

Sharing the Solutions Webinar 4

Police Partnerships with Directly Impacted Individuals and Communities

Transcript

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Bonnie Sultan: This is our Center for Court Innovations, fourth and final webinar in our series, *Sharing the Solutions* to homelessness police court partnerships. Today, really exciting panel, we're going to be talking with law enforcement and community partners working together on the local level to develop solutions to homelessness.

Sultan: We'd like to take this time to thank the United States Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services [COPS Office] for their support of this project. Especially, we would like to thank Vonda Matthews from the COPS Office, as well as Medina Henry, Bill Harkins, and Aaron Arnold from the Center for Court Innovation for their continued guidance and support throughout this project.

Sultan: There's no way we could have done this without you, and we thank you for all the time that you've been into this work. Let's meet our panel. So first and foremost, I would like to hand this over to Chief David Honda from Watsonville department. Chief?

David Honda: Thank you Bonnie. Good morning, everyone. At least it's morning here, we're in California but. So my name is David Honda. I just completed a 30-year career in law enforcement. I started back in 1990 at the San Jose Police Department [SJPD], and at the time the city of San Jose was the 10th largest city in the United States.

Honda: I did 25 years there. Most of my career I did in our special operations division, which included violent crimes, enforcement, narcotics, and our full-time SWAT team. And then later on in my career, I went up through the ranks. After 25 years, I got recruited to take on a chief position in the city of

Watsonville, which is still in California, it's a smaller town on the coast, and I'll get into some of the demographics later because I think that's relevant.

Honda: But then I was the chief there for five years, and then now I got hired by a state regulatory commission that oversees police training and hiring practices. And with that, I'll turn it over to my colleague, Susie Rivera from FLY.

Susie Rivera: Thank you so much, Chief Honda. Good afternoon. It's good morning here, as Chief Honda said, but good afternoon to everybody excited to be here. My name is Susie Rivera, I'm the Vice President of Youth Voice Initiative and also the Executive Director of Santa Clara County for Fresh Lifelines for Youth, better known as FLY.

Rivera: In addition to being at FLY, I also teach at San Jose State University in our justice studies department, where I'm impacting lives of students, I'll be working in the different fields in our community, in law enforcement, and across the system. I've been with FLY for over 20 years and at FLY—FLY was founded in 2000, and our young people really helped us develop our program, and we're award-winning nonprofit, serving Bay Area youth involved in the juvenile justice system and proximate to the system and are at risk for entering the system.

Rivera: And we educate them about the law and their rights, and give them positive mentors and role models, and really support them to be leaders in our community and partner with our communities. In addition to the youth service organization, we're also an advocacy organization where we help our [inaudible] become leaders and partner with system stakeholders to help our juvenile justice system become more just, humane, and equitable.

Rivera: And—I'll definitely share lots more when to some of the questions later on—and as a result, FLY [inaudible] safety and decrease the cost and consequences of crime across the Bay Area. And with one of those things, we've been able to [inaudible] youth voice initiatives across the Bay Area. And one of those things being the Youth Advisory Council. And I'm going to go ahead and pass it over to one of our youth justice consultants, Nallely Navarro to introduce herself and talk about the Youth Advisory Council.

Nallely Navarro: Thank you, Susie. Good afternoon, everyone. My name's Nallely Navarro. I am a youth justice consultant with the Youth Advisory Council of Santa Clara County, California. The Youth Advisory Council is a paid partnership between the Santa Clara County Juvenile Probation Department and a community-based organization which is FLY, the organization Susie just introduced.

Navarro: And the council was officially launched in 2017 and was solely based on youth voice. All of our youth council members are formerly system-involved, and the council was based on the belief that we are the experts of our own experiences and struggles of going through the justice system. And with that, I'll go ahead and pass it off to Stephanie.

Stephanie Martinez: Thank you, Nallely. Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Stephanie Martinez. I am the Lead Case Manager for the Literature Training Program in Santa Clara County, I'm also part of the

FLY program. So I've been working with youth for 10 years, but with FLY been six years now, so it's amazing.

Martinez: And basically the leadership program is, we work with youth ages 14, 18-year-olds who are system-involved too. We partner up with probation, with the schools, parents, other stakeholders to support this youth and help them achieve their goals in the 10 months they're in with us. Thank you.

Sultan: Awesome. Thank you. And I'm Bonnie Sultan, I'm the Special Advisor for Center for Court Innovation, and I'm very lucky and excited to be the facilitator of this discussion today. So let's just jump right into it and get to the conversation.

Sultan: Chief Honda, I'd like to start with you. You have decades of service that has proven to be a real true advocate for families and for individuals who are experiencing homelessness in your community and other communities across the country.

Sultan: But it might be helpful for people to start to hear a little bit in the beginning about how did your police department start with community engagement work, and especially with the youth voice. Can you start us from the beginning and tell us how you got here?

