

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

Disabled Persons Protection Commission

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

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

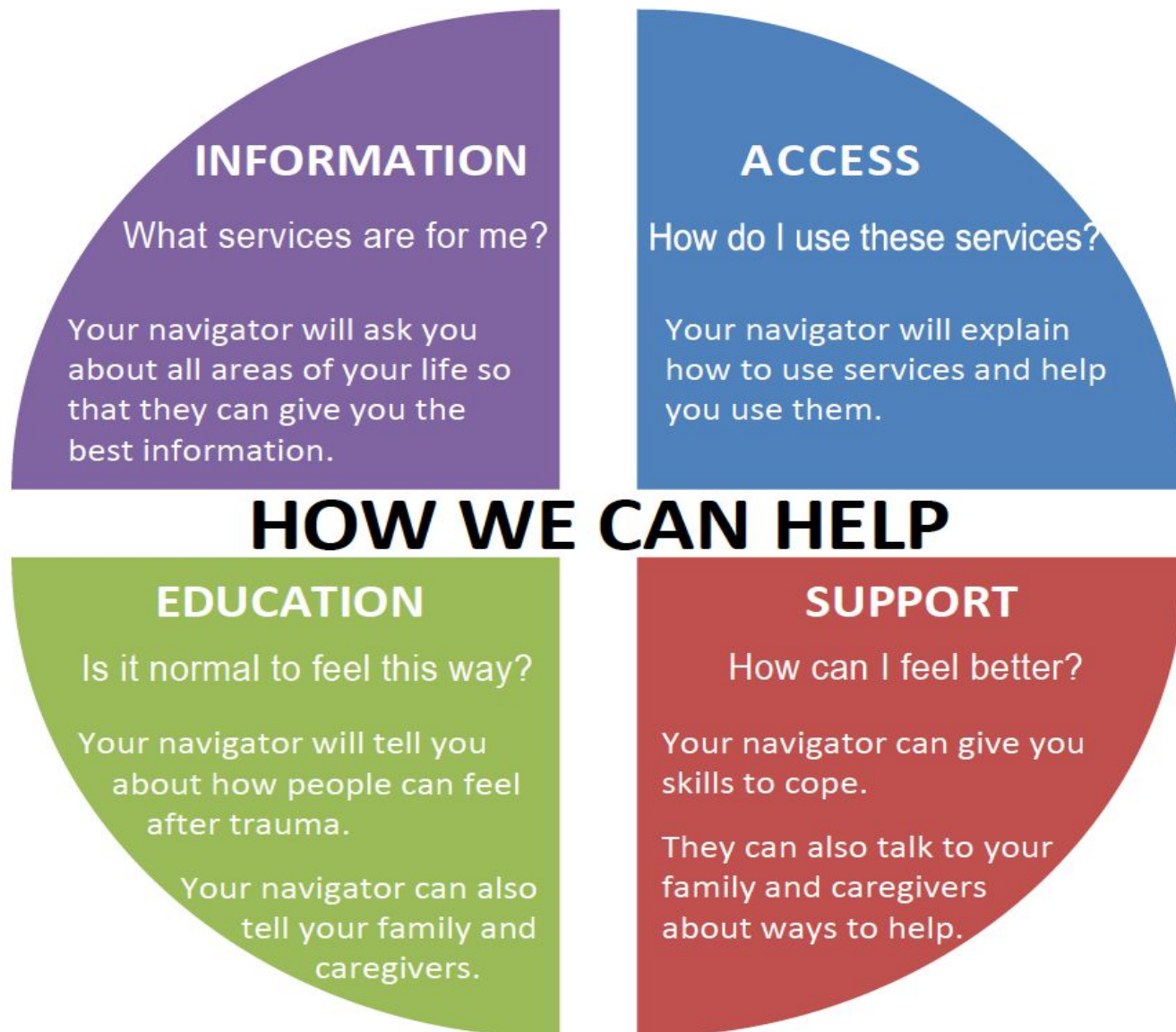
Statewide services Include:

- Regional Navigators
- Peer Support Services
- Interface Clinical Matching Service
- Consultation
- Emergent Case Intervention
- Outreach
- Statewide Collaborations



SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE UNIT NAVIGATORS

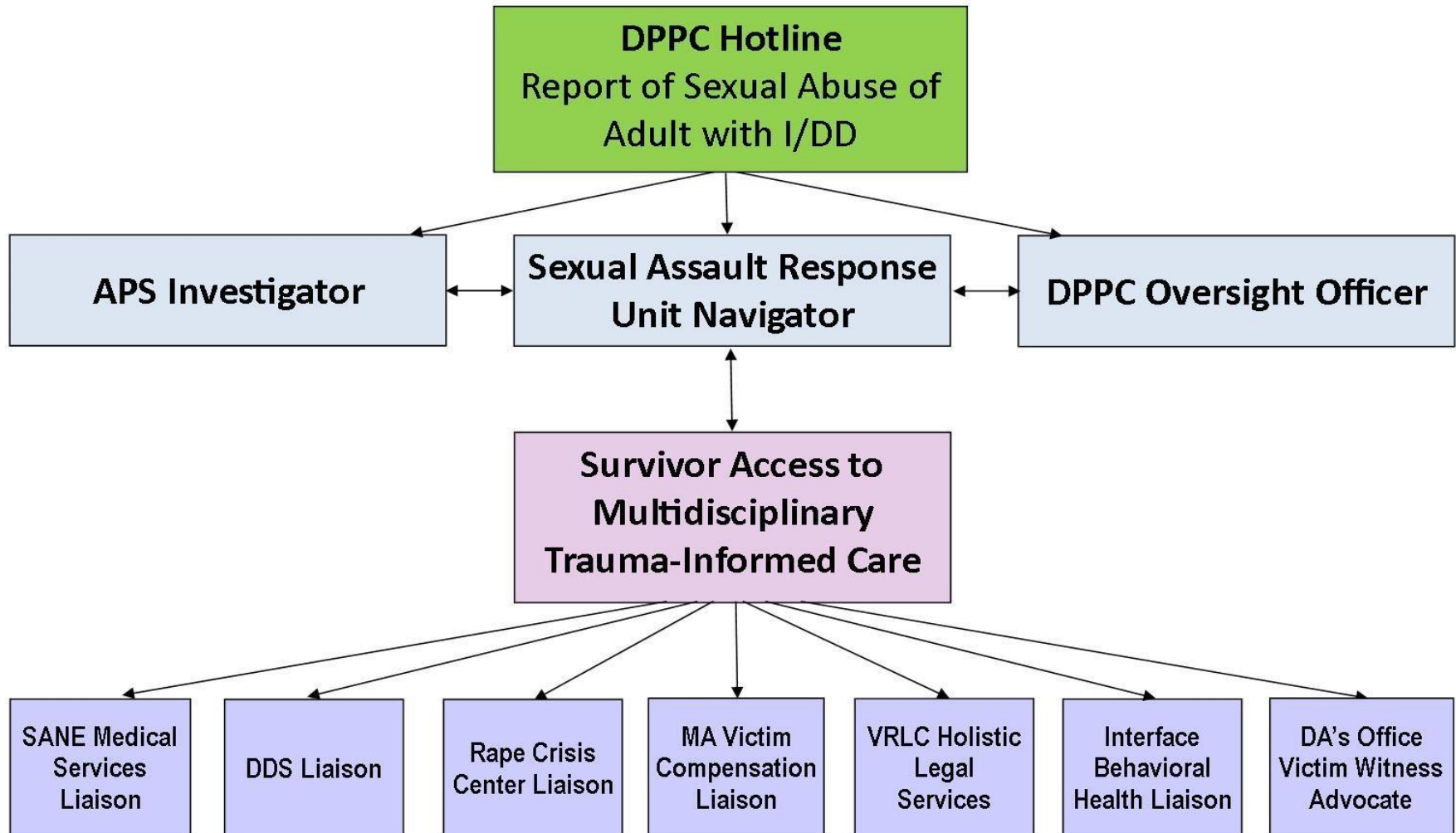
SARU Navigation



Disabled Persons Protection Commission

Improving the Well-Being of Persons with Disabilities

Facilitating Access to Trauma-Informed Care for Survivors with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities



Navigation: Direct Service

- 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

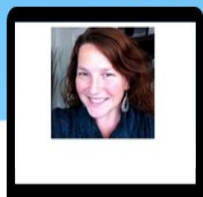
Peer Support Group



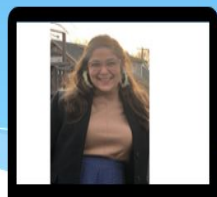
Leigh Ann



Patty



Trish



Marissa

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



JACKIE



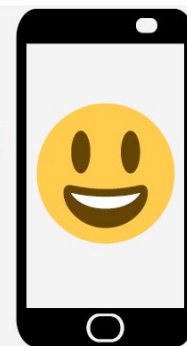
Phone Call!



