to some individuals not feeling confident about interviewing -- confident about interviewing kids or trained, that there was also a sense of discomfort or awkwardness or uncertainty what to do when you have parents that obviously don't want their children interviewed by police officers. And I think that was something the law enforcement folks in the room nodded their heads at when I was brought up and again wondering if you could comment on that that's someone in the position of following up with victims and their families.

yeah, that does kind of come into play at times. Especially if the abuser is still in the household while you're trying to conduct the initial interviews with the children. I think the biggest thing is to at least document the children are there. And that maybe they're emotional in mental status and how they're behaving at that time. Sometimes it is difficult to interview children in front of the parents and the parents want to overhear. But if we at least have some information as to whether or not they were witnesses, or if they heard anything, or if they have any history or knowledge of prior events and ways of contacting, we can try and make contact with the family later to conduct a much more -- I don't know how to say -- it's a very intense situation when patrol is out there initially. If you could do a follow up later, the children can be calmer, slower paced and more relaxed atmosphere, which may alleviate some of the parenting concerns at that time as well.

Yeah. And so we put this quote here at the bottom of this, because one of the things in thinking about trying to be constructive and helpful with this report, but you know, stay factually accurate is also provide good examples, so in looking at the police report, it's not that they're absolutely never, ever any documentation about kids, occasionally, if someone did recognize, again, even the importance of a sentence or two. And so here was a report that we had uncovered and it then actually listed this quote and put it in the report. As an example of what we were recommending. So that simply saying you should do this, we felt it was more helpful to include in the report, an example of what it was that we meant and also to show that it wasn't that difficult or overwhelming. So here the officer identified that the child did not see anything, but did hear the argument and actually heard a thud on the floor. Which corroborated with the victim, I said earlier, about being pushed roughly to the floor, on a wooden floor where she fell pretty hard. So, again, another thing to think about when you're doing this work, it's more than just uncovering problems, what is it you're going to do about them and how you're going to determine the credibility of what you're saying and also the likelihood that people are going to do something about what you say. And I think the helpful way that the team approached this in San Mateo is just great. So you can see that this is going to result in a recommendation for CHARN R training. -- for training. Can and Laura, one of the things that came up is what does it mean to train about quote interviewing kids? we heard a lot of officers lump interviewing, that activity, all together, in sort of one big blob. What was clear is you have two different kinds of interview, the kinds of that a patrol officer might have done -- officer might have done RS a brief assessment, simply talking to the kid for a few moments to see that they're okay, and

what they heard or saw and what impact that had on them. And then someone like yourself, Laura, that may be in a situation of speaking to someone later on, a longer-term interview. Just WOENDerring if you could comment on the -- wondering if you could comment on the difference between the two.

the difference between the two, for the initial on scene assess. You're dealing with a very volatile situation at the time. You may not have time or the child may not be responsive to a long-term interview. But if you can at least talk to the child, or children, and find out did they hear anything, did they see anything, document their, you know, how you see them. Are they crying, are they huddling under a table? are they silent, don't want to talk to you? grabbing on to mom? or even if, yeah, we saw something, but they're so traumatized they can't talk about it. If that stuff is documented on the on set of the investigation, then a later, more in-depth interview could be conducted. In San Mateo, we have the luxury of having the Keller center, which allows us to have an off site, not a police site, at a hospital, where we can have a forensic child interviewer assist in that interview. EP specially trained to interview children that have been through trauma.

Yes. And that is something that, again, it was so helpful to have that person on the team. But, again, as you can tell, the team and its representatives of the different law enforcement agencies, but also different sources of law enforcement patrol and investigation, was so key to forming a good recommendation like this, because without it, it appears likely that we would have simply stopped at police needs training on kids. Police need training on documents kids. Police need training on interviewing kids. When once you got a chance to really listen to both patrol and detective, not only during the team interviews, but also by discussion of team members themselves, it became clear that it could be more helpful, to recognize there were two things being talk about here, on scene assessment and then later longer term, more formal interviews. And so I feel we are getting a little crunching on time, so we'll move along to the next guest. Kristine, do you remember when we -- people were talking about a whole slew of things that had to do with victims, victim contact, victim communication, victim contact information? and one of our team members coined what I think is a new phrase, at least I've never heard it before, can you comment on that, please? as it relates to forming this gap?

in regards to the new phrase, I can't remember that phrase exactly.