Honda: Yes, Bonnie. Actually, so saying decades makes me feel very old, but yeah, so I did start in the 1990s, and that is really when it was the height of the War on Drugs, sorry, initially went into narcotics enforcement, but it was also the time when Gang Violence was escalating very dramatically. In fact, at the time Gang Violence was not an allowed word, it wasn't politically correct; we had to change our names from Gangs to Violence Enforcement. So that tells you a little bit about the atmosphere.

Honda: And I was at San Jose and again, it was the 10th largest city, so we were very busy. And so our mayor at the time decided to create what she called the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force, and this is back in—oh my goodness, it was either late eighties, early nineties.

Honda: And of course, as police officers, and especially during that era, we're very resistant to that because all we wanted to do was go out and do high-profile arrest, and it was all about statistics, and it did work in the short term; we arrested a lot of people and crime seemed to go down in the short term.

Honda: And the mayor had a lot of foresight at the time, so she brought together a bunch of different nonprofits, and a lot of it was funded by the city because that was her priority, and the police department was forced to get involved, and actually FLY was one of our partners, and this is going back with 20 years, I think, Susie. And by that time I had done a lot of time in working our violent crimes enforcement.

Honda: And so I promoted up to the ranks, I was a sergeant in our special operations division and then I became a lieutenant and of course, as a lieutenant, I had to get involved in our Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force. And like I said, reluctant at first, but when I start getting involved in the task force and I met organizations like FLY, it opened my eyes.

Honda: We really saw the impact that our nonprofit partners had in the community, how we were able to not arrest all the time, but actually start getting programs and diverting our youth out of the criminal justice system into something productive and giving them the tools to become productive community members, and get involved in civic engagement in government, and go to school and get their degrees.

Honda: So that's how I got started, and I became a true believer because, if you know the history of San Jose Police Department, we are considered probably for almost two decades the safest large city in the United States. And of course, the politicians, they touted it as the police department, we did all this enforcement, but if you really look at it, it was really the partnerships and the relationships we had and organizations like FLY, and that were really able to curtail the gang violence.

Honda: So fast forward to becoming a chief in the city of Watsonville. Going to Watsonville, our priority really was about youth violence and keeping our kids out of the justice system, giving them opportunities to become leaders in the community that our system didn't really have.

Honda: And that also is the basis of another program that we started that I'll talk about again, and has to do with homelessness and how to engage with our homeless population, our unhoused population, those that are suffering from drug addiction and mental health issues.

Sultan: Thank you. That's really helpful, and I appreciate all of the history, and you don't like it when I say [inaudible]

Honda: I'm just kidding, that's fine.

Sultan: But I think what the audience has heard is there's really a wealth of time and dedication that you've put into this and it really does show and I appreciate it. So as you were talking, I was really thinking more and more about the community organizations and partnerships that you were talking about and really how you rely on one another.

Sultan: And so that of course makes me think about Stephanie, and her work, and what she does there. And so, Stephanie, it almost sounded like he was just talking about knowing you and what you do. Can you share with the audience what you do, and why you came into this work, and how you go about this work? Just hearing how much officers rely and invest in community partners, I want to make sure that we go right to you and we hear what that is.

Martinez: Yeah, definitely. Thank you, Bonnie. Yeah. So I mentioned a little bit, the leadership program we work with youth, 14- to 18-year-olds, to achieve their goals. Mostly system-involved, in probation or—and during our program, they might get a new a case, but our goal is not for them not to get a case but things happen.

Martinez: But yeah, I've been working for 10 years with youth. I've just realized right now, it's a lot, but yeah, a lot of my life experience affected where I'm at right now, working with youth. So I've been born and raised in San Jose, California. So since I could remember, since I was little, my parents were struggling a lot to finding the housing.

Martinez: So we used to rent a lot of rooms, and we didn't stay that long, usually they complain because they have children or we couldn't find another place, they're like, "Oh, you have kids, never mind" too. Yeah, that's too much. And I was like, "Okay."

Martinez: So my parents were struggling and I remember one time around, I was fifth grade, we couldn't find a place to live. So my dad said like, "Hey, bad news, we had sleep in a van behind my job." So we were there for almost a year, so we had food, thankfully, my parents had the job, but it was a struggle as a fifth grader, my brother was younger, two years younger than I was, taking showers in winter with a water hose, I hated showers.

Martinez: So I struggled with hygiene issues, I was hungry, I go to school for breakfast, lunch, and that was like extra food in my system. So that was me as a child. And then as a teen, 2008 hit crisis, my parents lost their first house because it was super expensive, it affected a lot of people.

Martinez: So we were back in the streets trying to find somewhere to stay, sleeping in our cars, luckily we had one family member here in California and we stayed there for a little bit. And finally we were stable again. And then we were living in a ranch with other eight families, the owner was renting the space for us and everything was fine. And this time I was an adult, I was going to San Jose State, this was my third year in San Jose State, last semester for my third year, when I got the phone call for my dad, guess what?

