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Blueprint for Shared Safety Strategic Plan

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Abstract

The Blueprint for Shared Safety strategic plan will be adopted by Santa Cruz County Community Corrections Partnership as a framework of principles and practices that community leaders can use to lead shared safety strategies. By shifting the focus from the traditional criminal justice system to investments that can truly make our communities safer, the Blueprint aims to re-envision public safety together. The Community Corrections Partnership Community Education and Engagement Workgroup (CCP CEEW) has conducted data analysis to identify the key assets and gaps in Santa Cruz County. After identifying the key assets and gaps there were recommendation review sessions that included stakeholders, direct service providers, and survivors of crime, to prioritize draft recommendations. The recommendations will then inform the CCP CEEW on how to move forward and will be included in a report. The final report will be presented to the Community Corrections Partnership Executive Committee and eventually, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors.

Keywords: Blueprint, Survivors, Health, Community

Agency & Communities Served

United Way of Santa Cruz County is a non-profit organization, with a mission that states “We ignite our community to give, advocate and volunteer so that our youth succeed in school and in life, our residents are healthy and our families are financially independent” (United Way, 2019). Community organizing programs like Youth Violence Protection Taskforce, Project Thrive, Community Corrections Partnership, and Jóvenes SANOS at United way all have a similar goal, to improve the lives and well-being of the community.

Santa Cruz County Community Corrections Partnership Community Education and Engagement Workgroup (CCP CEEW), holds meetings once a month with collaborating agencies who share the same values and vision for Santa Cruz County, to improve the lives and well-being of the community. Work group members include community based organizations (CBOs), stakeholders, and survivors of crime. Community leaders in this workgroup recognized that a new approach to addressing community corrections was needed. Putting crime survivors needs at the center as an indicator of success based on their healing, instead of focusing on the offenders being punished. This success will be accomplished by shifting to a public health frame and adopting the 2016 Blueprint for Shared Safety strategic plan.

In the year 2016, Santa Cruz County had 10,624 reported crimes, for each crime committed a minimum of one person’s life is affected. We refer to these people as victims. In 2016, Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice completed a nationwide survey and found that 1 in 4 people have been crime victims. Victims are defined by Merriam Webster (2019) as, “a person harmed, injured, or killed as a result of a crime, accident, or other event or action”, “one that has

been subjected to oppression, hardship, or mistreatment”, and “one that is injured, destroyed, or sacrificed under any of various conditions”. A victim can be someone who may be “stuck” in the trauma state. The victim may feel lost and hopeless. It is until they find the road to recovery and healing that they will then move to identifying as a ‘survivor’. A survivor is “a person who continues to function and prosper”, “to remain alive or in existence”, and “to continue to exist or live after” (Merriam Webster, 2019). A key realization of the ‘survivor’ stage is that an individual has gotten through the trauma intact, or mostly intact, and is indeed outside of it. This understanding allows the person to begin integrating the trauma into his or her life story, to take control of life, and to recognize potential for change and growth.

Problem Description

Victim’s needs are not being met. Whether the needs be general basic needs, help to navigate through the systems, or just being believed and protected. Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice (2019), completed a nationwide survey of 800 crime survivors. They found that 59% did not receive any financial assistance, 52% needed help with understanding the courts and legal system, and 49% did not receive information about available support services (Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice, 2019).

Contributing Factors

There are many contributing factors that result in victims needs not being met including lack of trust, feeling judged, and difficulty navigating systems. Trust can be defined as the "belief that someone or something is reliable, good, honest, and effective" (Friedman, M., 2019). Victims do not trust the system, whether it’s a lack of trust between justice system officials (law

enforcement, probation, judges, district attorneys, and public defenders, Immigration and Customs Enforcement) or with victim service agencies (Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice, 2019). Not being able to trust the system means they won't file police reports due to factors such as the fear of deportation or retaliation. They may assume that filing a police report doesn't mean the issue will be resolved for themselves and that it could make things worse. Victims may not look to receive services due to the stigma of being a crime survivor, and feeling judged (Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice, 2019). There is a stigma against accessing support services, in part based on mental health stigma in general. "Too often when a victim's cry for help is heard, they're met with skepticism, a slew of nosy questions, or worse, told that they don't even deserve to be helped at all. In the process, their chance at recovery is often shattered, from the judgement of others." (anonymous, person, March 2018). This feeling may come from law enforcement, justice system, or agencies. Lastly, the overall justice system is difficult to navigate through, especially when you are alone. Not only is the justice system difficult to navigate, victim service providers can be tricky to handle and finding the ins and outs of different agencies.

