

My community is energized about pedestrian and bicycle safety! Where do we go from here?

## Media Framing and Advocacy

February 1, 2023

<https://safetrec.berkeley.edu/programs/cpbst>

*The CPBST peer exchanges are supported by funding from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.*

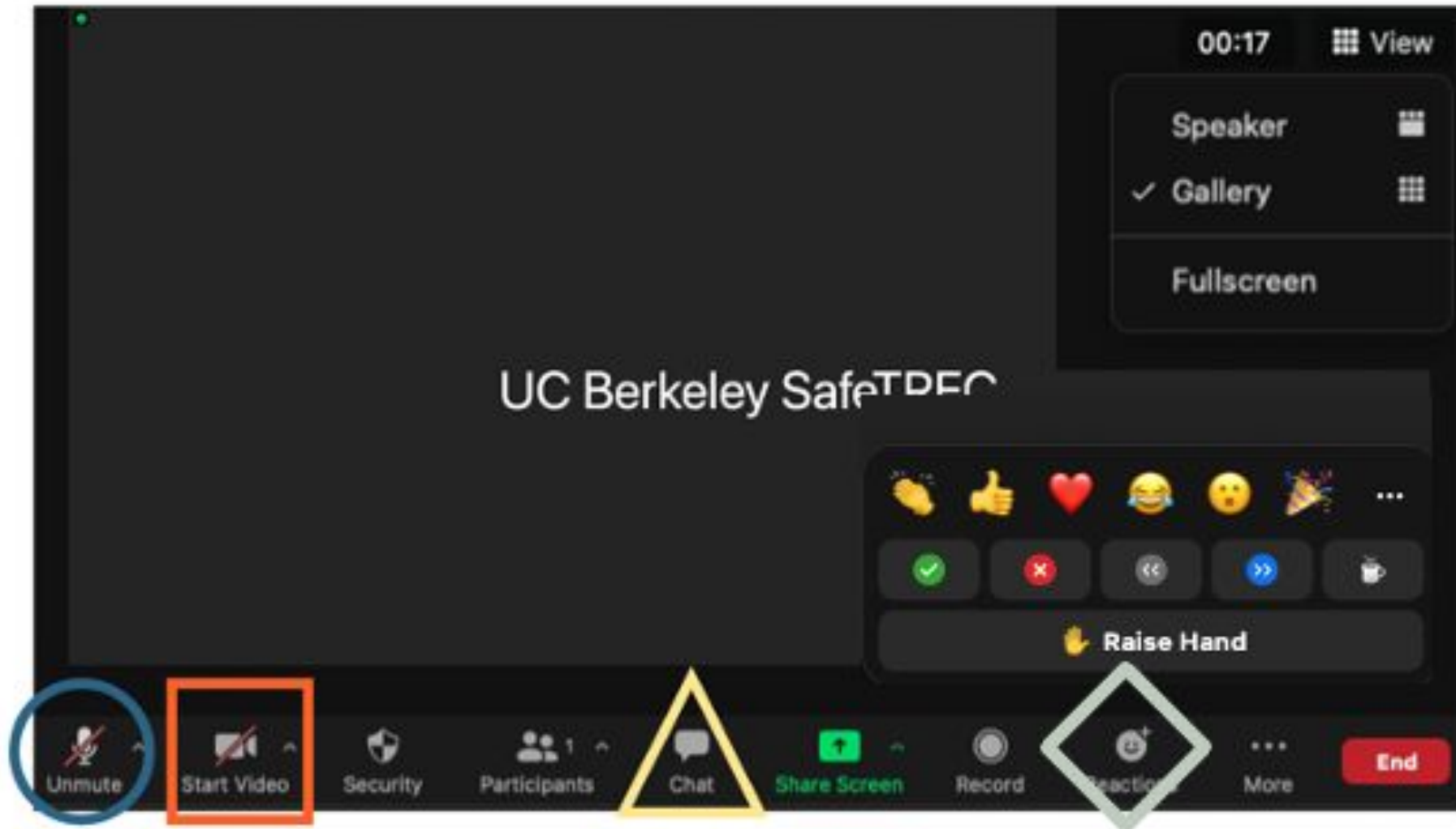
# Purpose of Today's Peer Exchange

- ▶ Bring together peers to learn about media framing and advocacy for road safety
- ▶ Engage in discussions related to how pedestrian and bicycle crashes are framed in the media
- ▶ Identify strategies and resources for effectively communicating about road safety with the media, journalists or members of the public

