



Mission: *To promote a community-wide response to sexual violence by coordinating a multi-disciplinary team that will ensure victims receive comprehensive, compassionate care*

Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) General Meeting Minutes Thursday November 21, 2019

Call to Order: Nicole Bishop, Director, Palm Beach County Victim Services & Certified Rape Crisis Center (PBCVS)

Welcome / Introductions of Members and Guests:

Nicole Bishop welcomed all who were in attendance at the meeting and facilitated introductions. Nicole specifically introduced Holly Carotenuto, Palm Beach County Victim Services' new Sexual Assault Outreach Coordinator.

Review/Approval of minutes: Minutes for October 31st meeting were approved without any changes.

On-Going Business:

SANE Report: Lisa Alward, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program Coordinator PBCVS

Lisa provided a report on Sexual Assault Responses for October 2019. There were 30 call outs and 29 forensic exams. SANEs responded to all cases. In the total call outs there were 3 non-reporting victims. 18 exams were completed at the Butterfly House. Lisa shared information regarding a training provided to the Town of Palm Beach Fire Rescue regarding services and protocols for sexual assault victims. The PBCVS SANE Team grew and is now up to 10 SANEs.

SART Case Staffing's: Carol Messam-Gordon, PBCVS Sexual Assault Program Coordinator

Carol updated SART members on the November sexual assault case staffing held on November 8th. Victim Services' staff reviewed 2 cases.

The first case involved an eighteen year old victim who was seen in the Victim Services Office reporting that she had been sexually assaulted by her mom's boyfriend since she was around 12 or 13. Victim currently has a seven week old baby and stated that mom's boyfriend was the father. Victim said she left her home this past weekend because of the continual attempts to control her. Victim is currently staying with her maternal grandmother and reported that she was safe there. Victim reported that she returned to the home to get her baby's personal belongings and her mom and her boyfriend refused to give her baby's belongings. Victim stated that the police were called, and she was told there was nothing they could do. Victim stated she told police that her mother's boyfriend was the father of her baby and police told her she would need to get a DNA

test to proceed with prosecution. After speaking to a victim advocate, the advocate contacted law enforcement and requested a detective respond to take victim's statement. A road patrol responded and after taking victim's statement the case was assigned to the detective bureau. Deputy also contacted the original jurisdiction and requested that they escort victim back to her home to get personal belongings.

Victim was later interviewed by detective and spoke about the sexual abuse that started at age 12. She stated that suspect progressed from oral sexual assault to vaginal sexual assault over several years. Client said she eventually got pregnant and gave birth to suspect's baby. Client wants to maintain a relationship with her mother and her mother's boyfriend and she wants her baby to have a relationship with her mother's boyfriend. Later that day Detective contacted assigned advocate to let her know victim dropped the charges. Advocate contacted victim, provided a safety plan and reviewed options available to her. Advocate provided support to victim. At the case staffing advocate was advised to report the case to DCF for the safety of the infant who will be visiting defendant. Victim was also a minor at the time of the assaults and criminal case should not be dropped. Advocate will follow-up with detective.

The 2nd case involved a victim who has reported that she woke up at a bus stop and her pants were undone and she could feel semen burning inside her. Since 2015 in our current case management system, victim has had 9 reports of sexual assault and all cases were unfounded. Law enforcement and SAO investigator were also working with the family to assist with getting victim placed in a facility to get her some help. Victim was hospitalized for a short period of time and was released. Victim is extremely intelligent and knows her rights as a victim and often will call in and state that she has a right to a forensic exam and an advocate and SANE must respond. Supervisors will intervene to get more information from victim when she calls prior to dispatching an advocate and a SANE. We will continue to provide services to this victim because one of her reports may be an actual sexual assault.

Green Dot Program: Clarice Redding, VS Green Dot Program Coordinator

Clarice reported that Green Dot has closed out their programmatic year and is planning for 2020. Green Dot had their headshot event and will have the program featured on a digital billboard off I-95 by Blue Heron Rd through December. Clarice also shared that in October, a new program called "Fading Out Violence" started where their goal was to create a safe space for men to share their stories, gain knowledge, learn about resources, as well as how to recognize and put an end to violence when it crosses their path. Fading Out Violence will be continued due to its success. A similar program is in the works for intervention at beauty salons called "Compassion Combs." Information on this will be provided at a later date.

