

## Episode 28: Engaging Stakeholders Using a Relationship-Based Approach

Release Date: November 14, 2023

Intro:

Welcome to the NCJA podcast. This podcast series explores promising practices, provides guidance on strategic planning, and discusses how the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant program or Byrne JAG contributes to improving justice systems across the country. We hope you enjoy it.

Jessica Grisler:

Hi there, and welcome to the NCJA podcast. My name is Jessica Grisler and I'm a program manager here in NCJA Center for Justice Planning. Today we'll be talking about the organization Safe Night, and more specifically learning how we can engage stakeholders within the community while using a relationship-based approach.

Safe Night is an organization that helps facilitate the co-production of public safety with community and municipal stakeholders through proactive relationship building, multidisciplinary approaches, and public private collaboration. I'm so excited that I have the privilege of speaking with the co-founders of Safe Night today, Molly and Dimitrios Mastoras, who also goes by Jim.

So thank you both for being on the podcast with me today. Before we jump further into our conversation, I would love for you both to just introduce yourselves and briefly describe your background. So Molly, do you want to go first?

Molly Mastoras:

Sure, thanks Jessica. So I am Molly Mastoras, the president and co-founder of Safe Night. My background is as a licensed professional counselor. So what that means is I have a master's degree in counseling psychology, and I went through a residency to be licensed so that I can practice independently.

So my background is in both social work and mental health. I've worked in child protective services, child welfare, the juvenile court with a residential treatment facility for adolescent girls, and sexual assault and domestic violence services, which means individual and group counseling advocacy a couple of times throughout my career.

I also worked in private practice, so I did psychotherapy for individuals, and couples and families in private practice, as well as psychological testing in cooperation with neuropsychologists. So we would do that testing process together.

So I created the Proactive Alliance relationship based approach, which we'll get into in detail. And what Jim and I have really been focusing on is how, as you mentioned, to facilitate multidisciplinary teams to really work well together, how to enhance that collaboration and just get that flowing.

Jessica Grisler:

Awesome. Thanks, Molly. Just hearing about your background is getting me so excited for our discussion today. Moving on to over to you, Jim, will you go ahead and introduce yourself?

Dimitrios Mastoras:

Sure. My name is Dimitrios Mastoras. I go by Jim, as you said. I'm the executive vice president of Safe Night and also a co-founder.

And prior to that I was a police officer for almost 24 years, a month shy of 24 years in Arlington County, Virginia. And over the last five years of my career, I spent not so much in law enforcement as I did in leading a team in the county as the county nightlife liaison. I'm also a Proactive Alliance relationship-based instructor. And in recent years, I've been called on to weigh in on nightlife management, multidisciplinary team issues, and complex problems across the country.

Jessica Grisler:

Awesome. Thanks Jim and Molly, such incredible and unique backgrounds you both have. So speaking of the Arlington County Police Department, Jim and Molly, I think this would be a really great place for us to start with some background just for listeners on how your organization Safe Night came to be. So could you talk a little bit about your role at ACPD and then how this innovative idea of Safe Night kind of came to fruition?

Dimitrios Mastoras:

Sure. I'd be happy to. In I guess this would be the summer of 2015, I'd been on the street, I'd worked patrol for most of my career, with differing assignments. Whether it be plain clothes or working in Homeland Security. I was also a field training officer for 15 years. I saw a lot of what was happening in the county grow and crime was continuing to rise as well for us, specifically in the entertainment district, which was known as Clarendon and continues to be.

That summer '15, we saw violence like we hadn't seen before. We were not accustomed to the amount of people, the amount of establishments, shootings, stabbings, real violent crime, and particularly officers were being assaulted in a way that we hadn't encountered either.

And most of the approaches that the bosses, lieutenants, and captains, and deputy chiefs that were coming up with were we need to get down there, essentially teach patrons and many of the bar owners that we're going to have zero tolerance when it comes to this violence. And essentially a reactive, very traditional way of dealing with things.

