

the **blueprint** is anchored in
SIX FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

Practices that align with these principles have proven effective at maximizing safety for victims of domestic violence and holding offenders accountable while offering them opportunities to change.

- 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 disparity of impact** on victims and offenders.

Find more information on the Blueprint at www.praxisinternational.org or contact Praxis at blueprint@praxisinternational.org or 651-699-8000 ext. 17.



the **blueprint**
for safety

BUILDING AN INTERAGENCY RESPONSE to DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CRIMES

The *Blueprint for Safety* was developed by criminal justice professionals in collaboration with national domestic violence and criminal justice policy experts. It is a detailed collection of practical policies, protocols, and training resources aimed at reducing and eventually eliminating domestic violence. A key feature of the Blueprint is that individual agencies' policies and practices are tied to each other.

RESEARCH-BASED

The Blueprint's underlying strategies and principles emphasize a collective approach to domestic violence cases that has been proven to:

- reduce domestic violence-related homicides,
- reduce serious assaults, and
- diminish the overall level of domestic violence in communities.

THE BLUEPRINT'S IMPACT ON PRACTICE

The **Blueprint for Safety** was created in the City of St. Paul in 2010 at the urging of ISALAH – a coalition of 100 faith congregations – and through the collective work of ten agencies* with leadership by the St. Paul Police Department, St. Paul City Attorney's Office, the St. Paul Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, and Praxis International. Praxis subsequently produced a universal Blueprint for Safety for adaptation by communities across the country and was selected by the federal

Office on Violence Against Women to implement the **Blueprint for Safety Adaptation Demonstration Initiative** (in partnership with the Battered Women's Justice Project) to test the adaptability of the Blueprint in three jurisdictions: New Orleans, Louisiana; Shelby County/Memphis, Tennessee; and Duluth, Minnesota. Each site is adapting Blueprint policies and protocols to their local conditions and state laws; the lessons learned will be published at www.praxisinternational.org in 2015.

* 2nd Judicial District of Ramsey County, 2nd Judicial District Court Administration, St. Paul Police Department, St. Paul City Attorney's Office, Ramsey County Attorney's Office, Ramsey County Community Corrections, Project Remand, Ramsey County Emergency Communications Center, Ramsey County Sheriff's Office, St. Paul Domestic Abuse Intervention Project.

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Blueprint communities report...

911 CALL

At 911 we're getting more information. We're engaging with callers in a different way and paying more attention to, and documenting, what patrol and prosecutors need.

PATROL

Patrol has a really unique role: we see firsthand what has happened. Under the Blueprint, we more accurately capture and communicate the nature and severity of the violence.

ARREST

Many times, both parties use violence. If self-defense was not used, then who is the predominant aggressor? Stopping this violence means getting control of the right person; knowing the history and context makes sure we get it right.

INVESTIGATIONS

The impact of all members of the system working together is greater than any one single agency doing it alone. We're devising better methods, protocols, and procedures, and we're having a positive impact.

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RISK QUESTIONS

A KEY FEATURE

“Domestic violence” is a broad category that jumbles together vastly different actions and motivations – from throwing a shoe at a partner who gambled \$1000 to strangling a woman because she wants out of the relationship. The Blueprint uses three risk questions so practitioners can document the scope, severity, and pattern of abuse, and communicate it from agency to agency.

1] Do you think that he or 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?

2] How frequently does he or 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 or her.



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RELIES ON A STRONG PARTNERSHIP

among CRIMINAL JUSTICE PRACTITIONERS & COMMUNITY-BASED ADVOCATES

911 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

911 has a critical role in gathering accurate details and **establishing the type and level of danger.**

PATROL & INVESTIGATIONS

Patrol’s response on the scene **affects how everyone else handles a case.**

JAIL BOOKING & RELEASE

In jail operations, a sheriff’s office is in a key position to reinforce **victim protection and safety.**

ADVOCACY

Advocacy keeps the criminal justice system aware of **how policies and practices actually impact victims.**

PROSECUTION

Prosecutors are uniquely positioned to adjust responses based on **severity, risk, and context** of each case.

COURTS

Courts reinforce a community’s ability to **protect victims from additional harm and hold offenders accountable.**

PROBATION

Bail evaluations and pre-sentence investigations anchor effective intervention in **more accurate assessments** of the violence.

The Blueprint ensures that **each agency and practitioner**—from 911 operators and patrol officers to courts and probation—**is on the same page.** Instead of isolated policies and a fragmented response, interveners build upon and share essential information about risk and danger.

THE BLUEPRINT’S IMPACT ON PRACTICE *continued...*

JAIL

No one thought the jail had much to do with victims. Now we take extra measures to notify victims when offenders are released. And we’re aware of retaliation—the witness tampering, subtle threats, intimidation—and communicating it to officers.

PROSECUTION

We’re seeing consistency across the board: photos taken, detailed victim statements, great police reports. When we get a report with such attention to detail and all of the things we’ve asked for, it makes us want to do an even better job.

CHARGING

Before the Blueprint, it would take 80+ days to charge a gone-on-arrival case. We reduced that to under 8 days.

BAIL/ EVALUATION

We now consider not just the likelihood that the offender will appear in court but we also use the risk questions to decide if the offender is a risk to the victim or others in the community.

ARRAIGNMENT HEARING

When I read that she’s fearful of his behavior, that she thinks he’s going to harm her and why, and that the harm is escalating—these weigh heavily in our decisions. Now I’m seeing how at-risk this victim is for future harm.

PRE-TRIAL HEARING

The Blueprint makes sure that the victim is a central focus of a fair and just plea negotiation. Our goal is to get the right control over offenders (along with support to change), while always paying attention to the safety and well-being of victims.

JUDGE

I’m finding out how scared these women are, and why. I’m finding out that this isn’t an isolated incident—or, sometimes it is—and that that makes a difference in my decision-making.

MONITORING/ PROBATION

Now when a probationer reoffends, we process the probation violation immediately instead of waiting until the new offense moves through the entire prosecution process.