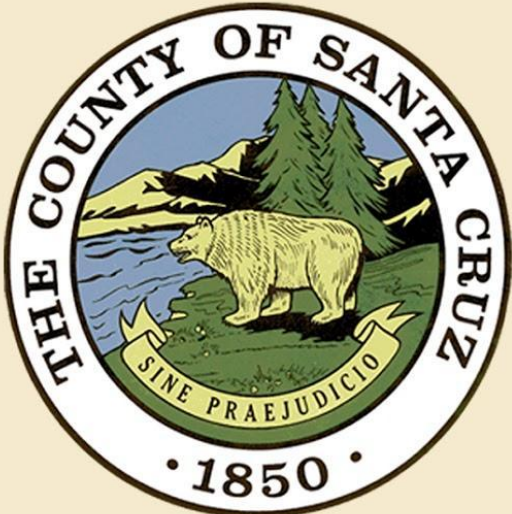


# Santa Cruz County Blueprint for Shared Safety

## Phase 1: Survivors at the Center



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# I. Executive Summary

**Background.** Californians for Safety and Justice developed the “Blueprint for Shared Safety” in 2017, after over a year of research and outreach to stakeholders — including law enforcement leaders, justice reform advocates, crime survivors, and local government officials — to provide a new survivor-centered framework for local leaders who are rethinking how to understand, invest in, evaluate, and achieve community safety and well-being. The Shared Safety framework is centered around five core principles: Shifting to a Public Health Frame, Wellbeing is Safety, Crime Survivors at the Center, Breaking the Cycle of Harm, and Making the System Work.

The model came to the attention of community leaders in Santa Cruz County where, in spite of the recent development of numerous strategic plans addressing various social issues, no strategic plan existed specifically for the adult criminal justice system. The Shared Safety framework was clearly in alignment with recent initiatives and best practices, and it provides a coherent framework to bring them together towards meaningful public safety outcomes.

**Methodology.** The Santa Cruz County Community Corrections Partnership (CCP) Executive Committee approved support for local community assessment and planning under the Shared Safety framework. The first phase has been an asset and gap analysis of the county’s alignment with the Shared Safety framework’s five principles, along with outreach efforts to engage crime survivors in this project (which is consistent with one of the Shared Safety principles). From January 2018 through October 2019, the CCP Community Education and Engagement Workgroup (CEEW) conducted strategic planning with leadership and support from the United Way of Santa Cruz County and the Santa Cruz County Probation Department.

From January 2018 to February 2019, the CEEW conducted focus groups, interviews, and convenings with over 175 community members, including survivors of crime, youth, and system stakeholders. Input was gathered with support from Californians for Safety and Justice, the District Attorney’s Office, the Conflict Resolution Center, Community Action Board, Barrios Unidos, and Survivors Healing Center. All communications were translated into Spanish for monolingual speakers, and translation services were available for the focus groups.

**Goals.** The input from the community dialogue process was compiled and sorted into five broad goal areas:

1. Prioritize healing and restoration for crime survivors
2. Ensure access to trauma recovery services
3. Engage crime survivors to prioritize and elevate their voices
4. Strengthen community trust and confidence in the criminal justice system
5. Recognize who is most vulnerable to crime in our community

**Top Recommendations.** From the gaps identified by the community input emerged 11 top recommendations designed to address those needs. In broad terms, the recommendations are, in no particular order:

A. Create **navigators for crime survivors** to assist them in navigating multiple systems and accessing existing community resources and supports.

B. Improve local **data collection** to better understand the characteristics and needs of crime survivors, including victimization incidence and prevalence data, as well as qualitative survey data from crime survivors themselves.

C. Expand and improve law enforcement efforts to **strengthen community trust and confidence in the criminal justice system** to increase the percentage of crimes that are reported and ensure positive experiences of law enforcement contact among crime survivors.

D. Establish a **trauma recovery center** with comprehensive services and supports for crime survivors, including those who may not typically access services due to individual, cultural or bureaucratic barriers.

E. Increase **crime survivor engagement and representation** at the level of policy and program planning to inform safety priorities and improve outcomes.

F. Support the establishment of a **peer-led network** of crime survivors to reduce isolation and provide a community voice for the needs and priorities of crime survivors.

G. Establish **restorative justice practices** such as community courts, victim/offender dialogues and restorative circles at multiple points in the local criminal justice system to promote healing and accountability.

H. Increase crime survivor **services and wellness resources**, including **coordinated wrap-around support and case management**.

I. Provide a robust calendar of **trainings** to increase the community capacity for trauma-informed care, cultural responsiveness, and whole-person support for crime survivors.

J. Provide **financial restoration** for crime survivors through coordinated collection of court-ordered monetary restitution, as well as active outreach and survivor assistance to increase utilization of California Victim Compensation Board resources, particularly for underrepresented populations.

K. Implement a community **outreach campaign** to shift the narrative to a public health framework that aligns multiple community sectors with evidence-based approaches to promoting shared safety for the entire community.



**Next Steps.** The CEEW is now in the process of prioritizing the top recommendations based on potential impact, community readiness, and resource requirements. For many of the recommendations, the CEEW will recruit appropriate organizations and collaborative groups to adopt and operationalize them. The CCP will also be asked to adopt the final report. This will allow these findings to guide new initiatives and resources as a coordinated, evidence-based model for promoting public safety throughout the community. Additionally, Santa Cruz County will continue to explore survivor engagement models – both formal and informal – to provide space for survivor voices to be heard, capacity building, and leadership opportunities, with a vision of deeper engagement by survivors of crime leading the conversation.

## II. Opening Letter

It is a pleasure to present the “Blueprint for Shared Safety, Phase 1: Survivors at the Center” report. This report is the culmination of nearly two years of committed work by the Community Corrections Partnership Community Education and Engagement Workgroup and many others who have volunteered to help push forward an agreed-upon framework for addressing the unique needs of crime survivors in a manner which is trauma-informed, healing and inclusive. The Shared Safety framework has helped our criminal justice stakeholders, local service providers and community members design a response to advance how we serve survivors of crime. This work is also aligned and supported by the 2018-2024 Country Strategic Plan Comprehensive Health and Safety Focus area.

I want to acknowledge all the hard work and dedication of the Community Education and Engagement Workgroup, public safety partners, and community members who have invested significant time and energy to bringing the crime survivor voice to the center to achieve community safety and well-being.

Thank You All,

Fernando Giraldo  
Chief of Probation  
Santa Cruz County

# Dedication

This project is dedicated to all those who have been impacted by crime, violence and trauma. You are survivors. We are committed to creating a community where survivors are heard and valued, a community that prioritizes your needs, a community that is trauma-informed, and a community that promotes recovery, healing and resiliency.

*“Each time a [person] stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, [they] send forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.”*

~ Robert Kennedy

Community Responses:  
*What does “Shared Safety” mean to you?*



# Acknowledgements

The Santa Cruz Shared Safety Project is the result of a multidisciplinary collaborative effort through the Santa Cruz County Community Corrections Partnership. We appreciate the dedication of those who contributed their time, resources and expertise to this endeavor.

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  - Walnut Avenue Family & Women's Center
  - Watsonville Law Center
- Californians for Safety and Justice
- Center for Victim Research
- National Center for Victims of Crime
- Funders
  - Santa Cruz County Community Corrections Partnership
  - Fund for Nonviolence
- Anonymous donors
- Countless in-kind contributions
- Survivors of crime and other community members who have informed the process



### III. Introduction

In 2017, Californians for Safety and Justice (CSJ), a statewide criminal justice reform organization, developed the “Blueprint for Shared Safety”. The Shared Safety report was based on more than a year of research and outreach to stakeholders, including law enforcement leaders, justice reform advocates, crime survivors, and local government officials. The goal was to provide a holistic framework for local leaders who are rethinking how to understand, invest in, evaluate, and achieve community safety and well-being.

**Shared Safety Core Principles:**

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

The Shared Safety model came to the attention of community leaders in Santa Cruz County where, in spite of the recent development of numerous strategic plans addressing various social issues, no strategic plan exists specifically for the adult criminal justice system. The Shared Safety framework is in alignment with recent initiatives and best practices, and it provides a coherent framework to bring them together towards meaningful public safety outcomes.

In November of 2017, the Santa Cruz County Community Corrections Partnership (CCP) Executive Committee approved support for local community assessment and planning under the Shared Safety framework. The Executive Committee determined that the first phase of the project would include an Asset and Gap Analysis of Santa Cruz County’s alignment with the Shared Safety framework’s five principles and the community’s strengths and weaknesses as related to the framework, as well as a simultaneous multi-faceted process designed to meaningfully engage crime survivors in this effort.

Established by law, the Santa Cruz County Community Corrections Partnership (CCP) is responsible for the development and implementation of the Community Corrections Plan. The CCP has convened working groups in the areas of Corrections Management, Community Supervision, Data Analysis, Community Engagement and Education, Court Processing, and Intervention Services. These working groups monitor and implement programs, identify program issues, facilitate inter-agency collaboration, and report on Realignment to the CCP.

Following this approval, the CCP’s Community Education and Engagement Workgroup (CEEW) conducted a strategic planning process based on the Shared Safety framework. This planning effort lasted from January 2018 to October 2019 under the leadership of the United Way of Santa Cruz County (UWSCC) and the Santa Cruz County Probation Department.

The CEEW meets on a monthly basis. Due to the new focus on the Shared Safety project, UWSCC conducted outreach and enrolled additional stakeholders to participate in the long-standing working group. The expanded CEEW membership includes representation from the County Administrative Office; justice organizations, such as the District Attorney’s Office, the Public Defender’s Office, the Probation Department, the Sheriff’s Office, and the Watsonville Law Center; service providers that work with survivors, as well as individuals who have committed harm, including Community Action Board, the Conflict Resolution Center, Housing Matters (formerly Homeless Services Center), Monarch Services, Santa Cruz Barrios Unidos, Survivors’ Healing Center, and Walnut Avenue Family and Women’s Center; and community members.

