

The Saint Paul



St. Paul, MN's Coordinated Response to Domestic Assaults: Identifying and Responding to Offenders

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Introductions

- Bree Adams Bill, Saint Paul Blueprint for Safety Coordinator
 - The Saint Paul & Ramsey County Domestic Abuse Intervention Project

- Tara Patet, Senior Prosecutor
 - The Saint Paul City Attorney's Office

Objectives

- Integrate an enhanced response to holding dangerous domestic abuse offenders accountable.
- Centralize the real-lived experiences of victims within the criminal justice system's response to domestic abuse crimes.
- Identify practical measures to assess the effectiveness of a coordinated community response model.

The Saint Paul Blueprint for Safety

Demographics

- Capitol City of Minnesota, Saint Paul: Pop. 295,000
- Located in Ramsey County: Pop. 526,000
- Domestic Abuse-Related 911 calls in Saint Paul: 5,000-6,000
- The Saint Paul & Ramsey County Domestic Abuse Intervention Project: 5,800 victims and their children per year

Before The Saint Paul Blueprint for Safety

Problems with CCR Work

- Drifted from systemic change to general collaboration
- Reform equated with “meetings”
- Focus on “who” not “what”
- Individual cases vs. systemic change
- Minimal policy development as a group
- Change didn’t “stick”

Problems with CCR Work Cont'd

- Turnover of key staff members, lack of institutional knowledge
- Lack of coordination between agencies
- Weak problem-solving process
- Lack of transparency

DV field experience

- Do our interventions account for unique nature of battering?
- Are we making things better or worse?
- Are people safer?
- Are we getting control over most violent offenders?
- How do our interventions impact victims/community?

Creation of The Saint Paul Blueprint for Safety

The Beginning

- 2007:** Approached by Praxis International to complete Safety & Accountability Audit
- 2008:** City of St Paul, SPIP, Praxis, ISAIAH ⇒ MN Legislature ⇒ Blueprint for Safety Funded
- 2009:** Created and Written
- 2010:** Unveiled and Implemented

The Definition

- **An approach:** A shared, coherent way of thinking about and acting on domestic violence cases
- **A document:** A shared collection of interagency policies and practices
- **A process:** Continually evaluate and adjust practices

The Key Features

- **Single, overarching policy:** All agency policies are linked together
- **Attention to risk and danger:** Each worker is organized to capture, document, act upon and disseminate information about risk and danger
- **Grounded in research:** 30+ years of research shape the policies/practices

The Key Features Cont'd

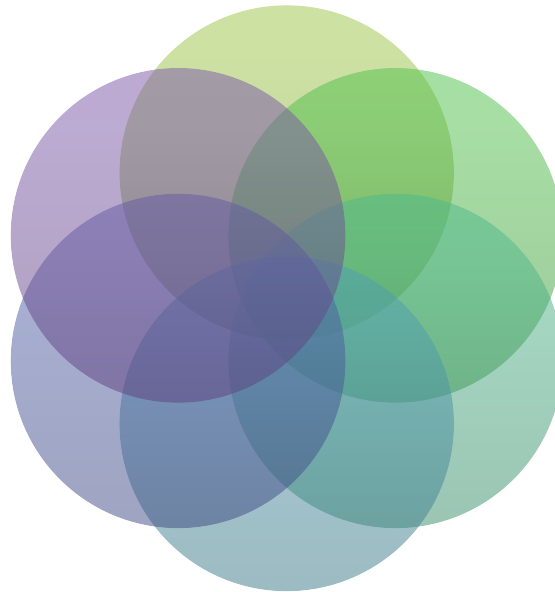
- **Ongoing monitoring and adjusting practice:** Built-in evaluation of what we're doing and adjust practices where indicated
- **Problem solving:** Internal Agency leaders and decision makers consistently communicate to address problems immediately and keep victims' experiences at the center

The Foundational Principles

Interagency approach and collective intervention goals

Reduce unintended consequences and disparity of impact

Attention to context and severity



Messages of help and accountability

DV is a patterned crime requiring continuing victim engagement

Sure and swift consequences

The Continuation

- 2012:** Office of Violence Against Women (OVW) funded Pilot Demonstration Sites to adapt the Blueprint for Safety
- 2013:** MN Office of Justice Programs funded enhancement of the Saint Paul Blueprint for Safety
- 2015:** OVW refunded pilot sites, including rural communities
- 2016:** OVW funded Saint Paul to continue enhancements

Real-lived Experiences of Victims

Victim-Centered Approach

- Community-based, confidential, domestic abuse advocates
- Advocate Initiated Response: Reaching out to victims
- Individual Experiences and Focus Groups : What are we hearing from victims?
- Monitoring: Keeping victims experience at the forefront

Continuous Victim Engagement

Specific actions are outlined in the Blueprint for each government agency:

- Protect victim from retaliation
- Problem solve with victim around enhancing safety as case proceeds
- Interview victims with sensitivity to the complexity of domestic abuse
- Consult with, refer to and contact confidential advocates

Continuous Victim Engagement Cont'd

Goals for each interaction:

