

# PREA AND INMATE EDUCATION

A RESOURCE GUIDE  
2016

NATIONAL  
**PREA**  
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CENTER

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## Notes

# Acknowledgments

**J**UST DETENTION INTERNATIONAL (JDI) is a health and human rights organization that seeks to end sexual abuse in all forms of detention. JDI has three core goals: to hold government officials accountable for prisoner rape; to promote public attitudes that value the health and safety of people behind bars; and to ensure that survivors of this type of violence get the help they need.

The National PREA Resource Center (PRC), a project run through a cooperative agreement between the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD), is working to address sexual safety in confinement, and to assist state and local jurisdictions with implementation of the Department of Justice national PREA standards.

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# 1. Introduction

**E**DUCATING INMATES<sup>1</sup> about sexual abuse in detention can be a powerful way to foster a positive facility culture. *PREA and Inmate Education* aims to help corrections officials craft a robust inmate education program that promotes safe, secure facilities, while also bringing agencies into compliance with the requirements of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) standards. This guide offers proven strategies and tools for setting up programs in each of the four types of facilities covered under the standards: adult prisons and jails, police lockups, community confine-

ment facilities, and juvenile facilities. Case examples are also provided to illustrate how a range of facilities are successfully implementing the PREA standards related to inmate education.

This guide reviews many strategies for putting in place effective inmate education programs. Each approach highlighted has its advantages; when used together, in a complementary fashion, they can reinforce an agency's zero-tolerance message, create a culture where inmates feel safe reporting, ensure the program's sustainability, and prevent sexual abuse.

## 2. The Importance of Inmate Education

**I**NMATE EDUCATION is essential to preventing sexual abuse and sexual harassment in detention facilities. Staff and inmates alike credit effective inmate education programs with having a transformative impact on their facilities. Such programs build inmates' trust in staff to take inmate safety seriously, and they provide inmates with — and remind staff of — basic guidelines around respectful language and communication.

The core aim of inmate education is to teach inmates about their absolute right to be free of sexual abuse and sexual harassment. No one ever deserves to be sexually abused, regardless of what crime that person may have committed. Corrections officials have a duty not only to explain this fundamental right to the people in their care, but also to provide information on how to report abuse if it does happen, and the services available to inmates who have been victimized.

Sexual abuse is a devastating crime but, with high-quality medical and mental health services, survivors of this abuse can heal. Historically, there have been

limited services available for survivors in detention settings. Even worse, many survivors do not try to use the few resources that do exist, fearing that their reports will be ignored or that they will face retaliation.

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**Sexual abuse is a devastating crime but, with high-quality medical and mental health services, survivors of this abuse can heal.**

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A successful inmate education program shows inmates how to get safe, confidential support services, including through local rape crisis agencies. Equally important, such programs empower inmates to talk openly about sexual abuse and sexual harassment — and to report when it happens — thereby shattering the “code of silence” that allows this violence to thrive. Inmate education also builds confidence among inmates that staff are committed to ensuring their safety, and to taking every report of sexual abuse and sexual harassment seriously.

## KARL'S STORY

Karl is a 24-year-old man. He's never been arrested before, let alone been in prison. Karl has been on the streets for a year, without receiving any care for his bipolar disorder. When he stabbed a man who tried to steal his backpack, he had been off his medications for six months. He has only vague memories of that night.

The reception center of the state prison is noisy and busy. Karl had just become accustomed to the jail when he was shipped off. The cell is the only place it's ever quiet enough for Karl to think. The problem is that Hank is there, too. On Karl's first night, Hank held a knife to his throat and told him he could "suck him" or get his throat slit.

The next morning at the chow hall, Karl speaks to an officer who had been kind to him earlier. Speaking quietly so as not to attract attention, Karl tells the officer, "I'm not getting along with my cellmate." The officer nods and tells him, "You are only here for another couple of days. If we have to move you, it might hold things up. See if you can manage it for a couple of days." Karl, aware that others may be able to hear him, mutters back, "I can handle it."

Karl figures he can handle anything for two days. But all he can think about now is the shank under Hank's mattress and the threat that, tonight, it's going to get worse. That night, when the call for count booms over the PA system, Karl panics. He steps into the corridor, prompting an officer to order him back into his cell.

Karl freezes. He tries to explain to the officer what Hank has been doing, but he pictures Hank's reaction when the officer walks away to get an investigator. Karl can't move or speak. "Get into your cell and on your bunk. This is your last chance," says the officer, who is now yelling. The next five minutes are a blur. Karl can't breathe. He is trapped. His eyes and throat burn, and he hears shouting.

The next day, Karl wakes up in a small cell, alone, in his boxers. He sinks back onto the bunk, relieved that Hank is nowhere to be seen. Then, an investigator enters the cell. He tells Karl that he is being charged with assaulting an officer, and explains that Karl refused an order to return to his cell. Apparently, the officer attempted to handcuff him and Karl struggled. They both fell to the ground and then other officers arrived, pepper spraying Karl. The first officer broke a finger in the struggle. Karl doesn't remember anything that happened, except the panic.

That afternoon Joan, a social worker, comes to see Karl. She asks him about his bipolar disorder, and about the medications he used to take. Finally, she asks him why he refused to return to his cell. Karl tells her everything. She explains to him she will have to report it, and that he will probably be taken to get a forensic exam. She also tells him he will be able to talk to a rape crisis counselor. She clarifies that he and Hank will be kept away from each other while they conduct an investigation, if not for the rest of Karl's time in prison.

Karl is afraid about what's going to happen next, but the panic subsides. "Thank you," he says.

"Can I ask you a question about reporting?" Joan asks. "I'm on a committee that is working on making it easier for people to report things like this and I wonder if you would mind telling me why you didn't report the abuse to the officer when you told him you were not getting along with your cellmate."

"We were in the chow hall," says Karl. "About six people would have heard me and I know it would have gotten back to Hank."

"Okay," says Joan. "What about the officer who was doing the count? What made you decide it wasn't safe to tell him, instead of just refusing to go back in the cell?"

"I thought he would put me back in the cell while he went to get someone to investigate," says Karl. "Hank would know I told."

"That makes sense to me," says Joan. "Would it have made a difference if you had known that the first thing officers have to do is separate the victim from the perpetrator?"

"If I had known that I wouldn't have been put back in the cell to wait, I think I would have told someone. I didn't know what would happen next, so I panicked."



## 3. Understanding the PREA Standards on Inmate Education

**I**N 2012, the Department of Justice released national standards to address sexual abuse in detention facilities. These standards — mandated by the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) of 2003 — establish requirements that are intended to protect inmates from sexual abuse. Recognizing the crucial role of inmate education, the standards require that corrections facilities develop programs to teach inmates about their right to be free from sexual abuse and how to stay safe.

There are four distinct sets of standards, each applying to a different category of facility: **adult prisons and jails; police lockups; community confinement facilities; and juvenile facilities.**

Under the standards, all facilities must provide education to the people in their custody, giving information on the agency's zero-tolerance policy and how to report sexual abuse and sexual harassment safely. However, the specific requirements for inmate

### 3.1 ADULT PRISONS AND JAILS

#### § 115.33 Inmate education.

(a) During the intake process, inmates shall receive information explaining the agency's zero-tolerance policy regarding sexual abuse and sexual harassment and how to report incidents or suspicions of sexual abuse or sexual harassment.

(b) Within 30 days of intake, the agency shall provide comprehensive education to inmates either in person or through video regarding their rights to be free from sexual abuse and sexual harassment and to be free from retaliation for reporting such incidents, and regarding agency policies and procedures for responding to such incidents.

(c) Current inmates who have not received such education shall be educated within one year of the effective date of the PREA standards, and shall receive education upon transfer to a different facility to the extent that the policies and procedures of the inmate's new facility differ from those of the previous facility.

**(d) The agency shall provide inmate education in formats accessible to all inmates, including those who are limited English proficient, deaf, visually impaired, or otherwise disabled, as well as to inmates who have limited reading skills.**

**(e) The agency shall maintain documentation of inmate participation in these education sessions.**

**(f) In addition to providing such education, the agency shall ensure that key information is continuously and readily available or visible to inmates through posters, inmate handbooks, or other written formats.**

education vary depending on the type of facility. Below are the PREA standards' inmate education requirements for each type of facility, followed by a brief summary analysis of the provision.