This expanded group consists of new collaborations among organizations partnering for the first time, and the group’s shared values, goals and principles have been infused in every step of the process. The workgroup identified the following goals for the Shared Safety project:

- 1) Promote healing, trauma-recovery and reparation
- 2) Increase public safety and wellbeing
- 3) Shed stigma and foster awareness
- 4) Make the system and community structures work
- 5) Foster accountability

The workgroup chose the following principles to provide the foundation for this work:

- **Equity** - Developing strategies to equalize resources and opportunities as a step toward justice; respecting and honoring the deep knowledge, varied experiences, and inherent dignity of those with lived experience<sup>1</sup>
- **Cultural Responsivity** - Appreciating the value of diverse views and avoiding imposing one’s own cultural values on others;<sup>2</sup> facilitating authentic collaboration from a place of respect, openness, and curiosity<sup>3</sup>
- **Trauma-Informed Systems** - Infusing trauma awareness, knowledge and skills into systems to maximize physical and psychological safety, facilitate the recovery of the person and support their ability to thrive<sup>4</sup>
- **Inclusion** of all voices, particularly those most impacted - Elevating, empowering and prioritizing voices not normally sought out or heard from; ensuring that policymakers and stakeholders hear these voices
- **Evidence-based practices** - Favoring practices that are based on firmly grounded scientific research rather than convention, intuition and unsystematic experience<sup>5</sup>

The CEEW directed that Phase 1 of the Asset and Gap Analysis should focus on the “Crime Survivors at the Center ” pillar of the Shared Safety framework. This was based on the fact that crime survivors have historically been underserved in Santa Cruz County, that addressing unresolved trauma in the lives of survivors is an important step in healing and breaking the cycle of harm, and that meaningfully engaging those most impacted by crime is key to any program seeking to advance the health and wellbeing of everyone in our community.

The purpose of Phase 1 of the Shared Safety project was to understand what survivors of crime need to heal and where their needs are and are not being met, to incorporate their voices into the development and implementation of the Asset and Gap Analysis, and to lay the foundation for ongoing and meaningful crime survivor engagement. The primary strategy chosen by the workgroup to answer these questions was to seek broad-based community input by engaging stakeholders, survivors of crime and community members in dialogue and information-gathering through focus groups and targeted engagement. CSJ’s “Shared Safety Community Engagement Session Guidelines” (see Appendix B) and “Shared Safety Survivor Engagement Guidelines” (see Appendix C) informed the planning process.

**Definition of “Survivor of Crime”**  
“Anyone who has been directly impacted by, witnessed, or whose daily life is impacted by violence or crime”\*  
Because not all people who have been victimized by crime identify with one or any label, the terms "survivor", "victim" and "person who has been harmed" are used interchangeably in this report. In addition, "offender" and "person who is responsible for causing harm" are used interchangeably.  
\* borrowed from Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice

UWSCC and the CEEW were committed to ensuring that the process meaningfully engaged crime survivors. Recognizing that crime survivor engagement must be carefully considered and conducted in a trauma-responsive manner, UWSCC relied on those who work directly with survivors of crime to support the recruitment efforts. Specifically, UWSCC partnered with the Santa Cruz County District Attorney's Victim Services Program, Santa Cruz Barrios Unidos, Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County, the Conflict Resolution Center, Survivors' Healing Center, as well as other CEEW member organizations.

The CEEW considered what success would look like and the desired impacts it hoped to achieve through the adoption and implementation of the Shared Safety framework in Santa Cruz County. It came up with the following:

- Those who have harmed others understand the impact of their actions and are supported to take accountability for their actions and repair the harm.
- Reduced suffering and harm; trauma is addressed and healed
- Compassionate, interconnected, thriving community focused on relationships, solutions and problem-solving
- Safety is viewed as a public health issue and crime as a lack of health; crime responses are focused on prevention and treatment; the risks and needs of individuals are prioritized; wrap-around services are offered.
- Shift in focus to victims and healing for all involved; the long-term needs of survivors are met holistically, through effective restitution (not just financially).
- The voices of those impacted are at the forefront; they speak through us and speak for themselves.
- The system and community recognize that a person is more than their offense or their victimization and don't define them by the event; focus on restoration and re-integration into the community rather than reducing them to the criminal event; everyone is supported on the road to health, wholeness and well-being.

## IV. Methodology

From January 2018 to February 2019, the Community Education and Engagement Workgroup (CEEW) engaged approximately 175 community members in Phase 1 of the Shared Safety project. Information was collected from five focus groups with systems stakeholders, seven focus groups with survivors of crime (including two in-custody groups), three focus groups with youth, four one-on-one interviews, monthly CEEW workgroup meetings, and other collaborative initiatives (e.g., the Youth Violence Prevention Task Force Network). See Appendix A for an overview of the community input process.

Seven of the stakeholder and survivor focus groups were designed and facilitated by Californians for Safety and Justice representatives, and the remaining focus groups and interviews were conducted by UWSCC, the Santa Cruz County District Attorney's Office, the Conflict Resolution Center, Community Action Board and Barrios Unidos. For their sessions, these organizations took the lead on recruiting participants through their networks and client bases, designing questions, hosting the sessions, and documenting participant responses.

Participants included: survivors of crime, youth, adults, English speakers, monolingual Spanish speakers, system stakeholders (including direct service providers and justice, education, health and government professionals), and people with direct experience of the criminal justice system. All communications were translated into Spanish for monolingual speakers, and translation services were available for the focus groups.

Additionally, in June 2018, the CEEW, along with the statewide network, Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice (CSSJ), conducted an intimate convening in Santa Cruz County to engage people with lived experience as survivors of crime or violence in a healing discussion about shared safety.

The qualitative data from this engagement process were compiled and integrated into five goals or desired results identified as important by the community. The five goal areas that emerged were: "Prioritize Healing and Restoration for Crime Survivors", "Ensure Access to Trauma Recovery Services", "Engage Crime Survivors to Prioritize and Elevate Their Voices", "Strengthen Community Trust and Confidence in the Criminal Justice System", and "Recognize Who is Most Vulnerable to Crime".

The CEEW then took the findings back to survivors and community members to check accuracy and invite input into the development of recommendations. In April 2019, the CEEW hosted two sessions with survivors of crime who had participated in previous focus groups. The community input results were outlined for participants, and they were asked if their contributions had been accurately captured and if there was anything else they would like to add. A total of 21 community members participated.

The CEEW used the totality of community input, as well as the expertise and experience of the workgroup members in their work as service providers, to develop a limited set of recommendations.



What follows in this report:

**Sections IV - VIII:** Goals - The five desired results that emerged from the community engagement process, including discussions for each of the following:

- a) Why Is This Important?: Why the result is needed in our community
- b) The Larger Context of Our Data: State and national research that reinforces the importance of the goal and echoes our community findings
- c) Gaps Identified by the Community: Unmet needs, challenges and barriers for achieving the desired results in our community
- d) Existing Community Assets: Existing community programs, services and systems that currently address gaps and work toward achieving the goal

**Section IX:** Top Recommendations - Solutions identified by the community for addressing the gaps and/or bringing existing assets to scale, as compiled by the CEEW

**Section X:** What Has Already Shifted and Next Steps - Shifts, milestones or or outcomes that have occurred since the start of this process and future directions of the CEEW based on what it has learned from this process so far

**Please note:** The gaps and assets outlined in this report are the perspectives of the community members who participated in focus groups and one-on-one interviews. The report does not include all comprehensive gaps and assets, nor does the information gathered necessarily reflect the opinions of the CCP Leadership or CEEW.

Due to the overlap and interconnectedness of the results, some gaps and assets may be listed multiple times.

## V. Goal #1: Prioritize Healing and Restoration for Crime Survivors

### Why Is This Important?

When a crime is committed, individuals and communities are harmed. Prioritizing the needs of survivors and restorative justice practices in our system's response to crime can help repair those harms, make survivors less likely to be victimized again and lead to less criminal activity overall.<sup>6</sup> Restorative justice gives crime survivors a voice and greater satisfaction with the justice system, while holding the individuals who committed the crime accountable and reducing recidivism.<sup>7</sup>

### The Larger Context of Our Data

Survivors of crime are often impacted deeply by the criminal event, with indirect effects that extend to their families, close friends and communities. Crimes can affect survivors psychologically, physically, financially, and spiritually.<sup>8</sup> National and state surveys show that survivors of crime experience significant challenges in recovery and healing.<sup>9</sup>

Being victimized often has a significant impact on survivors' long-term health, stability and quality of life. The majority of crime survivors report experiencing symptoms such as anxiety, fear, post-traumatic stress, depression and difficulty with sleeping, relationships or work.<sup>10</sup> Survivors report that it can take years to recover from these experiences.<sup>11</sup> These impacts are disruptive to daily life and can have long-term health impacts. In one survey, one in four survivors said they missed work as a result of the crime incidents, thus contributing to a financial burden.<sup>12</sup>

Trauma impacts survivors' ability to absorb and retain information and make decisions with respect to the criminal justice process and accessing services and resources. Survivors have described challenges in absorbing and processing information post-trauma and the need for information to be often repeated and relayed by an advocate or representative.<sup>13</sup>

### Gaps Identified by the Community: Survivors' Unmet Needs for Healing and Restoration

The following themes emerged from community input regarding the currently unmet needs of survivors for healing:

- Unresolved trauma and pain: stress, anxiety, feeling unsafe, difficulty sleeping, worrying about the safety of loved ones
- Not being asked what they need to heal by courts, service providers and advocates
- The need for meaningful accountability in which the survivor is involved
- The lack of an individualized approach by the system: the current system does not address the complexity of the needs of many survivors (e.g., those who don't want the offender to go to jail or those who want harsher sentences)
- The need for knowledge about the criminal justice process and system
- Lack of a voice and representation in the criminal justice process
- The need for a feedback loop and ongoing communication on criminal justice outcomes and processes
- The failure of the current system to prevent future victimizations and stop the cycle of harm

