



Prison Rape Elimination Act: 2018/2019 Annual Report

Perseus House, Inc.
Mario Mezzacapo, PREA Coordinator

Perseus House is committed to meeting the requirements of the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 and thereby enhancing the safety and security of Perseus House residents.

This report is a summary of the agency's efforts in PREA compliance. The examination of aggregated agency data underscores Perseus House's dedication to improving the effectiveness of sexual misconduct detection, prevention and response.

August 30, 2019

Purpose

The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) requires that, as a residential treatment provider, we collect accurate, uniform data for every allegation of sexual misconduct using a standardized instrument and set of definitions. This information must be aggregated annually, reviewed by the Executive Director of Perseus House and provided to the public through our website.

This document serves as an annual review to assess and improve the effectiveness of sexual misconduct prevention, detection and response; also, policies, practices and training at Perseus House pursuant to §115.387 and §115.388 of the national PREA standards. Therein, the agency is required to:

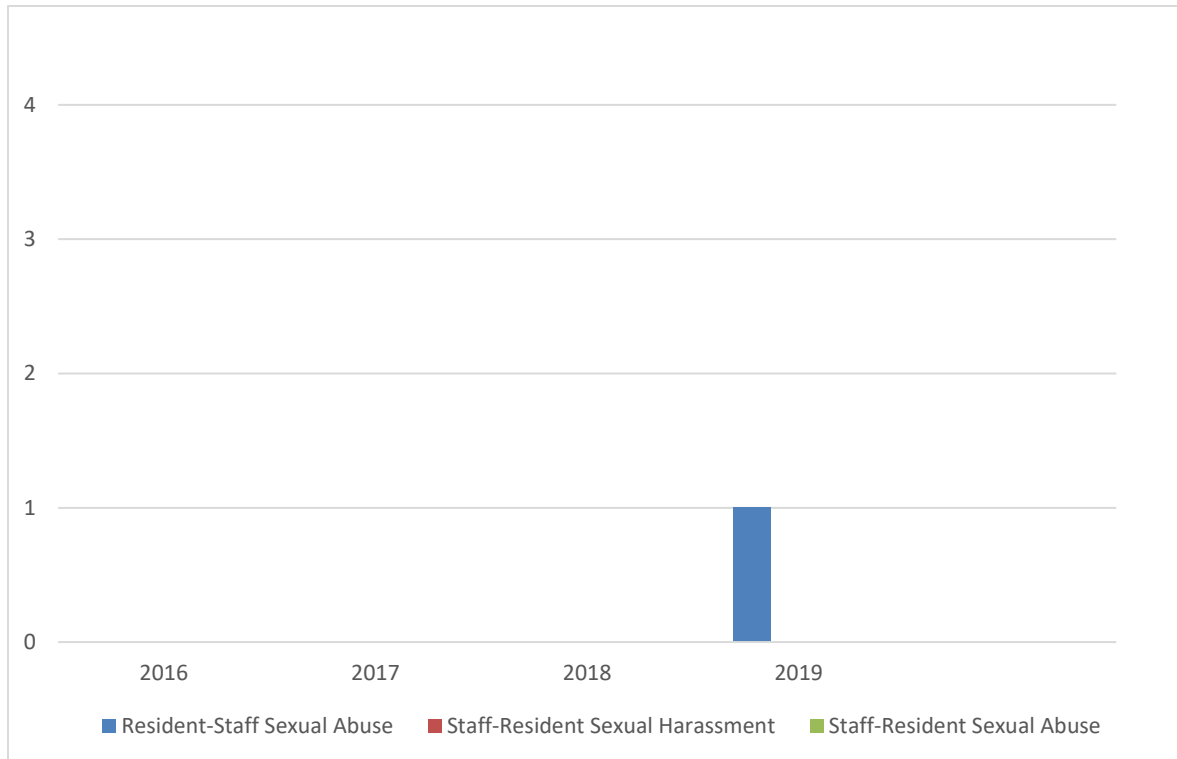
1. Review and aggregate incident-based sexual misconduct data annually to improve the effectiveness of sexual abuse prevention, detection and response as well as policies, practices, and training to include:
 - a. Identifying problem areas;
 - b. Taking corrective action on an ongoing basis; and
 - c. Preparing an annual report of its findings
2. Compare the current year's data and corrective actions with those from prior years and provide an assessment of the agency's progress in addressing sexual misconduct.
3. Publish an annual report on the Perseus House website of its findings and corrective actions for the agency as a whole.