Martinez: Sheriff department's here to kick us out. And I asked him why? And so I guess the owner lost the ranch and he left without telling us. And I was like, "What?" So this is me, I was walking towards my final to turn in and I couldn't handle it, I pulled my professor out, I broke down crying. I told him, "I apologize." He's like, "No, no, no, don't worry. Go deal with that, take your final. You have an extra week to complete it." I was like, "Okay."

Martinez: So I was shaking, and I was like, "Okay, what's going on?" I have worked, full-time student, two jobs, I was working nonstop, so we don't have to be homeless again. So when I get there, this is the time I was working for the city of San Jose too. So I was controlling myself, like okay, I'm representing still city of San Jose in my shirt, I had to be professional at the same time and control my emotions.

Martinez: So when I got there, I asked the sheriff, "What's going on? Do you have eviction notice?" "This is all we put at the house, but we didn't know there was family living here." I was like, "Yeah, there's eight family members living here." He's like, "Can we take our stuff?" He's like, "No, you can't." I was like, "What do you mean? There's our property inside?" He's like, "We're not sure your property, you had to talk to this lady out here, you had to make an appointment with her."

Martinez: I was like, "What do you mean?" I was like, "Don't we have rights?" And then he didn't know how to answer me, and I was bombard him with question after question. And he was like, "Go talk to her." And when I turned, he booked it, he walked away from me and I was like, "Okay." I was like, "All right, let me go talk to this woman."

Martinez: I talked to her and she was like, "Sorry, I'm just here to make appointments, but you're not allowed to take anything, you have to leave now." And I asked her, and I advocate for the other family because they were not English-speaking. I was like, "What they're going to do?" Is like, "I don't know."

Martinez: I was like, "They had to leave right now, they cannot take anything, they cannot even walk inside the property to get their clothes, paperwork, if they have money." And I got super upset, I'm like, "They have little kids, they're like six-year-olds, newborns." I was like, "What they're going to do?" And she's like, "Well, I don't know. I'm just here as the middle person, I can't really do much, just make your appointment." And I was like, I'll feel so frustrated. I felt bad for the other family members.

Martinez: I even talked to them trying to help them out. Like, "Hey, do you guys know where you're going to stay?" Were like, "We're just going to rent a hotel." And hotels are very expensive and sometimes they're not safe, the most cheapest ones, because they're really in hotspot areas.

Martinez: So yeah, that was my adulthood. I slept in my small two-door Mustang, tried to sleep in the library, luckily I had a gym membership so I was able to take a shower there and still gone by my day by day. But it was a struggle, but luckily we found another family member who helped us during that tough time.

Martinez: But all that experience helped me help my youth because there's a reason why they're going through all that stuff, because I recall when I was younger at that age, I was angry, I didn't trust nobody, I didn't wanted to ask for help because I was like, "Oh what are my parents are going to get the [inaudible] it or get in trouble."

Martinez: So I had a lot of pressure as a young child and it's true, I grew up real quick. I never had a childhood, I never had fun, I never loved San Jose until I was an adult. So it's very traumatic at that young age. Sorry.

Sultan: You take your time. I think that that's definitely the important part of making sure that we understand everyone's experience in this work. And there is that old adage that the personal is political, and so we appreciate you sharing all of this. I think it's that personal touch that makes it even more powerful, and so it's never anything to apologize about.

Martinez: Thank you. Yeah. So others' experience has helped me, a lot of our youth been going through a lot of stuff and I want to be somewhere to support them. Like, "Hey, I totally get you. Hey, I get it why you're doing this. Hey, I want something positive for my parents in the long run." I don't want to be in the system because I know it affects a lot of our minority people.

Martinez: So I definitely knew I was going to be stuck in the system, so I push myself, I push everything and I support my youth no matter what. And I was like, "Hey, I'm not here to judge you, I'm here to support you no matter what, give you options and support you in any way." So a lot of my youth simply knows this, even my youth from my past year self contact me.

Martinez: And it's amazing to see them grow and achieve in their life. They're like, "Hey Steph, thank you, you were my, my mother figure, you're my older sister figure." Because a lot of parents got deported during a certain period of time or the parents were not fully there.

Martinez: So yeah. So definitely my job, my role, I love it. I support them. This is why for 10 years working with youth and I enjoy it. But yeah, my homeless history has helped me help with other youth who've been struggling with homeless too. And I try my best to find resources now that I'm an adult and I have extra support to find those resources. But yeah, this is my experience, this is why I do this work and how I bring my heart and hard work to my youth. But thank you, Bonnie.

Sultan: Thank you. I mean, and we're again, as I said, the beginning of our intros, this is really an exceptional panel with really powerful stories of people to it, and you were certainly one of those individuals, and if you see in our chat box, you're getting support from across the country, thanking you for sharing your story, being a part of this work, and your commitment, and your passion, and love for this is palpable.

Sultan: And so we really appreciate you taking time out of the work that you're doing to be on this webinar, so thank you for that. I wanted to move over to Nallely, because Nallely this might be the first time that people are actually having a chance to see a youth leader, and talk to a youth leader, and even hear the term youth leader.