The PREA standards require that all adult prisons and jails provide information to inmates during the intake process, followed by comprehensive inmate education within 30 days. The intake process (see Section 4 of this guide) must cover the agency's zero-tolerance policy and how to report sexual abuse and sexual harassment, whether it is committed by inmates or by staff.

The purpose of the comprehensive education is to explain to inmates that it is their right to be free from sexual abuse and sexual harassment, and to give information on how to report safely and how to get help.

Crucially, the standards do not limit inmate education to the intake and comprehensive education sessions. Information on how to stay safe and get help must, per the standards, be accessible continuously through written materials. Section 4 gives tips on how to ensure that such information is available — and presented in a manner that all inmates will understand.

## 3.2 POLICE LOCKUPS

**§ 115.132 Detainee, contractor, and inmate worker notification of the agency's zero-tolerance policy.**

**(a) During the intake process, employees shall notify all detainees of the agency's zero-tolerance policy regarding sexual abuse and sexual harassment.**

**(b) The agency shall ensure that, upon entering the lockup, contractors and any inmates who work in the lockup are informed of the agency's zero-tolerance policy regarding sexual abuse and sexual harassment.**

Police lockups must explain their policy of zero tolerance for sexual abuse and sexual harassment during the intake process. Most lockups hold people for no longer than 72 hours, and thus are not required by the PREA standards to provide comprehensive education.

Community confinement facilities are also mandated by the PREA standards to give information about

sexual abuse and sexual harassment during intake. However, due to the longer length of stay of residents at these facilities, the requirements are more extensive than for lockups. Staff must not only explain their agency's zero-tolerance policy on sexual abuse and sexual harassment, but also residents' right to be free of sexual abuse, how they can report safely, and how they can get help.

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### 3.3 COMMUNITY CONFINEMENT FACILITIES

#### § 115.233 Resident education.

(a) During the intake process, residents shall receive information explaining the agency's zero-tolerance policy regarding sexual abuse and sexual harassment, how to report incidents or suspicions of sexual abuse or sexual harassment, their rights to be free from sexual abuse and sexual harassment and to be free from retaliation for reporting such incidents, and regarding agency policies and procedures for responding to such incidents.

(b) The agency shall provide refresher information whenever a resident is transferred to a different facility.

(c) The agency shall provide resident education in formats accessible to all residents, including those who are limited English proficient, deaf, visually impaired, or otherwise disabled as well as residents who have limited reading skills.

(d) The agency shall maintain documentation of resident participation in these education sessions.

(e) In addition to providing such education, the agency shall ensure that key information is continuously and readily available or visible to residents through posters, resident handbooks, or other written formats.

### 3.4 JUVENILE FACILITIES

#### § 115.333 Resident education.

(a) During the intake process, residents shall receive information explaining, in an age appropriate fashion, the agency's zero-tolerance policy regarding sexual abuse and sexual harassment and how to report incidents or suspicions of sexual abuse or sexual harassment.

(b) Within 10 days of intake, the agency shall provide comprehensive age-appropriate education to residents either in person or through video regarding their rights to be free from sexual abuse and sexual harassment and to be free from retaliation for reporting such incidents, and regarding agency policies and procedures for responding to such incidents.

(c) Current residents who have not received such education shall be educated within one year of the effective date of the PREA standards, and shall receive education upon transfer to a different facility to the extent that the policies and procedures of the resident's new facility differ from those of the previous facility.

(d) The agency shall provide resident education in formats accessible to all residents, including those who are limited English proficient, deaf, visually impaired, or otherwise disabled, as well as to residents who have limited reading skills.

(e) The agency shall maintain documentation of resident participation in these education sessions.

(f) In addition to providing such education, the agency shall ensure that key information is continuously and readily available or visible to residents through posters, resident handbooks, or other written formats.

The PREA standards mandate that juvenile facilities provide information on sexual abuse and sexual harassment to residents during intake and also within 10 days of their arrival at the facility, through a comprehensive education program. As with adult facilities, the intake education sessions at juvenile detention facilities must cover the agency's zero-tolerance policy on sexual abuse and sexual harassment.

The PREA standards' education requirements for juvenile facilities are nearly identical to those for adult facilities. Both sets of standards state that intake

should cover zero tolerance, and that the comprehensive education program should teach residents about their right to be free from sexual abuse, how to report safely, and how to get help. However, recognizing that youth have different learning needs than adults, the standards for juvenile facilities stipulate that the information in both the intake and comprehensive sessions be delivered in a manner that is age-appropriate (see pages 11 and 22). Additionally, in juvenile facilities the comprehensive education program must be delivered sooner — within 10 days — than in adult prisons and jails.

## 4. Inmate Education at Intake

**S**EXUAL ABUSE can happen at any time during a person's incarceration. However, inmates are particularly vulnerable shortly after arriving at a facility. It is common for new arrivals to feel afraid, confused about what will happen next, and unsure of whom to trust. In addition, jails and police lockups regularly process people who are intoxicated — or detoxing — or are otherwise sick or disoriented.

Survey data collected by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) indicates that new arrivals are targeted for sexual abuse at alarming rates. A 2010 report showed that, among jail inmates who reported being sexually abused by another inmate, one in five said they were first victimized within 24 hours of admission. Among inmates who were sexually abused by staff, nearly one in three were first abused during that initial period.<sup>2</sup>

Recognizing the risks facing new arrivals, the PREA standards require that all confinement facilities pro-

vide inmates with information on sexual abuse and sexual harassment during the intake process. In addition to equipping inmates with practical knowledge to help keep them safe, a strong intake education program sends the message that safety is a priority for staff, and that no sexual abuse or sexual harassment will be tolerated.

The vast majority of facilities have an intake program that covers everything from getting medical care to buying stamps. A good intake course explains basic rules of the facility, while also helping inmates feel safe and comfortable in their new environment.

PREA education should not be treated as separate from these efforts; rather, it should be folded into a facility's existing programs. For example, many facilities run day-long orientation programs for new arrivals; the PREA intake education can be included in modules on other safety issues, like getting medical care or filing grievances.

## KEY MESSAGES TO DELIVER DURING INTAKE

- **The agency’s mission is to increase public safety, and part of that mission is making sure that this is a safe facility.**
- **The facility does not tolerate sexual abuse or sexual harassment — meaning any unwanted sexual behavior or any rude or insulting sexual comments of any kind.**
- **Any inmate who is sexually abused or sexually harassed has the right to report privately and safely, and this facility offers several ways that an inmate can make a report.**
- **If an inmate is abused, that person has the right to get help from trained medical and mental health care professionals who work in the facility, at no cost and regardless of whether the inmate files a report.**
- **Inmates who are abused also have the right to receive emotional support services from trained rape crisis counselors who work at community rape crisis programs, whether the inmates report the abuse or not.<sup>3</sup>**
- **Sexual abuse of any kind is against the law in every city, county, and state, and these laws apply to people who are incarcerated. It is never okay for someone to be sexually abused or sexually harassed. It is always illegal for staff to have any sexual contact with inmates.**

There are multiple ways to deliver this information to inmates during intake. It is a recommended practice for a staff member or peer educator to present the information in person, and distribute supplemental materials to inmates. These materials include brochures and pamphlets that lay out the agency’s zero-tolerance policy and give specific instructions on how inmates can report abuse and get help. Contact information for local rape crisis organizations and other outside support services should be provided; it should be made clear that inmates can contact these organizations at any time for support, regardless of when or where the abuse occurred. This information can also be included as an addendum to a facility’s inmate handbook. (For samples of written materials, including scripts to use during the in-person presentation, see [www.prearesourcecenter.org/library](http://www.prearesourcecenter.org/library).)

