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Volume 3 Issue 1

## SART Connection

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## #MeToo

If you are reading this article, you probably have some connection to sexual assault in your community. Or, if not, you are at least interested in the topic. You are not alone. With movements like #MeToo and #timesup, almost *everyone* is talking about it. Rightfully so. In the wake of the #MeToo movement, many women and some men have come forward with their experiences of sexual harassment and assault, shining the light on just how widespread the problem is. The media has taken a sudden interest in all things related to sexual assault. Will it

last? Is our country ready for the culture shift necessary to sustain this movement? The #MeToo movement is not just trending online: new data shows #MeToo is making a difference in the lives and futures of young

people. MTV Insight research found that #MeToo is reaching young people and changing their interactions, influencing dating decisions and reshaping the way they think about gender dynamics. According to the study, one in three young men say, "I'm worried something I've done could be perceived as sexual harassment." Forty percent of young men say, "The #MeToo movement has changed the way I interact in potential romantic relationships." Equally as important, eighty-five percent of young people feel that the recent sexual harassment accusations have "started an important conversation." Let's all do our part to keep the conversation going. Together we can make a difference. Now is the time for change.



*Director's Corner*

*Director: Nicole Bishop*

## SART Member Highlight

In this issue of SART Connection, meet Crystal Conway. Crystal has been with Boca Raton Police Department since 2014. She is a Biological Processing Laboratory (BPL) Technician who screens evidence from crime scenes for any biological material that is potentially a good source of DNA. In this role, she works with the Forensic Biology Unit at Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office, Boynton Beach Police Department and the Delray Beach Police Department. Prior to joining the Boca Raton Police Department, Crystal worked as a DNA lab technician in Portland, Oregon.

Crystal has been an active member of SART since 2015. She expressed that she enjoys being able to attend the SART meetings to hear about different bills being passed and about what the SANE nurses are doing. She explained that, as investigators, attending SART meetings helps them to identify what they need to put in the sexual assault kit and what the SANE nurses need from them in order to collect the best evidence.

In March, Crystal was recognized as the 2017 Civilian Employee of the year for her help in leading the laboratory through the accreditation process with the ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board (ANAB) and re-writing the laboratory's Quality and Methods Manuals. She serves as the Quality Assurance Officer, making sure that the lab complies with all the accreditation rules and regulations. Additionally, she is the Technical Officer, which requires her to take great steps to preserve the chain of evidence. In 2017, Crystal and her partner worked 172 cases and because of their attention to detail, achieved 63 DNA hits. We are grateful for her and her team's hard work!



*Written by: Therapist Kelly Dambra*



## SANE's Corner



The sexual assault medical forensic exam is an integral component of an effective response to sexual violence. The purpose of a medical forensic exam is to address the health care needs of the victim, while at the same time promoting safety and healing. Information gathered during the medical forensic examination includes a medical and assault history, as well as, written and photographic documentation of injuries. With the victim's consent, forensic evidence samples, if potentially available, can and should be collected during the course of the medical forensic exam. Forensic evidence samples and information gathered during the medical forensic examination can be used to assist in the investigation and prosecution of sexual violence perpetrators.

Successful completion of the medical forensic examination depends, not only on the knowledge and skills of the health care practitioner conducting the medical forensic exam, but also the coordinated efforts of multiple disciplines involved in a community response to victims of sexual violence. To support community efforts to implement an effective response to victims of sexual violence, the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Justice Programs released the National Best Practices for Sexual Assault Kits: A Multidisciplinary Approach. This document outlines evidence-based best practice recommendations relating to evidence collection; prioritization of evidence and time periods for collection; evidence inventory, tracking, and auditing technology solutions; investigative and policy considerations; and communication strategies.



PBC SANEs met with the PBC Forensic Biology Unit and a plan was developed to implement the updated recommendations. As a result of this collaboration, evidence collection techniques have been revamped to reflect these innovative evidence collection techniques. The PBC Sexual Assault Kits (SAKs) have been re-designed to include materials necessary to implement the revised evidence collection techniques. Improved evidence collection techniques will facilitate the collection of forensic evidence with increased potential for yielding an absolute and viable DNA profile.

