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Building and Sustaining an Effective Response to Domestic Violence Crimes: The Blueprint for Safety Saint Paul 8 Years Later

Bree Adams Bill, Commander Jesse Mollner, Shelley Johnson Cline, and Tara Patet

January 10, 2019

>> Hello everyone and thank you for joining. We are at the top of the hour and ready to get started.

>> Hello and welcome to the webinar entitled building and sustaining an effective response to domestic violence crimes, the Blueprint for Safety Saint Paul eight years later. The webinars presented by Praxis International in partnership with the Office of Violence Against Women and I am Denise Eng in a Senior Advisor at Praxis and joined today by my colleagues Kue Chang and Bree Adams Bill. Kue will tell us how the webinar works and then will pass the microphone off to Bree Adams Bill who will introduce our guest speakers today and facilitate today's call. Kue?

>> All right. Thank you, Denise. Can you hear me okay?

>> I can hear you.

>> Thank you. Today's audio will be coming from your computer. If you have issues with your audio you can also dial in using the number listed on the PowerPoint slide follow by the code. When you use the code you have to use the special characters as well or else you will not be able to get in. There is also live closed captioning in the bottom right-hand corner of your screen. Please excuse any mistakes because it is being done live. Asides from that, if you have any questions or comments, you can put them in the Q&A box. And Denise will monitor them and get them to the presenters. The PowerPoint is available in the materials box right below

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>> Thank you, Kue. That afternoon everybody. This is Bree Adams Bill and I am very happy to introduce our speakers today. We are fortunate to have three Blueprint for Safety champions from Saint Paul, Minnesota who each have had a role in its creation, implementation and enhancement. Saint Paul is the originator and they are a practicing Blueprint community. As it stands today the Blueprint is so ingrained in Saint Paul that it is and has become second nature. It's a part of the landscape of the command a response to domestic violence crimes. The speakers will share their experiences with you about how Saint Paul has transformed its ability to effectively intervene and how they were able to institutionalize this groundbreaking work. First I will introduce Shelley Johnson Cline who is the executive director at the Saint Paul and Ramsey County domestic abuse intervention project and has worked within the battered women's movement for over three decades. As Director she manages a multi-service agency that serves over 5800 victims and their children each year. Shelley has been instrumental in the creation of many effective community and government collaborations to address and respond to domestic violence. As appropriate or of the Blueprint for Safety and main author of the companion piece a distinct and vital role of a system advocate her leadership has been critical and was critical to the journey that led to the Blueprint today, eight years after implementation at Saint Paul. Thank you Shelley for joining us. Next we have Tara Patet with the supervising attorney for the domestic violence prosecution unit in the Saint Paul city attorney's office and has been a prosecutor for over 21 years, practicing primarily in the areas of the mystic violence and elder abuse. Is a member of the Saint Paul Blueprint for Safety committee she has conducted monitoring activities, delivered training to jurisdictions around the country, and is a champion for collaborative efforts to increase victim safety and

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accountability. Welcome and thank you for speaking with us today. Finally we have Commander Jesse Mollner who is a 22 year veteran in law enforcement and was selected to participate with the creation and implementation of the Blueprint as a patrol officer. He was one of three officers tasked to train over 600 Saint Paul Police Department personnel in the Blueprint protocol. He was promoted in 2011 as Sergeant and was designated as an investigator spending six years investigating both domestic violence and sexual assault cases. Jesse was recently promoted to commander and is once again assigned to the [Indiscernible]. Thank you Jesse for joining us today. To the audience, a reminder to please type in your questions or thoughts and any time throughout the webinar in the Q&A pod. Shelley, Tara, and Jesse will respond to your thoughts and inquiries. Let's begin here.

>> Let's start with the Blueprint for Safety and how it was a big idea in Saint Paul as well as how it came to be.

>> As always, it's important to begin by rooting ourselves in a brief history of the women's movement which began in the early 70s. That's really the beginning to all this work. That movement produced the battered women's movement. The battered women's movement started with women helping women through phone hotlines created as a way to offer legal help to women and most of the calls that women were using the hotline for were those suffering by their husbands and partners and being abused. They were calling into the hotline looking for safe places to sleep as they had nowhere to go. And that led to shelters for battered women which were literally created within advocates homes. Women and children needed places to go and staying in their homes was detrimental to their physical, emotional and psychological safety. From there, that led to the passing of laws that would make battering a crime and hold batterers accountable. They were not being used to protect women back then. There were not a lot of arrests or prosecutions. Advocate saw the system was not really reforming and realized they must get involved with the coordination and organization of the criminal legal system if the goal was tool safety for victims and accountability for

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offenders. In the early 80s the domestic abuse intervention project in Duluth, Minnesota created a coordinated community response which was meant to move intervention strategies beyond arrests as a standalone strategy. The prosecutor's office did this through a coordinated approach and holding offenders accountable and opposing consequences for continued violence. This is while victims receive support and advocacy which they deserve. But to truly understand what ongoing domestic abuse was, advocates turned to the experts, battered women themselves. Through discussions with them now understood to be focused groups, to understand what was happening to them in their relationships, the power and control bill was created and that's when battering was truly defined. With the visual tool that you see in front of you a new way of thinking about how battering occurs with battering being defined and what it looks like and naming the tactics used by the batterer to perpetrate the abuse, this was the start of great societal and institutional change. From there, the coordinated community response model with the power and control wheel commonly known as the Duluth Model. So the two together, the power and control wheel and the coordinated community response model commonly known as the Duluth Model. That is the beginning pathway to the Blueprint . What we want to do now is move toward how this pathway then continued to the Blueprint.