All of this information — whether delivered verbally, in a pamphlet, or through a video — should be presented in a way that is clear and easy to understand. Remember that inmates may feel overwhelmed by the amount of information they are being given, and that these feelings may be compounded by the fear and anxiety of being in a new environment. This is especially true for people who are entering a detention facility for first time. Here’s how Frank Mendoza, a member of JDI’s Survivor Council, described his initial few hours in jail:

*“I was arrested for public drunkenness and I had never been in jail before, never been arrested. I was terrified and disoriented and it was chaotic. Total confusion and fear was all I felt. I couldn’t imagine what would happen next. It was all a blur.”*

It is strongly recommended that facilities assign a staff member or a peer educator — an inmate qualified to lead trainings (see page 31) — as facilitator for these sessions. The facilitator's role in the intake education is crucial, and showing a video without a staff or peer educator as a guide is discouraged. However, in short-term facilities with a high

turnover rate, like jails and police lockups, it may be impractical to have a facilitator present during every intake session. In these cases, agencies should make sure that all inmates receive supporting materials. Such handouts should include the names of staff members who are available to answer follow-up questions or to discuss any concerns.

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR INTAKE EDUCATION IN JUVENILE FACILITIES

**In any confinement setting, new arrivals often struggle to adapt to their surroundings. For young people, many of whom have never lived away from their families or communities, being locked up can be an especially hard transition. It is pivotal that juvenile detention staff help new residents feel comfortable in the facility, so that youth develop trust in staff to keep them safe.**

**The PREA standards' intake requirements for youth facilities are identical to those for adult facilities, but with one caveat. All information must, per the standards, be presented in a manner that is developmentally appropriate. (For examples of different ways to present intake education in juvenile facilities, see the case studies in Section 7.)**

## 5. Comprehensive Inmate Education Program

**P**RISONS AND JAILS have to provide inmates with comprehensive education within 30 days of intake; juvenile detention facilities must do so within 10 days.<sup>4</sup> This requirement applies to every new admission, even if the individual has been detained in the same facility previously.

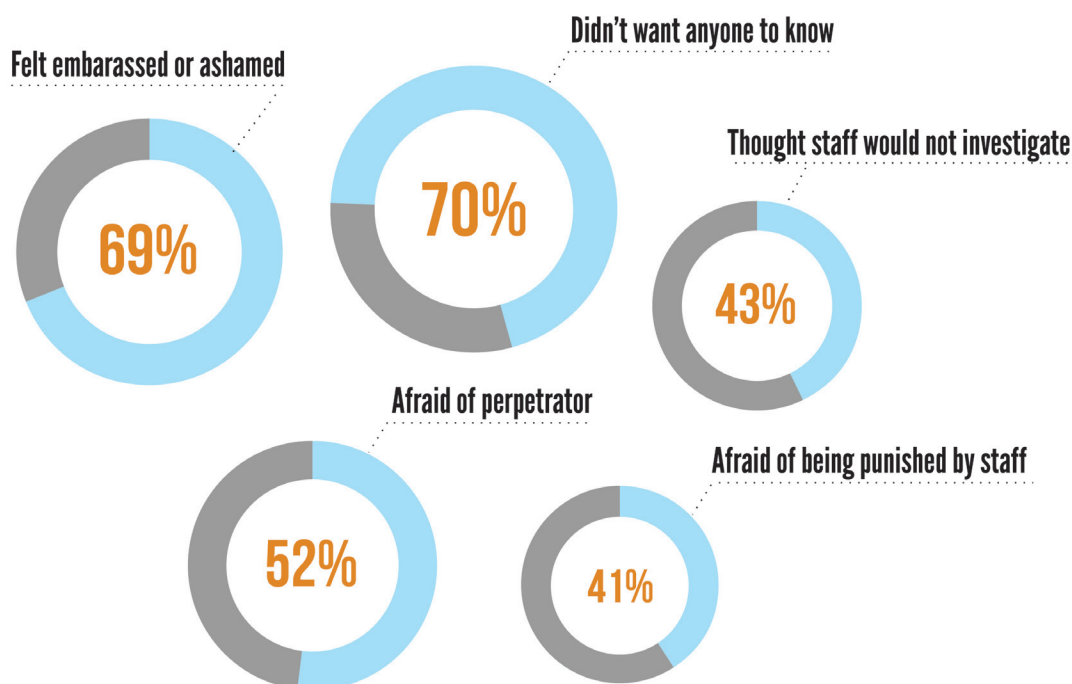
Comprehensive education is designed to reach inmates and residents at a time in their incarceration when they need — and are likely to be able to absorb fully — detailed information on sexual abuse prevention. It should cover the same themes as the intake program, but in greater detail. In addition, the comprehensive program should outline the facility's plan for a coordinated response to any instance of sexual abuse, the investigation procedure following an incident, and the medical and mental health care available to survivors, including community rape crisis services.

A strong comprehensive education program can create a culture where inmates and residents trust that they can report sexual abuse and sexual harassment safely. Research has confirmed that inmates face many obstacles to coming forward to report sexual violence. In a 2010 survey of former state inmates, BJS asked people who were sexually abused and did not report why they chose to keep quiet. The most commonly cited reasons were fear of retaliation or punishment, shame, and the belief that no action would be taken.<sup>5</sup> BJS has not undertaken a similar survey of youth; however, in the experience of many advocates, youth are less likely than adults to report sexual abuse in the community, suggesting that reporting rates may also be low in juvenile facilities. A complicating dynamic for youth is their lack of life experience, which may make identifying abusive behaviors and feeling empowered to speak out about them even more difficult.



## Common Barriers to Reporting Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment

As part of a 2008 study, BJS asked former inmates who were sexually abused but did not report it to facility staff why they chose to keep quiet. This graphic shows their most common responses.<sup>6</sup>



### COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION TIPS

For a comprehensive education program to be effective, it must include information about the following:

- Common barriers to reporting sexual abuse and sexual harassment
- The agency's commitment to investigate every single report
- The agency's commitment not to punish inmates for reports made in good faith
- The agency's policy to protect inmates and staff who report from retaliation
- The core view that no one ever deserves to be sexually abused or sexually harassed and that such abuse never is the victim's fault



*Photo: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation*

One highly effective approach to sexual abuse education is to fold it into an overall health education program. Many facilities provide education about chronic illness, medication management, and HIV. Comprehensive PREA education can be a part of such

a program, since it has a shared goal of promoting health and safety. Specialized treatment programs, like for alcohol and other drug addiction or mental health, can also incorporate PREA-related information into their regular meetings.

## COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION IN COMMUNITY CONFINEMENT FACILITIES

The PREA standards do not require that community confinement facilities set up a comprehensive education program. However, it may make sense for facilities that hold residents for extended periods of time to offer information and materials a few weeks after intake, to ensure residents' safety for the duration of their stay. A follow-up educational session could review the main topics from the intake session, specifically the facility's zero-tolerance policy and how to report sexual abuse and sexual harassment. If appropriate, a community confinement facility may want to use parts of a prison's or a jail's comprehensive education program, particularly those that cover the response to sexual abuse, investigation procedures, and medical and mental health care. (See Section 5 for more on the content of a comprehensive education program.)

## Crafting a Comprehensive Education Program

Inmate education programs should be tailored for individual facilities. For example, a large urban jail with a low staff-to-inmate ratio, high turnover, and limited classroom space will require a curriculum that is different from a rural prison with high staff ratios, a stable population, and plenty of classrooms. However, there are core principles for creating an education program that are applicable to every kind of facility.

At the beginning of the comprehensive education program, the facilitator should review the following:

- Course goals
- Guidelines for class participation
- Why it's important to talk about sexual abuse and sexual harassment
- Expectations about listening and mutual respect
- Self-care

When laying out the guidelines for class participation, the facilitator should acknowledge that sexual abuse can be a difficult topic to discuss, but emphasize that talking about it is important for everyone's safety. Class participation should be encouraged, and attendees should be urged to listen to the instructor and to their peers, giving them the same attention and respect that they would expect themselves.

