



DELVING INTO DOCUMENTATION:
WHAT DOES ALL THE PAPER WE
PRODUCE TELL US?

Amy Dilworth, Knoxville Family Justice Center

Anton Tripolskii, Battered Women's Justice Project



BWJP & Knoxville Family Justice Center Working Together



This project was supported by Grant No. 2015-TA-AX-K027 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this presentation are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

2000: Safety & Accountability Audit

- Praxis audit team, including Ellen Pence fronted victim safety in its analysis.
- Knoxville Police Department began to contract with the YWCA for victim advocacy on behalf of the Department
- First DV government/nonprofit partnership in the community
- Community Coalition to End Domestic Violence created to unite organizations in Knox County in addressing DV.
- Coalition led to the formation of the Knoxville Family Justice Center in 2006.

2006: Protection Order Analysis

- BWJP conducted an analysis of the protection order process.
- Long-term relationship between BWJP, Rhonda Martinson, and the Knoxville FJC established.
- New perspective on the protection order process: community proves itself to be resourceful and adaptable to the system already in place.
- Community focused on addressing issues through the founding of the FJC.

2010: Safety & Accountability Audit

- 10-year anniversary of the first audit.
- Audit focused on the criminal justice system's accountability to victims of domestic violence.
- Conducted focus group with the process serving team from the Sheriff's Office.
 - Created specialized team to serve DV orders of protection and DV-related warrant
 - Team receives specialized DV training annually.
 - Service increased from 30% to 85-90%.

2010: Safety & Accountability Audit

- Sheriff's Office began using a voice recognition system in its detention center, accessible to the District Attorney's office for screening of potential witness intimidation.
- Compliance Monitor position funded in the Clerk of Court's office.
 - Role was great in contributing to holding offenders accountable.
 - Unfortunately, position was not maintained.

2012: Witness Intimidation Audit

- Knoxville, Duluth, San Diego chosen for a pilot audit.
- Knoxville was selected partly because of the prior audit where many witness intimidation issues were examined.
- Recommendations included process changes at the courthouse.
- Once a new judge and clerk were elected, changes were adopted.

Outcomes

- Decreased unnecessary visits to the courthouse for victims of DV, with less opportunities for the offender to intimidate.
- Managed docket so that numbers of people at the courthouse on days when protection orders are heard were decreased.
- Easier for bailiffs and court security to observe and account for intimidation tactics.
- Physical separation of parties in the courtroom.
- Added a court advocate during the week for victims of violence with multiple issues needing addressing and another person providing a layer of separation from the offender

2017: Text Analysis

- Knoxville chose not to adopt a formal risk assessment tool which many other Tennessee jurisdictions were adopting. Knoxville FJC reached out to BWJP and partner with Knoxville Police Department, Knox County Sheriff's Office, and Knox County 911 to review the way information regarding risk to victims of IPV was gathered.
- BWJP reviewed a few dozen domestic 911 records, and assessed these together with their corresponding reports filed by the police or sheriff.
- Gathered all domestic calls within a discrete time period to rule out cherrypicking certain reports.

2017: Text Analysis

- The vast majority of departments nationally are not organized for formal risk assessment, which requires targeted resources and continuous process improvement.
- Reports to Knoxville Police and Knox County Sheriff consisted of a section focusing on findings with respect to already-existing policies at the respective departments, as well as another section comparing the reports to BWJP-identified best practices.

2017: Text Analysis

- Recommendations applicable to most departments nationally include:
 - Adopting a unique code for IPV (as distinct from non-intimate domestic violence or domestic calls more generally) at 911.
 - Screen and document IPV calls completely
 - Ask about historical abuse and the context in which IPV takes place
 - Document actions taken with respect to offenders Gone on Arrival
 - Document investigative steps taken in detail within reports
 - Classify simple assaults as domestic assaults

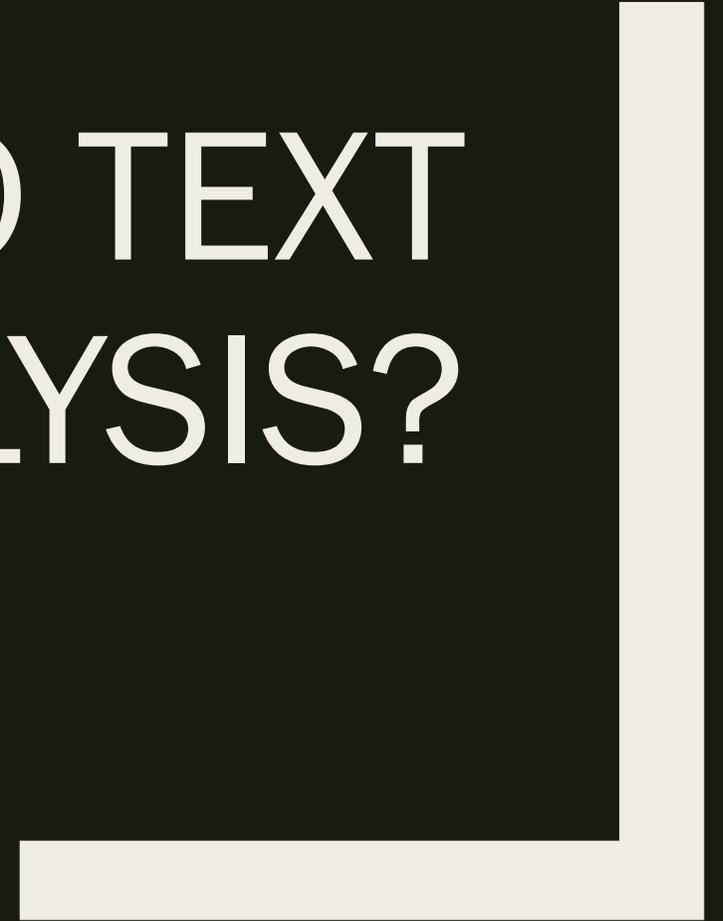
2017: Text Analysis

- Recommendations applicable to most departments nationally include:
 - Account for criminal interference with 911 calls.
 - Involve investigators early on.
 - Connect victims with advocates and resources thoughtfully.
 - Law enforcement officers should obtain warrants.
 - Document and investigate all crimes committed in an incident—sergeants should review.
 - Formalize follow-up and case closure practices.
 - Minimize exceptional clearances.

Outcomes

- Departments doing good things and committed to change—as evidenced in part by commitment to an assessment.
- Almost no law enforcement department in the country is well organized to assess risk.
- Assessing risk is more than just picking a tool.
- Policy work at the CCR helps develop better organization to assess risk.

WHY DO TEXT
ANALYSIS?



Planning Text Analysis

- Identify an issue to study
 - CCR team and/or victims of violence should identify areas for improvement.
- Get buy-in from departments from which you'll need written materials.
 - Screen and answer confidentiality concerns.
 - Potential sources:
911 records, police files, advocacy records, prosecution records...
- Identify assessment team and give them time to work.
- Deliver report coordinating with senior leadership at agencies.
- Make departments understand that the report is the beginning, not the end of the work—answer “what now?” before it's asked.

PLANNING FOR TEXT ANALYSIS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Keeping the Ball Rolling



QUESTIONS?

Amy Dilworth, adilworth@fjcknoxville.gov

Anton Tripolskii, atripolskii@bwjp.org