>> The question is how did the Duluth Model influence the creation of the Blueprint for Safety and that is its own unique journey that is best explained by one of the pioneers herself that made this happen, Shelley Johnson Cline . As I mentioned before she's executive director of the community-based confidential advocacy agency in Saint Paul. She's the best to speak to this. So Shelley, I now turn to you and ask that you please describe for all of us this pathway that continued and led to the creation of the Saint Paul Blueprint for Safety.

>> Bree, in Saint Paul, Minnesota we come from such a rich history in addressing domestic violence. They were involved in creating the Blueprint for Safety and have been working together for decades . We learned a great deal along the way. We had already created a probation domestic unit and the city attorney's office had a domestic unit and the city and

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County had a joint prosecution unit and a second judicial District had a family violence counsel created, in the Saint Paul police created a family violence unit. They were all centered around increasing our response to domestic violence and our commitment of trying to end domestic violence. Then we started a team that was a collaborative that started to greatly reduce the number of domestic homicides in Saint Paul. We were seeing the results of working as a unified force in protecting victims and that it was saving so many lives.

>> That's great. Thank you, Shelley. Will you discuss a little bit with us and it sounds like Saint Paul was positioned to move forward in developing a more collective policy and approach like the Blueprint, but what was currently happening in the coordinated community response you just described, will you talk about what came next and how the Praxis audit influenced the next steps?

>> Yes. Because of all the successes of things we were doing well, it was a real commitment that made us realize we could be doing things a lot better. We were far from being there yet. We knew amid all of our collective work and real accomplishments, we had to go deep and had to find and better articulate where were the gaps to victims safety. In moving forward with this and embarking on the audit, we also needed to develop a great deal of trust and we had a lot of that trust coming into us because this process was not about airing the dirty laundry of the system which is literally what the mayor of Saint Paul said at the time was his biggest concern. It was about us being in it together and I believe our community and particularly our justice system partners showed a great deal of strength and leadership in undertaking the audit.

>> That's wonderful. That's a really good description as to how [Indiscernible] committed to doing the audit. We you share with us a couple of examples of a few key audit findings?

>> When we begin to enhance the response team focused on highly lethal domestics it in sued the development of a project. What we wanted to know was where the dangerous gaps were

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in protecting victims and holding perpetrators accountable. We knew one example of this was gone on arrival or Geo a which is when the perpetrator flees the scene before police arrived in over 70% of all domestic crimes were these. But the perpetrators were not being arrested and the victims were being re-victimized and harmed. During the audit we realize the majority did not have a pick up and hold issued so officers could not be on the lookout and make an arrest during the window of time. We took the information we got from the audit to our team and created a response that reduced first appearance on GOAs from six months if not at all to 8 days with an 85% conviction rate. So while studying the foundation and conducting the audit was part of the flare up, it was a huge component of the learnings from the audit data affected reducing the domestic crimes in Saint Paul and the homicides. Another key finding was 911. When we went through the 911, we learned there was little or no distinction in priority of calls and that was regardless of if they were GOAs or a harassment order . They were all treated the same. A high proportion of these calls had an assault in progress. They were recorded as a priority three which translates to a crime happening within 15 minutes to dispatch. So the audit team realized the should be coded priority 2. It was a crime in progress and imminent danger involved. We went back and recoded and created a new coding system. We look at things and found so many things but victim engagement was key in all of them. How are we taking the system and communicating all the things we are attempting to do to protect victims back to the victim? And I want to say, Bree, with the audit we found phenomenal things that the justice system was doing, but the audit is the intent to go in and find out where the gaps are.

>> Amazing. Thank you, Shelley. Those are great examples. You learned from the Blueprint and implementation that with the six months to 8 days for charging of a domestic case an 85% conviction rate is quite amazing. Also the other examples you gave. Thank you so much. Now that we have a picture in our minds about the pathway that led to the Blueprint, let's now talk about its development. We will start with turning to Denise and Praxis made a role in making the Blueprint happen and Denise, I would like to ask you what role Praxis played during the

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development process and then we will go back to our presenters to speak about their role in the process as well.