Consequences

The barriers to seeking help and accessing services can be difficult for victims of crime, resulting in a lack of feeling safe, a hurt recognizes hurt cycle, and not being able to access victims funds to get the help for basic needs. There's a lack of sense of feeling safe, whether the crime may be burglary, bullying, domestic violence, or gang related, victims feel unsafe (Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice, 2019). The fear of retaliation if the victim seeks help or wants to go to the police, in fear it might happen again. Hurt recognizes hurt cycle, meaning when

someone has deep rooted trauma they haven't truly addressed yet, they may take out their pain on another person resulting in more hurt (Parsons, J., & Bergin, T., 2010). The cycle will continue to affect the victim, their support group, and community. Ultimately, the victim may suffer to the point where it is affecting their finances. A big victim funding service is California Victims Compensation Board (CalVCB), their criteria to apply and qualify is all dependent on if the victim filed a police report. The California Victim Compensation Board is a state program dedicated to providing reimbursement for many crime-related expenses to eligible victims who suffer physical injury or the threat of physical injury as a direct result of a violent crime (California Victim Compensation Board, 2016). Unfortunately, accessing these funds can be difficult for victims, a big one being filing a police report. Other eligibilities include, a 3 year filing period after the crime has happened, the victim can't have a criminal record in the past 5 years, and the victim must cooperate with law enforcement throughout the whole process.

Problem Model

| Contributing Factors | Problem | Consequences |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Lack of Trust | Victims needs are not being met. | Lack of sense of feeling safe |
| Stigma and judgement | | Hurt recognizes hurt, or revictimization |
| Difficult to navigate the systems | | Not able to access victims funds and services |

Capstone Project Description and Justification

Project Implementation

Using the Blueprint for Shared Safety, an evidence based public health model, there are five pillars. Each pillar have five supporting action steps, and are the building blocks for a restorative safety foundation to a community.

- Shifting to a Public Health Frame
- Well Being is Safety
- Crime Survivors at the Center
- Breaking the Cycle of Harm
- Making the System Work

In 2018, The Community Corrections Partnership Community Education and Engagement Workgroup (CCP CEEW) implemented the Blueprint for Shared Safety framework. CCP CEEW engaged 175 community members in focus groups, one on ones, and workgroup meetings. The participants included survivors of crime, youth, adults, English speakers, monolingual Spanish Speakers, system stakeholders (direct service providers, justice, education, health, government), and those with experience in the criminal justice system. Rather than using the 2016 Blueprint for Shared Safety as a ‘checklist’, the new safety plan is adapted to guide Santa Cruz County for the strategic work that will be implemented to serve survivors at the forefront. The work has already been in effect since January 2018, that started with the community engagement. A result of this work is identifying the assets and gaps as to why victim’s needs are not being met. Based on the work completed, the Blueprint will create recommendations from the asset and gap analysis and add in to a report that will be presented to the Community Corrections Partnership

Executive Committee and eventually the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors. The work group members of CCP CEEW have all taken part in the community engagement and work group meetings. There were community review sessions that were open to the community members who took part in the focus groups, and for their thoughts and insights to validate, review and revise the main themes. Their input was used regarding draft recommendations and their thoughts and opinions. Doing this raised community voices to be heard by decision makers who will read the report.

The first task completed was the data analysis of meetings for all 23 data sources where identified assets, gaps, and recommendations were given. As a result of the analysis, the Blueprint now has lists for Barriers to Accessing Services, Barriers to Engaging Survivors, and Survivors Needs for Healing were created (See Appendix X). Another result of the Blueprint, created a contact list for healing and support groups as well as a mental health and crisis support lists for agencies to use at their office that clients could use for resources (See Appendix X). As a result of the review sessions that included some folks from the focus group and one on one meetings to address the asset and gap findings, some of the recommendations that the work group created were presented to the folks from the focus groups (See Appendix X). Supporting staff members typed the Methodology paragraph that will go into the report. They also helped to create footnotes, as well as the end notes for the report. When finalizing the recommendations, CCP CEEW presented the report that was presented to Community Corrections Partnership Executive Committee and the County Board of Supervisors. Please see See Appendix X Scope of Work for a detailed timeline with activities and deliverables.