Facilitators should be sensitive to the fact that the material can be upsetting, especially for survivors of sexual abuse, who may feel triggered or have flash-

backs. Agencies should consider arranging for a member of their mental health staff or an outside rape crisis counselor to be available for support during the comprehensive sessions. Under the standards, facilities have to give inmates access to a local rape crisis center, or other outside organization, for confidential support services.<sup>7</sup>

Comprehensive inmate education can be run as workshop-style classes, where staff facilitators — or possibly inmate peer educators, in adult facilities (see page 31) — present the information and lead a discussion. Note that simply reciting an agency's sexual abuse prevention and response policies is an ineffective means of educating inmates about sexual abuse. Instead, the facility should explain how core PREA policies protect inmates and lead to an all-around safer facility. Educators should include written materials that emphasize key points and provide appropriate contact information.

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**Note that simply reciting an agency's sexual abuse prevention and response policies is an ineffective means of educating inmates about sexual abuse.**

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Staff, or the peer educator, should set up the classroom so it is as comfortable as possible. The best seating arrangement is a circle. The facilitators can make posters for the classroom, so that the information is reinforced visually. Following each class, the facilitator should give post-tests and evaluations, and then, if relevant, use that information to adapt the materials or their delivery (see [www.justdetention.org/resource/prea-tools](http://www.justdetention.org/resource/prea-tools) for examples of these tools).

Remember, strong inmate education programs should go beyond the minimum requirements of the PREA standards to include topics that, while not called for in the standards, will serve to strengthen the agency's zero-tolerance policies and create a culture where reporting is encouraged.

## **COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION COURSE**

### **Learning objectives:**

- **Inmates' right to be free from sexual abuse and sexual harassment**
- **Inmates' right to be free from retaliation for making reports, and the agency's plan for protecting this right**
- **Inmates' responsibility not to engage in sexually abusive or harassing conduct**
- **Suggestions for how to stay safe and reduce the risk for being abused**
- **Information on how to report sexual abuse and sexual harassment and get help**
- **The agency's responsibility to protect inmates and residents from sexual abuse and sexual harassment**
- **The policies and procedures in place to keep inmates safe and respond to incidents of sexual abuse and sexual harassment**

### **In the presentations, facilitators should make use of a range of materials, including:**

- **Brochures, pamphlets, flyers**
- **Video**
- **Posters**
- **Brochures from community organizations that can offer help**
- **Curricula for intake and comprehensive education programs**
- **Log or attendance sheets/record**

## Key Topics for Comprehensive Education

### *The PREA Standards*

The facilitator should explain PREA and the PREA standards early in the session.<sup>8</sup> It is important to clarify at the outset that the standards do not address consensual sexual activity between inmates — which is typically against facility rules, but is not covered in this class. This distinction is important: inmates who have been abused might fear being disciplined for “sexual misconduct,” which could deter them from reporting. Further, any investigation into sexual activity between inmates must determine whether it was consensual or not, to ensure that staff respond appropriately.

### *Basic Definitions and Legal Framework*

Instructors should explain the definitions and terms that are used in the standards and that will come up repeatedly in the course. In addition to defining consensual and nonconsensual contact, the class should cover the meanings of sexual abuse, sexual harassment, report, third-party report, PREA Coordinator, and rape crisis advocate. (For a full list of terms and their definitions, see [www.justdetention.org/keyterms.pdf](http://www.justdetention.org/keyterms.pdf))

Further, the class should cover the legal framework pertaining to sexual violence behind bars. The key points to highlight are:

- The same laws that apply in the community to protect people from unwanted sexual behavior apply in detention facilities. Coercing or forcing another inmate into sexual conduct is a criminal violation.
- Consensual sexual contact between inmates is typically prohibited by corrections agencies and is handled as an administrative matter.
- Inmates cannot legally consent to sexual activity of any kind with staff members, even if the inmate is perceived as willing, or as initiating

the activity. It is always the staff’s responsibility to maintain professional relationships with inmates. The legal information provided by the instructor should be specific to their jurisdiction.

### *Prevalence*

There is a wealth of data about sexual abuse in detention. Thanks to a series of BJS reports, there are reliable statistics on how frequently this abuse happens, where it happens, and who is most vulnerable.<sup>9</sup> Sharing this information with inmates is beneficial for several reasons. It demonstrates that the agency believes sexual violence is a problem, without undermining its commitment to preventing it. Equally important, talking about how widespread this abuse is can help show inmates who have been victimized that they are not alone, and that they need not be fearful or ashamed of coming forward to make a report.

To help ease any anxiety that people in the class might have, educators may choose to say something like, “We are committed to keeping everyone safe, but we want you to know that sexual abuse does happen and if it happens here, we will take it seriously.”

### *Vulnerability and Dynamics*

Sexual abuse is about power and control. Anyone can be targeted behind bars, but some people are more vulnerable than others. When crafting an education program, it is important to highlight the factors that might increase a person’s risk. This information should be presented in a way that’s helpful and informative — but not in a way that will cause inmates to feel anxious.

BJS research has consistently shown that certain groups of inmates are especially vulnerable to sexual abuse — lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) inmates, inmates with a mental illness, and survivors of prior abuse. (The key point to emphasize is that every inmate deserves to be safe, and that abuse is never the victim’s fault.)



Inmates should be aware of warning signs for sexual abuse and sexual harassment. Equipped with

this information, inmates are better able to protect themselves and to know when to ask staff for help.

## **BEHAVIORS THAT MAY INDICATE AN INTENT TO ABUSE**

### **Inmates who:**

- Offer protection
- Pressure others to join in on rule breaking
- Offer drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or other contraband
- Invite someone into a gang or some other unapproved group
- Offer unsolicited favors
- Make threats or use blackmail

### **Staff who:**

- Bring drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or cell phones into the facility
- Offer to bend or break the rules
- Stare at inmates for a long period of time and in ways that are not a part of their job
- Isolate inmates or take inmates into unauthorized areas
- Always request particular inmates for work assignments
- Use sexual language or make lewd jokes
- Threaten or pressure an inmate for sexual favors

**(Tip: A way to present this information is to ask inmates to come up with their own list, and then compare it with the one above.)**

### *Reporting*

The ability to report sexual abuse and sexual harassment, privately and free of retaliation, is essential to creating safe facilities. Recognizing this, the PREA

standards call for inmates to be educated about their right to report sexual abuse safely, without the fear of being punished. Repeatedly affirming this right can help shatter the culture of silence that pervades many detention facilities.

## ON RISK REDUCTION TIPS

**In developing sexual abuse prevention education programs for corrections facilities, it is tempting to provide vulnerable prisoners with a list of rules to help them avoid being victimized. However, this strategy may retraumatize survivors and reinforce the mistaken belief that it is victims who are to blame for their abuse.**

**Sexual abuse does not happen because vulnerable people did something wrong. Victims do not cause sexual abuse, and they cannot stop it; even people who follow all the rules can be sexually abused. Inside and outside of corrections facilities, prevention efforts must focus on changing culture, educating everyone about the dynamics of sexual abuse, holding perpetrators accountable, and supporting survivors.**

**As part of a complete program, educating vulnerable prisoners about the culture of corrections is a critical part of making facilities safer. People who are new to prison have the right to have information that helps them negotiate life inside — such as red flags for abuse (including trading contraband, getting into debt, or getting special treatment from a staff member). More importantly, education programs must provide information about staff’s responsibility to keep prisoners safe from abuse and retaliation, how people can get help, and what will happen if someone reports sexual abuse. Any education program should emphasize that, no matter what, victims are not alone, they are not to blame, and they can get help.**

The standards also call for improved services for inmates, including by community rape crisis advocates. Accordingly, the comprehensive education program should cover not only how survivors can make a report of sexual abuse, but also what types of services they can get after doing so. Instructors should review each step of the process for making a report, from the initial report to the hospital visit and sexual abuse investigation.

Some key questions about reporting that should be answered by facilitators are:

- How can people report anonymously or without naming the abuser?
  - How does the facility handle third-party reports?
  - How can an inmate report to an outside entity?
- Other crucial questions to be answered about reporting include:
- What can an inmate expect to happen right after making a report?
  - Where will they be placed until they can speak to a supervisor or investigator?
  - What are the multiple mechanisms for reporting in this facility?

It is essential for facilitators to describe to inmates, in as much detail as possible, how the facility will ensure their safety after they make a report.