New Business:

Child Protection Team Evidence Collection Update: Alison Hitchcock, CPT Executive Director & Susan Sims, CPT Senior Case Coordinator

Alison and Susan shared an update highlighting CPT's and PBSO's collaborative effort for a pilot project that launched in March 2019. For this pilot project, CPT committed to collecting SAKs on children up to 120 hours (CPT statewide protocol currently states 72 hours for children) to collect

data needed to justify expanding the evidence collection timeframe. CPT sends these cases and case paperwork directly to the PBSO Forensic Lab.

Alison and Susan also provided sexual abuse case statistics for the month of October where CPT completed 16 forensic medical exams and of those, 3 sexual assault kits were completed. CPT updates will now be integrated into the SART meetings on an ongoing basis to highlight another component of the SART process.

Senate Bill 2843 – Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019: Nicole Bishop, Director, PBCVS

Nicole provided information regarding a new legislative bill that will be considered in 2020. S. 2843 was introduced by Senate Judiciary Ranking Member Dianne Feinstein (California) and is a companion bill of H.R. 1585 - Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019. This bill reauthorizes VAWA which is legislation that sought to improve criminal justice and community-based responses to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking in the United States. PBCVS receives funding to assist victims through VAWA and recognizes it's importance for victims. Nicole stated that if SART members were interested in supporting this bill, they could reach out to their U.S. Senators.

Member Highlight: Alexa Lee, Director of Programs – Palm Beach County Behavioral Health Coalition (PBCBHC)

Alexa Lee provided an overview of the mission and goals of the PBC Behavioral Health Coalition highlighting their name change as well (previously Substance Abuse Coalition). Some campaigns supported by PBCBHC are Not My Brain, Not My House, and Teen Coalition in Action. PBCBHC recently was awarded funding and is currently designing and building "The HUB" which will be a Recovery Community Center in Delray Beach. The HUB will be for people in recovery to access to job and skill training in order to facilitate a successful reintegration into society.

Alexa also briefed SART members on the complex relationship between domestic violence and substance use disorder as well as the current concerns for the public regarding drug use trends, vaping, and projects/campaigns combating these issues.

Community Action Network: Holly Carotenuto, PBCVS Sexual Assault Outreach Coordinator

Holly relayed information regarding upcoming events and the planning for them. The Hispanic Outreach Committee is planning for their annual event in January 2020, Pride will be March 28th and 29th, 2020, and Sexual Assault Awareness Month will be April 2020. Holly stated that if any organization is interested in getting involved or hosting an event, to reach out to her and C.A.N./PBCVS will partner with the agency.

Training Committee: Molly McConnell, Victim Services Grant Coordinator

Molly reported that Training Committee is currently working on the upcoming SART Mock Training. The Training Committee met on November 19th and discussed the successes and opportunities of the most recent Mock Training and began discussing real but challenging case scenarios to be used. The next Training Committee will be December 17 at 2pm at SART.

Legislative Committee: Nicole Bishop, Director, PBCVS

Nicole highlighted S. 2843 previously discussed under “New Business.” These legislative updates were provided to Nicole by the Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation. Representatives of the Legislative Committee are currently working hard, gearing up for sessions to start again.

Member field discussion: Nicole opened the floor to members to discuss successful collaborations or provide updates. Lucas O’Ryan, Transgender Youth Program Coordinator at Compass Community Center provided announcements for several events. December 5th will be Dining Out for Life to raise funds to help those living with HIV. To participate, bring the flyer to a Texas Roadhouse and a portion of your bill will be donated to Dining Out for Life. November 20th was Transgender Day of Remembrance at PBSC Belle Glade Campus to remember those who have been lost to anti-transgender violence, including Bee Love, a member of the PBC community. About 125 were in attendance and the event was able to reach a lot of people within the rural community. Lucas also reminded SART member that Compass provides cultural competency trainings for free to agencies who are interested.

Next meeting date: January 30, 2020 @ 2pm – 3pm

Thank you!