- The need for opportunities for restoration and healing that involve forms of meaningful accountability other than monetary restitution, such as closure, an apology, a space for forgiveness, community service, opportunities for healing on both sides, etc.
- Isolation and lack of involvement: feeling isolated and “othered”, misunderstandings and misinformation on the part of the community, lack of spaces in which to share story and connect with others
- Lack of trauma-informed and victim-centered systems: the system is retraumatizing and dehumanizing, feeling blamed by system representatives and law enforcement
- The need for wellness resources: emotional support, free services for mental and physical wellbeing, ongoing and long-term mental and physical therapy, time to pause on life to get counseling if needed, continuing care, etc.
- The need for assistance in meeting basic needs related to victimization: access to victim’s compensation or other financial resources if unable to work and housing if needed to leave home, the need for more shelter spaces for women with children who need to leave their homes, the need for support with childcare

## Existing Community Assets

The community highlighted the following assets that address healing and restoration for crime survivors:

- Organizations that provide services to survivors of crime (see [www.211santacruzcounty.org](http://www.211santacruzcounty.org) for a list of existing survivor-serving organizations)
- Trauma-informed care being embraced by many in Santa Cruz County, for example:
  - The efforts of the Youth Violence Prevention Network’s Project Thrive to create an equitable, culturally responsive, trauma-informed system of care for boys and young men of color who have been impacted by violence. Project Thrive has provided systems-level capacity-building opportunities, such as:
    - Trauma-Informed Systems Conference (2017)
    - Culturally Responsive Organizations Training (2018)
    - Implicit Bias Training (2018)
    - Leadership Cohort for Advancing Equity and Cultural Responsivity (2019)
- Through Santa Cruz County’s Partnership with Trauma-Transformed, over 1,700 individuals were trained in Trauma-Informed Systems 101 workshops (2016-2019), including all Santa Cruz County Court staff (2016-2017).
- Implementation of culturally-based Cultura Cura curriculums that promote healing, e.g., El Joven Noble, Xinachtli, and Cara y Corazon
- Access to culturally-based healing activities, such as sweat lodges and other ceremonies
- Opportunities for survivors to have a voice in the outcomes of court case, e.g., victim impact statements and restorative justice programs
- An emerging commitment to restorative justice in Santa Cruz County, including: the Conflict Resolution Center, the University of California, Santa Cruz, the Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Office, Cabrillo College, and restorative practices in various schools across the county

*“In this Restorative Justice program, I liked that we had a voice as the victim’s family. We had a chance to decide how justice would happen. We had an opportunity to say what we needed to say to help our daughter feel better. This program gives strength to the victim. Everyone benefited - my daughter was no longer bullied, and the offender learned something and did not have to go to Juvenile Hall.”*  
- Parent of bullied teen

- Several organizations in Santa Cruz County have Victims' Advocates: Santa Cruz County District Attorney's Office, Santa Cruz Police Department, Monarch Community Services, Walnut Avenue Family and Women's Center, and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA). Some of the services that Victims' Advocates provide include but are not limited to:
  - Contacting victims of crimes to provide aid, assistance or referrals to appropriate services and resources to meet their needs; provide status updates to victims throughout case development
  - Functioning as a liaison to third parties to inform them of the crime, status, victim's condition, and case progress; meet and confer with detectives, officers, and allied agencies regarding individual cases; arranges victim interviews with the probation department prior to pre-sentencing decisions
  - Accompanying victims to court proceedings, meetings, and interviews with law enforcement and/or attorneys
- The Victims' Advocates from the Santa Cruz District Attorney's Office participate in community outreach with three community centers in the county (La Manzana in Watsonville, Nueva Vista in Beach Flats and the Live Oak Family Resource Center). Advocates meet survivors in these community locations to help them access services
- Nationally: Office of Victims of Crime Training & Technical Assistance Center, <https://www.ovcttac.gov/>
  - Building the capacity of victim assistance organizations across the country. OVC TTAC can help by offering education and tools to the field at no cost, so those who provide services have the skills to reach out to victims of every type of crime, from every background, in every place, and offer them what they need to rebuild their lives. Services include: Training, Customized TA, Speaker Support, National Victim Assistance Academy, and Professional Development Scholarships.

*“I feel like this helped me understand the depth of the harm that I caused and helped convince me that I should re-evaluate the path I’m going down. The best part of the meeting was feeling like I had a chance to have a voice but still get to listen to someone affected by the incident.”*

~ Local Restorative Justice Program Participant



## V. Goal #2: Ensure Access to Trauma Recovery Services

### Why Is This Important?

Addressing crime survivors' trauma produces ripple effects that benefit the safety and healing of loved ones and entire communities. Crime survivors who receive help are less likely to experience crime again.<sup>14</sup> An effective response requires ensuring survivors have access to services that are community-based, culturally responsive and trauma-informed, and engaging the communities most likely to be impacted by crime.

### The Larger Context of Our Data

Despite the fact that many California crime survivors experience stress and trauma after the crime and endure a long period of recovery, many do not pursue or receive support from state- or community-based survivor services. State surveys show that less than one in five California crime survivors report receiving financial assistance, counseling, medical assistance, and other types of healing services that can help recovery and stabilization.<sup>15</sup> This theme was echoed in our local findings of rates of service access among Santa Cruz county survivors, but as noted under goal #5, local surveys are needed to further confirm and specify these statistics.

The substantial gap between survivor needs and access to support was documented by Californians For Safety and Justice's California Crime Victims' Survey (2019).<sup>16</sup> Services desired but not generally received included: financial assistance to help with damaged property and monetary losses; financial assistance with medical costs; help understanding the courts and legal system; information on available support services, medical assistance or physical therapy; counseling or other mental health support; and emergency or temporary housing.

Survivors may not seek services for a variety of reasons, including the absence of diversity among service providers and a lack of culturally sensitive services.<sup>17</sup> Negative experiences interacting with formal systems, such as law enforcement and the criminal justice system, can also deter survivors from seeking services.<sup>18</sup> Those negative experiences may lead to lower rates of reporting crime to law enforcement, which severely constrains the number and type of services a crime survivor may access and may foreclose some options altogether.

Another major hurdle to accessing services is a lack of awareness and information about what is available. The California Crime Victims' Survey showed that the majority of crime survivors were unaware of the full array of available services, such as assistance completing an application for victims' compensation or assistance with expenses incurred as a result of the crime.<sup>19</sup>

*"Many victims are not aware of any or all of the services that are available to them. Also of importance for them is not to have to tell their story over and over again (each time reliving their trauma)."*  
~ Survivor

In addition, in order to meet multifaceted needs resulting from the crime, survivors are often directed to different providers and systems.<sup>20</sup> These systems are often fragmented and may have a variety of requirements that survivors need to meet in order to receive services. For individuals who are both traumatized and disadvantaged due to victimization, economic strain, or structural inequalities, navigating such systems without assistance may be particularly challenging.

Stigmatized views of formal support services, particularly mental health services, also may be an issue. Shame and embarrassment or a belief that survivor services cannot help are additional reasons survivors may not seek services. Stereotypes and social norms also may impact and inform survivors' decisions to seek help. Individuals may encounter victim-blaming responses and attitudes that regard them as less than deserving survivors whose behavior may have contributed to their victimization.<sup>21</sup>

Barriers appear even as survivors do seek services. Even when survivors are aware of the resources that exist and are interested in pursuing them, their access to those services is often curtailed by a host of complicating factors such as social isolation, poverty, jurisdictional issues, geography, immigration status, mistrust of the criminal justice system, fear of retribution or being labeled a “snitch”, and cultural, language, or communication barriers.<sup>22</sup>

### **Gaps Identified by the Community: Barriers to Accessing Survivor Services**

The following themes emerged from community input regarding barriers to accessing trauma recovery services:

- Lack of accessibility: location and transportation issues, availability of services, capacity and wait lists, and siloed services in different locations throughout the county that are not integrated or streamlined
- Being excluded from services due to exclusionary program criteria and language, literacy and vocabulary issues
- Lack of awareness and information about services: not being aware of services or how to access them, lack of outreach by agencies, and lack of referrals
- Systems too complex to navigate on one's own when attempting to navigate between victim services, family services, justice system, etc., especially when in a state of trauma
- The need for assistance regarding victims' compensation and monetary restitution: lack of knowledge and access to restitution
- Fear and safety issues: lack of a sense of safety, fear around accessing the service in an unsafe location (e.g., government buildings, police departments, downtown Santa Cruz, etc.)
- Stigma and judgement: shame or embarrassment, victim-blaming or being seen as not deserving, stigma around seeking help and mental health services
- A local shortage of culturally responsive therapists and service providers who are reflective of communities of color.

### **Existing Community Assets**

The community highlighted the following assets related to accessing trauma recovery services:

- Organizations that provide services to survivors of crime (see [www.211santacruzcounty.org](http://www.211santacruzcounty.org) for a list of existing survivor-serving organizations)

- Mental Health Liaisons (MHL) through the Watsonville Police Department, the Santa Cruz Police Department, and the Sheriff's Office respond to crime scenes when there is a mental health crisis occurring. While not consistently at this point, MHLs have been called at times to support victims and to link them with immediate services such as Children's Behavioral Health or San Andreas Regional Center, etc.
- Several organizations in Santa Cruz County have Victims' Advocates: Santa Cruz County District Attorney's Office, Santa Cruz Police Department, Monarch Community Services, Walnut Avenue Family and Women's Center, and CASA. Some of the services that Victims' Advocates provide include but are not limited to:
  - Contacting victims of crimes to provide aid, assistance or referrals to appropriate services and resources to meet their needs; provide status updates to victims throughout case development
  - Functioning as a liaison to third parties to inform them of the crime, status, victim's condition, and case progress; meet and confer with detectives, officers, and allied agencies regarding individual cases; arranges victim interviews with the probation department prior to pre-sentencing decisions
  - Accompanying victims to court proceedings, meetings, and interviews with law enforcement and/or attorneys
  - The Victims' Advocates from the Santa Cruz District Attorney's Office participate in community outreach with three community centers in the county (La Manzana in Watsonville, Nueva Vista in Beach Flats and the Live Oak Family Resource Center). Advocates meet survivors in these community locations to help them access services.
- The Peer-Navigator Model used at the Santa Cruz County Probation Service Center
- 211: the 2-1-1 toll-free helpline connects thousands of Santa Cruz County residents to housing, food, childcare, and other information and referral services. This is a free and confidential referral service that connects people to health and human services in Santa Cruz County 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- The National Resource Center for Reaching Victims, <http://reachingvictims.org/>
  - Vision: Victim services will be accessible, culturally relevant, and trauma informed, and the overwhelming majority of victims will access and benefit from these services.
  - The National Resource Center for Reaching Victims provides information and expert guidance to enhance capacity to identify, reach, and serve all victims, especially those from communities that too often have less access to healing services and avenues to justice.

