
The Arc of Pennsylvania's Sexual Abuse Prevention Action Plan



Organizational Approach to Achieving the Goals of the Office of Developmental Program's (ODP) Sexuality Policy

The Arc of Pennsylvania promotes the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes.

Because of our commitment to full inclusion, the epidemic of sexual and other abuse is a critical concern of individuals with disabilities, their families, and the professionals that work as part of The Arc network.



The Arc of Pennsylvania's Approach

- Supporting education that views people with disabilities as full and contributing members of their community, members that bring value and have voice.
- Educating stakeholders on this critical issue – stakeholders such as individuals with disabilities, family members, local chapters and staff, as well as members of the legislature, and their staff.



Action Plan

- Partnered with Dr. Mary Jo Podgurski to train staff and consultants on the **Me Too** curriculum. Provided additional training on the Inside Out program, an innovative approach to child abuse prevention that is body-positive, affirming, and empowering.
- Staff became Master Facilitators of the Inside Out Curriculum and will continue to train school district personnel and others using the **Me Too** Curriculum.
- The Arc of PA's recent Advocacy & Policy Conference showcased this issue in two sessions: "Unpacking the Dynamics of Sexual Violence"- PCAR, SAU1 and "Me Too: Every Person is A Person of Worth." Materials from this session are posted on our website.



Future Commitments to Action Plan

- Sharing information on this through our publication, The PA Message, which has a readership of more than 10,000. Readership includes the broader disability community and legislative & policy makers.
- Disseminate Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape's "A Guide for Friends, Family & Care Providers of Sexual Violence Survivors Who Have Disabilities".
- The Arc of PA and its local chapters will review current policies/practices to assure there are no barriers to reporting abuse and that all staff and consultants follow ODP's incident management procedures.



Future Commitments to Action Plan Cont.

- Continue to work on ensuring that stakeholders and professionals in the field are educated on best practices, as well as reporting and prevention strategies around sexual abuse.
- Continue to develop expertise among its own staff and constituents, as well as partnering with governmental and other organizations that can assist in the areas of reporting, prevention, and healing.
- Utilize our social media, publication materials, and conference presentations to educate the broader community on these issues and best practices.



Accomplishments

- Ongoing work with Dr. Mary Jo Podgurski in offering training to staff, school and families on the **Me Too** curriculum. Most recently, Dr. Podgurski presented at The Arc's Include Me's Includi-con conference for special education teachers across the Commonwealth.
- The Arc's PA Message Winter 2021 issue focused on educating the public on sexual violence and how to recognize and combat sexual violence. The issue also focused on educating individuals and families on the importance of sex education for self-advocates.

<https://secureservercdn.net/166.62.108.229/r2t.d64.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/PA-Message-Winter-2019.pdf>



Accomplishments - Legislative

- The Arc of PA collaborated on several key pieces of legislation that address these issues:
 - Act 53 of 2018: Provide for the Offense of Neglect & Create the Offense of Abuse of a Care-Dependent Person
 - Act 30 of 2019: Tender Years Exception for Court Testimony to those with Intellectual Disability and Autism
 - Act 61 of 2022: Expand Protections Against Institutional Sexual Assault
 - House Bill 1335: Requires Schools to Implement Sexuality Education and Affirmative Consent



Thank you.