# Housekeeping

- ▶ Please **mute** your audio/phone when you are not speaking to minimize background noise
- ▶ Feel free to enter questions or comments in the **chat**
- ▶ Please have your **camera on** when you're speaking, if you are comfortable
- ▶ All slides will be emailed to everyone registered for today's peer exchange
- ▶ Think of something later? Email [cpbst@berkeley.edu](mailto:cpbst@berkeley.edu)

# Zoom Logistics



# Agenda

- ▶ Welcoming Remarks & Housekeeping
- ▶ How pedestrian and bicyclist crashes are framed in the media
- ▶ Strategies and best practices available to reframe crash reporting
- ▶ Communication tools and resources
- ▶ Discussion
- ▶ Wrap Up



# Media Framing and Advocacy

Presented by:

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**Berkeley** SafeTREC

# Why do **words matter**?

- Nearly 43,000 people died in traffic crashes in 2021.
- 11,388 people walking were killed that year, and 7,727 bicyclists were killed or injured.
- This is a public health crisis.
- How we think about the problem of traffic injuries and fatalities – and what the solutions are - is influenced by how the media reports on it.



## Fatal semi-truck vs pedestrian crash in Oxnard



KEYT

OXNARD, Calif. – A 51-year-old Oxnard woman died in a semi-truck vs pedestrian accident early Thursday morning on Camino Del Sol and Kinetic Drive, according to the Oxnard Police Department.

### Teen, 3-year-old suffer minor injuries in Rockville pedestrian accident, officials say

by 7News Staff | Tuesday, January 31st 2023



Police lights (7News)



ROCKVILLE, Md. (7News) — A teenage pedestrian was struck by a vehicle after getting off a bus in Rockville, Montgomery County Fire & EMS said.

The teen suffered non-life-threatening injuries and a 3-year-old, who was traveling with the teen, was also taken to the hospital for

## Bicyclist dies in collision with vehicle in South Sacramento

Share



Updated: 2:43 PM PST Dec 17, 2022

Infinite Scroll Enabled



Police generic lights sirens SOURCE: KCRA 3



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**SACRAMENTO, Calif.** — According to the California Highway Patrol, a fatal accident occurred in South Sacramento on Saturday morning involving a car and a bicyclist.



# Driver, 78, who hit couple outside police station also struck woman in crosswalk days earlier

Police said they have flagged the driver's license for a priority review from the DMV.

By Emilie Raguso  
July 15, 2022, 3:54 p.m.



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## LOCAL NEWS

### Cyclist hit after driver failed to yield to right of way

by: [Ashtin Wade](#)  
Posted: Jan 4, 2023 / 04:08 PM CST  
Updated: Jan 4, 2023 / 04:08 PM CST

SHARE

SAN ANGELO, Texas — A bicyclist was hit by a vehicle in San Angelo on January 4 after a driver failed to yield to the right of way.

# Man hit by 2 cars crossing NJ intersection that's deemed one of the deadliest in nation

Police say the man was crossing the road with a stroller filled with ice bags when he was hit near Rt. 129 and Lalor Street.



By [6abc Digital Staff](#)

Wednesday, August 17, 2022



EMBED

MORE VIDEOS

Police say 66-year-old old John Giordano was crossing the road at the intersection with a stroller filled with ice bags when he was hit by an SUV.

TRENTON, New Jersey (WPVI) -- A man was seriously injured after being hit by two cars in Trenton, New Jersey Tuesday night.

# What does the research say?

- Local news coverage tends to shift blame towards vulnerable road users like people walking and biking and away from drivers.
- Coverage almost always treats crashes as isolated incidents (episodic framing) and focus on the role of the individual
- Refer to crashes as accidents.
- Fail to include input from planners, engineers, and other road safety experts.

Status quo	Better practice	Effect of status quo
<b>Accident:</b> “ <i>Pedestrian killed in <u>accident</u> on Main Street.</i> ”	<b>Crash:</b> “ <i>Pedestrian killed in <u>crash</u> on Main Street.</i> ”	Obscures preventable nature of crashes
<b>Non-agentive:</b> “ <i>A pedestrian was hit and killed.</i> ” (no agent)	<b>Agentive:</b> “ <i>A pedestrian was hit and killed <u>by a car</u>.</i> ”	Obscures role of a human actor
<b>Focus on pedestrian:</b> “ <i>A <u>pedestrian</u> was hit and killed by a car.</i> ”	<b>Focus on vehicle:</b> “ <i>A <u>car</u> hit and killed a pedestrian.</i> ”	Increases blame for the focus of the sentence
<b>Object-based language:</b> “ <i>A <u>car</u> jumped the curb.</i> ”	<b>Person-based language:</b> “ <i>A <u>driver</u> drove over the curb.</i> ”	Obscures role of a human actor
<b>Counterfactual statements:</b> “ <i>The pedestrian <u>darted into the street</u>.</i> ”	<b>Not included</b>	Increases perceived blame for the victim
<b>Episodic framing:</b> Treats the crash as an isolated incident.	<b>Thematic framing:</b> “ <i>This is the tenth fatal collision this year.</i> ”	Prevents readers from connecting the dots between incidents and thus shifts attention to individual-level rather than systematic solutions

How do we reframe crashes  
through a **Safe System** lens?