## VI. Goal #3: Engage Crime Survivors to Prioritize and Elevate Their Voices

### Why Is This Important?

Intentionally engaging survivors to inform safety priorities is necessary to understand what they need and to improve outcomes. Survivors have historically been excluded from public safety decision-making, despite the invaluable perspective they bring. Including crime survivors in policy-making ensures that the people most affected have a say. If the system responds in line with the crime survivor's input, the survivor is more likely to maintain trust in the criminal justice system and not feel additional trauma in the process.<sup>23</sup>

### The Larger Context of Our Data

Participants in our community focus groups and engagement sessions described various barriers to their engagement in local criminal justice conversations and decision-making processes. Their voices have not traditionally been sought out or prioritized in designing systems and practices that directly affect them. Perceived stigma and judgement on the part of the community, law enforcement and other criminal justice actors prevents them from seeking opportunities to share their perspectives and make their voices heard. Some don't identify with or see themselves reflected in the terms "victim" or "survivor" and thus don't feel the survivor movement represents them or their needs. Some are afraid of retaliation by those who have hurt them or of being deported if they speak out about their experiences and advocate for change. Many find that their work and family schedules prevent them from being able to participate in meetings and events, particularly those that occur during the traditional work week.

When those with lived experience are excluded from informing processes that directly impact them, they can feel unheard and marginalized. On the other hand, when those who are most impacted by an issue have meaningful involvement, not only are policies and practices better informed, but it has been shown that those individuals experience better outcomes, such as an increase in self-efficacy, empowerment, connectedness and trust.<sup>24</sup> For some, having the opportunity to participate in decision-making can "transform painful experiences into positive solutions for the community and others."<sup>25</sup>

*"Without their voices of real lived experience, how will it be known what is truly needed to help victims of crime and bettering our community?"*  
~ Survivor

### Gaps Identified by the Community: Barriers to Engaging Survivors

The following themes emerged from community input regarding barriers to engaging survivors:

- Competing priorities: hard to engage when one is juggling competing demands such as meeting basic needs, work, family responsibility, and self-care, particularly when involving trauma
- Fear or mistrust of the criminal justice system
- Fear of backlash or retaliation when coming forward with story or engaging in advocacy
- Afraid of not being taken seriously or disrespected
- Exclusion and lack of outreach: being left out of the conversation, a lack of opportunities for authentic and meaningful engagement



- Lack of support, role models and liaisons and a lack of capacity-building opportunities
- Language and cultural barriers for some
- Stigma and judgment: fear of being judged due to circumstances, lack of a safe and nonjudgmental way of interacting with other survivors
  - Labeling, “victim” and "survivor" language is stigmatizing and exclusionary
  - Feel judged and blamed by the community, law enforcement, attorneys, judges and other criminal justice system actors
  - Stigma against accessing and advocating for services

## Existing Community Assets

The community highlighted the following assets that prioritize and elevate crime survivor voices:

- Many local organizations elevate the voices of those with lived experience and incorporate the following: representation on boards of directors; leadership development, capacity-building and support for public speaking or meeting participation; stipends for participation; inviting input and feedback on service delivery design; and staff who are demographically reflective of the population being served
- Several organizations in Santa Cruz County have Victims’ Advocates: Santa Cruz County District Attorney’s Office, Santa Cruz Police Department, Monarch Community Services, Walnut Avenue Family and Women’s Center, and CASA. Some of the services that Victims’ Advocates provide include but are not limited to:
  - Contacting victims of crimes to provide aid, assistance or referrals to appropriate services and resources to meet their needs and provide status updates to victims throughout case development
  - Functioning as a liaison to third parties to inform them of the crime, status, victim's condition, and case progress; meet and confer with detectives, officers, and allied agencies regarding individual cases; arrange victim interviews with the probation department prior to pre-sentencing decisions
  - Accompanying victims to court proceedings, meetings, and interviews with law enforcement and/or attorneys
  - The Victims’ Advocates from the Santa Cruz District Attorney’s Office participate in community outreach with three community centers in the county (La Manzana in Watsonville, Nueva Vista in Beach Flats and the Live Oak Family Resource Center). Advocates meet survivors in these community locations to help them access services.
- Community events that elevate voices of survivors, such as Watsonville’s Peace and Unity March, the Santa Cruz Victims’ March, and the March Against Sexual Abuse
- Awareness month activities: Sexual Assault Awareness Month, Child Abuse Awareness Month, Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month, and Domestic Violence Awareness Month

## VII. Goal #4: Strengthen Community Trust and Confidence in the Criminal Justice System

### Why Is This Important?

When a community views law enforcement and other public entities as trustworthy and reliable, they are more likely to seek help and help others. In communities where residents trust public institutions, people access the services they need without fear of retribution or discrimination.<sup>26</sup>

### The Larger Context of Our Data

Survivors often cite a lack of trust that law enforcement can or will do anything to address their victimization as a defining feature of their experiences.<sup>27</sup> Survivors tend to perceive an “empathy divide” between themselves and police that results in not feeling heard or believed. At times, negative interactions with law enforcement can be traumatizing, especially when survivors feel stereotyped, blamed, misunderstood or treated callously by police.

One consequence of a lack of trust in law enforcement and confidence in the criminal justice system is the reduced likelihood of reporting the crime.<sup>28</sup> As discussed under Result #2, not reporting crime means not being able to access the full range of legal protections and survivor services. Ensuring the provision of comprehensive legal services, including the enforcement of survivors’ rights, requires consideration of the full impact of survivor reporting rates and ways to address this problem.

### Gaps Identified by the Community: Community Trust and Confidence in the Criminal Justice System

The following themes emerged from community input regarding gaps in community trust and confidence:

- Discrimination by the system based on race, class, gender, age, etc.; specifically, perceived experiences of racial profiling
- Need for service providers and community agencies that demographically reflect the communities they serve
- Lack of metrics: the need for more robust data assessing levels of community trust in the criminal justice system and law enforcement and assessing how representative community-based and governmental organizations are of the communities they serve
- Lack of reporting crime: due to mistrust of system and law enforcement and fear (i.e., of deportation, retaliation, being labeled a “snitch”, etc.)
- Law enforcement issues:
  - Trust levels unequal across populations or groups: lower for undocumented people, individuals experiencing homelessness, youth and communities of color
  - Lack of follow-up after initial contact with law enforcement
  - Law enforcement officers often not demographically representative of the communities they serve

- Justice system issues: lack of trauma-informed approaches by justice system officials (law enforcement, judges, probation, district attorneys, and public defenders)
- Systems and criminal justice processes can be retraumatizing and dehumanizing, which makes it hard to access services
- Not integrated into the culture of systems: Not all levels of agencies (leadership, management and line staff) are equally committed to fostering community trust; the commitment hasn't infiltrated the culture at all points in the hierarchy
- Stigma and judgement: perceived sense of labeling, stereotyping, judging and victim-blaming from criminal justice system representatives
- Barriers to accessing state victims' compensation and court-ordered monetary restitution: fear of reporting or accessing services for those with criminal records, those who don't want to file a police report, undocumented individuals, etc.

## Existing Community Assets

The community highlighted the following assets that promote trust and system confidence:

- Vocal, culturally responsive county departments and community-based organizations working to shift policies and practices such as Barrios Unidos, Community Action Board, Community Bridges, and the United Way
- Local law enforcement agencies are actively working to increase trust between their systems and the community. Some examples include:
  - Participation in the Youth Violence Prevention Network's Law Enforcement and Community Dialogue Project
  - Top leadership expressing a commitment to building the capacity of their staff to be more equitable and trauma-informed: Several departments have participated in trainings, such as Trauma-Informed Systems, Implicit Bias, Culturally Responsive Organizations, Procedural Justice, and Implicit Bias "train-the-trainers" programs.
  - Participating in community-building events, such as National Night Out and the Martin Luther King Jr. March
  - Several departments have allocated resources to build and strengthen relationships and better meet the needs of specific populations, including survivors of crime. For example:
    - Watsonville's Agua con la Chota: The Watsonville Police Department's "Agua con la Chota" or "Water with a Cop" outreach program is aimed at connecting with farmworkers and provides agricultural workers a safe space to interact with officers and receive information and guidance.
    - Watsonville, Santa Cruz, and the Sheriff's Mental Health Liaisons (MHL) respond to crime scenes when there is a mental health crisis occurring. MHLs have been called to help ground victims and to link them with immediate services such Children's Behavioral Health.
    - Being transparent with ICE cooperation policies

- Law Enforcement Resources for Victims of Crime:
  - All law enforcement agencies have victims' resource information brochures (though resource brochures are not consistently handed out, nor is there uniformity across departments in the types of resources).
  - Law enforcement departments promote U and T visas that “encourage the victims of certain serious crimes to cooperate with law enforcement officials who are prosecuting criminal offenders”.
  - The Sheriff meets personally with homicide survivors after the fact. The Capitola Police Chief is working with his officers to increase follow-up with survivors of crime.
  - In 2018, the District Attorney's Office established the SKY Multidisciplinary Child Interview Center, in which all law enforcement departments currently participate.
  - All law enforcement departments participate in the Sexual Assault Response Team. The Sheriff's Office is currently in the process of getting certified to process DNA for sexual assaults. This will decrease the burden of a survivor having to travel to Santa Clara and will increase processing time and solve rates.
  - For over 30 years, the Santa Cruz Police Department has staffed an in-house Victims' Advocate. The advocate functions as a liaison to third parties to inform them of the crime, status, victim's condition, and case progress; meets and confers with detectives, officers, and allied agencies regarding individual cases; arranges victim interviews with the probation department prior to pre-sentencing decisions; and accompanies the victim to the District Attorney's office and the Court. Additionally, this person advocates for the rights of and benefits available to crime victims during the various stages of follow-up to the crime and makes referrals for the survivor and their families.
  - The District Attorney's Office has been committed to serving victims of crime through their in-house advocates for over 35 years, including providing direct services to survivors and participating in community outreach through local community centers.