Facetime!



zoom



YOU

We can work with clients or staff to provide support
617-483-5414

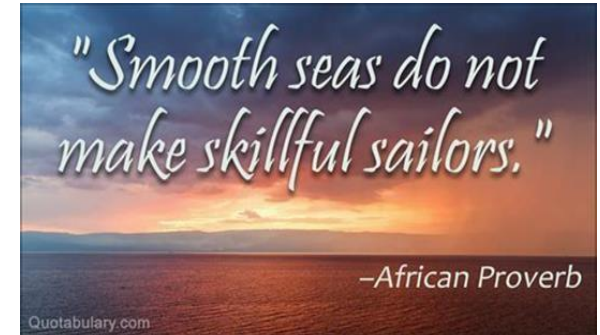
Jacqueline.Perez@MassMail.State.MA.US

Navigation Process: Provider Service

- 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

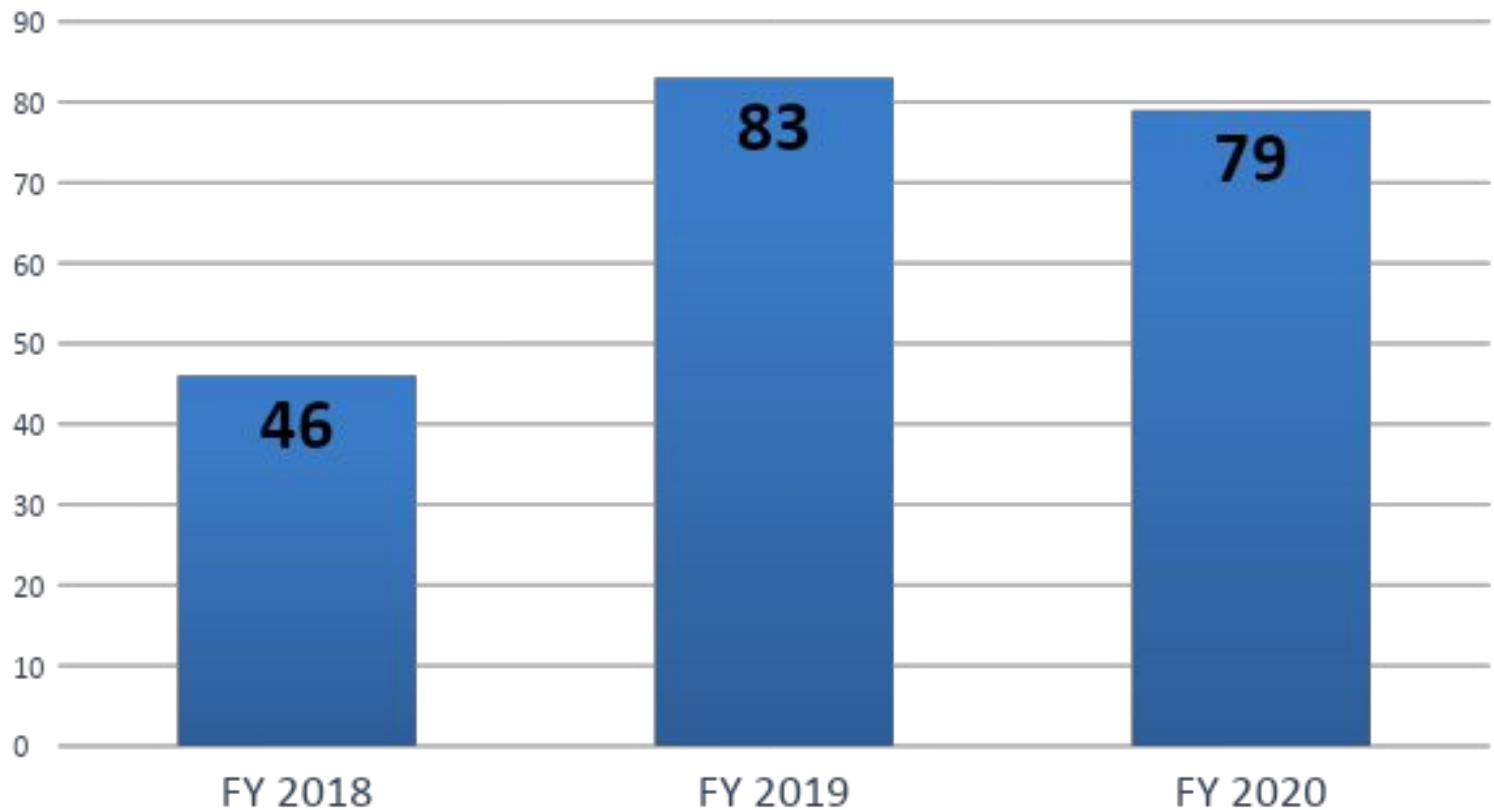
Challenges

- 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

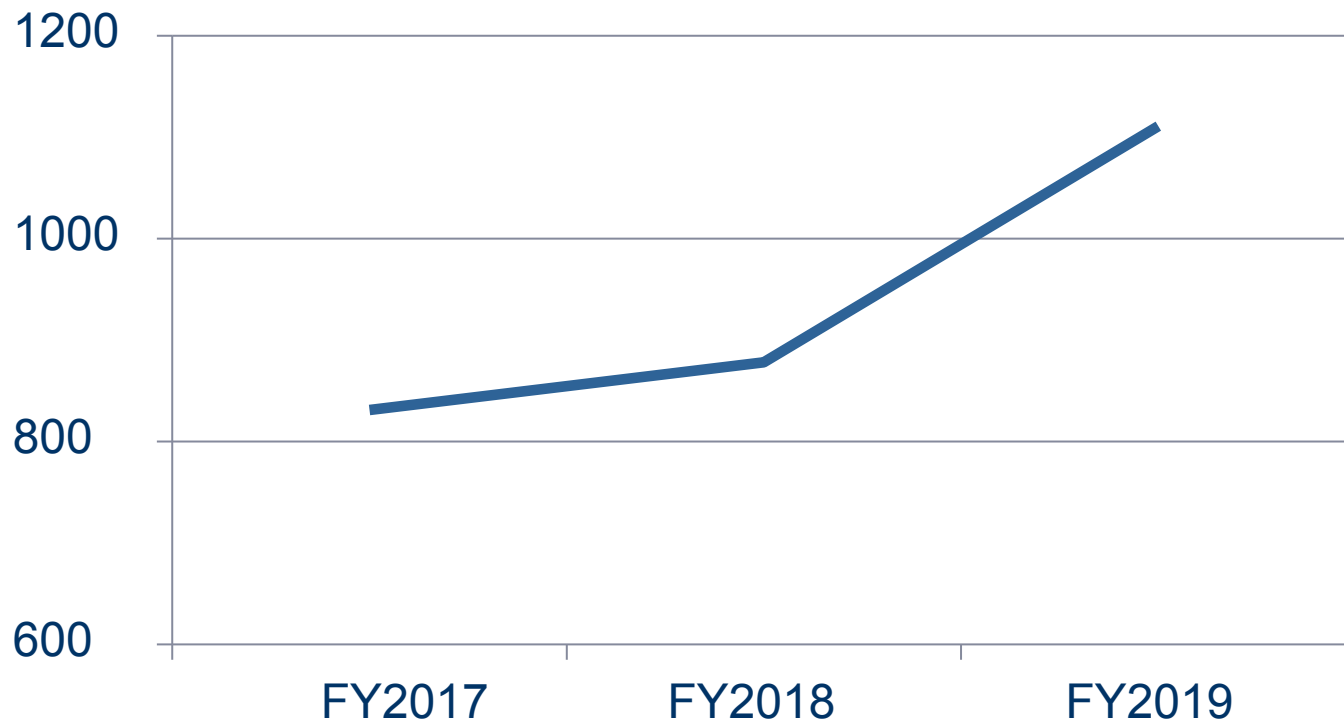
Number of Within 5 Day Outreaches



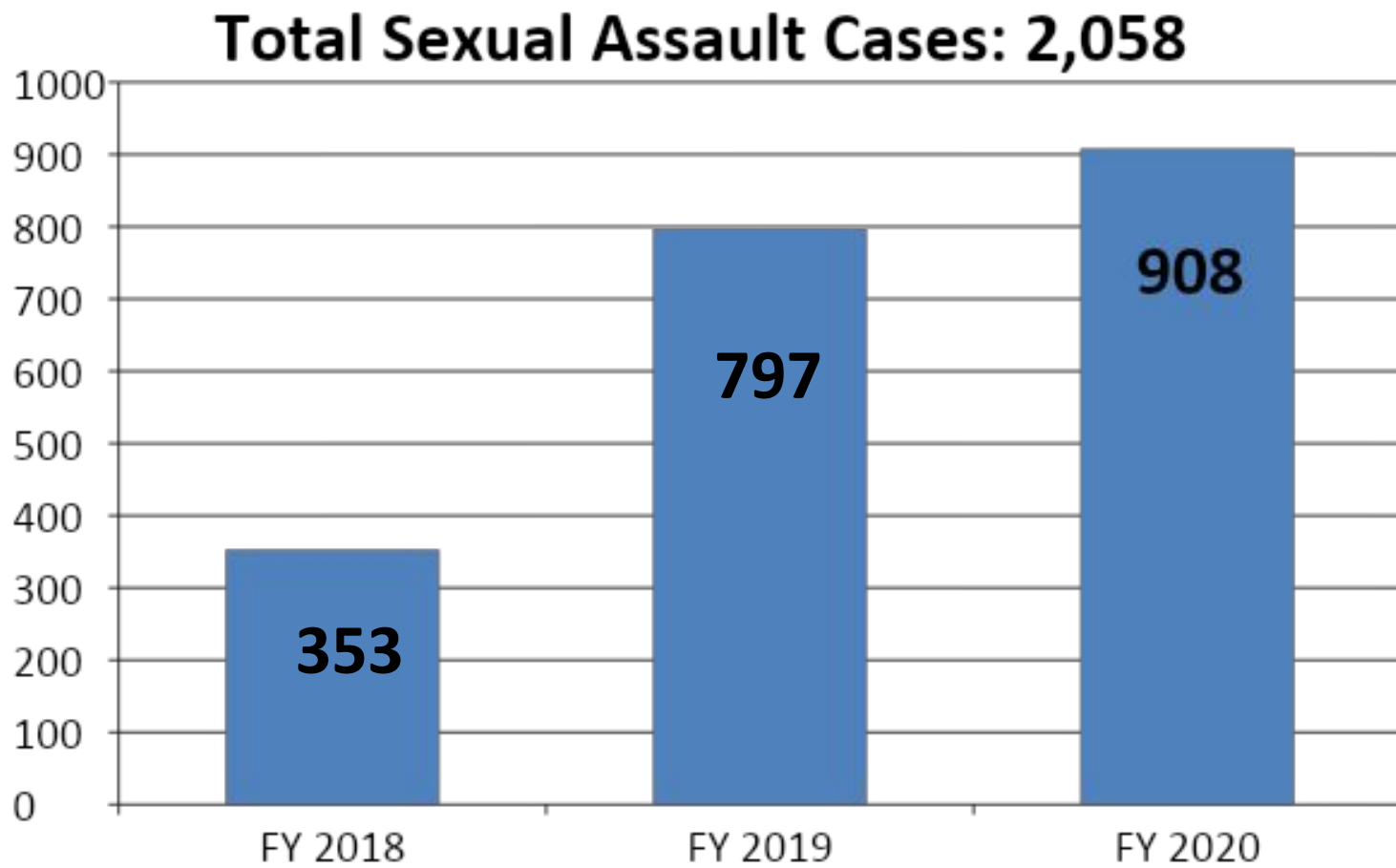
Successes

Disabled Persons Protection Commission 24 Hour-Hotline Sexual Violence Allegations

27% increase from FY 2018 to FY 2019



Successes: Expanding SARU Services



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

Peer Support Leaders

Together
we work towards