The presentation should emphasize that:

- Inmates who report will be protected, as will potential witnesses.
- Victims are entitled to a forensic medical exam, if one is deemed medically appropriate. Such exams, along with other care, are to be provided free of charge.

Facilitators should bring up during the session that, per the PREA standards, agencies must attempt to make a rape crisis counselor available to inmates who have reported sexual abuse or sexual harassment to accompany them through the forensic medical exam and any investigative interviews.<sup>10</sup> Facilities should also be sure to reiterate that they will take steps to protect inmates from retaliation at all times while they are in the agency's custody.

Sexual abuse survivors who choose not to name their perpetrator — or even report at all — can still get medical care for their injuries and receive a forensic medical exam. This point is important, and it should be emphasized in a comprehensive education course. Quality medical care is critical in the aftermath of sexual abuse, but some survivors may not yet be ready to come forward, out of shame or fear of retaliation.

Facilitators should explain what services are available to survivors of sexual abuse or sexual harassment, regardless of the status of a report, including from community rape crisis counselors. Knowing that they can get such services may make it easier for many survivors to decide whether or not to report.

Facilitators should make sure to review basic health terms related to sexually transmitted infections (STIs), like HIV/AIDS, and their prevention. The

PREA standards address STI prevention by requiring facilities to provide care that is commensurate with what is offered in the community, which includes post-exposure prophylaxis to lessen the likelihood of transmission of some STIs.

Many facilities already offer health classes that include discussion of STIs. However, it is important to incorporate this topic into comprehensive PREA inmate education sessions to ensure that inmates fully understand the facility's procedures for responding to sexual abuse, including provision of the required medical services.

Comprehensive education should also cover what happens after a sexual abuse investigation. For example, if a report is substantiated and appears to involve criminal conduct, inmates should know that the case will be referred to a prosecutor.

### HOW LONG IS A TYPICAL CLASS?

**The length of a comprehensive inmate education session will vary, usually between 25 and 45 minutes. Some groups may have many questions, and there should be time allotted to answer all on-topic questions. Classes presented by peer educators — which are used only in adult facilities — may be longer because inmates generally feel more comfortable engaging in discussion with a peer. For adult facilities, the ideal class is 6-12 inmates, and no more than 20; for juvenile facilities, the ideal size is 6-10 residents, with a maximum of 12. If the facility is using a video, educators should allow for the running time of the video and an additional 15 minutes for discussion and questions.**



### *Resources*

During both intake and comprehensive classes, facilitators should provide contact information for local rape crisis organizations and other outside support services. It should be made clear that they can contact these organizations at any time for support related to sexual abuse, no matter when or where the abuse happened. It is equally important for the facilitator to cover the extent to which such communications will be monitored and whether reports of abuse will be forwarded to authorities under mandatory reporting laws.

In any setting, when a group of people is encouraged to report sexual abuse or sexual harassment and is told that anyone who comes forward will be protected and taken seriously, the number of reports will go up. This is an essential tenet of zero tolerance. It is likely that inmates — and youth residents — who are survivors of sexual abuse but did not know they could report, how to report, or even that what happened to them is reportable, will come forward. As such, facilitators should expect to receive disclosures during and after the class, and should prepare accordingly.



Captain John Johnson of the Miami-Dade Corrections and Rehabilitation Department (MDCR), which set up a successful PREA peer education program.  
*Photo: Just Detention International*

## WRAP UP

**It is important to review the goals of comprehensive education at the end of class.**

**The goals are:**

- **To make sure inmates know that the facility will not tolerate sexual abuse and harassment**
- **To give inmates information on how to get help if they need it**
- **To make sure that all inmates know how to report sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and retaliation**

## Considerations for Comprehensive Education in Juvenile Detention

The PREA standards on comprehensive education, just like the standards on intake education, are almost identical for adult and juvenile facilities. The key distinction is that youth education programs must be “developmentally appropriate.” Crafting a curriculum that is suitable for a juvenile detention setting means taking care to use language and content that a young person can grasp, but without sacrificing any core messaging about sexual abuse prevention.

For example, youth are often familiar with the concept of bullying, so sexual coercion and pressure can be discussed in the context of managing bullying. Many youth facilities also provide education about healthy boundaries. Resident education can include information about each person’s right to set bound-

aries for themselves and the need to respect others’ boundaries and limits.

These considerations are important given the staggering number of young people in juvenile detention who are survivors of sexual violence. Many of these youth are likely never to have told anyone about their abuse, and attending a prevention class may trigger painful feelings. Make sure, therefore, to include information about available ways to get support every time the topics of sexual abuse or sexual harassment are raised with youth.

As in prisons and jails, juvenile facilities can benefit from folding comprehensive education programming into broader health education. Such an integrated approach is likely to be easier to adopt in juvenile detention, where life skills and other group activities are often part of the daily schedule.

## PREA Inmate Education: Additional Requirements

In addition to addressing the content of PREA education programs, the standards also include requirements on how the education should be delivered.

### *Education for Current Inmates*

#### **STANDARD § 115.33/115.333(C) INMATE EDUCATION**

**Current inmates/residents who have not received such education shall be educated within one year of the effective date of the PREA standards, and shall receive education upon transfer to a different facility to the extent that the policies and procedures of the inmate's new facility differ from those of the previous facility.**

Along with ensuring that all inmates receive intake and comprehensive education within the prescribed timeframe, agencies must establish a system for educating current inmates. Whether a facility has established completely new policies and procedures related to the PREA standards or modified existing ones, it is important to educate current inmates about their right to be free from sexual abuse and the steps the facility will take in response to reports. This is an opportunity to reinforce the core principle that sexual abuse and sexual harassment will not be tolerated, and to get this message to the entire population. Some current inmates and residents may be encouraged to reach out for help for the first time. Additionally, in adult facilities, longer-term inmates influence culture as much as veteran staff. If they are unaware

of PREA-related changes in facility policies and procedures, they may perpetuate old misconceptions, problematic attitudes, or other aspects of institutional culture that are contrary to the goals of PREA implementation efforts.

Consider using inmate bulletin boards, newsletters, and leadership groups — such as advisory councils — to distribute new pamphlets or brochures. Make sure that inmates have an opportunity to ask questions and know how they can get more information. Existing classes, meetings, and groups can be appropriate settings for inmates to receive comprehensive education. Alternately, it may be more effective for juvenile and adult facilities to develop a stand-alone course on sexual abuse prevention for current inmates, holding sessions for inmate populations based on housing unit, inmate number, or intake date.

Inmates must also receive refresher information following a transfer to another facility, even if it is within the same agency. Refresher courses should focus on the policies and procedures at the new facility. Agencies should strive to minimize differences in how they implement agency-wide sexual abuse policies. Nevertheless, phone systems, staffing patterns, and available services may differ from one facility to the next. Even if a person is moved to a facility with identical policies and procedures, refresher information can reinforce the agency's commitment to preventing and responding to sexual abuse.

Adult and juvenile detention facilities may also find it beneficial to offer annual refresher courses to inmates who have remained at the same facility. While not required by the PREA standards, such courses affirm the facility's commitment to eliminating sexual abuse and sexual harassment and ensure that all inmates have the most up-to-date information.

### *Accessibility*

Inmate education can only contribute to safer facilities if all inmates can understand and benefit from the information that is being presented. As such, the PREA

standards require that inmate education be provided in such a way as to make sure that inmates who are limited English proficient, deaf, visually impaired, otherwise disabled, or who have limited reading skills can use the information.

## **STANDARD § 115.33(D), § 115.233(D) § 115.333(D) INMATE [AND RESIDENT] EDUCATION**

**The agency shall provide inmate and resident education in formats accessible to all inmates, including those who are limited English proficient, deaf, visually impaired, or otherwise disabled, as well as to inmates who have limited reading skills.**

### **§ 115.116(A) AND (B)**

(a) The agency shall take appropriate steps to ensure that detainees with disabilities (including, for example, detainees who are deaf or hard of hearing, those who are blind or have low vision, or those who have intellectual, psychiatric, or speech disabilities), have an equal opportunity to participate in or benefit from all aspects of the agency's efforts to prevent, detect, and respond to sexual abuse and sexual harassment. Such steps shall include, when necessary to ensure effective communication with detainees who are deaf or hard of hearing, providing access to interpreters who can interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially, both receptively and expressively, using any necessary specialized vocabulary. In addition, the agency shall ensure that written materials are provided in formats or through methods that ensure effective communication with detainees with disabilities, including detainees who have intellectual disabilities, limited reading skills, or who are blind or have low vision. An agency is not required to take actions that it can demonstrate would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of a service, program, or activity, or in undue financial and administrative burdens, as those terms are used in regulations promulgated under title II of the Americans With Disabilities Act, [28 CFR 35.164](#).