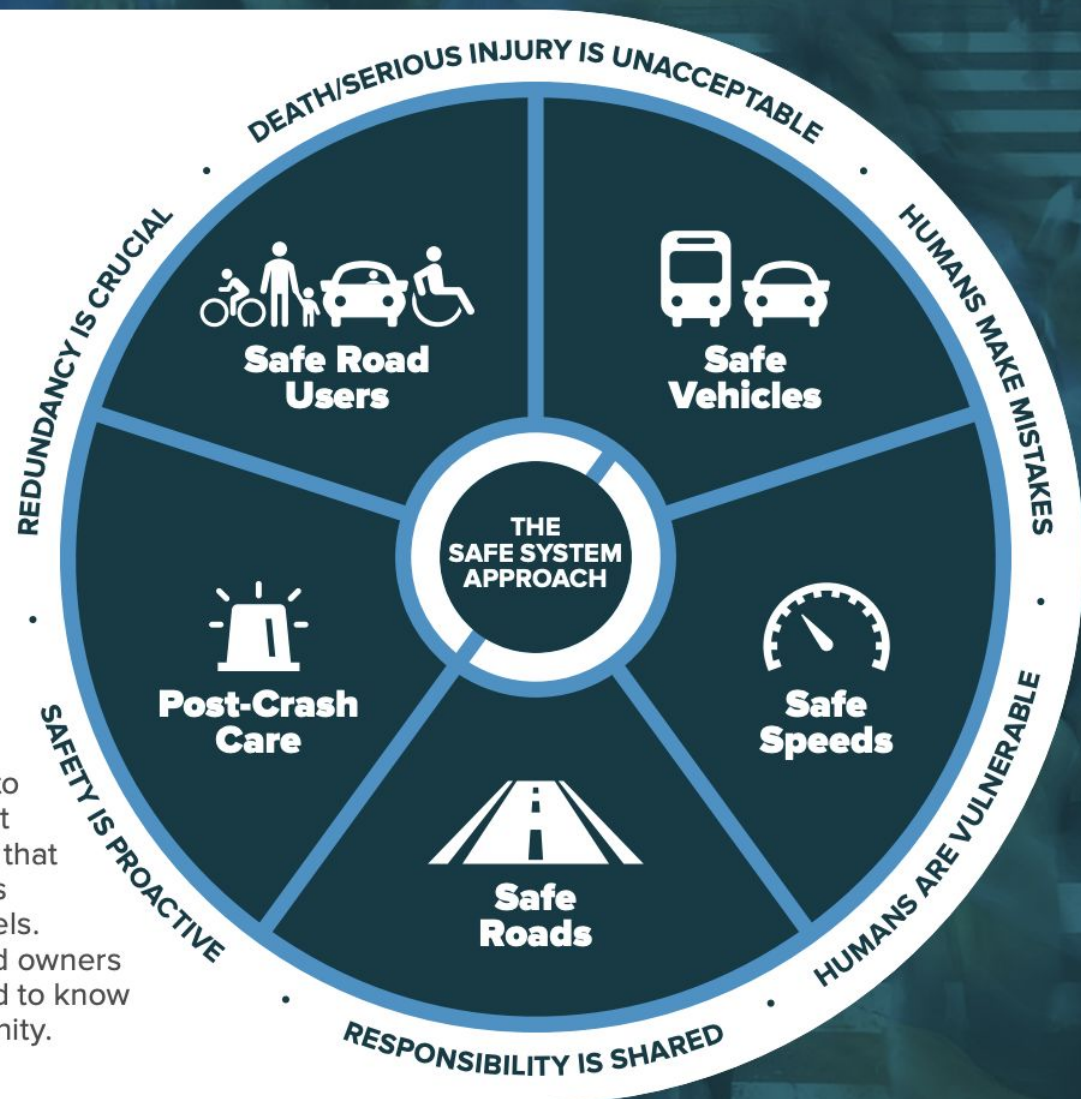


# SAFE SYSTEM

## APPROACH

**Zero is our goal. A Safe System is how we will get there.**

**Imagine a world where nobody has to die from vehicle crashes.** The Safe System approach aims to eliminate fatal & serious injuries for all road users. It does so through a holistic view of the road system that first anticipates human mistakes and second keeps impact energy on the human body at tolerable levels. Safety is an ethical imperative of the designers and owners of the transportation system. Here's what you need to know to bring the Safe System approach to your community.