And I was complaining a lot about our approaches, because we knew the way we felt as patrol officers, that this was not sustainable. We knew we couldn't keep having the amount of staffing that we were putting down there, as many as 20 officers down there a night, which was far above what we were accustomed to. And we were depleted, we were tired. And one of my bosses said, "You are constantly throwing out ideas. Why don't you put something into a proposal and submit something formal?"

And that's exactly what I did. I did a lot of research on multidisciplinary approaches that were used in the UK, specifically the Best Bar None model, which is a focus on an accreditation model, which raises the operational standards for businesses. The other part of this, and what we didn't have were relationships. Bar owners did not trust us. They did not want to work with us. And usually, the only time we showed up, the police showed up or fire marshal showed up is when they were in trouble. I was not met with a lot of open arms.

The other part that I found was that it was really hard to make these relationships. Yeah, you can talk to people, you can build some rapport, but getting them to do work with you is something completely different. And I also found that many of the county agencies didn't want to work with me either. So I was challenging them to do things in a collaborative way. They just felt like these weren't their problems, that this was a police issue and they needed to stay in their lanes.

I'm describing all this work years later with some hindsight, but it was really difficult, and it took a lot of time to get people on board with this new perspective that I was asking them to consider.

Molly Mastoras:

Well, I think it's important too to talk about how this sort of happened by accident. And what Jim was talking about, that was planned, his transition to work as a nightlife liaison. But I don't think he expected or knew that it would be difficult to connect with people. And so what really happened was... I mean, I guess an important part of this story, which we don't hide, but we're married. So we're partners in business and life. So we talk about our work, not that much actually. Over the course of years. I mean, we've got similar jobs in a way. We work with people a lot. There seemed to be a struggle on his part, and I was like, "If you're interested, I've got some ideas if you want." I mean, there was no plan in place. "We're going to collaborate on this, we're going to create something." We just-

Dimitrios Mastoras:

Yeah, it happened organically.

Molly Mastoras:

It just kind of happened. And so listening to him struggle, I'm like, "Well, what you know would be really helpful or what you could try? Give this a try or give this a try." And so he would try these different things or have a perspective about how to approach the next meeting.

Because talking to people is tough. This is not easy. We're talking about complex social interaction skills. And if you're going to be rejected or told to, "Get out of here, I'm not interested." That can wear on you. I mean, you might not go as far to say, "That hurt my feelings," but it might, or you feel like, "Forget it, I don't want to try that again." And so that's part of what my training, is how do you engage people and how do you protect yourself when you're doing that so that you don't give up so that you are resilient and you can move forward? So it was just really that me sharing what my experience was and saying, "Try this." And he would come back and be like, "That totally worked." I was like, "Yeah, I know." So it really just built on itself.

Dimitrios Mastoras:

One of the things that really stuck out for me was motivational interviewing, essentially facilitating some decision-making for the stakeholders. I wasn't there to demand anything of them. I was there to offer help and do it consistently.

And I was attracted to... A lot of the counseling psychology concepts, I didn't really have to know them at the level she did, but she would explain them to me in a way that I could actually just go use them and see some real results.

So you can imagine how that felt being kicked out of a bar by a bar owner three, four, five times. And then finally shifting my perspective and some of the words I used to get people on board to actually work with me. They were seeing through the consistency also that I wasn't going anywhere. I was there to help them, and that was my only goal.

Molly Mastoras:

Going off of what Jim just said, we always knew that we worked with similar people at times. And I often worked with people who were either court ordered to be in therapy, or as a CPS worker, no one wants

to see you really. So it's really important to establish rapport, and some level of trust, and being honest, and being resilient, and being in this difficult time with people. So just kind of passing that on to Jim as best I can to say, "It's tough, but other people do it," mainly social work, mental health. You can do this too. So a lot of the things I did teach him, like he mentioned motivational interviewing, were just really adapted to fit what he was doing in Clarendon.