>> Thank you, Bree. I will be very brief because I know you want to hear from our Saint Paul partners but I was brought on to Praxis almost 11 years ago and part of the reason I was brought on was to coordinate the project that became know as the same Paul Blueprint for Safety. At the time we just called it the Saint Paul project as we were developing the projects and then we called it the framework until we settled on the term Blueprint. One key point is it's fairly important to have someone who can coordinate this. It's the kind of thing that's tough for people to squeeze into the regular job duties. The city contacted Praxis to help with the coordination. Saint Paul had done some important establishing of groundwork that you heard Shelley describe that helps facilitate and position the city to be ready to do this. We started out by gathering up every good policy or practice we could find around the country where people were doing this kind of work, and we were also trying to continue to learn what was happening in Saint Paul so we continued activities that we do in a safety and accountability audit by learning more and more about how agencies operated. We were expanding learning about what was happening locally and what we could learn nationally. We also started identifying additional problematic areas. Shelley described some to you and there were some additional findings in the audit. We started talking to advocates throughout Saint Paul and across the Minneapolis-St. Paul area about what kinds of problems victims could encounter in the criminal legal system like what is the impact of mandatory no contact orders? Are we getting good investigation in charging and stalking cases? What direction do we want to give officers in responding to [Indiscernible] and that kind of thing and we started to explore more deeply what kind of guidance we could give to responding practitioners in the criminal and legal system. We work closely with the Saint Paul intervention project and I know Shelley will tell you more about that. They get a lot of focus groups and we talk together about the kinds of things we want to learn more about. And then we periodically brought together interagency groups of people, or sometimes even single agency groups. We brought together

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groups of patrol officers and they would act as a think tank for us on a particular issue. We also established a panel of experts nationally who could help advise us about what the research said about what makes for effective intervention. So the role we played was organizing and controlling that kind of work.

>> That's great. Thank you, Denise. That's a nice way to describe the role of Praxis during the process. I know part of the process to make the Blueprint happen as you mentioned, Denise, is showing advocacy leadership. We know advocacy and when I say that I mean community-based advocacy a central for the work and responses of the real world responses of victims of domestic violence. And without advocates there is no coordinated community response and therefore there can be no Blueprint for Safety. If you wouldn't mind just briefly describing what the role of advocates is during the process of developing the Blueprint and a little bit about how how your agency and advocates took the leadership role.

>> When you look back at the history of the Blueprint , we had to go to the state legislature to get money to create the Blueprint for Safety. There was not that type of funding available. One of the things that was key to getting the funding is that we reached out to dozens of domestic violence women programs across the state. One was to see if they were supportive of the idea of creating this framework, which they were very strongly. But they wanted us to ensure that as long as it was developed and remained victim and advocacy driven, that was key. When you look at getting advocates involved and they get the voices of victims, it was not only the intent of all the Blueprint principles and practices to be supported by research, but by -- but they be informed by every step of the way of real-life experiences of victims and advocates providing direct services in the field. It was these critical perspectives that it was determined who would be served by the policy and practice and who would not and what measures we would need to build into the Blueprint to expand it to who it truly helps or reducing the intended consequences. We were very vigilant regarding the victims and advocates as far as experiences and particularly those focus groups with victims who had experience in the justice

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system particularly problems or changes they recommend to strengthen the protection. That was key and intertwined and everything the Blueprint did . Without the advocates at the table and without the voices of the victims at the table this would have been just another document. It really does create the foundation for what it is. We remain vigilant the advocate experiences are and how the Blueprint is working.

>> Thank you Shelley. With that everything you described, I will move to Tara Patet and Tara I ask you to speak to the role that attorneys from the Saint Paul city attorney's office played in the process. And speak to the three bulletpoints in your perspective of advocacy leadership and how your agency participated.

>> Sure, thank you. My office was as were other criminal justice partners an integral part of the process of Blueprint development. What we realized is in going through the process, yes many of the individual members of our group respective offices were doing good work, but really were operating in silos and did not have the kind of perspective that we really needed to gain in looking at the roles of all the other criminal justice partners and what they did. That took observing other agencies that were going in and going into their offices and looking at the work being done, talking to each other and defining roles for each other. Also making sure we understood clearly what we could and could not do in a domestic violence intervention or prosecution or investigation. That was an important part of that. We were careful that it was not a finger-pointing game. It was about learning what each other did and figuring out ways that collectively we could work better together. We also participated watching focus groups as Shelley mentioned. We all wanted to stay grounded in making sure we are responding to the real-life experience of domestic violence victims. That is something that advocates are used to doing in their daily work and you would think prosecutors and law enforcement and everyone else would do that, but we tend to get more removed and more clinical in our approach, particularly speaking for prosecutors. This gave us an opportunity to celebrate that partnership that we had with our community based advocacy groups and listen to how our

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work impacted victims and how to better focus our work to improve their lives. That also involves not only looking at other agencies but opening up our files and being willing to open our work up to other criminal justice partners and community advocates. The sample intervention project and look at how we were doing our work and were we working collaboratively and did we have the information we needed to effectively do our jobs and then sharing the information we had with other partners in a way that made us collectively more successful in our interventions. So throughout that process, Saint Paul intervention was the driving force leading the efforts and we learned how important the partnership was and continues to be as the Blueprint continues to evolve in our community.

>> Thank you, Tara. I like the point you made of echoing what Shelley said about it wasn't really about finger-pointing, the process. It's really not about the individual person making mistakes. It sounds like it was how your agencies were organized. I really think we can all relate to what you said about working in silos. Thank you for sharing those examples with us. I would like to move to Commander Jesse Mollner and asked the same question of you, Jesse. Out of the Saint Paul Police Department participate in development of the Blueprint and if you would speak to a little bit about advocacy leadership and a little bit about involvement in the process.