(b) The agency shall take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to all aspects of the agency's efforts to prevent, detect, and respond to sexual abuse and sexual harassment to detainees who are limited English proficient, including steps to provide interpreters who can interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially, both receptively and expressively, using any necessary specialized vocabulary.

A guiding principle should always be to create materials using clear, simple language, avoiding jargon wherever possible. Simple language is more accessible for everyone, staff and inmates alike. It has the

added benefit of being more easily translated and explained by someone who might not be as familiar with the PREA standards, like an interpreter on a language line.

## SIMPLIFYING LANGUAGE

**Instructors should take care to use simple language. Generally speaking, materials should be written and presented at no higher than a fifth-grade level. Here are some technical terms to avoid, or that deserve clarification, with recommendations on how to reword or rephrase them.**

*Instead of:*

*Use:*

zero-tolerance ..... sexual abuse and sexual harassment are never allowed or okay

access services ..... get help

without additional cost ..... free

multiple internal ways

to privately report ..... several ways to make a report inside the facility in private

establish a method to receive

third party reports ..... have a way for friends, family, and others to report

voyeurism ..... peering, looking at, or peeping

consent to ..... agree and be able to freely say 'yes' or 'no'

victimization ..... abuse



It is important to develop a plan that takes into account any foreseeable needs to adjust and simplify materials to ensure that they are accessible to everyone. No facility can plan for every possible scenario, but planning for predictable ones helps staff do their jobs well, and enables them to troubleshoot less predictable scenarios if they arise.

Review the inmate education materials, curriculum, and presentation style and consider:

- Are inmate education materials and curricula available in a variety of formats including: in-person instruction, videos, and written materials such as posters, brochures, pamphlets, or handbooks?
- What are the most common languages spoken in the facility, community, or geographic region? Does the agency employ sufficient staff to conduct education sessions in those languages? Are materials translated?
- Is the written information that is available comparable with what is presented in class or on video? How would a deaf or hard-of-hearing inmate ask questions? Are there staff or peer educators who are fluent in American Sign Language (ASL)?<sup>11</sup>
- Are materials available in large print or Braille, for blind and visually impaired inmates? Remember that only people who have attended formal schools for the blind are likely to read Braille. Make certain that audio information and videos are as complete and easy to understand as any written information. Consider creating recordings, like audiobooks, of key agency policies and procedures.
- Assess the population of the facility and consider who else might have particular needs. Do you have a high population of very young inmates? Very old? Are the people in your custody from a culture that is different from the majority of the staff?
- Facilities must meet the accessibility requirements of the PREA standards. When developing an accessibility plan for inmate education, consider

how staff handle communication around medical appointments, general orientation, and other common practices.

Some tips for the most common accessibility concerns are described below.

For inmates with **limited English proficiency**, agencies can:

- Translate all written materials into other languages that are commonly spoken and understood by inmates at the facility.
- Make an audio recording of any videos or class curricula and an audio book of any relevant policies and procedures. Alternately, close caption any videos in the most common languages.
- Hold education sessions in the most common languages, with staff members or trained peer educators who are fluent in those languages. Note: this is different from asking another inmate to translate. Inmate peer educators should be trained to present an approved curriculum (see PRC FAQ: [www.prearesourcecenter.org/node/3264](http://www.prearesourcecenter.org/node/3264)).
- Ensure that staff members and inmate and resident education facilitators are aware of available interpretation services.

For inmates who are **deaf or hard-of-hearing**, agencies should plan to:

- Provide complete information in a written form. If the facility uses a video, provide a copy of the video script. If the facility offers an in-person class, provide a written summary of the class.
- Create a handout that summarizes key points for deaf or hard-of-hearing people to refer to later.
- Make sure that videos have closed captioning.
- Ensure that facilitators are aware of available sign language and other interpretation services.

- Make use of telephone relay services and technology such as tablet computers.
- Work with other law enforcement and court agencies to identify interpreters in the community.

For inmates who are **blind or visually impaired**, agencies can:

- Provide written materials in Braille and large print.
- Contract with a reading service that supports the blind and visually impaired.
- Give people an opportunity to listen to any videos more than once.
- Record readings of class curricula, written materials, and policies and procedures for use as supplemental materials.

- Program a recording of key points — the right to be free from sexual abuse, how to make a report, and how to get help — into the telephone system.

For inmates who are **cognitively disabled**, agencies can:

- Provide a handout covering the basic concepts in just a few bullet points, using the simplest possible language.
- Make sure that case managers, mental health providers, and educators are aware of the content of the inmate education and can reinforce the messages.
- Make posters and other supplemental materials easy to read and understand, and visually appealing.
- Offer opportunities to ask questions of the PREA Compliance Coordinator or other staff who are knowledgeable about PREA.



Ensuring that information on how to report sexual misconduct is widely available and accessible — including through posters, like the one above from a California state prison — is a crucial component of inmate education. *Photo: Just Detention International*

## 6. Models of Inmate Education

**A** NUMBER OF corrections facilities nationwide already have robust inmate education programs in place. Their experiences setting up such programs can help guide other agencies in developing their own. The examples below include prisons, jails, police lockups, and juvenile facilities.

### Staff-Led, In-Person Models

Many facilities choose to hold in-person educational sessions, both for intake and comprehensive education. Such sessions can be led by staff, contractors, or volunteers. A benefit of this model is that it allows

staff to show inmates their commitment to inmate safety. Staff educators are also easily identifiable as contact people to follow up with for more information and to ask for help.

Staff educators should become their facility's experts, and be responsible for staying up-to-date on policies and practices related to sexual abuse prevention, detection, and response. They can support the role of the PREA Coordinator or PREA Compliance Manager — agency-wide and facility-wide positions, respectively — and may become the people who can distill key information into simple, clear instruction

### THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY-BASED VICTIM SERVICES PROVIDERS

Corrections agencies are encouraged to work with local, community-based victim services providers on delivering inmate education. Victim services providers, particularly those who provide sexual assault services, have specialized knowledge on key topics covered in inmate education courses, especially trauma and the dynamics of sexual violence, and are adept at providing prevention education to the community on such topics. Victim services providers are also uniquely qualified to handle disclosures of abuse that may come up during a session. Another benefit of partnering with victim service providers is that their words may carry more weight than the words of staff, who may be seen as having no choice but to provide the information.

Many corrections agencies are already working with local victim services providers to deliver support services to survivors, which is a requirement of the PREA standards (§ 115.21 and 115.53). Some facilities also contract with victim services providers, such as local rape crisis centers, to help train their staff. Keep in mind, however, that many victim services providers likely will not have funding to provide inmate education, so a fee-for-service agreement may be necessary. Corrections agencies would also benefit from working with victim services providers specializing in sexual assault advocacy to help them develop inmate education materials.



for inmates, as well as other staff. In addition, a staff-led education program is well equipped to respond to changes in policy and procedure.

Staff-led education programs also have the benefit of being simple to revise. The staff members are well positioned to change inmate education materials and curricula, though they will need to keep abreast of changes in policy and protocol. Staff educators who understand the facility and know the inmate population can make sure that the curriculum and mes-

sages align with the needs of the facility — and reflect the culture of reporting that the agency is working to establish. They will also be able to assess how well inmates understand the material — for example, whether it is accessible to people with disabilities and limited English proficiency.