Sultan: And so are you able to talk a little bit about what that means and how you came into this work? And that stuff—she's tough act to follow, I'm sorry, I wouldn't want to—that's tough, that's tough stuff, but I think that you might be able to give it a go. So are you able to share how you got here and what your role is for folks in our audience?

Navarro: Yes. So, like I said before, the Youth Advisory Council is made up of formerly system-involved youth. So in my teenager years, I think I involved with the system and I got involved with the system because I was struggling and my parents were struggling. And like Stephanie said, my mother was undocumented and we were not about to go to any officials and ask them for help, that is not something like we believed them and just thought that was a possibility that we would actually go and receive some resources or help.

Navarro: But let me go back to the Youth Advisory Council. So the Youth Advisory Council really has given us a unique opportunity to bring our own lived experiences, going through the system, and bring our voices to the table; and this is all to create better outcomes for youth who are currently in the system, and that are going through the system, and needing resources.

Navarro: And so when we share and talk about our own unique lived experiences, we're able to give this client-based perspective to probation officers, and to policymakers and counselors, and help them understand the impact that they have on a youth's lives, and help them understand what policies and what practices are working or are not working. This is why youth voice matters, and it needs to be brought to the table, especially when we're trying to come up with solutions to these issues that youth are also experiencing.

Navarro: And so having a voice at the table matters because youth themselves are going through homelessness, there's a youth homelessness population. And so if we're trying to come up with solutions on how to deal and interact with homeless youth, then the first step would be to invite them to the table, to this space, and just have a conversation like we're doing here, ask them questions, have them talk about how they got there, how they're being impacted, what resources they need, and how should police officers interact with them? How can a police officer help them? Because how are you going to help youth who are experiencing homelessness if you don't know what they need, and you don't know what they're going through?

Sultan: I appreciate that, full disclosure, I had a great conversation with Nallely about a week or so ago talking about this webinar. And she gave a wonderful example, I'm hoping that you can provide now, which was how officers might reapproach how they're doing their work.

Sultan: And so we have a lot of officers out here on this webinar today, and we'll watch it again on a recording, thinking about interactions they may have had with families and with youth and thinking about, did I do it right? Maybe I did do it right, or not even considering it.

Sultan: And you gave a wonderful example of an incident that occurred with you, of when an officer approached you in your community. I'm wondering if you can share that, because that is a great way to unpack organizational change and culture change with policing and understanding community and where they're coming from.

Sultan: Because it sounds like in all intention, the officer was doing their best and really thought that they were doing their best, but just didn't maybe have all the tool or information of how to approach you because they've never worked with a leader before. Are you able to share a little bit of that story?

Navarro: Yeah. So growing up, I would often and have interactions with police officers, and because I would always be on the streets and I would never tell a police officer the truth, I did not trust police officers because I really believed if I were to ever say what I'm really going through, what's happening in my house—like where my mom rented a room, it's not a home, I didn't like to call it my house.

Navarro: And I believe there was going to be some type of consequence; I wasn't going to receive help, that was going to be more hurt in some type of way, because that's just what I believed. And so one time when I did build up the courage and let it be known to a police officer that was detaining me around 2:00 a.m. at night, I had nowhere else to go, I let it be known that when he was asking me, "Where do you live? Where is your home? Where can I drop you off?"

Navarro: I'm like trying to come up with a lie and I can't, I am just like, "You know what? Don't take me home. Don't take me home, that's not my home. I am being neglected there, there's hardly any resources there, and I'm being abused there, that's not where I want to go."

Navarro: And this officer, now that I think about it, this officer did not know how to show me empathy because he thought I was lying or it's late, and I am doing things I'm not supposed to be doing, he's probably thinking this girl does not want to get in trouble by her parents. And so he forced it out me to

tell where he can drop me off, if not he was starting to take me to the hall and I didn't want to go to the hall, I didn't want to go to where we lived.

Navarro: And I don't know how, I feel like I was really lucky this night because he took me to the house, he knocked on the door really loud and no one answered that door and I was so happy. But then I started the about, "Okay, so where is he going to take me?" And luckily I was with a friend that night and we were both telling him, this friend knew my situation, we were both telling him I was supposed to be spending a night at her house, and her mom knew my situation as well, and as soon as we got there, he just let me stay at her house.

Navarro: I believe he just let me stay at her house because he didn't know what resources to give me, he didn't know, when I told him that I have an, a, or I'm not really living how I'm supposed to be. Where was he supposed to take me other than the hall or to my guardian? Where, if I was telling him I'm missing all these things, where was he supposed to—he didn't have the resources in hand, he didn't know what to tell me, Well, you know what? There's this place you can get help, they help you, they'll serve you a hot meal, you'll be able to take a shower here.

Navarro: If a youth goes up to a police officer while they're being detained, tells them like, "I haven't ate, I'm stealing food because this reason, I look like this because I haven't showered." What is a police officer? What are they ready? What resources do they have in hand to help these youth?