- Prioritize safety
- Offer resources and increase access to services and protection
- Build collaboration over time

Enhanced Response

911

- Seek and document the history of domestic violence
- Assess victim's level of fear and threats made
- Assess suspect's access to weapons
- Communicates more info to patrol via CAD
- Sends reassuring messages to victims
- Priority Codes and Problem Natures more accurate

Patrol

- Ability to re-code the call
- Quality (and length) of police reports enhanced
- Sends messages of help to victims
- Risk and Danger Assessment

Patrol Risk Questions

- Do you believe he/she will seriously injure or kill you/your children?
Why/why not?
- How frequently and seriously does he/she intimidate, threaten, or assault you? Is it changing? Getting worse? Getting better?
- Describe the time you were most frightened or injured by him/her?
- If we cannot contact you, who can we call that will know where you are?
- Where has he/she lived the past 10 years?

Case Illustration

“I asked the victim the Blueprint questions. She said she and the suspect have been together for 17 yrs. and have 2 children together. She said the physical abuse started about 2 yrs ago. The time she was most afraid was last Christmas when he punched her so violently it left a scar on her cheek. That’s when she tried to leave him. He would not accept her leaving. She says the violence is getting worse and she believes he will seriously injure or kill her. He follows her when she goes out. Two days ago he attempted to pour boiling water on her and told her if she called police he would go after her family.”

Investigation

- Document a thorough history of domestic abuse
- Prioritization and assignment of cases
 - Offenders that flee cases are treated just as timely and serious as in-custodies

Investigation Cont'd

- Continued Risk and Danger Assessment
 - Provides more context and better assessment of severity
 - Digs deeper into victim's level of fear, isolation, frequency of abuse and history of domestic abuse not reported to law enforcement
- Cases evaluated for multiple charges, paying particular attention to crimes that often occur in domestic violence
 - Stalking, strangulation, sexual coercion or aggression
 - Witness tampering

Prosecution

- Better assess risk at charging stage and beyond
- Gather more information about context and severity of abuse
- Documenting victim and advocate contact confidentially
- Improved bail arguments
- Individually assesses domestic abuse no-contact order recommendations
- Prepare for probation violations immediately
- Joint Special Victims Unit

Pre-Sentence Investigation

- Broader access to history of domestic violence
- More context gathered and provided for PSI report
- Increased victim engagement

Probation Supervision

- Individually assesses domestic abuse no-contact order recommendations
- Supervising agent assignment based on a totality of risk and danger factors
- Increased and continuous victim engagement
- Quick response to probation violations

Assessing Effectiveness

Steering Committee

Overall Commitment

- Interagency collaboration and problem solving
- Honest evaluation
- Hold each other accountable
- Know shortcomings can lead to strengths
- Collectively move forward

Steering Committee Cont'd

Disparate Impact & Unintended Consequences

- Where is disparity occurring?
- When and how are discretionary decisions made?
- Is there a broader systems issue or one specific to our community?
- How are decisions negatively impacting victims and their children?

Assess Response: Inside Perspective

- **Internal Monitoring:**
 - Supervisors responsible
 - Monthly, quarterly, annually
 - Policies, protocols and practices
 - Implemented and being followed
 - Share with steering committee

Internal Monitoring

- 911
 - Regular review of DV calls and electronic transcripts
- Law Enforcement
 - Division commanders meet every other month for quality and compliance review of patrol reports and advised domestic calls
- Prosecution
 - Semi-annual case file review for compliance
- Probation
 - Review 3 – 5 cases quarterly for compliance

Assess Response: Outside Perspective

- **Interagency Monitoring:**
 - A mixed group of Blueprint agencies and advocates
 - Planning meetings
 - Specific areas of focus
 - Report to head of agency
 - Share findings with steering committee

Interagency Monitoring

- Develop monitoring plan and timeline with individual agency
- Form small interagency work group to lead monitoring activities
- Collect statistical data
- Conduct focus groups with victims/survivors

Internal Agency Monitoring	Focus	Results
LE	<p>Reviewed “Advised” Calls</p> <p>Police report review for risk ? Compliance</p> <p>Police report quality</p> <p>SPIP referrals</p>	<p>Increase in written police reports</p> <p>Increased to 100%</p> <p>Academy, FVU, In-service training</p>
Prosecution	<p>Context/severity of violence</p> <p>Victim Engagement</p> <p>DANCOs</p>	<p>Risk & Danger Checklist</p> <p>Victim Contact Sheet</p> <p>Reshaped “blanket” practice</p>
Probation	<p>Victim Engagement</p> <p>DANCO’s</p>	<p>Updated victim letters</p> <p>Reshaped “blanket” practice</p> <p>Increase of advocacy referrals</p>

Monitoring Challenges

- Time-consuming to plan, to do and to summarize/report
- Gaps in timeline to monitor
- Roadblocks
- Leadership changes
- Data compilation
- DV = Tough “cases”

Learnings

- A coordinator is essential
- Monitoring is key
- Ensure knowledge is shared, helps address staff turnover
- Secure buy-in from leadership
- A process is needed to address roadblocks
- Personality conflicts will always be there

Contact Information

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