## **VIII. Goal #5: Recognize Who is Most Vulnerable to Crime**

### **Why Is This Important?**

Shared Safety starts with understanding who survivors are and where survivors are coming from. Individuals at highest risk of being victimized by are often unacknowledged and unsupported by our current systems, especially if those survivors come from marginalized communities or have committed crimes themselves. This contributes to underreported crimes and unaddressed trauma. Recognizing and engaging all survivors in Shared Safety solutions strengthens recovery and helps prioritize survivor services. It requires deepening and expanding our understanding of “survivors” to include individuals at highest risk of being victimized.<sup>29</sup>

### **The Larger Context of Our Data**

As the field stands now, limited research is available on victimization incidence and prevalence rates, victimization reporting on national, state, and community levels, and the help-seeking behavior of victims. There are also significant gaps in our understanding of the impact of criminal victimization.<sup>30</sup> This is true at the national, state and local levels.

One of the primary contributors to the dearth of information is that most crimes are not reported to the police. According to the 2017 National Crime Victimization Survey, less than half (45%) of violent victimizations, 35.7% of property crimes, and 40% of rapes or sexual assaults were reported to police.<sup>31</sup> Experts attribute low crime reporting rates to factors such as: fear of retaliation (i.e., by gangs), deportation or wrongful blaming; a lack of faith that the justice system will intervene or have the capacity to resolve the issue; trust gaps between communities experiencing concentrated crime and the criminal justice system, especially for communities of color; and feelings of stigma, shame and embarrassment.<sup>32</sup>

This is especially true for the many underserved crime victim communities in California such as people with disabilities, LGBTQ individuals, victims of human trafficking, communities affected by gang violence, elderly people, people with limited English proficiency, immigrants, people who are homeless or have unstable housing, and people who suffer from mental illness.<sup>33</sup> A 2019 Californians for Safety and Justice survey found that crime victims who are young, low-income and from communities of color are less likely to report crimes. Two in three victims under age 45 (67%) and victims who describe themselves as poor or lower middle class (66%) say they don't always report crimes.<sup>34</sup>

The importance of local data in the development of survivor-center practices and policies cannot be overstated. State surveys and resources are available for extrapolation, but the lack of data on the unique characteristics of Santa Cruz County that shape survivor experiences and criminal justice dynamics is glaring.

One local study conducted by Dr. Susan Greene deserves replication and expansion. She explored the link between victimization (particularly in childhood) and adult criminal offending in her profile of 31 women in the Santa Cruz County jail.

Dr. Greene looked at the women's social histories, reasons for their criminal justice involvement and the effects of sustained trauma on rates of offending and recidivism. The women described nearly universal themes of childhoods characterized by poverty, instability, abuse/neglect and physical and sexual abuse at rates much higher than women in the general population.<sup>35</sup> This kind of data is essential for understanding the needs of crime survivors in Santa Cruz County and the dynamics that shape both victimization and offending in our county.

### **Gaps Identified by the Community: Recognizing Who is Most Vulnerable to Crime**

The following themes emerged from community input regarding the need for local data on crime and victimization:

- Lack of data on:
  - Who is most vulnerable to harm and who is most likely to be a victim of what type of crime
  - How many crimes go unreported, which crimes are under-reported and why
  - Why victims and witnesses might not come forward
  - Who is accessing police services and reporting crime

### **Existing Community Assets**

The community highlighted the following assets that could be utilized to better understand who is most vulnerable to crime:

- Data experts in the community who could support capturing data, such as Applied Survey Research and the University of California, Santa Cruz
- Local data from the California's Victim Compensation Fund on who accesses funds
- Nationally: Center for Victim Research, <https://victimresearch.org/>
  - The Center for Victim Research is designed to serve as a one-stop shop for victim service providers and researchers to connect and share knowledge to increase: (1) access to victim research and data, and (2) the utility of research and data collection to crime victim services nationwide.

# IX. Top Recommendations

The CEEW used the quantitative data from community input that outlined local gaps and needs, as well as the expertise and experience of the workgroup members in delivering services to crime survivors, to develop a limited set of recommendations. These recommendations are listed in no particular order and have not yet been prioritized in terms of importance or order of implementation (see “Next Steps” under section X: “What Has Already Shifted and Next Steps”).

**A. Crime Survivor Navigator:** Create navigators for crime survivors to assist them in navigating multiple systems and accessing existing community resources and supports.

Navigators offer survivors “support without borders” across criminal justice, healthcare, and community resource contexts. Combining a comprehensive understanding of the criminal justice system with knowledge of existing community resources, navigators help survivors navigate systems in order to access material support, reducing the potential for re-victimization in these systems.<sup>36</sup> Navigators offer information and support in managing survivors’ expectations of the criminal justice process and the options available to them. Survivors are increasingly transformed from being “outsiders” to “insiders” in criminal justice processes.<sup>37</sup>

Studies show that navigator involvement benefits survivors of crime by generally serving as a protective factor against negative and potentially re-traumatizing experiences with the criminal justice system.<sup>38</sup> More specifically, survivors gain increased access to community resources, greater social support and greater mental health and well-being. Survivors are supported in working through their trauma and recovering from the incident, are empowered in their participation in the justice system, which improves their experiences, and are able to avoid the confusion and retraumatization that so often results from attempting to navigate the complicated legal system.

*"Those who have experienced trauma are in the middle of their trauma (either mentally, physically, or both) and do not have the capacity to take on anything else, even if it is to benefit them."  
~ Survivor of Crime*

**Gaps this recommendation addresses:**

- Accessibility of services and wellness resources
- Awareness and lack of information about services and wellness resources
- Basic needs related to victimization
- Complex systems to navigate
- Fear or mistrust of systems
- Lack of feedback loop and communication
- Need for an individualized approach
- Need for healing and trauma recovery
- Need to be believed, supported and protected
- Not being asked, “what do you need to heal?”
- Sense of isolation
- Voice not being heard

**B. Improved local data collection:** Improve local data collection to better understand the characteristics and needs of crime survivors, including victimization incidence and prevalence data as well as qualitative survey data from crime survivors.

**B1. Victimization Incidence and Prevalence Data for Santa Cruz County:** Improve data collection on crime and victimization by race/ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, disability, age, legal status, geography, type of crime, and repeated victimization.

**Gaps this recommendation addresses:**

- Lack of local data to better understand who is most vulnerable to crime
- Lack of local data on who is accessing services
- Lack of local data on reporting crime

To address the dearth of data on victimization incidence and prevalence rates, victimization reporting on national, state, and community levels, and the help-seeking behavior of survivors, the United States Department of Justice’s Vision 21 report (2013) emphasized the importance of research that will benefit the field’s understanding of victimization and improve services for victims, including data on who is victimized, victim needs, why some victims access services, and the enforcement of victim rights.<sup>39</sup>

As one Center for Victim Research report put it, “Filling gaps for those impacted by violence requires filling gaps in knowledge”.<sup>40</sup> Understanding who faces the greatest risk for victimization and who is receiving services in comparison to that need, with special emphasis on race, ethnicity, gender, age, income and place, is critical for policy and funding decisions in the survivor assistance field. This is especially true for ensuring a return on investment in strategies designed to address the needs of those most likely to be victimized and to fill the gaps in services and responses that the data has long revealed.

**B2. Survivor Survey:** Conduct a broadly representative survey of survivors in Santa Cruz County with quantitative and qualitative measures, to include questions regarding:

- Victimization incidence rates by race/ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, disability, age, legal status, geography, type of crime and repeated victimization
- What survivors need and need to know to promote healing and reparation
- What happened in their recovery and criminal justice process that was helpful
- What was lacking but could have supported them in their recovery process
- The cultural responsiveness of local systems
- Levels of trust and experiences with law enforcement and perceptions of the police and police-community relationships

**Gaps this recommendation addresses:**

- Lack of data on survivor needs
- Survivors not being asked, “what do you need to heal?”
- Voice not being heard

Seeking insights from survivors themselves is critical to completing the empirical picture and developing sustainable and cost-effective interventions. Research also suggests that a more focused consideration of crime survivors and their experiences can lead to the prevention of future victimizations.<sup>41</sup> A mixture of both quantitative and qualitative techniques is ideal for providing a necessarily nuanced understanding of survivors’ experiences. Survivor stories can aid in understanding the impact and effectiveness of policy approaches on the ground as they interact with the realities of lived experience.

**C. Law Enforcement and Community Trust-Building** through community-oriented policing: Expand and improve law enforcement efforts to strengthen community trust to increase the percentage of crimes that are reported and ensure positive experiences of law enforcement contact among crime survivors.

**Gaps this recommendation addresses:**

- Community and survivor trust of law enforcement
- Need of survivors to be believed, supported and protected
- System legitimacy



- Expand community-oriented policing throughout the county, incorporating the following:
  - Increased participation of law enforcement in community trust-building programs
  - Increased feedback loop and communicating with survivors about outcomes and criminal justice processes

Evidence suggests that successful community trust-building dialogue sessions require law enforcement to be open to hearing community perspectives and to refrain from reacting defensively to critical or emotional statements.<sup>42</sup> Listening sessions that focus on candid conversations about the relationships between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve have been shown to lead directly to policy changes as well as increases in positive community perceptions, trust in police and police legitimacy.

**D. Trauma Recovery Center:** Establish a Trauma Recovery Center with comprehensive services and supports for crime survivors, including those who may not typically access services due to individual, cultural, or bureaucratic barriers.