Navarro: And the only thing he was able to consolidate me with was just words of advice that night. And later on, I got picked up again and I was involved in the system and I never received resources. So yeah, that was my experience.

Sultan: Yeah. I mean, I really appreciate you sharing all of that and I'm sure our audience does as well, because it highlights I think for the officers in our room today, they probably are going through one of those interactions that they had and the language that they use.

Sultan: And I think that you said it so beautifully about, they didn't have the tools that they needed, that it was they did want to do their best, and maybe wanted to do their best, and just did not have the resources and the training available to them in order to really do the work that they were trying to do.

Sultan: And I think that what you shared and what Stephanie shared really shows us the trauma that is involved, especially with youth and family homelessness. And when you're talking about police and poor partnerships around homelessness, to understand that there's a lot of weight, you can feel it as we talk with you today, even if the time has passed, we can still feel that weight that you carry of what comes with homelessness, especially on the backs of kids, there's a lot of a responsibility that you both shared around protecting the family, protecting yourself, a lot of fear that comes around homelessness that actually has nothing to do with the actual homelessness, it's the other things that are also surrounding all of this, that these kids are carrying.

Sultan: And so Susie, I want to bring this to you because FLY has somehow become a trusted ally to all of these different partners. And I think by understanding the trauma that happens with youth, and the

trauma that happens with families, and the trauma that happens with law enforcement and their experience, time and time again, and their work, somehow you and your colleagues at FLY have become that shared space, that common ground, where people can feel safe to come together to have conversations like this today, mind you, on a national webinar, very powerful that you were able to create this space for us today. And so can you talk about how you've done that? How are you able in your role and within your organization to do this today? It's quite powerful and moving, and I would love everyone's able to. . .

Rivera: Thank you, Bonnie. I think my hardest part is, how do I condense that in a couple of minutes, [inaudible] lots and lots of work. And as I told everyone a little bit about FLY, and FLY was founded in voices of young people. And all of our intervention strategies have been designed, embedded, by our young people, and this is why our service we offer in our community work.

Rivera: And a lot has been talked about, Bonnie's talking about being a trusted partner, also working with other community-based organizations and resources because we only don't just serve youth who experiencing homelessness, we're serving youth that are proximate to the juvenile justice system all the way from middle school-aged throughout transitional-aged young people, right into young adulthood.

Rivera: And we've been at the table talk to our partners, or probation partners, or police partners, or community-based organizations to really make sure that we create a system of care of, of resources we can lean on. You know what I mean? As youth are going through these traumatic periods of their life, as well as the intervention strategies we provide.

Rivera: And at the same time being an advocacy organization, what we've done is set up these tables and also build relationships. I remember when Chief Honda and I met, when he was a captain, and we really sat there and we had a discussion of in the area that he was overseeing, how can we partner? How does SJPD know FLY more, and FLY know SJPD? And how do we serve our young people to ensure that we're being not just trauma-informed, but responsive to their needs and help them move onto a healing journey and repair those relationships and those trust relationships.

Rivera: And it takes a lot of time and energy. And being able to be in those spaces, and the one thing that I could say that worked is not just taking the time to build the relationship with our community partners and our system partners, but also the youth, and then, how do I be that bridge builder?

Rivera: So since I have the trust of our young people and have access to their voices, and at the same time, I have access to decision makers and folks who are in law enforcement, folks who are making policy changes, but also impacting our young people when they're entering the system, whether it's by arrest, or through incarceration, or supervision, how am I accessing that and bringing people together to have a conversation?

Rivera: And that's what I've had a privilege of doing, using my positional privilege so to speak, being the trusted ally in the mix across all parties and bringing everyone together to really come up with how can we cope with sustainable solutions that really impact our youth and our community, and also help practices across law enforcement, and in practices across the community, and at the same time, the

ultimate lead to a safer community for all, regardless of what the philosophies are of getting there, finding that common ground.

Rivera: And one of those is that each and every one of us want a safe community and feel safe. Nallely talked about it, Stephanie talked about it, Dave talked about it, and the way we get there may be different, but if we come together, we can find solutions are that sustainable, and that makes sense, and that are not harmful for our youth, as we do the work.

Sultan: You make it sound so easy, so thank you for that. Now, here's a little bit of a trick, so it's not so easy. So, you and I have spoken a little bit about the group, we've spoken about—how many chance to really understand where your partner is coming from? And a lot of this work has to do with what people like to talk about cultural competency.

Sultan: And what I really appreciate about you and your role is that you push that further down the line, that like cultural competency isn't where it's at, it's about what. And so I would love for you to talk about that, Susie, because it really does kind of shake into what you were talking about, about trust-building and pushing the line and really changing the paradigm a little bit about where we're at. So can you talk about how it's not about cultural competency, it's about [inaudible]

Rivera: Yeah, sure. And I think it's about really establishing that trust and understanding and coaching competency is a starting point, it's an understanding, and knowledge, and awareness of what's happening. What really needs to be happening is cultural responsiveness, like, in my role, what am I doing to be responsive to these needs? And I would also say for everyone that's here in the webinar in your role, how are you being responsive to what you are aware of in that situation?