>> I don't want to echo everything Tara said it because she was thorough in her response but the first eye-opener for me with the program and protocol. It revealed how much impact and change could occur just from simply opening up conversations in our agency. There were things that we have been doing so long that became institutional that the belief was that must be the right way to do things. By going out and doing outreach with other agencies, it shed light on just because it's the way we've always done it doesn't mean it's the best way or practice. That was humbling to discover that what we were doing might not have been the best for our partners and vice versa. So through these conversations that took place in these focus groups, we started realizing other industries had the same overall goal we had with

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victim services but the only cause of animosity was failure to communicate how each other's agencies operated. Once these conversations started to occur, the collaborative effort started taking shape and put things into perspective. That was the reveal for me. Reviewing previous police reports and activities to determine the best practice was not a new concept, but analyzing police practices with the lens of a collaborative view perspective was new. It was quickly apparent that it was something we should have been doing long ago. As a patrol officer, I started learning how simple details that I could gather at the scene of the crime or additional questions about lethality which I wasn't aware of prior to the review, how much that could impact the aggravating factors and prosecution and sentencing. That is powerful stuff and empowering two young street cops. We thought they were just responding to domestic calls but they actually have a very poignant impact later on in that case.

>> Thank you for that description. Really what I am hearing from all you said is how important it is to not only include a level of agency within government programs together in collaboration in order to implement the Blueprint . So thank you all for speaking to that. Let's move to getting the Blueprint off the ground. Let's talk about what the lunch looked like. I will ask Denise to share with us and begin with how Praxis was instrumental in the Blueprint launch which occurred April 1 and April 2 in 2010 . So Denise, we talk about Praxis's goal in the launch?

>> I will and yes, thank you Bree. It was a big undertaking and we had three events. We had two two day events in February and the official event in April. As we did the Blueprint we officially took a comprehensive approach to looking at all of the potential issues without the practitioners would encounter and Jesse just describe situations where he had not thought of that and we know that it's true that all of us get used to doing work in the way we normally do it. We were trying to find everything we could and identify every issue we could and then write something about it to provide guidance for workers about how to handle it. We needed to have a way of introducing people to all the new practices they would be asked to do. And

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Ellen who was an executive director at Praxis earned instrumental in working on the Blueprint used to say agencies -- 90% of the Blueprint is what you are doing and that might have been a little bit of an exacerbation but most of the document is what people are already doing and then we found other places we could add. We wanted to make sure everyone was schooled in what the expectations were. We had events where we had first of all the first day was a big Blueprint overview. We spent an entire day delving into aspect of blueprints and highlighting new policies. We had a celebratory aspect and invited the community and wanted as many practitioners as possible in the city of Saint Paul to be exposed to the Blueprint on day one. And on day two we advised agency training where each agency would have an opportunity to learn about the new practices. We worked with local and national experts to develop the training modules and for some agencies it was a couple of hours and for others it was all day. That was the model we did. We also had a press event in conjunction with the first day to make sure we announce to the entire community that this is a new day in the city of Saint Paul and what we are doing to improve our response to domestic violence crimes.

>> Thank you, Denise. Let's shift over to what the systemwide training look like that occurred before, during or after the lunch. Jesse I want to turn to you because I know a lot of questions that we hear from communities is how do you get buy-in from street cops? I would like to know from you if you would share with all of us how did you do that and what specific activities were done to accomplish this?

>> If memory serves, I believe I was asked to participate because my bosses knew I would not say no to anything at the time. It was more than that and truthfully I know it's not a shock to anyone listening but cops don't always embrace change very well. We meaning representatives on patrol knew that representatives in the review that we needed to present the change optimistically and showcase the driving cause of the change was the result of the commitment and hard work already being accomplished. Like Denise just said, from Ellen, 90% of what we were already doing and in policing that is true. The body and the soul of what this

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was all about was there being done. We just needed to formalize some processes. Cops have a well calibrated BS meter we like to call it so using fellow street cops that had the respect and street credibility of officers, that's who we chose to deliver training which was instrumental. With cops it's all about trust. It's hard to get outside agencies are outside representatives that are not familiar or in the police culture to speak to the level of police officers and have them listen and take things in. We needed for them to not only listen to it but really embrace it. That's the selection that was considered when choosing the trainers.

>> Thank you, Jesse. It sounds like the Saint Paul Police Department was really smart in using trusted cops to reference a cops cop to be the one to generate excitement and secure the buy-in of those on the street. Thank you for sharing that with us. And Tara I'd like to ask you, how did you generate excitement and buy-in and if you would also say what the systemwide training look like for attorneys to begin the process of implementing the Blueprint ?