So my background is therapy, as I mentioned. So cognitive behavioral therapy techniques, thinking about person-centered, which is meeting somebody where they are at and not where you expect them to be. A lot of these are just important for approaching a situation, giving people a strengths-based platform to jump off of, which is a different perspective than you were used to.

Dimitrios Mastoras:

Right. And it's not like... I'd never received any type of training on how to build a relationship with somebody and get them to do something with me. That's just not something that was offered. Yeah, we've gone through community policing classes, but this was next level. This was a way to really connect with people and start building some culture and sustainability. And that's really what I was after, because that is what led to a higher level of work. I could ask more of them and they could ask more of me. And we really built an interdependency with the stakeholders.

And when I talk about stakeholders, I'm talking about everyone. Bar owners, other businesses, the county agencies, economic development, we're all equals in big complex problems. And that was my shift, is that this is not just the police only problem.

Molly Mastoras:

Well, I think too, which might've been a surprise for you, but you can speak to that of course, is that your safety increases when you're able to talk to people in a way. I think when I was fresh out of grad school and working for CPS, Jim would say, "I'm nervous that you're going to these houses alone a lot of times. And what do you do if something happens?" And that's a reality, that something threatening could occur of course.

But it's my responsibility to treat everyone with integrity, respect, and know how to do that, know how to make people feel comfortable, or build some rapport, build some trust as quickly as I can so that they're a little calmer. And just understanding that the power differential between me and this person that I'm talking to, mitigating that, understanding that, and working through that is important, because they're afraid I'm going to take their child away. That's terrifying. And I need to have empathy for that in order to get to the next step is, how can we start your case plan, or what happens next? Or what information can I get from you that I need in order to file my court affidavit or whatever it is?

So you need to get these people to work with you, but you also don't want to make them afraid, because you need them as a partner in this. So I would kind of joke around that I don't need any sort of physical tactics because I have my clinical skills, but I kind of meant that. I know how to talk to people. I know how to use empathy in the best way. That doesn't mean it was perfect.

Dimitrios Mastoras:

That's what I heard for years. And I finally understood how your relationships actually made you safer.

Molly Mastoras:

A lot of times, it's seen as being a soft skill, as a police officer anyway. But it really is, in my opinion, a core competency because it keeps you safe.

Jessica Grisler:

I love that these intense conversations are happening over the dinner table. I can only imagine, but really what a creative way to just bring two professions together to address some of these issues, especially when having to navigate a lack of resources. It's really, really incredible.

So we've talked about building relationships, but I want to contextualize this against a concept some people may be more familiar with. So we hear the term community policing a lot nowadays. How does relationship-based policing differ from community policing, and how has Safe Night adopted this approach and applied it to not only law enforcement, but other stakeholders in the field?

Molly Mastoras:

So first, let me define relationship-based policing, right? Because, thank you for bringing that up, Jessica. So relationship-based policing is establishing and maintaining individual relationships with community members and collateral professionals, with the purposeful goal of collaborative problem solving and management of complex community issues.

So that's kind of a wordy way of saying you base your action, your problem solving on the relationships that you're making. And so there's a lot of talk about making relationships with the community. Well, the community is made up of individuals, so this means knowing how to talk to one person at a time and really just using these complicated, advanced social skills to do your work and move it forward.

Dimitrios Mastoras:

Yeah, I would agree. And especially in relation to what you asked, how does this differ or how is this in line with community policing? And I'm going to break down a little bit of what community policing means to us versus the way we've applied our work through relationship-based policing.

I'm going to refer back to Dr. Charlotte Gill from George Mason University Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy. She's been our partner for a number of years. We've worked together. She did a full research seminar on our work in Arlington, and she's been a strong partner with us, especially in the development of relationship-based policing.

In 2014, she released a systematic review of community-oriented policing. And one of my favorite quotes by her is that, "There is a feeling in the scholarly literature that to some extent, community policing has become a buzzword rather than something that's actually implemented. Because it is a philosophy or a set of principles rather than a defined model, we see a different level of engagement among police departments."