During the first half of 2018, 158 victims of sexual assault requested the services of a SANE. All victims consenting to a forensic examination were seen and cared for by Palm Beach County SANE nurses. 83 patients were examined at the Butterfly House and 75 at various hospitals across the county.



## Sexual Assault Awareness Month 2018



April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month – the 2018 theme was “Embrace Your Voice.” Palm Beach County Victim Services & Certified Rape Crisis Center joined national organizations and hosted several events designed to engage the community in awareness of sexual assault and prevention efforts. Prevention requires addressing the root causes and social norms that allow sexual violence to exist. The attention April generates is an opportunity to energize & expand those efforts. We consistently identify & reach out to the community to support our efforts.

### Proclamation

To kick off the month, Mayor McKinley signed and read a Proclamation on April 3<sup>rd</sup> recognizing the impact of the “Me Too Movement” and “Start By Believing” Campaign by increasing the general public’s awareness to embrace the vision of a community free from sexual violence.

A diverse group of events followed throughout the month: “Day of Action” event on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, “What Were You Wearing” exhibit on April 6<sup>th</sup>; “Denim Day” on April 25 and a “Library Book Display” set up the entire month to create a more positive response by friends, family members and community professionals to increase awareness, to provide victims access to supportive resources, and engage the criminal justice system.



*Written by: Sharon Daugherty*

## Field of Hope / National Day of Action



Palm Beach County Victim Services & Certified Rape Crisis Center participated in the nationally recognized event, "Day of Action" & held the "Field of Hope" on April 6th in recognition of SAAM - Sexual Assault Awareness Month. This event brought together Survivors of Sexual Assault and their supporters for a unique "speak out." The featured speaker shared her moving story of a tragedy turned into a triumph. It was a powerful message to all in attendance. The evening ended after survivors and supporters wrote their messages on white flags, spoke their messages, then placed their flags in the ground which spelled out the word "HOPE" in recognition of the survivors courage and optimistic outlook on the future.

The experience was uplifting with an impactful feeling of hope that unified the participants and those in attendance.



*Director Nicole Bishop, Sexual Assault Outreach Coordinator Sharon Daugherty & Program Coordinator Carol Messam-Gordon*

## SART Member of the Year

To qualify for the SART Member of the Year award the recipient must have been an active member of the team throughout the prior year and have demonstrated a strong commitment to the SART mission.

Oren Alter, Keiser University Associate Vice Chancellor of Crisis Management received the honor for his exemplary leadership in securing the collaboration between Keiser and Palm Beach County Victim Services. Oren recognizes the incredible connection between the community needs and that of the college campus. He is a champion for SART on the Keiser University campus, making it a point to provide training, and resources to ensure employees and students have access to the latest information about protecting the rights of victims of crimes.



*Oren Alter and PBCVS Director Nicole Bishop*



## Officer of the Year

The distinguished “Officer of the Year Award” presented each year during National Crime Victims’ Rights Week by PBC Victim Services, was bestowed upon Detective Astrel Labbe of Boynton Beach Police Department for his remarkable service as a detective with victims of violent crimes. Detective Labbe has been cited for consistently going above and beyond the call of duty when responding to Sexual Assault cases. He is best described as a “silent soldier” who goes about his daily work with vigor and perseverance and without regard for credit or recognition. He has a genuine concern for all victims he encounters and begins each investigation *by believing*.



Detective Labbe truly exemplifies what the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) stands for; working to approach each case from a victim-centered approach. As the recipient of the award, Det. Labbe was joined by his wife and colleagues from BBPD and was honored during the Opening Ceremony of National Crime Victims’ Rights Week and recognized at the Victims’ Rights Week Luncheon on April 13th.



Detective Astrel Labbe



Boynton Beach Police Department: Sgt Murphy, Det. Labbe,

Det. Raftery, Det. Loshelder & Det. Joseph

## What Were You Wearing Art Exhibit

On April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018, over 85 attendees gathered in the Palm Beach State College Gallery at Lake Worth Campus for the What Were You Wearing Art Exhibition.



The exhibition explored the cultural attitudes around sexual assault, specifically, victim blaming and implying that a survivor could have prevented their assault had they worn something less revealing. Outfits similar to what they wore during their assault were on display, with a note written by each survivor describing why what they wore had nothing to do with being raped.