>> Sure. I think as Denise had said there was a large-scale multidisciplinary training that took place. From that the following day was individual disciplines breaking into groups and learning about what it would look like and how it would be different from what we were already doing. Like Jesse said, we like law enforcement sometimes are hesitant and equate change to more work. What we quickly learned was what the Blueprint did was give us a lot of information and informed cases in ways we had never had before. After attending the initial training and continuing to generate excitement within our office by making sure people understood we are working off this great foundation of good work that has already been done, but we will get better information and more tools to effectively do our work. It continued to grow from there. As we saw from the very beginning when we just started learning, one thing you will learn or see prosecutors as you review cases is you see information from the patrol officer about the history of violence that may have occurred and that relationship. We can immediately see what a difference that would make in our cases. We talked to each other how we would use that and looking at that at the charging stage or when making a bail argument, and then also

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during the plea negotiations and at the sentencing stage. So a domino effect. The police department is doing the heavy lifting and making a big change of asking questions about the history of violence at the scene and we get the benefit of being able to see that and immediately see the benefit. We continue to meet monthly. Our group of domestic violence prosecutors talk about continuously eight years later ways we can use the information to effectively inform the other partners during the case about the situation. Whether it is probation or the judges or community advocates, whoever it is. I think the training beyond the big initial push has been really internal conversations and learning together as we have more information.

>> Thank you, Tara. A great transition and in a moment we go towards what the Blueprint looks like today. Before we do that, Shelley, I want to turn to you to see if there's anything you would like to add about getting the Blueprint off the ground.

>> I think when we talk about when we launched the Blueprint and when we did the pilot for the Blueprint, advocates were giving feedback about this is really working or this is not working. When you talk about this big statewide event and the excitement and cops speaking to cops and Tara was talking and we showed what we modeled statewide. We had cops and advocates and prosecutors and everyone plus the leadership of all of these different arms of the systems lineup and say we did this together. We are committed to working together and we benefited from working together. I think that is a strong message that other battered women programs took to their jurisdictions and said we want this to happen. This is important and works for victims.

>> That's great, Shelley. Thank you. And you are right that it definitely was a strong message. As all of you have indicated, it's important to generate and have conversations within your own discipline because cops want to hear from cops and attorneys want to hear from attorneys and advocates want to hear from advocates. Thanks for sharing. Let's move to where the Blueprint is today. What it looks like and what it means for the Blueprint to be

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institutionalized in Saint Paul. It is so ingrained in Saint Paul, so much so there are patrol officers that know nothing other than the Blueprint as a way of just being. It is the domestic abuse policy. I would like for us to talk about what that looks like and hear about your successes in Saint Paul. I want to go back to you, Jesse, and if you would not mind just telling us what is it like in Saint Paul. You described how it was and a bit about where the Saint Paul Police Department wanted to move but what is different about today?

>> Like you said it has become institutional. The last eight years with the size of our department and attrition, the basic patrol duties that we have in the duties outside patrol work, the vast majority of patrol officers only know the Blueprint like you said. The Blueprint is impacted our ability to gather history which is the key point in our police investigations or the key change was doing risk assessments and documenting that past history of abuse. Also painting a picture that isn't just an isolated event. That was the large change that took place that I saw. Another thing we saw was the quality of documentation. The reports of her coming in from patrol officers after embracing the domestic changes in protocol changes, the quality was so much better. Not just with the mystics, but reports in general. We were teaching officers how to document and do a preliminary investigation on the street as well as how to document seemingly routine criminal investigations which are these domestics and improving overall performance in other areas and not just domestics. That was interesting to see. We have taken the majority of officers that work on the street today that have only known that and have the vast majority of veteran officers that this is their way of life too. So it's the institutional response. Everyone has a piece in the whole scheme. There is more compassion now and less pragmatism. On an administrative level, that involves more effort and more resources. We have seen the impact of victim services. When we look at things more compassionately than pragmatically, my job in the administration it's a constant reminder to monitor that and know that my people need to put more time into their victim communication, how they relate in with them and less time on case management and it's a balance but we need to figure that out. From time to time I pull reports from cases from the

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early 2000's which were before the Blueprint for Safety. These are for investigative reasons. There is a noticeable difference in these reports nowadays across the board. The outliers are so few and far between. Just the quality of the reporting.

>> Thank you, Jesse. From what you just described it's a nice segue to turn to Tara because what I heard you say Jesse is as a first responder in Saint Paul Police Department, you are getting more quality information and better victim engagement which then allows for the next agencies coming in after you to respond in a different way as well and a more positive way. Thank you. Tara, what has changed in the city attorney's office?

>> You hit the nail on the head, Bree, in terms of the domino effect that anyone can imagine happens when you have quality, thorough police reports that include not just what happened on the particular date of an offense but what has been leading up to that and where it fits in the larger context of violence in the relationship. Being armed with that information from the patrol level and the investigative level because investigators who are doing subsequent follow-up on the case are also asking more information about risk and gathering better information. From that we are able to make better pale arguments without a doubt. The bench overwhelmingly liked the change. It's a challenge for the bench to make decisions on whether you will release someone back into the community or whether you will set conditions of release like a no contact order or hold them on high bail, particularly in misdemeanors where your injuries may not be very severe. Knowing where that falls in the larger context of the relationship makes a huge difference for the events to be able to assess risk to the community and the victim. It made a big difference there. It has made a big difference in how we adjust our prosecution for given the amount of risk that might be present in a case, are we pushing the envelope on a case because we know this person is so dangerous based on the other information that we have gathered? Or are we asking for more jail time because of the high risk or less because it appears to be a relatively isolated incident? It just informs the whole process going forward. In addition to that, I think the regular institutionalized collaboration

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with criminal justice partners has been invaluable. We are collaborating on so many different things on workgroups that collaborate on issues surrounding for example the issuance and cancellation of domestic abuse no contact orders. There are so many examples of how collaboration and sharing information and having developed relationships -- so if I have an issue I can pick up the phone and call so-and-so from probation and we can share information and come up with a result that hopefully is better suited for the victim than if we just came at it with a more wrote uninformed approach. I think we are charging more stocking cases than we did prior to the Blueprint simply because we have more information about risk and we have better police reports and a better chain of police reports so even if we can charge something today I know that that case is well preserved in the narrative written by the officer. And we will be able to use that as the conduct progresses. And of course the gun on arrival project and we don't have time to get into in this webinar but it's had a very large impact as well.