That's exactly how we have experienced community policing. Community policing is often referred to, we've heard it called the relational policing. And because it's not defined, because there is no pathology to how it's applied, it really means something different to everyone.

What we don't use community policing for is developing those individual relationships. And while many people who come out for Coffee with a Cop or National Night Out, you often attract people who already support the police.

What we're really going after is the heart of problems. We want to find people that are most relevant to the issues, most relevant to the problem. And that's what relationship-based policing does. It comes

from evidence-based counseling, psychology. It does have a methodology. We do have a systematic way of teaching relationships with individuals, rather than the community. And I put that in quotations.

And the real value here is not just people in the community or stakeholders, it's the other municipal agencies or state agencies, and bringing everyone most relevant to the table to work on these problems. And we also parse out this pretty distinctly as well, is that we see community policing more as for outreach, which increases awareness, right? It gets the message out. But awareness should amplify the message of the engagement work, which is done through relationship-based policing that's focused on prevention.

We want to make these relationships. We want to do this work on the front end, so that people will do work with us to avoid and weather the storm when we have these things.

Ultimately, what are we after? We're talking about management of these big complex issues. There is no elimination of them. These are really difficult problems that society faces. Really, what we want to focus in on is the severity and how often they're occurring. And these relationships are durable and resilient so that we can get through them together.

Molly Mastoras:

Well, I think it's important that... Because when you have these individual relationships, you benefit from the wisdom of the community. They are telling you, these people are saying, "I know that's an important problem for you, but these are the problems we see. These are the problems that we want to take care of." And it is so important to listen to that, especially if you're looking for them to participate in management and solutions of bigger issues.

So they know, they're the experts on their neighborhood, they're the experts on what goes on there. So just opening up and listening to what the community is saying one person at a time is so important.

And I know that a lot of times police will say to us, "That's so much time." It does not have to be. It does not. It just is five minutes here or there, checking in with people. And once you have an established relationship, it's even easier, because people want to become familiar. They want to know the police in their neighborhood. They want to have that access. And if that person is friendly and open to listening, it makes a huge difference, especially in neighborhoods that are used to police not presenting that way. It kind of knocks people for a loop and they're like, "Oh, okay." And it can be very effective.

Dimitrios Mastoras:

One of the things, most importantly I want to say about relationship-based policing is that this is not looking to eclipse any other policing strategy. We're looking simply to enhance. Proactive Alliance, this relationship-based approach is meant to grease the wheels. So proven and evidence-based policing strategies such as problem-oriented policing or hotspots can be enhanced through this work, because you need relationships not only for understanding and support, but so that you can engage the stakeholders who are again, closest to the problem that have been identified through data.

So we often leave people out of those conversations, especially on the public participation side, is that we come in with, yeah, these strategies are proven, but you don't have understanding or support for them. Again, that's really what the heart of it is. We really want this to be foundation that drives a lot of these other very effective strategies.

Molly Mastoras:



One thing that I do want to differentiate is that we do hear a lot in our trainings is like, "Okay, so I need to be friends with everyone? I am hugging now?" No, that's not what we're saying at all. In fact, the whole structure of Proactive Alliance is how to teach you to be yes, friendly. Friendly, yeah, totally. But how to build productive relationships with people based on your genuine, authentic self. And we teach people how to protect that, because that can feel scary to be yourself out in the world, especially when you're used to having a defensive stance and wanting to keep yourself safe. But there are ways to do that, that mental health and social work professionals learn before they go out into the world to help people.

So not being friends with everyone, that would be exhausting. It's being friendly and being your authentic self in a way that's safe to engage people with you. And having empathy can go a long way, and it needs a purpose.

So my thing is having empathy gets a bad rap, I think overall. But if you just have empathy and you don't do anything with it, that's not really helping anyone. So we call it productive empathy, which is you build a way to have empathy, but then there's a goal to it. This is for problem solving, although it is authentic. So it's both things.