Attendees wrote comments on a large banner, exclaiming their anger at the culture of victim blaming, showing support for the survivor artists & often stating...MeToo.



The exhibit symbolizes the strength that stems from sharing these stories, creating community, instilling hope, and promoting healing and change. The MeToo Movement has created national discussion and empowered people of various backgrounds to share the ways that they too have been impacted by sexual violence. The exhibit's aim is to further amplify the experiences of survivors.



*Written by: Sharon Daugherty*



## Denim Day 2018



The Denim Day campaign was originally triggered by a ruling by the Italian Supreme Court where a rape conviction was overturned because the justices felt that since the victim was wearing tight jeans she must have helped her rapist remove her jeans, thereby implying consent. The following day, the women in the Italian Parliament came to work wearing jeans in solidarity with the victim.



This day is a now global event recognizing how far we still have to go and expressing solidarity for all who have experienced not being believed. Our sexual assault therapy clients express their healing through words & art on jeans which are displayed on our SART fence along Australian Ave. PBC employees and other supporters of survivors wore jeans to work in support of Denim Day.



## LE Torch Run 2018

On April 25, 2018, members of SART to include hundreds of Palm Beach County law enforcement officers, the Palm Beach State Attorney's Office, Victim Services, CPT and DCF personnel participated in the 2018 Law Enforcement Torch Run to benefit Special Olympics Florida. Officers carried the Flame of Hope in support of children with special needs. The same torch, which made its way through the state, lit the opening ceremony of the Special Olympics Florida annual State Summer Games the month prior.

We are proud to participate in the Law Enforcement Torch Run every year to raise money for these tremendous athletes.







## PBC Victim Services & Certified Rape Crisis Center Attends FCASV Biennial Summit

**“REACHING OUT. COMING TOGETHER.”** ... was the theme of the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence Biennial Summit held in Naples, Florida on *June 13<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup>*, 2018 which was purposefully attended by Staff from Palm Beach County Victim Services & Certified Rape Crisis Center. A definite highlight as one of the presenters for the Summit, PBC Victim Services SART Staff, Carol Messam-Gordon, Program Coordinator, Sherry Britton-Susino, SANE Coordinator, & Sharon Daugherty, Sexual Assault Outreach Coordinator with the support and encouragement from Director, Nicole Bishop, articulated the importance of *Start By Believing* with their workshop on “Believing the Unbelievable.” Their workshop fulfilled the entire Summit’s goals, which was to reenergize, refocus, and provide transformative opportunities for those in attendance.

Through participation in this workshop attendees gained greater confidence in their ability to identify their personal barriers which will equip them when barriers occur as they apply the “Start by Believing” concept in their service delivery. The positive feedback they received from the attendees was overwhelming as they shared their comments such as, “We all feel that we learned more about “Start By Believing. It was relevant for us all – inside the profession and outside as well” and, “Genuinely one of the best workshops I’ve attended. Really *really* worth it and immediately applicable too.”



Another special highlight of the Summit was the presentation of the *Survivor Activist Award*, presented to PBC Victim Services Sexual Assault Outreach Coordinator, Sharon Daugherty! Sharon’s 30 plus years of extensive background in creating and executing high standards of accountability in working with survivors of sexual violence has enabled her to perform an integral role in PBC Victim Services & Rape Crisis Center. She successfully provides innovative, holistic, and comprehensive services to survivors of sexual violence. Her outstanding passion for ending sexual violence in Florida and globally is contagious and she is constantly inspiring those around her! Sharon’s contribution to the field of sexual violence is unmatched. Receiving the *Survivor Activist Award* serves as justifiable recognition and a milestone in Sharon’s progressive journey as an inspiring leader in the movement to end sexual violence.



## Clergy Roundtable

Destiny by Choice (DBC) and Palm Beach County Victim Services (PBCVS) continue to share information about Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault with the faith community. The first interactive roundtable of 2018 was held on March 29, 2018 at Operational Kingdom International Ministries in West Palm Beach. Its theme was *“What Ministers Need to Know in Addressing Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, The Journey to Wholeness”*.