### *Choosing Staff Educators*

Facilities should choose staff educators carefully. A staff member who is not well-versed in the material

## **TIPS FOR CHOOSING STAFF AND SETTING UP STAFF-LED EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

### **Look for staff educators who:**

- **Communicate well with all inmates**
- **Are committed to carrying out the agency's zero-tolerance policy**
- **Believe that inmate education is a key part of implementing the PREA standards**
- **Are prepared to handle reports of sexual abuse and sexual harassment professionally and sensitively**
- **Are willing and able to revise curricula and materials as needed**

### **Steps to setting up a staff-led inmate education program:**

- **Identify staff members to review policies, procedures, and protocols; create materials; conduct education sessions**
- **Determine how and when intake education will be provided**
- **Determine how and when comprehensive education will be provided**
- **Develop procedures for documenting inmate and resident participation in inmate education**
- **Review and test out procedures for inmates to report sexual abuse/harassment and get help**
- **Create materials, including written materials for inmates, posters, and curricula**
- **Pilot the materials and curricula with small groups of inmates and solicit feedback**
- **Revise materials per the feedback from inmates and facility administrators**
- **Post and distribute written materials and begin conducting education sessions**

or does not buy into it can, even unintentionally, undermine the program's effectiveness. At a minimum, staff educators should be comfortable discussing sexual abuse and sexual harassment with inmates and should know the material well. They must be ready to handle disclosures of sexual abuse; inmates may come forward with a report after, or even during, a PREA inmate education presentation. Staff educators can prepare for disclosures by learning the basics of how to assist survivors of sexual abuse and provide them with information about available resources and referrals to facility mental health staff and community rape crisis counselors.

Staff educators can be custody staff, case managers, mental health staff, or non-custody staff. What is most important is that the person has an interest in, and is committed to, delivering quality inmate education. *If possible, staff educators should be people who volunteer for this duty, rather than being assigned to it.*

Another option is to use volunteers as inmate educators. Because volunteers choose to do this work, their words may carry more weight among inmates than the

messages from facility staff, who may be seen as having no choice but to deliver the information. Importantly, in-person staff or volunteer educators can help assess how well inmates with disabilities and limited English proficiency understand the materials, giving staff an opportunity to alter them as necessary.

### Inmate Education Using Video

Videos can be used to provide PREA inmate education. The National PREA Resource Center (PRC), in cooperation with JDI, has created a video and facilitator's guide that can be used for both intake and comprehensive education programs: [www.prearesource-center.org/node/1912](http://www.prearesource-center.org/node/1912). Facilities can use this video as the cornerstone of a comprehensive education program, supplementing it with their own written materials and in-person instruction. The video is also customizable, allowing facilities to shape it to meet their needs. Some facilities may choose to create their own video, using PRC's as a model. An example of a video for youth facilities can be found here: [www.nmcoun-ties.org/insurance/loss-prevention-2/training-videos/prea-youth-education-video/](http://www.nmcoun-ties.org/insurance/loss-prevention-2/training-videos/prea-youth-education-video/)



Peer education allows inmates themselves — like these two women at a California state prison — to become leaders in culture change.  
*Photo: Just Detention International*

### *Intake Education Via Video*

For intake education, a video with short, simple messages can be broadcast on a loop in the facility's intake or medical area, thus ensuring that nearly every inmate will be able to watch it. The messages in the video should be clear enough so that people can listen to and get the message in just a few minutes and while other things are happening in the area. The primary messages for intake videos are the agency's zero-tolerance policy and how to report sexual abuse.

### *Comprehensive Education via Video*

While intake education videos can run on a loop, it is preferable to have a facilitator — or, at the very least, someone to whom inmates can direct any questions — present videos for the comprehensive education section. Comprehensive videos can be screened at any time that fits the facility schedule, and as often as needed to reach all inmates.

One advantage of using a video is that all inmates receive the same messages — and they can be used across all security levels. Another benefit is that relatively little time is required of staff once the video has been produced. In addition, video may be less intimidating to survivors — and to inmates who believe they might be at risk — than in-person education in a group setting.

Facilities that plan to use video exclusively should consider having a staff or peer educator attend the screenings. That person's presence can increase inmates' trust in the program, add credibility to the zero-tolerance message, and give inmates an opportunity to ask follow-up questions or express concerns.

With videos, as with all educational materials, accessibility is crucial. Facilities should make sure that the information, particularly on how to report sexual abuse and sexual harassment and obtain crisis counseling services, is conveyed in a way that is clear, specific, and accessible to inmates of various backgrounds and

abilities. Further, agencies should customize the content to fit the needs, populations, and staffing patterns at each facility. For example, they should consider the unique needs of work release programs, administrative segregation units, and mental health units. Not every unit will have the same reporting mechanisms. It's also important that women are not shown a video and materials created for men's facilities, and vice versa. Similarly, materials developed for adult facilities should not be re-purposed for juvenile settings.

### **In-Person Education with a Peer Educator**

Many adult corrections facilities have found peer education to be a valuable and successful approach.<sup>12</sup> Based on proven public health principles, peer education is a tool for primary prevention that seeks to address problems at their root. Efforts at achieving culture change through education — especially around a sensitive topic, like sexual abuse — are more likely to succeed when the information is presented by a peer. This is true in any setting: people are more willing to accept information from a person with whom they identify, someone they see as a peer.

For these reasons, peer education programs hold great promise for changing culture. First and foremost, investment in a peer education program sends a strong message on the part of the facility that its staff are proactive about preventing and responding to sexual violence. Additionally, robust peer education depends on staff and inmates working together. This approach gives inmates the opportunity to take a positive leadership role, raising the overall level of trust in facility staff's ability to handle sexual abuse and sexual harassment effectively.

Peer education allows inmate leaders to take ownership of the program, which helps ensure its sustainability and positive impact. Because they are inmates themselves, peer educators are more accessible for follow-up questions and to provide information after the class. This makes it more likely that inmates will receive the information they need to stay safe.

Like other in-person programs, peer education programs are easy to revise when there are changes in facility population, policies, or practices. Peer educators can be tasked with keeping materials up to date and making any needed changes. Peer education programs also take less staff time to run and manage than staff-led programs and are less vulnerable to budget and program cuts. (For more information, see the case studies on pp. 37-42.)

### *Staff Liaisons*

Staff liaisons play a critical role in starting and maintaining a peer education program. They recruit, interview, and hire peer educators, explaining the time commitment required for the position and any compensation offered.

The most important criteria for appointing a staff member to be a peer educator liaison is a commitment to the PREA standards and a desire to make the facility safer. The PREA liaison should also be dedicated to ensuring the program's success.

One of the main tasks of staff liaisons is to ensure that all peer educator applicants are screened by the facility's classification staff for any history of sex offenses or sexual misconduct. They should make certain that the inmate does not have a recent history of disciplinary infractions. Ideally, staff liaisons will be able to train those inmates selected as peer educators. In other words, they should be prepared to be the supervisors of the program.

Peer educators and the staff liaisons should work together to develop the inmate education curriculum. The bulk of this work can be given to peer educators, but the staff should support and guide the process, approving any changes and any supplemental materials that the peer educators create.

Staff liaisons should meet with the peer educators regularly to provide ongoing support, information,

and any additional materials. While peer educators should be permitted to work independently, effective staff liaisons will check in with them regularly and help them address any issues that may arise.

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**The most important criteria for appointing a staff member to be a peer educator liaison is a commitment to the PREA standards and a desire to make the facility safer.**

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### *Selecting Peer Educators*

When choosing peer educators, it is important to consider ethnicity, age, religious background, length of stay, sexual orientation, and personality type. Having a diverse team of peer educators who reflect the demographics of the general population can help make inmates feel comfortable hearing the message and reaching out for help. Once a team is selected, the facility should try to assign peer educators to an appropriate group — older inmates with an older educator, youth with youth, lifers with lifers, and so on.

Peer educators should have excellent communication skills and a strong understanding of the material. Inmates have different learning styles and needs, just like people in the community. Peer educators have to understand the topic well enough to explain it in different ways and to answer a variety of questions.

Additionally, peer educators should be able to handle being asked questions at any time, including outside of PREA education sessions. They should be comfortable hearing disclosures of sexual abuse and sexual harassment, without feeling like they are in a crisis themselves. Peer educators should clearly understand their role and staff's expectations.