Jessica Grisler:

Molly, I love what you said about the community being the experts on their own neighborhood and how far just taking five minutes to listen can go when building relationships. I think that's really, really key and really important. I think we hear the term community policing often, but not as much about this relationship based approach. So thank you for going more in depth on the two.

I think this sets a really great foundation for how your organization Safe Night adopted this approach and saw a need to take a step further to create a training, which you've mentioned a couple times, Proactive Alliance, that was specifically focused on this. So can you talk a little bit more about Proactive Alliance and its goals, and then maybe you can also give listeners some examples of programs that have started to use this and adopt this approach.

Molly Mastoras:

Absolutely. Well, I'll start off with that. I think once we were seeing how much success Jim was having in Clarendon, we thought, "This could be used for any complex problem." It really became, how can we put this together so that it can be replicated and we can teach it? We can go and find departments who are willing to learn or who need assistance in a wicked problem as they're called, that are difficult to manage. We want to get this out there because this works.

So that really was the beginning of that. And Proactive Alliance, the name was just something that spoke to me, because it says exactly what it is, if you think about it. So you're being proactive, meaning getting out there and taking the initiative. And you're aligning with people rather than being adversarial, right? This is about joining with and saying, "All right, let's look at this problem together. Two brains are better than one, essentially. And I need you. You need me. Let's make this happen."

So in giving that sort of permission to police and other municipal agencies who are in similar positions, to go out and try, it's okay. You don't have to wait for the community to come to you. You can go to them. And that's really a big part of preventative work, which is what we focus a lot of our energy on. How can you make this more about prevention than reaction, response as opposed to just reaction?

So the goals of Proactive Alliance training is to teach the perspectives, because the perspectives I think are as important as the actual tactics. It's a way to think about how to approach these problems, how to approach people, and then exactly what you do when you get there.

Because I feel frustrated myself. I would learn a new therapeutic approach. I'd be like, "I need a script. Tell me what to say. What does this look like?" So I wanted to deliver this in a way that was practical. Practicality is the key to Proactive Alliance.

In that vein, we want people to use fewer resources with more effective outcomes. Of course, we want to create safer neighborhoods by developing and maintaining individual relationships. Like I said, communities are made up of individual people. Promoting collaboration with other municipal agencies to improve efficiency.

So while it might take time to understand someone else's role, and have them understand yours, and their limitations, and your limitations, in the end, it saves time because you know how to access this resource. You know who to call in this situation, and you have somebody that can be on your team that can fill in this gap that you might not know what to do or how to handle.

We also want to inspire critical thinking and agency for problem solving. So I think people don't act a lot of times they don't feel competent to do so. How do I move ahead? What am I supposed to do? We all can relate to that. So hopefully, this training gives people different ways to approach it.

Our training also teaches to prioritize wellbeing and job satisfaction. So we talk a lot about self-awareness in this training, which I understand elicits lots of moans and groans. I get it. And it's only for the purpose of helping keeping you safe. So I think understanding what your emotions are when they come up is key to not acting in a way that is based on emotion and not rational thought.

We all do this when we're upset about something. We act immediately. We think back and we're like, "Ooh, yikes. That maybe wasn't the best idea." But if you're aware of your emotions, you're less likely to do that.

I always sort of giggle a little bit, because a lot of times people say, "Well, my emotions are never, they're never part of my decision making. I don't even think about it." I'm like, "Well, then they definitely are," because if you're not thinking about them, they're driving your behavior. So just something to chew on with that.

And then finally, our last goal, and then I'll pass off to Jim, is to modify perceptions of the community. And also vice versa, modify the community's perceptions of either the police or the other agencies working with them. Because then you see each other as people, as individuals. It's not just that guy. It's that guy that you know, and you know his first name and his kid plays baseball or whatever it is. So it diminishes that feeling of danger, because you know these people. And it broadens the ability to do more work because they're on your team now. You can include critical partnerships on your team, and you're all working towards the problem solving.