Comprehensive survivor service agencies or “trauma recovery centers” seek to address both the psychological and material needs of crime survivors. This model incorporates mental health interventions and advocacy services in tandem and addresses the multifaceted needs of survivors.<sup>43</sup>

This model offers a promising avenue to address the needs of crime survivors who do not typically access services due to individual and cultural barriers to seeking help, in one sense by providing a single point of access. In order to meet diverse needs resulting from the crime, survivors are frequently directed to different providers and systems. These systems are often fragmented and may have a variety of requirements that survivors need to meet in order to receive services. For individuals who are both traumatized and disadvantaged due to victimization, economic strain, or structural inequalities, navigating such systems without assistance may be particularly challenging.

Accessing services through traditional criminal justice settings is also a barrier for many survivors. Comprehensive models facilitate access to a variety of resources in non-traditional settings such as hospitals, medical clinics, schools, and community centers, and address trauma symptoms and quality of life needs in culturally sensitive and accessible ways.<sup>44</sup>

**Trauma Recovery Centers can incorporate:**

- Trauma-informed clinical case management
- Evidence-based individual, group and family psychotherapy
- Crisis intervention
- Medication management
- Legal advocacy and assistance in filing police reports and accessing victim compensation funds
- No cost services<sup>61</sup>

**Gaps this recommendation addresses:**

- Accessibility of services and wellness resources
- Awareness and lack of information about services and wellness resources
- Basic needs related to victimization
- Busy schedules, inconvenient to navigate around the county
- Complex system to navigate
- Fear and safety issues around traditional criminal justice settings
- Lack of feedback loop and communication
- Mistrust of systems
- Need for healing and trauma recovery
- Need of survivors to be believed, supported and protected
- Sense of isolation
- Siloed services and lack of info and data sharing among agencies
- Voice not being heard

*"To this day, the memories [of the crime] haunt me. I wish centers like this and other places specializing in Trauma Recovery could exist in every town. I wish there was more awareness about how much help really is needed - at any time. Late is better than never, but having access to help early on could have helped me live a life with fewer nightmares, less anxiety. It may have helped me speak my mind sooner and step up for what is right."*

~ Survivor

Evaluations of comprehensive models that facilitate access to a variety of resources and allow for tailored services based on individual needs have shown positive survivor outcomes, such as increases in hope and measures of well-being such as satisfaction with life, positive emotional experiences, affect balance, and the capacity to flourish.<sup>45</sup>

**E. Increase crime survivor engagement and representation** at the level of policy and program planning to inform safety priorities and improve outcomes.

- Increase representation of crime survivors on organization advisory panels and decision-making boards (e.g., lived-experience advisory panels, planning committees), including the CEEW, to provide input on service delivery in order to inform quality improvement and to create a feedback loop for policy and programmatic recommendations. It is important to include support and capacity-building for survivors to participate in these processes.
- Remove barriers to engagement:
  - Allow for alternative methods of participation (i.e., engaging outside of traditional spaces that might create fear)
  - Provide stipends or compensation for participation
  - Provide childcare
  - Offer flexible times, including evening and weekend opportunities
  - Create opportunities to have a voice on social media
  - Offer translation services and Spanish language materials
  - Create an outreach campaign to address stigma, judgment and exclusion (see Rec. #11)

**Gaps this recommendation addresses:**

- Cultural, language and literacy barriers to engagement
- Fear of backlash when engaging around victimization
- Lack of understanding survivor needs
- Mistrust of systems
- Need for support, empowerment and advocacy
- Stigma around victimization
- Survivor exclusion, isolation and lack of involvement
- Voice not being heard

While there has been significant focus in recent years on bringing other county partners to the criminal justice table and embracing evidence-based practices, particularly within Probation, those most impacted by crime and the criminal justice system are rarely, if ever, placed at the center of local planning and implementation efforts. When those who are most impacted by an issue have meaningful involvement, policies and practices are better informed. It has also been shown that those impacted by the issues have experienced better outcomes, such as an increase in self-efficacy and connectedness.<sup>46</sup>

**F. Survivor Chapter or Network:** Encourage the establishment of a peer-led organization of crime survivors to reduce isolation and provide a community voice for the needs and priorities of crime survivors.

Survivor-led chapters or networks can address the isolation and lack of involvement and community support reported by many survivors by providing a safe and healing space to share experiences among peers. Some survivor networks engage in policy and advocacy work as *healing through action*.

*"It is important that survivors of crime be at the center of advocacy and working in collaboration with other entities to make important decisions that affect crime survivors."*  
~ Survivor

**Gaps this recommendation addresses:**

- Fear and mistrust of systems
- Need for healing and trauma recovery
- Need of survivors to be believed, supported and protected
- Stigma around victimization
- Survivor exclusion, isolation and lack of involvement
- Voice not being heard

Research supports the importance of the peer-based sharing of experiences in promoting recovery, building trusting relationships and a sense of belonging, strengthening personal and shared agency, reintegrating with the community, and encouraging change-oriented action.<sup>47</sup> Outcomes include renewed self-image, new insights, strengthened experiences of being useful resources in acting against violence in a wider context, and an empowered sense of self.

**G. Restorative Practices:** Establish restorative justice practices such as community courts and victim/offender dialogues at multiple points in the local criminal justice system to promote restoration and accountability.

Restorative programs and practices hold the potential for more meaningful engagement, restoration and transformational outcomes than the traditional criminal justice system. The person-centered focus and emphasis on treating all participants with dignity and providing ample opportunities to participate and share their feelings promote greater healing and meaningful accountability.

Empirical reviews show that restorative justice programs can play a key role in fostering a greater sense of fairness and system legitimacy. Survivors report feeling satisfied with their central participatory role, that they were treated with respect, and that, over time, their lingering bitterness over their treatment by the formal criminal justice system diminished.<sup>48</sup>

**Gaps this recommendation addresses:**

- Lack of feedback loop and communication
- Lack of restorative resources in schools
- Need for accountability
- Need for an individualized approach
- Need for restoration and healing
- Survivors not being asked, “what do you need to heal?”
- Voice not being heard

Other evaluations of restorative justice programs that include both survivors and those who have harmed them and/or others demonstrate that both parties are more satisfied with the process and outcomes than with the courts. Participants are more likely to draft and complete restitution agreements, they derive psychosocial benefits, the process is less expensive than the traditional criminal justice system, and offenders are less likely to recidivate.<sup>49</sup> Further survivor impacts include the opportunity for additional sources of material restitution, such as work trade or other benefits offered by the person who caused the harm, and greater emotional restoration, such as higher rates of sincere apologies, an increased sense of safety and less fear of re-victimization by the same person when they participated in the restorative process, the decreased belief that the person who victimized them would re-victimize others in the future when they had participated, and fewer post-traumatic stress symptoms.<sup>50</sup>

**H. Increase knowledge of and access to crime survivor services and wellness resources, including coordinated wrap-around support and case management.**

Crime survivor services and wellness resources should be geographically, linguistically, financially, and culturally accessible and inclusive. They should address impacts of the crime at various levels: emotional, psychological, financial, physical, social and spiritual. Recommendations for increasing access to and inclusion of services include:

- Upload all victim’s services to the Santa Cruz County’s 211 Resource Referral Database to increase ease of referrals.
- Increase the availability of low- or no-cost services to address financial needs.
- Offer centralized services and services brought directly to survivors to address location and transportation challenges.
- Offer evening and weekend programming and services to address time obstacles.
- Provide translation services and Spanish language materials.
- Provide childcare when possible.
- Increase cultural competency in programming, including staff who are demographically reflective of the population being served.
- Increase gender-specific programming.
- Increase targeted outreach for marginalized and underrepresented populations (e.g., undocumented, elderly, and LGBTQ+ survivors).
- Provide survivor navigators to help navigate complex systems.

**Gaps this recommendation addresses:**

- Accessibility of services and wellness resources
- Awareness and lack of information about services and wellness resources
- Basic needs related to victimization
- Mistrust of system
- Need of survivors to be believed, supported and protected
- Need for healing and trauma recovery

In addition, Santa Cruz County should invest in a range of options and points of access for trauma recovery and survivor services that are based in and outside of the formal justice system.<sup>51</sup> A diversity of service options, including those located in communities and that are unaffiliated with the formal justice system, helps survivors to feel safe, comfortable and not judged or stereotyped by law enforcement or service providers. Our community input aligns with research showing that many survivors find nonprofit- or community-based services located in neighborhoods, schools or in the survivors’ community to be more accessible and trustworthy than formal justice system-based interventions.<sup>52</sup>

*“I wanted to deal with my depression on my own. A year later I sought out help for therapy when I realized that I couldn’t deal with the after-effects of the shooting on my own. Also, I wasn’t aware that I would be going through the stages of grief in addition to the medical needs (and diagnoses) and financial issues.”*  
~ Survivor



Survivors of violent crime often have special needs and high levels of trauma.<sup>53</sup> Some communities have responded by creating “Rapid Response Wrap-Around Services” specifically for survivors of violent crime. A local model could include representatives from the District Attorney Victim/Witness Program, County Mental Health, survivor navigators, and other relevant service providers or systems (e.g., education). Services provided could include: immediate family support and stabilization, assistance with funeral planning if needed, support accessing Victims’ Compensation resources, resource referrals, and coordination of and connection to healing activities (e.g., healing circles and candlelight vigils).

**I. System Trainings:** Provide a robust calendar of trainings to increase the community capacity for trauma-informed systems, cultural responsiveness, and whole-person support for crime survivors.

- Ongoing trainings that address trauma-informed care and systems, chronic stress and vicarious trauma, victim sensitivity, implicit bias, and cultural responsiveness
- Offered to first responders, law enforcement, judges, criminal justice officials, public defenders, investigators and service providers

**Cultural Responsivity:** Providing culturally appropriate services should be viewed as essential to ensuring equal access to justice and fair treatment for all of the justice system’s users, particularly those most vulnerable and under-represented.<sup>54</sup> The need for survivors to feel affirmed, supported, and physically and emotionally safe is most likely to be achieved when operating from a cultural competency framework.

**Trauma-Informed Systems:** Trauma-informed care and interventions must be employed to effectively support survivors in the criminal justice process. Trauma-informed care comprises the survivor-centered practices that allow the survivor to begin working through the trauma while simultaneously participating in the criminal justice process.<sup>55</sup> This type of intervention is essential to avoid the likely pitfalls of re-traumatization, feelings of insecurity, and withdrawal of cooperation, which can be consequences of insensitive care.