>> Thank you, Tara and you mentioned something I want to make sure to call out which is your ability to charge and prosecute stalking cases and that's an important one because as most of us know those are very difficult crimes to charge. What I heard both of you say, Jesse and Tara, the amount of risk and danger you are assessing and documenting is shaping your responses, so whether it's a differentiated response based on risk or danger or tying something together like a stalking case . Multiple crimes per se that are taken altogether quite dangerous so thank you both for that. Shelley, what about the advocates? What are the advocates impressions for the changes in response from the criminal and legal system after the implementation of the Blueprint?

>> When you talk about all the accomplishments, how things have improved with Jesse and Tara , ultimately that goes back to the victim. The victim is safer and feels they can engage with police. They feel the courts are taking their situation seriously so that all comes back to the victim. What advocates notice is one cases are processed, victims are safer and children

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are safer. It really does impact everything. As far as being a direct service advocate and partner in all of this, it also has a document which gives us the opportunity that if there is something a victim does not feel comfortable with or advocate doesn't feel comfortable with, we can go out and pick up the phone and talk about it. We talk about it within the language of the Blueprint very often. This is very helpful because it's what should be done and also the philosophy. I see the changes as being tremendous and what we hear from victims -- I heard from one victim when we were talking about the Blueprint for Safety and she said what it did was made her feel like she had a whole community that was behind her. What a powerful feeling that is.

>> Most definitely. Thank you, Shelley, for offering that insight as well. As we are talking about the changes and how the responses different in Saint Paul today, there are very specific things that you are doing to make sure he keeps going. To make sure there are maintenance steps and enhancements, so let's hear about what that looks like. How do you keep it going beyond the things that you described and are phenomenal and the reason why this question is specifically for Tara and Jesse as the Blueprint for Safety is your protocol or policy. So in there it directs you as supervisors to do very specific things. Tara, will you start and talk about what that looks like and then Jesse a few examples as well?

>> Sure. It really involves doing regular dives into some of the casework. At the beginning it meant making sure to communicate with prosecutors that things need to be documented and your thought process often needs to be documented in the file. If you dismiss a case because you don't have sufficient evidence to go forward, you need to write a paragraph about your thought process in doing so. Making sure attorneys try hard -- I hate to say evidence-based prosecution because all prosecution's evidence base, but going forward on cases even if you feel like a victim is unwilling or unable to participate. That takes doing an analysis that might be beyond simply saying the victim was not available to testify. What other attempts were made to get statements and things like that. Attorneys do a nice job of making sure that is

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clear in the file. My job is made a little easier when I go in and sporadically review files. I do it on ongoing basis where I Peru's cases to look for a trend in outcomes. And I also on a quarterly basis grab a handful of cases and dig in and look at how the case was handled. Through that process we often identify, it's not about finger-pointing, but making sure the attorneys have all the information they need to handle the case in the best way that we can. Also making sure our policies and protocols give them the tools to do that.

>> That's great, Tara. Jesse, will you say a little bit about what the Blueprint says you should do about specifics?

>> I will touch base on documentation things we do. It something we do with all of our reports, but the Blueprint has its unique expectations and protocol has unique expectations which is the officers will do documentation of the Blueprint responses as well as the history. That starts at the patrol street-level with the patrol supervisor. If it is missed there, which it can be, last year we were at 3300 cases assigned to the unit which does not include the many cases that get assigned elsewhere for other reasons, but that is a lot of cases to expect 100% compliance. We know there will be some cases that slip through the checks and balances process that we have. Those cases would then get assigned to an investigation in the family violence unit. The Sergeant investigator would review the case to make sure all the elements required within the Blueprint are in there. One more layer is myself. I review and like Tara said I personally can't review 3300 cases myself that come into the unit. I choose random cases and they might be high profile cases or things that come to my attention for whatever reason to make sure all the pieces are in there. There is a method to salvage cases that they missed things on. So all is not lost if the protocol is not followed. Some things we definitely want to adhere to the protocol as much as possible. Recently we have been doing an audit with patrol and it is a documentation and response call clearance audit to know that we are one, in compliance with the Blueprint protocol and department policy in two, in compliance with state statute . Obviously, there are participants from all over the country here and there

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statutes will dictate what they have to follow, but here in Minnesota we have to document any time there is a domestic relationship and a crime committed. So it is pretty black-and-white as far as what needs to be documented. We have a process here that satisfies that. If the officers are remiss in coding a call the right way or don't document a case that they should have, that is addressed immediately and it's a supervisory counseling level of response. We also look for trends in response. If there are things we see that are occurring over and over again or there are changes, we adopted a roll call training process where we had address those issues. So if it's more systemic than a few officers miss something it makes it into roll call training. There are several layers of checks and balances and then a response to that.