Dimitrios Mastoras:

Yeah, a thought that pops into my brain when Molly's talking about all this, recently I spoke at the Professionalizing Law Enforcement-Community Engagement conference in Atlanta back in the spring, and the moderator for my session was Dr. Nikki Smith-Kea, who is an executive in residence, Philadelphia Police Department. Listening to her talk about our model is very exciting, and this is what she said to the conference was that this is what co-production of safety looks like. This is in practice, and that's really what we're getting to the heart of when we do these trainings. We're not talking about things, and we give them the theory why these things work because it's necessary, but then they have to



do the work. We spend a lot of time having them work on specific problems that they're dealing with in their communities together. And what we often hear is as soon as they arrive, they go to the sides of the room where they know each other, their agencies kind of stick around together. Whether it's police, fire, code, social services, public health. They all kind of sit in their little silos just the way they do in normal practice every day. And we challenge them. You have to go sit with somebody you don't know.

And what they find is, "Yeah, we're all working on these problems together and this is why we showed up. But now I have to actually talk to somebody who works for the same municipality I do. I don't want to do this." And what they find is they're leaving our training with specific tasks. You can't just say, "We're going to go talk to the community." You have to tell us who, and you have to tell us their relevance to the problem. It's not just about saying, "We talked to people." We do not offer tips and tricks. This is an investment. This is a way of doing work that is going to have an outcome rather than an output. And really, that's what we're after.

We know relationship-based policing works, because it's been evaluated by UCLA. In 2020, Dr. [inaudible 00:28:14] evaluated the Community Safety Partnership in LA, and their sole purpose was to build relationships and reduce gang violence. And guess what? It worked. It could also be used for other complex or chronic issues like homelessness.

Guess what we also found? Same thing. Proactive Alliance and the relationship-based policing model being used in LA with the Community Safety Partnership, it's the only two models that we know of. And the Urban Peace Institute is the nonprofit that created the work with them. This didn't come from within the police, just like this didn't come from within the police.

And it's that multidisciplinary approach where you're bringing in perspectives from other professions that really drives real examples of this. I mean, Michael Keen, who was a police officer for many years in Arlington County, went through our first Proactive Alliance training and created the Homeless Outreach Coalition in Arlington, Virginia. He's no longer a police officer. He was offered a job with the Department of Human Services to continue his work at a higher level, and he took it. It's just amazing.

And he did the same thing I did. He followed the same blueprint. He brought all these agencies that were working on homeless issues in the county separately and siloed. And if they did, it was a bit competitive. He brought them all together towards a common goal. That's co-production of safety. So that's really what we're after.

Molly Mastoras:

A lot of times people will say, "Well, what you're talking about isn't evidence-based, it's not." And in policing, okay, correct. I'll give that to you. Proactive Alliance has not been evaluated in that way.

However, a lot of the evidence-based techniques that I refer to are evidence-based in my field, in counseling psychology. So things like motivational interviewing and cognitive behavioral therapy, these are established evidence-based techniques that work in that setting. So granted, they are adapted for use in this setting, but you kind of joke around sometimes, "If you work with people, these will work."

Jessica Grisler:

So I know Safe Night has really grown with staff and recognition, as you're kind of mentioning, and you've brought this approach to several cities and states across the country now. What are some of the successes you've seen in some of the municipalities you've brought this training to? Can you briefly highlight some examples?

Dimitrios Mastoras:

So in Dallas, we had this training, the Safe Night Out training, which Proactive Alliance is baked right into. And this captain with Dallas Fire-Rescue got up and said, "We're all supposed to be working on this nightlife violence issue together, and we're all here, but I've never met most of you in this room." What stuck out for me was he said, "We need to get our own house in order. We don't even have relationships with each other. How are we expected to go make them with the community, the bar owners, the managers? How are we expecting them to change when we can't even do the basic thing that we're asking them to do ourselves?"

And I heard the same sentiment echoed in Wichita, Kansas with the Homeless Outreach Team. They're working with Housing and Community Services, a ton of other community service providers, and they have a national model for homeless outreach, yet they're struggling with communicating. And it was evident by they were all sitting in the same room together, and many of them had never met each other, had never really.

