NCJFCJ

Building Safer Communities

Firearms Technical Assistance Project

FTAP Mapping Exercise Process

Initial considerations:

- Sites are expected to map both the criminal and civil protection order processes, even if initial plans are to address only one of the two processes
- Mapping should be part of an assessment process in which as many diverse stakeholders as possible are engaged; multiple perspectives are critical to the success of the process
- Small groups should be no larger than six people each to maximize number of different perspectives but allow for meaningful participation by each group member
- Facilitators should explain that participants will be tempted to discuss the challenges at each step as they draw the map, but that they should resist the temptation and continue to work through the map because there will an opportunity to discuss challenges in depth later in the process

Steps of the mapping process:

1. **Portals to safety exercise**

Using a scenario involving an arrest (to facilitate mapping of both criminal and CPO processes), participants engage in discussions at their table to identify where in the community the survivor would go to get help, thinking broadly (identifying "portals/pathways to safety"). Examples may include research by a victim regarding relief available re: firearms; initial interaction with law enforcement at the scene of a DV incident; speaking with a faith leader or other community leader; and a meeting between a victim and a DV advocate and/or attorney. Faculty facilitate a brief share-out and capture the portals on flipcharts. During the subsequent mapping work, participants are asked to incorporate in their maps the pathways from the identified portals to the court system.

2. **Creation of process maps**

Participants use large sheet of paper and markers of many colors to draw a map of the process being studied. They are encouraged to include each step of the process, including parallel processes and linkages between such processes, in the map. They also should include post-it notes for each stakeholder involved in a particular step.

Half of the tables are instructed to map the civil protection order process, and the other half maps the criminal process (e.g., 911 call through post-conviction). Faculty inform participants that they will have an opportunity to review and build upon a map of the process that is not their focus.

3. Debrief of mapping

Participants have an opportunity to circulate around the room to review all of the maps developed by their colleagues, noting similarities and differences. One person should be designated to remain at the table to answer any questions about the map. Participants are free to suggest revisions to maps of the process that was not the focus of their initial mapping. They then return to their own maps and revise them, if desired, based upon the other maps they reviewed.

Next, facilitators engage participants in a large-group discussion of the various maps, offering them an opportunity to make observations about things that they found surprising, and similarities and differences among the various maps. Through this process, participants begin to achieve a shared understanding of the process under review.

Finally, participants decide on a consensus favorite map for each process (CPO and criminal) to use in the next steps of the process; any needed revisions are made to ensure that the map is sufficient complete to enable challenge and opportunity identification.

4. Identification of key challenges and intervention opportunities

Next, participants use color-coded dot stickers to mark on the consensus map: (1) points in the process that present opportunities for better intervention regarding firearms—whether for providing information to litigants, obtaining information about respondents' access to firearms, or taking steps to obtain surrender of the weapons themselves (Green Dots); and (2) points at which there are significant challenges and gaps in stakeholders' ability to intervene regarding guns (Red Dots). A particular step can represent both an opportunity and a challenge or gap, and thus have both green and red dots. Usually, these are points to focus on for improvement.

After the map has been marked with red and green dots, faculty shift participants' attention to an assessment of the cultural responsiveness and accessibility of the mapped processes. Specifically, using a different color, participants indicate on the maps particular or additional barriers encountered by litigants who do not speak English or are from historically marginalized/underserved communities. If a particular aspect of the system implements an effective response to such litigants, participants may mark those areas with a fourth color.

A facilitated discussion follows, in which participants, depending on time available, engage in the following:

1. Organization/grouping of challenges into challenge areas ("buckets") to facilitate further refinement, prioritization, etc.
2. Prioritization of the challenge areas
3. Identification of factors that underlie or contribute to each of the prioritized challenge areas

5. Creative problem-solving and strategy generation

Note: this step is likely to take place at a separate meeting. Ideally, energy from the mapping process would be harnessed in the large, multi-disciplinary group to do some creative problem-solving together. Facilitators should explain that this presents an initial opportunity, one of many to come, to develop consensus around specific project areas of focus and activities. Consequently, this is not the only chance to engage in these conversations for stakeholders, but also ideas and strategies generated will be subject to change or refinement or ultimately may not become part of the project.

Participants select one of the identified focus areas of interest to them and form small groups to begin generating ideas for how to address the identified challenge or gap. Using a worksheet, they record their ideas, as well as which agencies would need to be involved and what possible next steps would be. Participants are encouraged to think creatively, envisioning a dramatically different approach to the issue. The facilitators circulate among the groups and, where helpful, offer suggestions regarding approaches that have worked in other communities.

During a large-group debrief, the groups share their ideas and others have an opportunity to provide feedback. During the last few minutes of the meeting, next steps are identified, with the possibility that the small groups will continue the work (with technical assistance) after the meeting, depending on how the project management team decides to move forward.

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