The connectivity.

oh. I thought maybe it was like a funny catch phrase that we had discussed.

No. A little bit too catch CHI because we kind of missed mental connections there. But there was many things that we talked about that seems separate at first, and then as we talked more realized they fell into this umbrella of staying connected with victims. So again, when coordinating that discussion,s was just asking you to comment on how we

came up with this umbrella gap, if you will, over all of those different issues?

okay. Yeah, it was -- in a similar manner, at the conclusion of each day of our data collection, where we came together and debriefed about the activities that had gone on, that day, or in previous days, things like one thing that sticks out to me a lot that came up quite a few times was there's not an alternate phone number or address for a victim. It's hard to reach them later on. A victim talked about how they weren't prepared for the Court process that they were going through later on. They weren't given information on to what would be next in the process. For instance, if someone's partner or husband or boyfriend was arrested, you know, what happens after that? some victims expressed that they had no idea, they didn't know what was going to happen after their partner was arrested. You know, would he come home, when would he come home, what would happen? there was some stuff about establishing rapport during the initial response that came up quite often. Those first moments with the victim can be the most crucial, because that's where you can get them. Everything has to happen quickly if you want them to stay engaged in the process. So it's important to make contact with that victim advocate via phone, initial LICHLT it's important to establish a good rapport with that victim, make them feel comfortable. Try to get their side of the story and inform them of the options of what could happen next with the resources are and so forth.

Yes, that's my memory as well. And so if you look at this diagram begin, we started out each gap CHAERT with a diagram that's kind of -- who would this have helped by fostering these connection opportunities. So you see a number of examples again that team members really uncovered by trauma informed communication encourages victims to stay connected. And if you get a chance to read the audit report that I mentioned a couple of times, this is one of the best parts, I think, because many women said this this in the focus groups, San Mateo did five focus groups of many women, both Spanish speaking and nonSpanish speaking, so we're not talking about just a few people, but many, many people. And this was a theme in a few of the groups is this communication that was sometimes difficult or perhaps not very sensitive. So, again, for credibility purposes, many direct comments from victims are put in the section of the report, where Maves said, you know, I just got hit in the head, my head is spinning, I can't answer these questions. Or the person talking to me was talking too fast. I couldn't keep up. Or in addition to being at fault, I'd also been rape SXID department want to be talk about it. They were too probing and intrusive. I didn't feel comfortable. I could give many other examples, but that was a particularly fascinating part of this project is looking and actually seeing very similar and parallel themes of what people said in these groups that really report this as a gap.

yeah, that was a large number of people, too, there was 65 people in those focus groups, so.

Uh-huh. I was thinking about it was that much. Thank you, Kristine. We talked about who would be helped. Again, many things contribute to the gap, not just one thing on the slide. I would welcome you to check out the report for more information. But one of the things that is

particularly problematic in California, not just San Mateo, but other places I visited in the last few years is relatively recently within the last several years, California has passed a law prohibiting a prosecutor or a judge to request incarceration for victims that don't honor subpoenas or come to court and don't wish to speak in response to a subpoena. And so what has evolved from that, unintentionally and unfortunately, is sometimes that law gets explained to victims as though it's wrong. And so just -- it were a right. And so for example, you may have the O'Farrell's attorney talk to the victim and say you have a right not to show up. It isn't a right not to show up. It's just a statutory bar against punishing you for not showing up. But what's evolved recently and Laura actually witnessed this in one of her activities is that victims bring their own attorneys, because they don't want to be pressured to say anything. Then you really can't talk to the victims any further. And so it appears to be an unintentional result of good intentions, legislation, that's creating the obstacle in communication now as a case moves from arrest to prosecution. And Laura actually watched court where she saw some of this happen.