The 23 focus groups, one on one interviews, and work group meetings completed by United Way, all concluded that the needs were not being met by crime survivors. The main pillar CCP CEEW focused on is ‘Crime Survivors at the Center’ and they identified the assets and gaps in Santa Cruz County. Once they found the assets and gaps, the work group identified recommendations that will be implemented throughout the County by CBOs, stakeholders, and the public health sector.

Project Purpose

The Blueprint for Shared Safety purpose is to shift from a system that focuses on punishment to a system that serves the survivors well being and ensuring their needs are being met by providing recommendations to service providers about how to support survivors in healing (Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice, 2019). The project can help to improve the trust between law enforcement, community members, and agencies. Blueprint will help to address the stigma and judgement victims feel, by providing tips to service providers and justice systems and recommend training to be more trauma informed. This will also address the lack of trust when it comes to law enforcement and not feeling like they are being believed or heard. The goal is to identify some recommendations from the data analysis that will be put into the report, and hopefully the recommendations will be implemented correctly in the County.

Project Justification

Community leaders recognized that there needed to be a new approach to addressing crime, by shifting to a public health frame and adapting the Blueprint for Shared safety strategic plan. Identifying the assets and gaps and coming up with recommendations that could improve

the lives and well-being of victims of crime, to hopefully engage victims in the process to becoming survivors by supporting them in gaining access to services and healing. Our current criminal justice system focuses on giving justice to the offender and making sure they, ‘pay for their crime’ (Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice, 2019). Community leaders and agencies recognized that it wasn’t working when in the Community Assessment Project (2017), Santa Cruz had a growing crime rate of 38.5 per 1,000 residents compared to overall California with a 30.2 per 1,000 crime rate. Shifting to a Public Health frame will let stakeholders, agency service providers, and community members collaborate to address crime within the community and find long term solutions.

Expected Outcomes

In the end, the desired outcome will be to increase access to victim’s services in Santa Cruz County by amplifying the existing CBOs and programs. Promote Trauma-recovery , and shed stigma by fostering awareness to the public health by making sure the victim's needs are being met. Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice (2019), completed a nationwide survey of 800 crime survivors, their findings mirrored the same findings we found in Santa Cruz County. They found that 59% did not receive any financial assistance, 52% needed help with understanding the courts and legal system, and 49% did not receive information about available support services (Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice, 2019).

Project Results

From the beginning to the end of the capstone project, multiple tasks were completed during the time of writing the Blueprint report. Tasks such as, a mental health and support group resource list was created and attached to the report. This resource list was provided at community

engagement and work group meetings as an aide to use when any triggering topics were discussed. Second, A Victims of Crime Act FAQ sheet was created and attached to the report that answered Frequently Asked Questions on eligibility and qualifications. A third component added to the report is the collaborative agency table that is aligned with Blueprint. This table includes current agencies and programs in Santa Cruz County that are currently working on victims needs. The table also includes a quick description and contact name. The last component that was suggested by the Blueprint is a whole category devoted to “Services for Victims and Crime Survivors”. This category is part of the 2-1-1 directory website that makes it easy for crime survivors to access help they might need. When conducting the focus groups, they found many reasons why victim’s needs are not being met, a few big ones are a lack of trust, stigma and judgement, and difficulties navigating through the system. Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice (2019), completed a nationwide survey of 800 crime survivors, their findings mirrored the same findings Blueprint for Shared Safety found in Santa Cruz County. They found that 59% did not receive any financial assistance, 52% needed help with understanding the courts and legal system, and 49% did not receive information about available support services (Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice, 2019). The completion of each component of Blueprint for Shared Safety will have a report that will be presented to stakeholders of the community. The measure of effectiveness will be the acceptance of the recommendations that were presented. If CCP provided 4 recommendations to the County Board of Supervisors, then how ever many of the recommendations the stakeholders use will prove if they were effective or not. Further measuring of the effectiveness will be to observe the recommendations being used in the community and if it is a success, or not.