Aggregated Data

Perseus House collects data from referrals for investigation of sexual abuse and sexual harassment, resident-on-resident sexual abuse and staff-on-resident sexual abuse and sexual harassment. The data in this section contains aggregated data from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017.

All allegations are entered and tracked through a secure database. The following graph depicts a breakdown of July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018 sexual abuse and sexual harassment data from Perseus House; included are all allegations of staff-on-resident sexual abuse and sexual harassment, and all allegations of resident-on-resident abuse.

Prison Rape Elimination Act: July 1, 2018/2019 PREA Case Breakdown



0 – Resident-Resident Sexual Abuse
0 – Staff-Resident Sexual Harassment
1 – Resident-Staff Sexual Abuse

Findings

Perseus House had one allegation of sexual abuse between staff-resident. Perseus House learned of the allegation after the staff reported to the police that the resident touched him inappropriately. Perseus House terminated the staff immediately upon learning of the allegation. Perseus House recently learned the former staff member plead guilty to Failure to Report Suspected Child Abuse. Perseus House maintains a Zero Tolerance Policy for sexual abuse and sexual harassment. Our staff are trained extensively in child abuse and neglect reporting, maintaining appropriate relationships, behavior management, ethical issues and more to ensure this standard is continuously met.

It is worth noting, as cited in the “Department of Justice National Standards to Prevent, Detect, and Respond to Prison Rape Executive Summary”:

“An increase in incidents reported to facility administrators might reflect increased abuse, or it might just reflect inmates’ increased willingness to report abuse, due to the facility’s success at assuring inmates that reporting will yield positive outcomes and not result in retaliation. Likewise, an increase in substantiated incidents could mean either that a facility is failing to protect inmates, or simply that it has improved its effectiveness at investigating allegations. For these reasons, the standards generally aim to inculcate policies and procedures that will reduce and ameliorate bad outcomes, recognizing that one possible consequence of improved performance is that evidence of more incidents will come to light”.

Problem Areas

One problem area was found during the 2018/2019 reporting period. As a result, supervision of staff has been modified to focus on safer client supervision processes. Supervisors reviewed safe supervision approaches with staff. Perseus House continues to monitor adherence to the procedures for safely supervising clients in our care.

As a result, a focus on general program safety and effectively implementing PREA culture successfully has been continued at Perseus House throughout the year.

PREA Implementation Action Plans

Through the accreditation process, it was determined that Perseus House was PREA-compliant as of May 2015. Perseus House continues to implement best practices and the requirements of the PREA standards to address allegations of sexual abuse and sexual harassment of residents. Leadership of Perseus House is dedicated to ongoing monitoring and corrective action to maintain full PREA compliance and most importantly to maximize and maintain the safety of our residents. Creating culture change is a long and arduous process. As an agency, Perseus House is steadily and continually making progress toward systemic change that fully integrates the intent of the PREA standards and the highest level of safety.

Prison Rape Elimination Act:

The following are PREA Implementation Plans completed at the agency level:

Revision of policies to enhance PREA policy and practice
Continuous education for staff and residents
Implemented specialized training required of specialized staff

2018-2019 Initiatives

- Continue to develop culture of safety and prevention of sexual abuse for all clients
- The PREA Coordinator will continue to utilize the PREA Resource Center to keep abreast of standards, updates and PREA-related materials
- Improve PREA training efforts
- Continue to review and revise policy as appropriate/as needed

Summary

PH is committed to continual and progressive culture change. Perseus House will continue to implement the requirements of the PREA standards and make adjustments on an ongoing basis.

Mario Mezzacapo

June 30, 2019

Chief Operations Officer

Date

Mark DiPlacido

June 30, 2019

Associate Executive Director

Date