SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE UNIT (SARU)

Empowering and Inspiring Survivors and Service Providers

Increasing Accessibility to Trauma Services
Learning Goals

- Discuss the role and function of the Sexual Assault Response Unit (SARU) within the DPPC and throughout the Commonwealth
- To understand obstacles of access to trauma services and how to reduce these obstacles for your own organization utilizing systems collaboration
- Recognize how the SARU Peer Support Program works with professionals and survivors of sexual assault
Independent state agency responsible for the investigation and remediation of instances of abuse against persons with disabilities within our Commonwealth. (M.G.L.c.19C)

mass.gov/dppc
Reporting Agency for Persons with Disabilities

Department of Children and Families
- DCF
- Birth-17
- 51A

Disabled Persons Protection Commission
- DPPC
- 18-59
- 19C

Executive Office of Elder Affairs
- EOEa
- 60+
- 19A

MA Disabled Persons Protection Commission, NAPSA Conference 2020
Disabled Persons Protection Commission

Units

- Administration and Finance
- Hotline/Intake
- Informational Technology
- Investigations
- Legal
- Outreach and Prevention
- Oversight
- State Police Detective Unit
- Sexual Assault Response Unit (SARU)
Addressing the Gaps

- Addressed DPPC internal issues
- Sought and secured ACL federal funding (Oct. 2015)
- Identified and convened the team:
  - Massachusetts Disabled Persons Protection Commission
  - Massachusetts Department of Public Health
  - Rape crisis center representatives from each region
  - Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong
  - Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services
  - Riverside Community Care
  - Massachusetts Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners
  - Victim Compensation Division of the Attorney General’s Office
  - Jane Doe Inc.
Sexual Assault Response Unit (SARU)

Increasing Access to Trauma Services for Survivors with Disabilities

Statewide services Include:

- Regional Navigators
- Peer Support Services
- Interface Clinical Matching Service
- Consultation
- Emergent Case Intervention
- Outreach
- Statewide Collaborations
SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE UNIT NAVIGATORS
SARU Navigation

**INFORMATION**
What services are for me?
Your navigator will ask you about all areas of your life so that they can give you the best information.

**ACCESS**
How do I use these services?
Your navigator will explain how to use services and help you use them.

**HOW WE CAN HELP**

**EDUCATION**
Is it normal to feel this way?
Your navigator will tell you about how people can feel after trauma.
Your navigator can also tell your family and caregivers.

**SUPPORT**
How can I feel better?
Your navigator can give you skills to cope.
They can also talk to your family and caregivers about ways to help.
Disabled Persons Protection Commission

Improving the Well-Being of Persons with Disabilities
Facilitating Access to Trauma-Informed Care for Survivors with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities

DPPC Hotline
Report of Sexual Abuse of Adult with I/DD

APS Investigator
Sexual Assault Response Unit Navigator
DPPC Oversight Officer

Survivor Access to Multidisciplinary Trauma-Informed Care

SANE Medical Services Liaison
DDS Liaison
Rape Crisis Center Liaison
MA Victim Compensation Liaison
VRLC Holistic Legal Services
Interface Behavioral Health Liaison
DA’s Office Victim Witness Advocate
Build rapport
Conduct needs assessment and issue-spot
Provide psychoeducation, information about resources, and facilitate connections
Provide resources to family and providers
Work to ensure resources are accessible
Flexible Service Model

Peer Support Group

- Leigh Ann
- Patty
- Trish
- Marissa

We can help over the phone, facetime, or a zoom call!

JACKIE

- Phone Call!
- Facetime!
- zoom

We can work with clients or staff to provide support

617-483-5414
Jacqueline.Perez@MassMail.State.MA.US

YOU
Education on Trauma Informed Care and Trauma Informed Services in the community

Coordination and commitment to warm-referrals

Ensuring referrals are FULLY accessible and client-specific

Supporting and guiding services for meaningful accessibility

Consultation and coordination as-needed
Challenges

- Access to survivors
- Working through Systems
- Supporting providers to ensure accessible service provision
- Access for clients to Healthy Relationship and Sexuality training
Successes: SANE Access

Number of Within 5 Day Outreaches

- FY 2018: 46
- FY 2019: 83
- FY 2020: 79

MA Disabled Persons Protection Commission, 2020
Successes

Disabled Persons Protection Commission 24 Hour-Hotline Sexual Violence Allegations

27% increase from FY 2018 to FY 2019

MA Disabled Persons Protection Commission, 2020
Successes: Expanding SARU Services

Total Sexual Assault Cases: 2,058

- FY 2018: 353
- FY 2019: 797
- FY 2020: 908

MA Disabled Persons Protection Commission, NADD Training, September 2020
Successes: Expanding SARU

Due to the success of the Unit, we have received continuous increases in funding, leading to:

- Hired one new navigator to expand access to services for survivors in the Central part of the state
- Expansion of the peer support team:
  - Peer support leader in each region
  - Peer support Coordinator to support the peer support team
Successes: Expanding SARU

Learning, Changing and Growing

- Anticipated a brief intervention and have learned that collaboration, consultation, and networking is essential to getting survivors access to services.
- Rather than only individual support we are working on systems and culture change.
- Adapting during a pandemic.
SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE UNIT
PEER SUPPORT
Together we work towards positivity, hope and empowerment...
Peer Support Program

Start by believing

Accessibility
Promoting Inclusiveness

Education
How to best help persons with disabilities

Empowerment
Peer-to Peer Support

Path to Healing
Sharing struggles and strengths
Meet Leigh-Ann

- I am a sexual assault survivor.
- I am a self-advocate.
- As a Peer Support Leader, I talk to survivors of sexual assault who have disabilities. I listen to them.
- I like to share positive quotes with survivors because I want to make them feel better.