Rivera: It's not enough to know like, okay, this youth is dealing with homelessness or this youth is dealing with the English barrier, language barrier and doesn't know English, this youth is dealing with X, Y, Z, it's about, okay, I'm aware of that. And in my role, how am I going to be responsive to these needs to be appropriate that's actually going to not create more harm? But that's going to create partnership, it's going to create safety, it's going to create community and also resources for, I'm always going to say young people, because I'm always focusing on young people, and I think the older I get, I think everyone becomes younger, but it is what it is, but how are we being responsive to those needs?

Rivera: And a lot of times, many of the stakeholders have or may not have the answer to those questions like, okay, well we need a training and retraining, yes, those are all great. And at the same time, where is that shift going to happen within that department? Whether it's a police department or probation department to really take on and center the individuals that they're impacting, and how are those voices at the table and what practices at all levels?

Rivera: It could be at a police officer level, that's responding to like a Nallely situation, in the community on the streets, and it could be all the way up to the administrator's level. What are those responsive needs happening across the board to ensure at we're creating a community of healing and safety? And so, yeah, and I had a lot more to say but hopefully they answered your question on that, Bonnie?

Sultan: It's a great start for it, I mean, again, you just make it all sound so easy. I'm sure everyone in the audience is like, "How does that—what is in the water in San Jose?" So I think that also what you were talking about a little bit has to deal with partnerships and trust.

Sultan: And so I think that we can all fairly say that in the past, certainly, few years is in this country, but definitely for the history of this country, there has been at some times lower-level conversations and now certainly higher-level conversations around police, and community trust, and partnership, and legitimacy. I think that this is something that's certainly coming through more and more as we're talking about, we've certainly talked about it within this project. We're getting some questions in our Q and A around this as well.

Sultan: And so Nallely, I want to bring it to you first, if I could around, how is that type of partnership built? How do you do that work? What's the first step? Again, Susie makes it sound really easy and we all know it's not, and we know that it sounds, we can see this partnership happening and sometimes it doesn't really, sometimes it can start bumpy or it doesn't have anything at all in the beginning. And so how do you start that work? Especially from where you said, how do you do that?

Navarro: Yeah. So I really believe that, let's say like police in my community, our police department wanted to partner with us, I really believe the first place any police department should start is finding a community-based organization that's already involved in the community, already trusted with the community, has youth like FLY, that would be a great place to start.

Navarro: And then having intentional and interactions with them, what is the purpose of this partnership? And do you guys feel the same? Is the same purpose there, the same passion there? I really believe that's how you would start a partnership with the community and with you, people who are experiencing homelessness.

Sultan: Thank you. And so Chief Honda, I'd like to bring it to you, especially within, I think with some of our audience members and what our colleagues are calling like an error of defunding, the conversation around defunding, how are homeless outreach officers and people like yourself who are really driving this work, how are you able to do this and be responsive, be respectful, and really be a hand to help in this conversation and in this climate today? Just share a little bit about that, I'm sure that it's something that you've thought about a couple of times in the past few decades, I just had to say it one more time.

Honda: That's fine. First of all, let me just say, Nallely hit it on the dot: Officers, departments, you need to go out to your communities; you got to find the experts, the advocacy groups, your nonprofits that do this work; and you have to partner with them, you have to build those relationships, bring them to the department for training, and that's how it starts, and you got to have it in ongoing, you got to be intentional about it.

Honda: Now, going back to your question. So I honestly don't believe the police should be the first responders in calls when it comes to homelessness or stuff that's not criminal in nature; but unfortunately, the way our system is set up, we're always the first responders to everything that's emergency or non-emergency.

Honda: And so as a stopgap, the police department, I think to be responsible, you have to form groups like that, you have to partner, you have to make homelessness in our outreach and our partnerships a priority until there is a way we can change the system, so to speak, because I would say most departments out there, they're going to be responding to these calls and the officers, they're not the best trained to deal with all these different situations, especially when it's not criminal matter.

Honda: So yeah, yes and no. So it's important that the police do come up with these programs, but at the same time, find a way that they can taper off [inaudible] and turn it over to another organization that has the expertise, if that makes sense. And I hope I answered the question.

Sultan: You did and it does. And so while I have you not muted, we have a lot of different, just looking at our panel, our participant list, we see officers all over kind of the rank, I'm seeing some people who are on an executive level, and I see people who are doing outreach work, and all in between.

Sultan: And so sometimes when you're talking to police leaders, they're able to think about starting a program like this because of where they are. But then you also have other folks that are lower-level of the services, mid-level officers that go, "Well, how do I do this? This conversation was amazing, and these women today on this panel were incredible, and I want to promote this where I live, how do I bring that up the chain?" So in your experience, what could people in our audience today do to give a memo to the folks upstairs and say, "Hey, you all, maybe [inaudible] you think about doing this kind of partnership work."