PBCVS discussed the free services that are available 24-hours a day to anyone impacted by Violence. Those services include advocacy, counseling, forensic examinations, and support at the scene. Reverend Dr. JR Thicklin trained the local pastors on best practices when responding to violence experienced by member(s) of their congregation. The topics included why pastors struggle, the role of the church, what ministers need to know, and hope and healing on the road to wholeness.

At the end of the evening, the Ministers committed to seek more information about the subject matter and incorporate it into their church Health Ministries. To find out details about the next event contact J.R. Thicklin at [manofpurpose2000@gmail.com](mailto:manofpurpose2000@gmail.com).



Reverend Dr. J.R. Thicklin, Destiny by Choice, CEO

## PBC Library Book Display

Book displays highlighting sexual assault awareness and prevention along with PBCVS services & resource information were set up in 7 different locations throughout PBC. The library posted a “Book letter” on the PBC Library website listing all SAAM display books available with the hyperlink for checkout, reserving & similar book recommendations.



*Written by: Sharon Daugherty*

## Advocating for Positive Change using Motivational Interviewing Techniques



PBCVS Advocates, SANEs, and Therapists strengthened their advocacy skills by attending an evidenced based training, Motivational Interviewing (MI) on May 24<sup>th</sup>. Shayna Ginsberg, Chief of Clinical Services: Education and Training, Palm Beach County Youth Services Department; Residential Treatment and Family Counseling Division engaged the group and shared the principles of MI that have practical application to their work. The unique technique enhances the participants' ability to assist victims with making positive behavioral changes when setting goals for surviving such as planning for their safety, engaging in medical care & follow up, adhering to medical, court and/or therapy appointments.

## SART Strategic Plan 2018

At our March 29, 2018 monthly SART meeting members were presented with a summary of the 2017-2020 SART Strategic Plan. The 8-page document is a compilation of the team's realistic goals, objectives, and tasks gathered during the Strategic Planning meeting held on January 25, 2018. The guidance document outlines the work ahead for the SART with established timelines to accomplish it. All members in attendance were given a copy and it is available on the SART website -<http://pbcsart.org> for future viewing and reference.





You have the right to live free from violence. Being the victim of a violent crime can have serious mental, physical and emotional effects. If you have suffered personal injury or personal loss you may feel scared, lonely, or anxious. The task of putting your life back on track can seem daunting.

**You don't have to handle it alone.**

Palm Beach County Victim Services & Certified Rape Crisis Center offers free and confidential services to all victims in a **Safe** environment. Regardless of your gender, gender identity, nationality, race, or sexual orientation. The following services are available:

- 24 hour crisis response to hospitals, law enforcement agencies, and the crime scene
- Certified Victim Advocates to support you
- Criminal Justice advocacy and court accompaniment
- Individual therapy and support groups
- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) and forensic exam site- "The Butterfly House"
- Information and referral to community resources



Call our 24-hour, free and confidential helpline:

Local: (561) 833-7273

Toll Free: (866) 891-7273







## SOUTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL SART TRAINING 2018

### Learning Objectives:

- Identify gender bias in everyday interactions between victims of violence, perpetrators, and practitioners
- Examine different theories of the origins of Sexual/Intimate Partner Violence and how these theories impact responses to victims and perpetrators
- Apply DOJ Guidelines on Gender Bias to case fact patterns and reports.
- Let's participate to share promising practices which address gender and other biases to promote victim safety and offender accountability



#### Location

Boca Police Department  
Training Facility  
6500 N. Congress Ave. Boca  
Raton, FL 33487  
Office: (561) 982-4896

September 21, 2018  
8:30am – 4:30pm

Breakfast  
&  
Lunch  
Provided



Registration is OPEN : <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GDMCRZK>





<https://twitter.com/pbcdvs>

<http://pbcsart.org>

## Victim Services SART Center

4210 North Australian Ave.  
West Palm Beach, FL 33407  
(561) 625-2595

**24/7 Rape Crisis Violent Crime Helpline**

**HELPLINE:** (561) 833-7273

**TOLL FREE:** (866) 891-7273

**TTY:** (561) 624-6520

## Vision: Justice for all Crime Victims

### Mission Statement:

With compassion and respect, we assist victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, homicide, and other violent crimes through crisis response, advocacy, therapy, and community awareness.



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