>> Thank you, Jesse.

>> Go ahead.

>> I'm sorry. One thing I can add is in addition to that, when a prosecutor is reviewing a file and there are things that are missed like maybe Blueprint questions are not asked, we will get in touch with the patrol officer and the investigator as well to give feedback on that. By the same token, if someone writes a really great report, we try to make sure to take the time to share successes as well and let the officer know. So cross disciplinary -wise we do it.

>> And Bree I should add whereas in the past prior to the Blueprint that feedback may not have been well received, it may have been but may not have been. Through this transition we have done, that feedback is how we learn. We have embraced that as an actual learning method and not just correction and critique. But an actual way we get better in presenting these cases so thank you for adding that, Tara.

>> Thank you both. What I think we have all heard is the description of a whole new way of communicating with each other and working with each other. The supervision provisions you have described as far as the Blueprint is reminiscent of another way of ensuring the policy is being followed and that the policies are working. Man also what the trends and outcomes look

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like which is the interagency monitoring component. I want to shift to that because some of the things you were saying are absolutely reminiscent of what this means so this component is a small group of practitioners that came together to conduct reviews or audits in case file reviews of one particular Blueprint agency but they do it together. It's similar to a safety and accountability audit that led to the Blueprint creation, and yet it's different in a sense that it could be smaller and more intimate. So often times the interagency monitoring could be one of the biggest factors in keeping the Blueprint going. Tara, you been part of quite a few interagency monitoring activities in your role and I want to ask if you would share briefly how this type of assessment has mattered to you and the prosecutors in your office?

>> I think it's important to note that these audits that are done can sound like a scary process to open all of your files for partners to come in and look at your work. Keep in mind the Blueprint -- it's built into the Blueprint so there are no surprises. Everyone knows the audits are done and it's good to know that going in. No one is just showing up at your door surprised and wanting you to open up all your files and look at them. You have to do it with the spirit of -

>> There is some music playing. That was lovely. Are we back in business?

>> Tara, this is Bree. I was muted and trying to figure out what was going on and we figured it out. I'm sorry about that.

>> That was lovely. [Laughter]

>> We can just pick it up.

>> I just want to say that was an applause to what you have been sharing. [Laughter]

>> Very nice. As I said. This is something built into the system and process, so we know the audits are done. Being a receiver of an audit is very instructive. We all go into it in the spirit of learning. We all stay grounded in the fact that what we are trying to do is keep victims safe

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and hold offenders accountable. As much as we can stay grounded in those things, we tend to not let our egos get in the way of that by getting defensive if someone finds gaps in our work or things like that. For example, when the audit was done in my office for the Saint Paul city attorney's office, we did find some gaps. We found a lot of good things and celebrate those successes. We also found for example that we had been writing our notes from our victim contact on our files in a place that was not private enough. Also, in a place that was interspersed throughout the file in the narrative of the procedural posture of the file, so not a very good place to readily see the scope of contact that had been made with the victim. That is just a small example. Based on that we changed our policy and put it all in one place in an area that no one else was able to see. Doing those processes and being part of an audit and going out and being part of the group that did the patrol audit, it's eye-opening and gives you a perspective how challenging the work of patrol is. It's good to have that perspective and to see what information we are getting from them that they are gathering that works and what is not working and to offer that from your own discipline perspective is very helpful for the group as a whole.

>> Thank you, Tara. And what you shared reminds me of what all three of you have said throughout the presentation and that doing looking like the audit or internal monitoring or interagency monitoring, the focus isn't necessarily at all about the individual person. I know the interagency monitoring isn't. It's more about how the organization is organized and how the agency is organized so everyone within the agency and all the other partners of the Blueprint can best respond and have as much information as possible to make the best decisions for the safety of the victim and accountability. So Jesse can you say a little bit about the monitoring aspect as well and also I believe there is a question that you can answer if you would not mind doing that as well.

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>> I apologize that we momentarily were distracted by the noisy music that came on so we need to make sure that was taken care of so what do you want me to respond to, the monitoring aspect of the Blueprint?

>> I'm sorry, Denise. I was turning towards Jesse.

>> I'm sorry I thought you said Denise. I apologize.

>> That's okay, Denise. When it comes to the interagency review or best practices -- I lost track of your question?

>> That's okay. I think we all were thrown off by the music and are trying to figure that out. What I was asking, Jesse was you are the beginning stages of review within the investigation unit and I'm curious if you could share with everybody what are some things you want to know besides the Blueprint protocol or policy check, making sure it's all being done, are there general things you want to find out through the interagency monitoring that you will be doing?