Graphic: FHWA



# Shaping the narrative around traffic injury:

A media framing guide for transportation  
and public health professionals

November 2020

Seth LaJeunesse  
Stephen Heiny  
Wes Kumfer  
Nancy Pullen-Seufert  
Luke Morin  
Sydney Nicolla  
Teresa Tackett  
Lucinda Austin

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

# Reframing crash reporting in news media

Transportation and public health professionals have an important role to play in building public support for addressing road injuries and deaths as a preventable public health crisis. Use the following strategies to change the narrative:

## How to reframe the message



**1. Choose your target message** that reinforces the Safe Systems approach (e.g., risk of speed, separating users in space and time, vehicle design).



**2. Appeal to people's concern for others** by highlighting the human toll of such tragic events. Acknowledge the harms caused to loved ones and the larger community.



**3. Provide context** to frame traffic injury as a broader pattern of harm. Speak to the extent of the problem and risk factors that go beyond individual responsibility.



**4. Inspire “can-doism”** by emphasizing that the problem is something that can be addressed, is preventable, and would benefit everyone. Highlight any local efforts to prevent serious crashes.

## How to engage with news media and the public



**Be a resource.** Notify your communications team or local journalists that you're willing to speak on traffic injury.



**Create your own content.** Anticipate events, large projects, holiday travel, etc. to share info with the public. Pitch stories, write press releases, and use social media to build support for addressing the problem.



**Make a plan.** Add a communications agenda item to regular meetings. Identify relevant messages and have a procedure for what will be done and who will be responsible.

# Examples of messages aligned with a Safe Systems Approach

- Crashes are preventable
- Speed (not just speeding) is an important factor in the risk of injury/fatality in a crash
- Protecting human life is the top priority
- Separating vulnerable road users from fast, large vehicles in space (e.g., protected bike lanes) and time (e.g. leading pedestrian intervals) saves lives
- Vehicles can be designed in ways that make them safer (e.g. size, weight, visibility, braking systems) for everyone



# Communication Resources

- From Victim-Blaming to Solutions: Online Toolkit for Changing the Narrative About Traffic Crashes (Pedal Love)
- Guide To Improving Police Press Releases About Car Crashes (Ralph, Goddard, Thigpen, Davis)
- Vision Zero Reporting
- Road Collision Reporting Guidelines (University of Westminster)
- Role of Media and Road Safety (CATSIP)

**Thank you!**  
[lisapeterson@berkeley.edu](mailto:lisapeterson@berkeley.edu)

My community is energized about pedestrian and bicycle safety! Where do we go from here?  
**2023 Peer Exchange Series**

### Upcoming Peer Exchange Sessions

***Safe Routes to Parks: Given the importance of safe green space in both urban and rural neighborhoods, how can communities promote safe and active routes to parks?***

Wednesday, February 15, 2023; 11am-12 noon

Register at: [https://berkeley.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUkfuGvqjgpHdW\\_jTMKOqxGqq2x35jqIH3W](https://berkeley.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUkfuGvqjgpHdW_jTMKOqxGqq2x35jqIH3W)

For more information, visit: <https://safetrec.berkeley.edu/2023-peer-exchange-series>

# Other Programs Offered!

**Community Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Training (CPBST)** and **Comunidades Activas y Seguras (CAyS)** are accepting applications for new sites.

Early consideration: January 20, 2023.

- CPBST Fact Sheet: [English](#) / [Spanish](#) and CPBST Application: [English](#) / [Spanish](#)
- CAyS Fact Sheet: [English](#) / [Spanish](#) and CAyS Application: [English](#) / [Spanish](#)

**Community Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program** is offering follow-up technical assistance to all former CPBST communities. To apply, email [cpbst@berkeley.edu](mailto:cpbst@berkeley.edu).

- CPBST Follow-up TA Menu: [English](#) / [Spanish](#)

**TIMS:** For training or technical assistance, email [tims\\_info@berkeley.edu](mailto:tims_info@berkeley.edu)

**Street Story:** For training or technical assistance, email [streetstory@berkeley.edu](mailto:streetstory@berkeley.edu)

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