Honda: That is actually a very good question. So for the police leaders out there, you need to step up and come up with an idea or program that the department can follow. And for the line-level officers, that's a tough one, it depends on your leadership, if they're open to it or not, but I'm hoping they are, and if they're not, then you can take the initiative to go out and form these relationships and start these partnerships.

Honda: And then when you start doing that, create some allies within your department, maybe you're a first-line supervisor or if you're a supervisor, get a group together and respectfully bring it up to the chain of commands saying, "Hey, this is program, it works in different cities, here's some references, I've already partnered with some people that I know one might be or in my area, and they're willing to talk."

Honda: And then that's the way I would approach it. And I think that'll work because I can't imagine that if you're a chief or a sheriff, and especially in this climate, that you wouldn't be opening to hearing new ideas as far as partnerships with the community and relationship.

Honda: So that's how I would approach it, just to be respectful of the rank and the chain of command, but maybe take the initiative and show something that you're doing that's actually working that the chief can say, "Okay, that sounds like a good idea." Does that answer your question, I hope?

Sultan: You just want me to say that yes, it answers, yes. This is beautiful answer. And one that's really practical, because here what this project's really about is about, as I said before, sharing solutions, is that

is our motto and our mission, and that is a perfect answer around how someone could just move ahead right now and say, "You know what? I saw this, this is what I want to do to move forward."

Sultan: And I think that that's fantastic and I appreciate that. And yes, you answered all of the questions, thank you. So Stephanie, I wanted to ask you, just from your role and your experience in this and your passion in this, for folks listening, just as we're starting to close our conversation today, do you have any recommendations of marching orders for folks?

Sultan: We always want to make sure that we give people some next steps to take. And I think if anyone's going to have someone listen to them, it's probably you. And so what are those steps that you would have people take today?

Martinez: Yeah, definitely. There's a lot, but I'll start one basic one. I know we have a lot of law enforcement here, just to be more aware is when you get a call related to homelessness out there, you just be mindful that that's their house now. I know, I understand that you work for the city, you're out in the streets and I understand your struggles too, I'm aware of everybody's, their job description, the trauma, and that too, that comes with it.

Martinez: But yeah, when you approach somebody be mindful, like I had a youth who was homeless with a family living in Mountain View, and those are all trailer homes. And I was like, "Hey, I'm here to support you guys, I'm not reporting you. I totally understand that, this is not CPS mandated reporter, I'm not calling the officers, you're not letting your children."

Martinez: So I let them aware. And also I offer food, I was like, "Hey, are you hungry? What's more comfortable for you? Do you want me to meet you at your trailer home or somewhere else?" And the mom was like, "Wow, thank you for that, nobody has ever asked me that, nobody respects our space, they assume stuff, they come barging you with authority. They're not empathetic, they're not understanding."

Martinez: So offer support, offer resources like Nallely and Chief said, bring resources. If you're going to a call that's related to homelessness or stuff like that like, Hey, there's this place on street, they offer showers or food or you yourself, I know it's not in your work requirements, but humanity, end of the day we're humans, it's not our decision to be homelessness, things happen in the society, but yeah, just be more aware, more empathetic, treat them more as like that could be your family member of the day or, so just be mindful of that.

Martinez: But yeah, I think next steps is offering resources, building that "trust us" with other communities, because I know the funding police officer for me, that's, I get it, where they're coming from, but also it's not a good thing, I feel like we need to build that rapport, that relationship back with the police officer, build that trust because all my life, I don't trust police officers because the experience I dealt with, certain police officers, but I know there's some good ones out there who are more understanding and more, less strict and more stuff. So I totally get it.

Martinez: But yeah, resources, go research your community agencies; nonprofits have like a resource notebook around you, like flyers or stuff like that. Because I do that now, when I meet with other stakeholders, other organizations, I get the flyers.

Martinez: I know we have housing for youth as they become homelessness, if they want to get removed their tattoos, I collect those flyers and I'm like, Hey, I pass it out, or if I don't understand something or I don't know, research about something, I'll go find it. But those have it in your handy, next to you or phone numbers, pass it out, I think that'll be helpful. And then anybody else has any ideas?

Sultan: Well, what do you think? Nallely what would you, [inaudible] tough to follow? I'm sorry that we do this to you. I'm sorry, but those are great recommendations. And so what do you think?

Navarro: Yeah, I definitely believe building trust is up there and I feel like the way to do that would just be having more interactions within the community, doing things like, I mean, you guys don't have, I don't know if you would get paid to do this, I don't really know, but I'm saying if I were to see a police officer at a food distribution, handing out food to people who come and obviously need it, that would change my perspective, I have never seen that and I just thought about that.