MA Disabled Persons Protection Commission, 2020
Meet Leigh-Ann

- I enjoy talking with my peers about self-care activities. It is important for us to find new ways to take care of ourselves.

- It is important for survivors to know they are not alone and what they are feeling is ok.
Leigh-Ann: Peer Support Leader

- I put together outreach materials for DPPC/ SARU events
- I co-led a Survivor Skills Group virtually
- I host tables for the DPPC and network in the community
- I started the first Coat Drive at DPPC
Leigh-Ann: Peer Support Leader

- I am on the DPPC Teamwork Committee
- I share my survivor story through public speaking at events, conferences, and trainings throughout the state of Massachusetts.
- I meet with survivors of sexual assault that have a disability
- I created a Self-Care BINGO Game
I have created a Self-Care Bingo game because I like to talk to my peers about new ways to take care of themselves.

Self-care is important to me because it helps me stay calm when I am feeling stressed.

My Bingo game includes both words and pictures.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sing</th>
<th>Talk To Friends</th>
<th>Talk To Someone You Trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read</td>
<td><strong>FREE SPACE</strong></td>
<td>Take A Nap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Coloring Book</td>
<td>Listen To Music</td>
<td>Yoga</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Challenge To Opportunity

- It is important for me to empower my peers during this difficult time
- I created a virtual jeopardy game for my peers to play during COVID
- Currently, I am creating an UNO game on self-esteem
I am meeting with my peers weekly on Zoom or FaceTime.

I have learned to be flexible. We sometimes have technology problems.

It can be harder to make a connection online.

To help peers feel comfortable, we do different activities like: MadLibs, Bingo, Arts/Crafts.
Leigh-Ann’s Message

- Being a survivor has taught me to **SPEAK UP** for myself as well as **ADVOCATE** for myself and others. I help others as much as I can. By doing this, I am a stronger person because I am less angry and less afraid.

- My message today to all survivors is **SPEAK UP, SPEAK OUT, AND KEEP GOING**. Don’t let others make decisions for you. Tell them how you feel and what you want.

**TAKE CONTROL, IT’S YOUR LIFE!**

MA Disabled Persons Protection Commission, 2020
Meet Patty

✓ I am a woman who has a developmental disability.
✓ I am sexual assault survivor.
✓ I am person who advocates for people with disabilities. It is important that they know their rights, have choices in their lives and are safe.
Meet Patty

- It’s important for you to know that I am a person with disabilities.
- I have Cerebral Palsy.
- I am deaf in my right ear.
- I have an intellectual disability.
Patty Turning Lemons into Lemonade

How my disabilities affect me:

1. Sometimes I need to use a FM listening device in order to hear more clearly. This makes me feel uncomfortable because I think people are staring at me and don’t know what the device is for.
2. My Cerebral Palsy causes me to drool, cough, and sometimes choke on my saliva

- Affects my speech
- Makes me feel tired
- Makes it hard for me to move my hands and legs
- Makes it hard for me to express my thoughts

All of these things make me feel uncomfortable because I think people sometimes only see my disabilities
3. Having disabilities sometimes makes me feel frustrated and angry, and say things I don’t mean.

4. How I take care of myself... and turn lemons into lemonade!!
   - Think positive thoughts
   - Listen to music
   - Do crafts like knitting
   - Laugh and use my sense of humor
   - Try to help other people with disabilities
What you can do to assist people with disabilities:

▪ Be patient
▪ Take your time listening
▪ Believe them when they share difficult information
▪ Don’t be afraid to ask them to repeat what they said if you don’t understand
▪ Take time to learn about different types of disabilities
▪ Learn about assistive devices that can help
▪ Be sure to speak clearly

All of these things can help people with disabilities to be more independent, happier, and have better quality in their lives!!!
In my experience, people with disabilities are uncomfortable with certain parts of their disability.

I will empower my peers to name those uncomfortable feelings, and use their voices to feel better and teach their supports.
Challenge to Opportunity

- I now meet clients online with Zoom or FaceTime
- I train professionals online. I led a webinar for staff at Boston Medical Center on working with people with disabilities
I created a National Peer Support Network. The national peer support network will now be online.

I recorded a webinar to tell our survivor stories and how we can work together with advocates from other states.
National Peer Support Network

Patty Quatieri
Boston, MA

Kecia Weller
Los Angeles, CA

James Meadours
San Antonio, TX

Nothing About Us Without Us!
How Did We Get Here?

- Self-advocates from CA and MA started the conversation
- NAPSA Conference in California and Wisconsin
- Expanded group to include male perspective
- Planned first Convening at NAPSA Conference in Colorado
- Created ‘Stronger Together – National Partnership to Address Sexual Violence Against Persons with Disabilities’
- Developed the National Peer Support Network
Action Plan 2021-2022

- Online Training
  - Stronger Together - National Peer Support Network webinar
  - Peer Support Workbook
  - Trauma-Informed Care

- Writing Articles on Current Topics

- National Conferences

- Develop Stronger Together - Peer Support Network webpages
For More Information:

Email:
StrongerTogether.BPI@gmail.com

Web:
www.mabuildingpartnershipsinitiative.com
What is next for the SARU?

Let’s Get Started!

What are you interested in?

- **Self-Care** - exploring different ways you can take care of yourself
- **Healing** - discovering different things you can do to help you feel better
- **Coping** - learning different ways to help you cope when you are struggling with your emotions
- **Celebrating** - looking at you and realizing why you are so special to everyone around you

- Navigation Manual
- Peer Support Manual and Workbook
- Extended Outreach
- Virtual Adaptations
QUESTIONS?
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