And the piece that often is missing is what Molly referred to earlier, which is the strategic planning. There are no defined outcomes for everyone. Hence, you lack accountability. We don't know what each other's roles are. We don't know what is expected of each other. And we don't know what common goal we're working towards. The strategic management piece, whether that's problem identification, the diagnosis, the strategies we're going to use.

And then when things don't go well, how do we alter them? It's not just this is a failure and we give up. How do we change what we're doing in service of the strategy or the larger outcome?

Jessica Grisler:

That's great. Thanks, Jim. So because Byrne JAG can be used across the entire spectrum of the criminal justice system, state administering agencies are often required and encouraged to engage with many different and diverse stakeholders. So similar to your example in Dallas, whether it's because new leadership has come in or they're developing an advisory board with stakeholders that they may have never worked with before or other circumstances, where would you advise them to start when trying to build these lasting relationships in their states?

Molly Mastoras:

The first step is understanding that relationship building is a process and long-term commitment, and it takes time. It's not something that is going to change things overnight. So when it does take a little bit longer, that's normal. It's okay. And it does not have to be perfect.

Human relationships are messy and complicated, and that's not bad. It's just what it is. It's a matter of learning skills and practicing them, continuing to try.

Dimitrios Mastoras:

Yeah. Specifically problem identification, and then the lack of knowledge around what agencies bring to the table, especially on the state level. We put out a report with [responsibility.org](http://responsibility.org). The title of it is Proactive Engagement in Traffic Enforcement and Safety. The goal here was that we find that federal, state, and local agencies are not working together specifically on strategic goals. We find a funding of money, and it travels from above high down to the local agencies, and they're just expected to go do whatever they do. There's no guidance, there's no strategic plan, there's no real goal here. And frankly, they're not being given any guidance on how they should be doing anything differently.

So we saw a real opportunity here to write this report and expand the understanding from not only the federal, state, and local level, that there are more things you could be doing together. And we wanted to use evidence-based research. We wanted to use and introduce models like risk terrain modeling. We wanted to introduce cultural competency. We wanted to introduce relationship-based policing, because having a hotspots application with no real direction on what you should be doing in that hotspot or that concentration is not helpful for the local agency. We're looking for systematic change here. We're not looking for check the box.

Jessica Grisler:

I think this approach is so important. Not every state is going to be as far along and have as many resources, similar to what you just mentioned, Jim. So I think reminding them that even small changes can make an impact is really crucial.

Jim and Molly, thank you so much for being on today's podcast. It really is such a pleasure to hear from you both. But more importantly, it's just so fun to talk about all of the innovative work that you're both doing for the field, really does not go unnoticed. Lastly though, if any of our listeners are interested in bringing your training to their state or really just want to talk about other ways that you can support them, how would they go about reaching out to you?

Dimitrios Mastoras:

Sure. We'd be happy to work if anybody is interested. If you're going to work with us, we invite everyone to be involved. We do not do this work with single agencies. That's kind of the problem. That's what we're trying to stay away from. So make the investment with us. We're happy to work with. You can reach us on the web at [safe-night.com](http://safe-night.com) and you can check our website, any of our emails are available there.

Molly Mastoras:

Yeah. And if anyone has questions about it, we're happy to answer those. Because this is kind of an innovative new thing, so we understand that. And just to reiterate what you started off your question with Jessica, is that it is our priority to meet people places where they are and to go from there. We work with a variety of issues and places, and-

Dimitrios Mastoras:

We're not limited. That's the other thing. We're not limited to specific issues or specific problems. There's lots of things we've been asked to weigh in on and help people with.

Jessica Grisler:

Yeah, awesome. The field is just so lucky to have you both. And again, thanks for being on today, and I hope you have a great rest of your afternoon.

Molly Mastoras:

Thank you. You too.

Dimitrios Mastoras:

You too. Take care.