positivity, hope and
empowerment...



Peer Support Program



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.

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

Leigh-Ann's Self-Care Bingo

- 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.

Leigh Ann's Self-Care Bingo



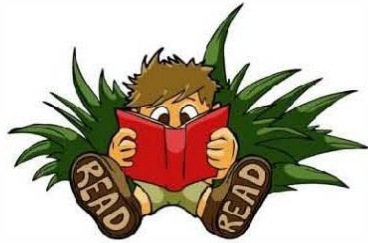
Sing



Talk To Friends



**Talk To Someone
You Trust**

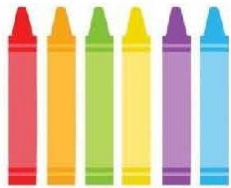


Read

FREE SPACE



Take A Nap



Adult Coloring Book



Listen To Music



Yoga

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

Challenge to Opportunity

- 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 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!

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.

Patty Turning Lemons into Lemonade

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

Patty Turning Lemons into Lemonade

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



Teaching Tools

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!!!

Overcoming Being Uncomfortable

- 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

Challenge to Opportunity

- 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



"Building Partnerships"
Working Together to Protect
Persons with Disabilities

National Peer Support Network



STRONGER Together
National Partnership to Address Sexual
Violence Against Persons with Disabilities



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?

Contact Us!

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