>> Most importantly we want to know the services that we are planning or that we have constructed are being delivered. It's not just a manual. It's a working document and a living document which is effective. We are doing that mostly through communication with Saint Paul intervention project and the advocates having one-on-one contact with the victim. We get a lot of feedback from advocates when our patrol officers or investigators have good contacts with them and we also have one they have less than favorable contacts with them which is a good way for us to learn and gauge if the services that we are providing are positive or negative and adjust how we are doing that. When it comes to the interagency review and how we are going to do that, it's up to the planning team consisting of the advocates, the Blueprint coordinator, prosecutors, investigators, myself and it's a team approach. It's not anyone decision but the collaborative. We are looking at the way the body worn cameras impact the investigation which is a hot button issue when it comes to domestics and doing sex crimes

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investigation as well. You have that one more layer of invasiveness we are trying to figure out how to best use the tool. On that note we have found the body worn cameras have been very effective especially for collecting those statements early on and certainly in cases where there is recantation. We can gather the early evidence. Another thing we are looking at is the gun in arrival estimation timing. We want to make sure we adhere to the immediate response and I won't get into it like we discussed earlier but the gone on arrival approach is to make sure prosecutors have a complete picture to do an early evaluation as possible. We are getting those misdemeanors and felonies handled appropriately. We do it at the city attorney level and the County Attorney level. With victim engagement, are we contacting the victims every time? I discussed pragmatic response earlier and we really want to go back to the one-on-one contact with the victims. Each case is unique. It's clear that's the most important thing going on in the life of the victim and we have to remember it's the most important thing in our job too is their needs. We need to really make sure we make direct contact back knowing full well that some victims don't want to be contacted, but we need to put the effort in. We have a great investigative team that adheres to that. It is no longer just case clearance but it's case clearance with an explanation and conversation with the victim. We are also focusing on our inclusion in our community of the reps that we have. We have a very fluctuating population in Saint Paul. One in particular is our [Indiscernible] speaking population and they are growing drastically. We need to make sure we provide services that they need to utilize like interpreter services and community outreach services. All those things are expensive. We need to make sure we are making those budgetary adjustments within our investigative unit and we have that relationship with the upper administration to be able to explain that it's important stuff. Communicating with everyone and being inclusive in the community is important. The Blueprint is fluid and has to adapt to the community it serves. It's a living thing so it is constantly being adjusted and adapted.

>> Thank you, Jesse your description of what you want to look at through interagency monitoring is wonderful. It's a great foundation of what the new process looks like today and

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how it is implemented in Saint Paul. Shelley, is there something you'd like to respond to about monitoring and also if you would briefly describe what the new process means to you today?

>> I think with the monitoring and I echo a lot of what Jesse and Tara have said is as advocates we can pick up the phone and say this is not going well or this or that happened and get a response that is welcomed and addressed. If you look at the volume of victim roles -- victims that we serve we see patterns that are happening and when we reach out and talk to Jesse or Tara or other partners, this may set the tone of an idea of what we want to monitor. It isn't just picking up pieces of paper but also based on feedback from victims and we have victim focus groups that provide feedback. So it's a very holistic approach. That's it.

>> Thank you, Shelley. I would like to ask you how you document the holistic approach, the fabulous work, in a way that will hopefully pay for all of this? So if you would not mind sharing with us some of the Blueprint funding you have been able to obtain and whatever insight you can share with the listeners today.

>> I think having funding for the Blueprint is critical and the Blueprint for Safety saves lives. There is no doubt about it. Not only does it save lives in the form it is right now, but each year we keep making it better and better. It reaches more victims and looks at things of implicit and explicit biases on the impact of a victim being sexually exploited and immigration issues. This is an organic, growing document that is successful. What I find is when I am able to portray that to funders, I think the OVW funding, the arrest grant has been phenomenal because they recognize you won't and Ralph this in three, six, nine years. It's the process to implement the Blueprint and it's a process to make it better. There is STOP money that goes through local states and is a good avenue for funding because it takes a lot of money. You need a Blueprint coordinator and advocacy involvement in training and materials. Every time you put into it, you get millions back. I'm not just saying that. To get the funding, you have to really be able to articulate the value of doing it. There is value in creating a Blueprint community. I open myself up to the grants I have shared and how I have laid it out and I would be happy to share grants

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and things that I have utilized. I think it's important we get a message across and programs have been good about doing that that this is the type of project that we feel communities need to have funded and in a long-term way.

>> Thank you, Shelley. I will move over to my colleague Denise and ask her to talk about solicitations and I know there are some questions about how they can get officers involved. Can you speak to that, Denise?

>> I will and thank you Shelley for giving the commercial I was going to do. On the Praxis website we have a number of resources in the Blueprint pages and others talking about ways in which we can support you and the work of other communities in implementing the processes. I won't talk about them in the interest of time but you can find them on our website. OVW has funded a number of these efforts and the solicitation is open now and I think it's due February 14. I see my colleague responding to a question about tribal specific solicitations and there is one open now and folks could consider trying to apply under that. The improving criminal justice response as far as I know is not out yet. I don't know how the shut down my impact the release of that solicitation but normally they come out this time of year. We are happy to talk with you and help you think about how to put together your application if you are interested in applying to do Blueprint work. With that I want to thank our Saint Paul partners for the presentation today. It has been an excellent presentation and you do wonderful work here in Saint Paul. Thanks to all of you who joined the webinar and putting up with our crackerjack team who put together a smoothly delivered webinar and an a more serious note thanks for indulging us as we had technical problems in the middle. Thank you again everyone, and have a good day. Goodbye.

>> [Event concluded]