Research increasingly suggests that a more focused consideration of crime survivors and their histories with violence and trauma can lead to the prevention of new victimization.<sup>56</sup> This growing body of knowledge suggests that trauma-informed services and interventions have the tremendous power to assist people traumatized by violence from engaging in violence or crime themselves later in life.

**Law Enforcement Training:** Another important step in improving community perceptions of police is through trainings that can address the perceived empathy divide between the community and law enforcement. The survivors and participants in our community engagement process noted that reduced judgement and perceived victim-blaming would be helpful, a perspective echoed by participants in the National Institute for Building Community Trust’s program.<sup>57</sup> Many of our participants noted that targeted trainings related to victim sensitivity, trauma-informed approaches and implicit bias would be beneficial for law enforcement working in their communities, a perspective also reflected in other California studies.<sup>58</sup>

**Gaps this recommendation addresses:**

- Discrimination
- Mistrust of system
- Need of survivors to be believed, supported and protected
- Stigma around victimization
- Trauma-inducing system
- Victim-blaming

**J. Provide financial restoration** for crime survivors through coordinated collection of court-ordered monetary restitution, as well as active outreach and survivor assistance to increase utilization of California Victim Compensation Board resources, particularly for underrepresented populations. Some recommended strategies include:

- Victims’ Restitution Discussion, to include: District Attorney’s Office, Probation Department, judges, and corrections
- Victims’ Rights and Compensation Forum or Workshop to build organizational capacity to increase survivor access to victim compensation funds and promote victims’ rights

**Gaps this recommendation addresses:**

- Accountability
- Basic needs related to victimization
- Financial needs and access to wellness resources
- Lack of access to resources
- Myths around service eligibility
- Need for increased capacity of CBOs to act as system navigators

State-level victim compensation funds are available to help individuals recover physically, psychologically, and financially from crime victimization. However, of eligible crime victims, only a small portion applies for and ultimately receives state victims’ compensation. National evaluations find that victims who are male, are younger, belong to an ethnic minority group, and are victims of physical assault are less likely to access the victim compensation system than are other groups of victims.<sup>59</sup>

Research has shown that active outreach and survivor assistance increases the proportion of survivors filing compensation claims and also reduces disparities in access for disadvantaged populations.<sup>60</sup> Studies suggest that the primary barriers to filing claims are a lack of information about compensation and difficulty navigating the application process, not lack of interest or reluctance to access the system. Efforts to reach out to disadvantaged survivors and provide assistance can help them receive the compensation and services they need to restore their lives after victimization.

**K. Community Outreach Campaign:** Implement a community outreach campaign to shift the narrative to a public health framework that aligns multiple community sectors with evidence-based approaches to promoting shared safety for the entire community.

- Survivor-focused awareness, education and community-building events
- Shift narrative to a public health framework that is inclusive, trauma-informed and designed to remove stigma (i.e., “a person who has been harmed” rather than “victim”)
- Engage all relevant stakeholders in making this shift (e.g. media, the faith community, non-profit organizations, justice, health)
- Materials that are provided to survivors: Partner with law enforcement and other survivor-serving organizations to provide survivors with comprehensive materials and resources

**Gaps this recommendation addresses:**

- Accessibility of services and wellness resources
- Awareness and lack of information about services and wellness resources
- Complex system to navigate
- Fear or mistrust of systems
- Myths around service eligibility
- Need for targeted outreach to people of color and youth
- Need for trauma-informed and victim sensitive systems
- Stigma around victimization
- Survivor exclusion, isolation and lack of involvement

## X. What Has Already Shifted and Next Steps

### What Has Shifted Since the Start of the Shared Safety Project:

**Restorative Justice:** In partnership with Smart on Crime, the CEEW hosted a Community Forum on Restorative Justice in November 2018. This forum brought some of the nation's foremost experts on restorative justice to Santa Cruz to raise awareness about the advantages of this approach to criminal justice decision-making and to stimulate discussion about whether and how to implement restorative justice practices at the local level. More than 175 community members attended the event, and over 50 community leaders representing community, education, government, health, and justice sectors attended the pre-event reception.

Event photos are available at: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/qwcj6AGs1B5HHURk6>

*"This movement is on the right side of history. If we keep going, it will become universal."*

~ Event Participant

*"I found it most interesting that this program would give an opportunity to the victim to speak to the person that committed the crime. I feel like this can bring peace to both the victim and perpetrator."*

~ Event Participant

Results from a post-event survey conducted among forum attendees revealed the following:

- 100% of survey respondents *agree or strongly agree* that restorative justice can **serve victims better than traditional models**.
- 96% of respondents *agree or strongly agree* that restorative justice can **promote accountability**.
- 93% of respondents *agree or strongly agree* that restorative justice can **be effective at reducing recidivism and preserving public safety**.

Media coverage can be found at the following sites:

- Santa Cruz Sentinel: <https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2018/10/30/expert-panel-explores-restorative-justice-for-santa-cruz/>
- City on the Hill: <http://www.cityonahillpress.com/2018/11/09/restoring-justice>
- Univision: <https://noticiasya.com/monterey-salinas/2018/11/01/video-programa-de-justicia-restaurativa-esta-dando-resultado/>

As a result of the Forum, representatives from the District Attorney's and County Administrative Offices conducted a site visit to the San Francisco Neighborhood Courts program. The site visit prompted them to include the Neighborhood Courts model in a funding application under the State's Proposition 47 Grant Program for which Santa Cruz County was recently awarded almost six million dollars over a four-and-a-half-year period. The Neighborhood Courts component of the grant is currently under design and will be coordinated by both the District Attorney's Office and a local restorative justice provider, the Conflict Resolution Center.



Santa Cruz County Strategic Plan 2018-2024: At the same time as the CEEW was working on the Santa Cruz County Shared Safety Project, the County underwent a strategic planning process. The CEEW’s collaborative work with the County Administrative Office and the District Attorney’s Office led to the inclusion of shared safety and survivor services in the plan goals and the Santa Cruz County Strategic Operational Plan, under the area of Comprehensive Health and Safety:

- Objective #157: Crime Survivors - By June 2021, the District Attorney will create an outreach program to educate the community and law enforcement about the effects of criminal activity and prosecution on crime survivors.
- Objective #158: Neighborhood Courts - By June 2020, the District Attorney will complete a feasibility study for operating a neighborhood court to use restorative justice principles to resolve low-level criminal offenses.
- Objective #162: Survivor Services - By June 2021, Probation will establish three standard practices or protocols that will increase the level of support provided for survivors of crime.

Informal Service Provider Feedback Convenings: As perspectives have shifted about the value and importance of elevating survivor voices, several CEEW member organizations have conducted small internal convenings with current and former clients to learn more about what worked and what didn’t regarding the service delivery of their organizations.

Culture Shifts and Working Together Differently: Several CEEW members have reported small shifts they have made since participating in the Santa Cruz County Shared Safety project. For example, every organization has indicated that they have changed language from “victim” to “survivor” and have increased the normalization of asking survivors what they need to heal. Organizations have also mentioned an increase in overall mindfulness of client needs and sensitivity to crime survivors. New partnerships have stemmed out of the CEEW, in terms of partnering on collaborative grants as well as resource referrals. There is increasing support for restorative justice practices from judges, district attorneys and service providers.

Inclusion of Victims’ and Survivors of Crime Services in Local 211 Database: 211 is a free resource database available to all residents of California. UWSCC coordinates the local 211 system and is working to create a specific category in 211 for “Victims and Survivors of Crime” and is coordinating with the organizations to upload their information into the system. CEEW members have compiled a list of existing survivor-serving organizations to facilitate this process.

Templates for Other Counties: Throughout this process, Californians for Safety and Justice (CSJ) worked with Santa Cruz County to identify ways to support communities who want to meaningfully engage crime survivors with the goal of developing some common practices and tools that can be replicated and shared. The Appendix includes two CSJ documents that were a part of this process: 1) “Community Engagement Session Guidelines”, a template for conducting focus groups and community engagement sessions with local crime survivors, and 2) “Survivor Engagement Guidelines”, an overview of key considerations for engaging crime survivors in a meaningful and trauma-informed manner (See Appendices B and C).



While these templates can be helpful to other communities, particularly those where there is not a pre-existing network of crime survivors, some conclusions with respect to replicating what has been done in Santa Cruz County have emerged. These include: there is no “one size fits all” way to meaningfully engage crime survivors; a commitment to being trauma-focused is critical; outreach requires one-on-one engagement as well as safe places for peers to convene; differing opinions about how to engage survivors who have also caused harm must be addressed; and lastly, this work must be done as part of a broader commitment to racial equity.

Lesson Learned: During this process, in an effort to engage local survivors, Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice hosted a survivor convening in Santa Cruz. CEEW members were encouraged to invite survivors they were connected to. The convening blended survivors who had committed harm against others with those who had not. Feedback from participants was that it was difficult for everyone involved and, at times, retraumatizing. There were many lessons learned from this process. The CEEW identified the need to move forward with great sensitivity, preparation and disclaimers for all those involved. In the future, if convenings include both survivors who haven’t committed harm and survivors who have, substantial preparatory work should take place with participants, a safe space during the convening should be prioritized and held by an experienced facilitator, and a meaningful post-event debrief should take place.

#### Next Steps:

- Using various templates, UWSCC developed a recommendation prioritization criteria tool. The tool will be used to support the CEEW and the broader community in prioritizing which recommendations should be implemented first.
- This report, “Santa Cruz County Blueprint for Shared Safety Report, Phase 1: Crime Survivors at the Center”, will be presented to the CCP Executive Committee in 2020 for approval and adoption.
- The CEEW will engage with other collaboratives about the plan recommendations and will enroll those who have a role to play in taking responsibility for specific recommendations.
- Santa Cruz County will continue to explore survivor engagement models, both formal and informal, to provide space for survivor voices to be heard, capacity building, and leadership opportunities, with a vision of deeper engagement by survivors of crime leading the conversation.
- The CEEW will prioritize ongoing engagement and building lasting relationships with survivors, including supporting them in finding leadership opportunities.