Conclusion & Recommendations

The Blueprint was completed at the end of December, and was presented to the CCP Executive Committee followed by the Santa Cruz County Board of Directors. The report has addressed many assets and gaps within Santa Cruz County that created the necessary recommendations as long term solutions. The report will shed stigma and foster awareness to this invisible social health issue that divides survivors of crime and stakeholders. It will also give a voice to survivors of crime and let them share their story and experience to bring into light the to stakeholders such as law enforcement and other agencies that serve crime survivors. While we are focusing on victims needs being met, this is also important for the system folks to work together in a different way to come together as a community. Not only will it help the system folks to come together to better serve survivors of crime, the report will promote trauma recovery, and amplify resources already existing programs. This report is only the first step in this journey to reforming the criminal justice and becoming a public health shared safety community.

Personal Reflection

The Blueprint for Shared Safety Strategic Plan began in 2018, with the hopes it would be completed by October 2019. As we all know, deadlines can be difficult to meet when collaborating with CBOs, stakeholders, and the community. Not all CCP CEEW meetings had consistent attendance so that each meeting would take a few steps back to remind everyone the purpose of this report. On top of collaboration not completely working out, time was against us. At our workgroup meetings, members would get caught up on a specific topic and would take a longer time diving into one topic and not having enough time to cover the rest of the topics on

our agenda. A recommendation for United Way and the CCP CEEW members, would be more stern on the deadlines. Making sure that even though the workgroup may go off topic, bring the group back to keeping track on the agenda. Last recommendation I would make would be in regards to their collaborating partners. Only sticking to the table members of CCP CEEW, without reaching to far out of the circle. The more people the workgroup reaches out too, the more they will have to wait for their comments and responses.

Although this was the most challenging assignment I have completed in my whole education career, I gained the most amount of real life knowledge and skills that I know I will carry with me through my professional career. There were definitely challenges that affected the project and work I was working on, but with the help of my mentor I was able to handle them and find solutions that will help me in the future. My mentor definitely challenged me as well, on my professional development. Sarah helped me to get out of my comfort zone by making phone calls to reach out to work group members, or speaking at a CCP CEEW meeting. I also learned first hand how to collaborate with other members to complete a task, this was different that just learning from a textbook what collaboration is. I will definitely cherish the year and a half I have been with United Way and remember all the connections I've made, the increase I made towards bettering my professional development and communication style. I am forever grateful for the opportunity to have my mentor, and have my name on the Blueprint for Shared Safety Strategic Report that will be published in Santa Cruz County.

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Appendix A

Scope of Work

| Activities | Deliverables | Timeline/Deadlines | Supporting Staff |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Discuss potential capstone ideas | Final capstone project approved | January-April 30, 2019 | Sarah Emmert, Adrienne Saxton |

| | | | |
|--|--|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Helped create 3 lists to help organize the assets and gaps | List of Barriers to engage survivors List of Barriers to accessing services List of survivor’s needs for healing | January- March 2018 | Sarah and Erica De Garmo |
|--|--|---------------------|--------------------------|

| | | | |
|---|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Create FAQ sheet for VOCA and CalVCB | FAQs presented to # of victim service agencies | October 16, 2018 | Sarah Emmert |
| Create resource lists for mental health and support groups | Resource lists distributed To be used for every meeting in case of potential trigger topics | January- February 2019 | Sarah Emmert |
| Focus group, one on ones, and work group meetings | Transcribed notes | August, 2018- February, 2019 | Sarah Emmert |
| Collaborative Initiatives that are Aligned with Blueprint for Shared Safety | Created a table that will be added to the report on current services that are aligned with Blueprint | February- April, 2018 | Sarah Emmert |
| Participated in data analysis | 23 word documents with identified assets | February- March, 2019 | Sarah Emmert, Erica DeGarmo, |

| | | | |
|---|--|-----------------------|----------------------|
| | and gaps in community | | Andrew Davis, CSJ |
| Created three main lists from data sources | Distributed #s of each- Barriers to accessing services, Barriers to Engaging, and Survivors needs for healing | February- March, 2019 | Sarah Emmert |
| Participated in a review session with community members who participated in focus groups, | Solidified assets and gaps analysis and draft recommendations for report | March 24, 2019 | Sarah Emmert |
| Created another list to 'where are survivors currently accessing services' | List for "where are survivors currently accessing services" present to workgroup where # were distributed | May, 2019 | Sarah Emmert |
| Wrote methodology for report | methodology paragraph for report | March 18, 2019 | Sarah Emmert |
| Final presentation for capstone festival | Final presentation at capstone festival | December 19,2019 | Adrienne Saxton |