Yeah, during the observation portion of this process, I did watch a preliminary hearing where this happened. But I've also seen it happen with victims in my own cases that I've investigated. The victims are starting to be contacted in some fashion, we're not being told exactly how, but they're being told they are allowed to have an attorney, and a lot of times they'll get this attorney and they'll be advised of that, where you know, you don't have to testify. And it's kind of changed where you don't have to testify, not that if you don't feel like testifying, you may not -- you're not to be taken to jail. But they do honor subpoenas, the victims will show up for the subpoenas. And then of course, tend to kind of purger themselves throughout the hearing where they'll either completely deny anything happened or start really minimizing anything that happened. I don't know -- I don't remember -- I don't remember -- I don't recall. We get, when they start providing their testimony, they'll minimize and start backing out. Because of this. And it's become a big trend here in California as well.

Yeah, so I don't know what we're going to do about that. But that, it's, again, it maybe doesn't -- it perhaps doesn't happen like this in other places, but here again, it's a value of doing an auditor assessment of your own community, because you're looking at things pertinent and unique to your own laws and resources, which is one of the reasons why it's fortunate do the site look that we mentioned a while ago to be apprised of local laws. If you simply assessed based on, well, this is a national best PRACTICES we should be doing this -- practice, so we should be doing this. If you have a unique and unintended impact of a law that Laura was describing that is now simply trying to look at other people's practices, not very help. . So that was something that I know the prosecutor's office appreciated about this process is feeling that he wasn't going to be chastised for -- chastising for expressing his frustration about the way this law was impacting his cases and recognizing this is something that could collect information about and be helpful to the prosecutor's office. So we talked about educating victims about this area. So we often talk about educating police and educating members of the system. This may be an area where the advocacy program in

a community can help educate victims and kind of fair it out more about what's going on in this area and how to address this. Other gaps, I'm just going to mention, again, if you'd like to read the report, is reports, we looked at did not have any problems doing the basics, everybody was doing the basics, but things that were con TEKT -- in nature, have to act in the future, such as the prosecutor. That kind of information sometimes was missing. And we talked about ways to address that and last, but not least, certainly, San Mateo, right next door to San Francisco, kind of jockeying for position for the most diverse counties in the United States. There were 80-90 languages spoken there by interpreters. So the fast variety of language and cultural differences that are present in San Mateo county can really exacerbate already existing safety problems, already existing resistances to coming to court, and again, we're not just talking like one or two different languages here, we're talking about a huge amount of differences in the community, which creates -- say something for that community to work on. So Lauren wanted to make sure that we let people know that San Mateo has now gone through phase one of its project, which is doing the assessment itself. All the activities that you found, the findings that we found, the report has been published. And now, have received a second round of funding for implementation. And so I just wanted to summarize that quickly and then ask Kristine for a few comments on where we're at with implementation, which hadn't being gone on -- been going on for too long. The Blue Shield foundation in California was very interested in this process, which built in the voice of victims so much. And on that basis, we're willing to provide a second round of funding for if implementation purposes and for the -- and so the idea is let's let the practitioners who did all of this work identify what would be short-term and long-term recommendations, IE, what could be likely completed well within say a year's time, and what are things that are more complex and likely take several years. And so once identifying those of forming implementation teams to divide up and work on those recommendations, that it was felt could be accomplished within the next 12 months. And Kristine will remain as a coordinator. And also time and budget built in for a modest amount of national consulting or if trainers are needed. One of the things that's already come up is differences of opinion on risk assessment. If we're going to address one of our gaps, with creating training or policy around better assessing risks or victims and children, people are on different pages about that. Whether it's a good idea to have that as a policy or if so, what instruments it should -- and that's a discussion that the team and I have been having lately. So Kristine, would you care to give us an update on implementation now in San Mateo county.

over the past couple of months, we've had a few meetings with some team members, mostly old team members, but we've had a couple F other practitioners throughout the county join in as well. Because of things, appointments and did for probation officers, we have new domestic violence district attorneys, that sort of thing. We've gotten together and identified our short and long-term goals for each recommendation. And throughout the discussion, we figured out which would be the most actionable items to address first. So for instance, right now, we're really focussing on some of those recommendations that have to do with children. As well as some of the feedback between officers and the district attorney's office. .