# XI. Appendix

## Appendix A. Overview of Community Input Process

Type	Participant Profiles	Purpose of Engagement	# of Participants
Community Education and Engagement Workgroup	Includes a variety of sectors that work on issues impacting victims of crime: Government, Justice, Nonprofit, Philanthropy, and Community	Oversight body for strategic planning process	24
Survivor Convening	Included community members and system stakeholders who identified as victims of crime	To better understand the Shared Safety framework and survivor engagement models	7
Focus Groups: System Stakeholders	Included a variety of sectors that work on issues impacting victims of crime: Education, Government, Health, Justice, Nonprofit, Philanthropy, and Community. Many participants identified as victims of crime.	Provide input on perceived assets and gaps	47
Focus Groups: Community	Included English and Spanish speaking youth and adults residing in both North and South county. All identified as victims of crime and had been impacted by range of crimes (violence, property, bullying, etc.).	Provide input on perceived assets and gaps	63
Focus Groups: Community (In-Custody)	Included those who committed harm and who also identify as victims of crime. Focus groups were conducted at Blaine St. and Rountree facilities.	Provide input on perceived assets and gaps	30
1:1 Interviews: Community	Included victims who utilized services through the Conflict Resolution Center and the District Attorney's Victims' Services	Provide input on perceived assets and gaps	20
1:1 Interviews: System Stakeholders	Law Enforcement Leaders	Provide information on existing victims' services through law enforcement	5



## Shared Safety Community Engagement Session Guidelines

Shared Safety requires that those most impacted by crime and the criminal justice system are meaningfully engaged in vision-setting and problem-solving.

### Planning Elements

- Clarify purpose: Vision-setting, gap analysis, identify/prioritize needs, build community, establish trust, etc.?
- Participants: Cross-sector or among peers only?
- Size: Ideally 6-10.
- Time: Outline below assumes 2.5 to 4 hours (with snacks and breaks).
- Other critical logistics: Event location and space type; beverages/food; childcare; accessibility; language issues.
- Role of facilitator: Lead, connect, listen, etc.?
- Process to document: Note-taker and/or recording.
- Process to follow-up and maintain engagement.

### **Community Engagement Discussion Topics**

#### Welcome/Introduction (30 - 40 mins)

Facilitator “opens the space,” setting tone and addressing brief house-keeping matters.

- Facilitator introduces her/himself, and points out housekeeping matters (food, bathrooms, explanation of audio recording, if any, etc.)
- Grounding the conversation/modeling: Facilitator explains purpose of the group and the process, generally, including background/context (how/why this process was developed).
- Facilitator asks participants to introduce themselves.

#### Establish common understanding/language around Shared Safety (30 - 40 mins)

Begin with a few questions to get each participant engaged and to create some common understanding around Shared Safety language.

*Sample questions:*

- Can you share about a time when you felt safe?



- In the Shared Safety framework, we say that safety is not just the absence of crime, it is the presence of well-being.
  - What does community well-being mean to you?
- The Shared Safety model is based on the idea that those who are most at risk of harm should be involved.
  - Who is that in our community?
  - How engaged are they?
  - What are some strategies that might work to increase their engagement?

#### World Café Style Exercise to Identify Strengths/Gaps/Priorities (40 - 60 mins)

Three questions are posted around the room (large sheets of butcher paper on the walls). Participants are divided into three groups. Each group moves around the room, stopping at each question, to put their responses under each question.

*Sample questions:*

- What are our community's greatest strengths when it comes to Shared Safety?
- What are your main concerns in terms of our community's capacity to build Shared Safety?
- Do the current strategies effectively protect those who are most at risk of harm? If not, what needs to change most?

#### Problem-Solving Exercise (building off of World Café) (10 - 20 mins)

Ask participants to review the strengths identified above, and think about ways in which some of the strengths could be used to address concerns around capacity to more effectively address the needs/protect those most at risk of harm.

#### Changing How We Measure Safety (10 - 30 mins)

*Sample question:*

- How could we measure Shared Safety? (Thinking beyond crime rates)

#### Closing Questions (10 - 20 mins)

*Sample questions:*

- What is your most significant take-away from today's discussion?
- What surprised you most about today's discussion?

#### Call to Action (10 - 20 mins)

*Sample questions:*

- What is one thing you can do differently to help increase Shared Safety?
- How would you like to remain engaged in Shared Safety?







## Shared Safety Survivor Engagement Guidelines

For too long, safety policy and investment decisions have not been informed by the experiences and insights of the most typical crime survivors. Those that bear the disproportionate burden of crime — young people, especially young people of color; elderly people; immigrant communities; people with disabilities; LGBTQ individuals; homeless individuals; and residents of low-income communities — need a voice and a role in safety strategies. When crime survivors are placed at the center of these discussions, communities are able recognize who is most vulnerable to crime; amplify investments in protection, trauma recovery, and restorative justice; and partner with survivors to understand and stop the cycle of harm.

Californians for Safety and Justice developed the [Blueprint for Shared Safety](#) in 2017, after over a year of research and outreach to stakeholders — including law enforcement leaders, justice reform advocates, crime survivors, and local government officials — to provide a new survivor-centered framework for local leaders who are rethinking how to understand, invest in, evaluate, and achieve community safety and well-being.

[Shared Safety](#) starts with understanding who survivors are and where survivors are coming from in your local community. Individuals at highest risk of being victims of violent or repeated crime are often unacknowledged and unsupported by our current systems, especially if those survivors come from marginalized communities or have committed crimes themselves. This contributes to under-reported crimes and unaddressed trauma. Recognizing and engaging all survivors in Shared Safety solutions strengthens recovery and helps prioritize victim services.

The following guidelines are steps any community can take towards meaningful and authentic survivor engagement in developing local Shared Safety strategies.

- **Begin by building an understanding of local survivor-serving organizations, and survey these organizations on what they do, how they work, and who they serve.**
  - DO ensure you survey as many local organizations as possible, including those that have not traditionally been included in system discussions (*e.g.*, family-based, faith-based, community-based, and prison-based groups which might not have historically been considered “organizations”).
  - DO be clear in your survey about how the information will be used and why.
  - DON’T begin your survey without first building initial relationships with groups that haven’t traditionally been included in systems discussions, to create trust and to ensure robust, candid participation.



- **Recruit survivors into positions to inform local policy — including on planning boards, advisory committees, and commissions — and eliminate any barriers to their participation in true decision-making roles in these bodies.**
  - DO ensure a diverse group — survivors from all corners of your community with diverse lived experience; as well as gender, ethnicity, identity, age diversity.
  - DON'T assume that someone who has been incarcerated or involved in the criminal justice system hasn't also been a victim of crime or experienced trauma.
  - DON'T use *othering* language such as “offender/victim,” “ex-con,” “felon,” etc., which creates generalizations, assumptions, and stereotypes that limit barriers to participation.
  - DO research and implement *people-first* language in order to maintain an environment of dignity and respect (e.g., “survivor,” “responsible party,” “person who caused harm,” “person who was harmed,” “person who was formerly incarcerated,” etc.).
  - DO adjust the infrastructure of these bodies as needed to ensure survivor participation (e.g., move meeting times if needed, ensure meeting space is inviting and accessible, adjust meeting format to invite robust, candid participation, assess language needs, etc.).
  - DON'T rely on survivors who may already participate in some local bodies (*i.e.*, ensure diverse voices across all decision-making bodies).
- **Identify a way to regularly collect data on how survivors are being served in a community, what barriers may exist to accessing services, and to identify the gaps in the infrastructure that should be filled.**
  - DON'T begin this step until after completing a survey of local organizations.
  - DO include data on whether/how/why survivors are accessing services or not.
  - DO overlay this data with other data sources (e.g., local law enforcement and public health data by ZIP code) in order to address those issues in the local infrastructure
  - DO consider a participatory research approach where you can directly engage with community members and survivors to obtain a representative picture of crime survivor and victimization patterns in your community.
  - DO consider compiling all collected data into a local “victimization study” to track victimization trends in your community.
- **Regularly engage survivors in planning how the community will address safety issues, and plan an approach to deliver services to those who are the most harmed and least helped.**
  - DO create an integrated table — not simply a collaborative table — where a diverse group of survivors have a true voice in decision-making and planning.
  - DON'T pursue the traditional model of having agency leaders or representatives develop a safety plan to then present to survivors for feedback.



- **Convene an annual summit of organizations and individuals to review the survivors' engagement and services plan.**
  - DO clarify goals of this summit to include hearing from survivors and discussing the victimization study and trends, in order to develop a plan stemming from this summit to address the issues raised.
  - DON'T assume that even with a diverse group of survivors that all survivor experiences all represented — assess who is not at the summit and whether additional outreach is needed.
  - DO plan a summit that looks and feels different than traditional townhall or government meetings (*e.g.*, think through time, space, format, access, language, etc. issues).
  
- **Be mindful around creating spaces for survivors that acknowledge the healing journey they each might be on, and employ active listening.**
  - DO recognize that justice and healing are individual processes, and are unique to each survivor.
  - DON'T make generalizations about what “justice,” “accountability,” “restorative justice,” etc. means to each survivor.
  - DO provide a safe space for survivors to participate in the discussion in the way they may need to in that moment (*e.g.*, allowing time for individuals who may need to recount specific details of their experience), and using active listening skills so that the individual feels seen and heard.
  
- **Review existing materials used to communicate about resources and policies to survivors to make sure they meet the needs of the individuals intended to be served.**
  - DO remember that language should not assume that someone who is a victim of crime can't also have been arrested, convicted, and been incarcerated for a crime (or vice versa).
  - DO avoid language and terminology that could trigger past trauma.
  
- **Because the largest number of underserved survivors are people of color, the approach to engaging survivors has to be through a racial justice and equity lens.**
  - DO consider all of the steps above in planning your survivor engagement plan, in order to ensure a racial justice and equity lens creates meaningful and authentic engagement.

For more information, visit the Blueprint for Shared Safety website at <http://sharedsafety.us> and/or contact the Shared Safety project at: [info@safeandjust.org](mailto:info@safeandjust.org).





## XII. Endnotes

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