Navarro: Because that's something we do at the Youth Advisory Council, to make partnerships with our community and to say, "Hey, we're here. You can trust us because we're here to help." But yeah, so that would be a recommendation, building trust, making more, just random appearances, I don't know something like that because I feel like that's something I don't see enough in my community.

Sultan: That's a great, I love that. And I think that that's something that will kind of build more on because that, I mean, it sounds like you're saying be a member of the community. It sounds like, just do the thing. And so I want to close if I could, for our last question for Susie, that we're getting on our chat.

Sultan: And I also want to thank all of our audience members today for sharing all their support for our speakers. And so we see it, we appreciate you, they appreciate you, we see you and it just really, again, drives home why this work is so important and how, just a conversation like this on Zoom is powerful.

Sultan: And so to do it at your home community must be epic. And so, Susie I would like to have the last word with you because, again, you are the person who brought this all together and you are the person who developed these relationships over time to be a trusted voice, not just yourself but your organization, that's tough stuff.

Sultan: And so knowing that you have had the chance to do this and have the expertise to do this, I'm wondering if people in our audience are thinking, well, I don't live in San Jose and that's tricky. So how do I find her in Colorado? Where is Susie in Houston? How do I find you? So what are the steps for people to find you? And to know that, even though you're not in San Jose, there's probably organizations out there that do like work, so what would that be for the audience staff?

Rivera: All right. So I mean, I think, to sum it up, it comes down to care, connect, and commit. And you're probably like Susie, I do know those three things, what are you talking about? But it's about how we're doing it. When I talk about care, it means about listening to the community, exactly what Nallely is doing,

getting out there, being a part of the community, listening to the needs, and then taking inventory of what are the resources that are in my community right now.

Rivera: And a lot of times it can be a lot of folks that are showing up to different spaces and you can see like, "Oh, you know what? I really need to connect." And that leads to my connection. You need to connect and partner, not just connect like, "Hey, this is who I am," but, "Hey, I would really like to have a conversation, understand what your organization's doing," because that organization will probably say here's 10 other organizations that are doing this type of work.

Rivera: So you'll have your list of resources that you can actually put out there, but you'll also have a list of individuals that you could start building relationships with and building true partnerships and trust, because that does take time. I have a lot of people in my speed dial, in my phone, that I can call in all different parts of government, in all different parts of law enforcement, that I can have a conversation and dialogue with when there's issues that are arising.

Rivera: And it's a process that needs to happen every day. So how do I truly partner and make those connections? And in regards to commitment, really making that commitment and understand there are deep power dynamics that play, whether it's talking to a young person on the street or even talking to a community based organization, that true partnerships, that has to be a shared share in power, that needs to happen and true collaboration in that.

Rivera: And so really inviting, after building those relationships, inviting those CBOs to come do a training, to come do a discussion, to do a dialogue, to do focus groups, you know what I mean? With those who are experiencing homelessness and other issues in the community that could really help you. So the homeless is not just on you, how do you partner and get that expertise? Because as Chief Honda was talking about the police are first responders to everything.

Rivera: And I know in where we're at, as we serve across the Bay Area, that we're really looking at different ways of how CBOs could be responding to some of these needs that are happening in our community. So I would say, taking that time to listen, connect, commit so that you have that list of people that you can actually reach out to when you come across different Nallelys in our community who are amazing, and brilliant, and beautiful, but may not have the resources at that time.

Rivera: And also those that you can lean on. There's a gap here, I don't know what's happening. And there could be forums that you already have in your community, you could invite people to.

Rivera: And if there's not, let's create one, we have a lot of individuals, I'm sure they're out there that are doing the work that I'm doing and that everyone's doing here, that's on the panel that would love to have that connection to be able to come out, like Nallely and her group, or putting together a law enforcement symposium of how do they going to bring law enforcement across the Bay Area, and have a discussion of how they connect with youth and serve youth and open up that dialogue so that we could promote that healing.

Rivera: So I think that'd be the start, but there's a lot more to that, and I try to make—it is easy but it is a challenge, but you definitely taking the first step would be doing just that.

Sultan: That's awesome. And people are starting to, the bubbles are starting again on my chat. And so I'll say that, even though we're coming to the end of our webinar now, and I thank everyone for your passion and sharing your story, it's definitely not the end.

Sultan: And so if the folks in the audience want to keep that conversation going and you want to take our speakers up on the opportunity to keep those connections going, and you want to learn more, or you want to know next steps, or you're interested in connecting further, or you just want to thank them for their time today, the best way to do that is to contact either Susie, her email address is up on our screen, you can always contact me, my email address is up on the screen and that's to contact our panelists.

Sultan: Again, I just want to thank our panelists for all of the time, passion, sharing your story, it's never easy, but somehow you make it seem so easy, and so graceful, and beautiful, and we thank you for this. And so on behalf of the Center for Court Innovation, the COPS Office, everyone on our project, we're grateful that this was the way that we closed out our webinar series. And we just want to thank you, and we want to thank everyone in the audience for their participation, and thank you all, take care.