I think that's where we're at right now.

Laura, anything else you would like to interject?

yeah, I would ask that Kristine, this question and I'll ask it for both of you Kristine and Laura. You said is on the front end of this work, Kristine, you weren't maybe a part of this vision at the very beginning. You set out to revitalize your coordinated community response effort. I'm wondering if you can close with a statement of whether this -- whether and/or how, engaging in a community assessment process like this did accomplish that goal?

I think it definitely has brought a variety of practitioners together throughout our county. That wouldn't have necessarily come together to discuss a lot of these goals and recommendations that we now have. From what I could hear from many individuals is this is something that people have talked about for many years in the past throughout San Mateo county, but there was never that, I guess, kick, to get it going. And to keep it going. So I feel like this is something that has really kind of helped it, I guess, helped reignite the fire that has kind of been there all along. But it just took a certain group of people and you know -- yeah, that's all. Laura, do you want to add anything to that?

for me, in law enforcement, we understand the way law enforcement runs. It's always ever changing, how we do our job, how we are expected to do our job. When domestic violence laws first came about, we had to go through the transition of how to investigate from how we used to. This just reminded me again of all of the other partners that are out there. That are accessing the information that we're -- you know, that we are writing. And how they're using that to help the families help the children, help the abuser, help the victim, and just -- I didn't REZ that there were that -- realize that there were that many people that had their hand in the information we were providing. So it was a guy good eye opener for law enforcement.

continued support that's available for people who are interested? so I didn't point -- I said I pointed this out in the chat, but currently, there are two solicitations open through the office on violence against women, specifically, that are supporting community assessment or safety audit work. One of the program application -- applications are due for that one tomorrow. So I'm afraid you'd have to really scramble to get that one in. But the grants encourage a -- program also supporting safety audits through that program. And so I encourage you to read those solicitation -- that solicitation in particular and consider, you know R hopefully this call has helped you think about whether your community might be in a position to do this kind of work or benefit from this kind of assessment process. Also, you know, San Mateo had the benefit of some funding where they could secure in a really intensive way some national consulting expertise through PRAXIS and they can get Rhonda assigned to that project. You don't have to do this assessment work with that level of son SULation. And there's -- consultation and there's a lot of tools and resources that they provide to support you in doing this work on your own. One of the opportunities is coming up around the corner, we offer an

annual training institute on the community assessment, it's an imMESHs it's TUT, so we take you through a mock -- in St. Paul, Minnesota. May 12th through 15th. Registration is now open and I'll send a link out after the webinar today for more information about that training institute. Also, we offer annual -- monthly webinars, this is the first of this year, and they'll continue and so now that you've REJ TERed for this one -- REJ TERed for this one -- the logistics guide for assessment coordinators . And a whole series of sample reports from assessment projects that have been completed and along with many other resources, again, that I'll follow up -- I'll send to -- sent to you in a follow up after the webinar. You can get Taylored individualized -- from PRAXIS consultants. If you feel like you might be able to apply for a grant. We've got sample grant language and some budget considerations for you to include -- to consider as well. So we're really happy to work with you all to determine whether this is a right process for you. And provide support along the way as well. So with that, I think we'll close. We're a couple of minutes over. I appreciate you all hanging in there for the five minutes over we heardly ever do, but I a appreciate your attention and your time today and wish you the best of luck in retooling your CCR's and thank you for your continued work to end violence against women. Have a great day, everybody.

Thank you.

bye, everyone.

thanks, Kristine and Laura and Rhonda.

thank you. [Event concluded]

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