## COMPASSION FATIGUE

Compassion fatigue, or secondary traumatic stress, is experienced by people who, in caring for others who have experienced trauma, experience trauma symptoms themselves. While anyone who provides education or services related to sexual abuse and sexual harassment can suffer from compassion fatigue, it is more likely to afflict survivors of previous trauma. Becoming aware of the warning signs and being willing to acknowledge and act on them are critical.

Staff members should be prepared to help peer educators to take care of themselves. Here are some tips:

- Clearly explain to peer educators what they can and cannot do for others. Peer educators can provide information and offer support by giving other inmates options. They cannot take away someone else's pain, make them decide to report abuse, or rescue them from danger.
- Recognize common signs of compassion fatigue, which include sadness, hopelessness, nervousness, irritability, dread around coming to work or to peer education classes, and feeling overly responsible for the safety of others at the facility.
- Ensure that peer educators and staff discuss secondary stress before the beginning of the course. People working together on a peer education project must be willing to check in with each other and be honest about when someone needs a break.
- Hold regular team meetings and supervision sessions with peer educators. Team meetings should have a recurring agenda item on the topic of stress and self-care. Simply providing the space to talk about stress, and hearing that it is normal, can be a powerful protective factor for people working in sexual violence prevention.
- Remind peer educators that they should not always be working. They must be able to sleep, read, eat, write letters, and engage in other programs without having to discuss sexual abuse or sexual harassment. If possible, give peer educators a few minutes of break time before their return to the unit following the end of class.
- Talk about it. Encourage educators to talk about the reality and seriousness of secondary traumatic stress and ways to practice self-care. Make it clear to peer educators that feeling stress at work does not mean they can't do it. Give them the space to talk about, and share with others, ways they deal with other kinds of stress and encourage them to use those coping mechanisms. If they become overwhelmed, help them to come up with new ideas for coping.
- Focus on the positive. Foster discussions among peer educators about the positive effects their work have on the institution; ask for specific examples of successes and encourage peer educators to share what they appreciate about working with each other.
- Show appreciation for peer educators in formal ways, such as through certificates and letters for inmates' files.



### *Training Peer Educators*

New peer educators will need training so that they can develop materials, present information, answer questions, and know when they need help from staff members. The training objectives for peer educators should be to ensure that those who complete it are able to:

- Understand the inmate education requirements of the PREA standards
- Discuss the intent of the PREA standards overall and the agency's approach to zero tolerance
- Understand and discuss the prevalence, dynamics, and impact of sexual abuse and sexual harassment in detention, including barriers to reporting this violence
- Demonstrate knowledge of the peer education program, including criteria for peer educators, logistics of conducting classes, classroom management, working with the staff liaison, and roles and responsibilities of the peer educators
- Provide information regarding preventing and responding to sexual abuse and sexual harassment, including agency reporting mechanisms, protection from retaliation, agency response protocols, available medical and mental health care, victim notification, and services from rape crisis programs
- Maintain records related to the peer education classes and provide staff members with the information they need

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**Having a diverse team of peer educators who reflect the demographics of the general population can help make inmates feel comfortable hearing the message and reaching out for help.**

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When training peer educators, it is important to emphasize the very specific nature of their role. In most cases, peer educators are not mentors or counselors; their job is to impart information. Nevertheless, it is unrealistic to assume that other inmates will not see them as resources. Facilities should make certain that peer educators are prepared to explain at the beginning of the first class what they will do if someone discloses sexual abuse or sexual harassment to them. (See the case study on the Miami-Dade Corrections and Rehabilitation Department on page 41.)

*Through the diverse team we have in place at the prison, we are able to meet the needs and reach out to our wide-ranging and ever-changing inmate population. We all came from different groups within the institution and united, making a beacon of hope. People who thought they would never identify with me suddenly were knocking on my cell door asking for direction and help. We each interact and present in our sessions differently, allowing us to reach a wider range of women. The more knowledge and information we can get throughout the institution, the safer our community becomes.*

— Peer educator at a California women's prison

## **TIPS FOR CHOOSING PEER EDUCATORS AND SETTING UP PEER-LED EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

### **Look for peer educators who:**

- Have good communication skills and positive interactions with both staff and other inmates
- Have been free of disciplinary actions for some time
- Are not convicted or charged with a sex offense
- Are comfortable talking about sexual abuse and sexual harassment
- Are committed to inmate education as a way to make the facility safer
- Are prepared to handle disclosures of sexual abuse/harassment discreetly and sensitively
- Are willing and able to revise curricula and materials as needed
- Represent the range of demographics of the inmate population

### **Steps to setting up a peer-led inmate education program:**

- Identify staff members to serve as liaisons and supervisors
- Determine how and when intake education will be provided
- Determine how and when comprehensive education will be provided
- Develop a peer educator job description, interview protocol, compensation mechanism, and training curriculum
- Recruit, interview, and train peer educators
- Develop procedures for documenting inmate participation in inmate education
- Review and test out procedures for inmates to report sexual abuse/harassment and get help
- Have staff and peer educators work together to review policies, procedures, and protocols; create materials; and conduct education sessions
- Pilot the materials and curricula with small groups of inmates and solicit feedback

## WHAT IF SOMEONE REFUSES TO TAKE THE CLASS?

**If an inmate or resident refuses to take the class, staff should try to understand why. One explanation could be the inmate's having a history of sexual abuse — attending a class on sexual violence can feel overwhelming for a survivor. Often, the people who are the most reluctant to come are the ones who need the information the most. Be creative. One idea is to put together a packet with all the inmate education information for the person to read in a private area. If he or she cannot read, the peer educator can read it to them. This is another benefit of having peer educators — staff simply will not have enough time to provide such individualized attention.**

### *Running the Program*

If possible, staff should not sit in on the entire class. They should allow the inmate peer educator to speak and to use language that will be understood by the participants and will make them feel comfortable. Peer educators are likely to use more slang and to avoid official language and jargon — which helps make the information more credible. If a staff member must be in the class for security reasons, they should make their role clear at the outset, and stand or sit in the back during the class and avoid interrupting the peer

educator or answering questions from participants that are unrelated to security needs.

There may be times when questions will come up that a peer educator cannot answer. If that happens, the peer educator should check with staff and get back to the person as soon as possible. The peer educator should not pretend to know the answer to everything. In fact, their willingness to admit when they do not know something, and to check with staff for the answer, will help to build trust with both the peer educator and the staff.

## USING OTHER TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPLEMENT IN-PERSON EDUCATION

**Technology can be used to supplement an inmate education program. For example, one facility plays a brief message about zero tolerance and how to report sexual abuse when inmates enter their pin number into the telephone system. Another facility has a PREA poster displayed on the kiosk where inmates order canteen items. The same facility also added a similar poster to the staff internal email system. Any system that delivers or collects information can be used to convey short, simple messages about zero tolerance, reporting sexual abuse and sexual harassment, and how to get help.**



## 7. Making Your Program Work: Case Studies

**T**HERE ARE DIFFERENT types of detention facilities. This section gives an overview of the models and offers guidance on putting them in place.

### State Prisons

#### *Washington State Department of Corrections*

The Washington State Department of Corrections (WADOC) has one of the country's most innovative approaches to delivering inmate education. In 2015, the Department began broadcasting its inmate education video on many of the buses that it uses to move inmates between facilities. The bus journey is a prime opportunity to show a video, since the audience includes new arrivals and transfers, who must, under the PREA standards, receive educational information.

The video is adapted from *PREA: What You Need to Know*, which was produced by JDI and the PRC to serve as a tool for both intake and comprehensive education. WADOC's videos — the agency created versions in English and Spanish, both with closed-captioning — feature speaking roles by key department staff. The speakers give Washington state-specific information on preventing sexual abuse and sexual harassment, and how to get help.

The idea to screen an educational video on a transport bus was first proposed in 2014. Even though leadership was supportive, the agency did not have the funding.

Inmates were being shown the video, but only at the intake site. Then, in 2015, a budget was passed that included adding a new bus to WADOC's fleet. As of August 2015, all buses operating on the east side of the state have DVD players and screens; the remaining vehicles in the fleet will be outfitted in 2016. These changes mean that every single inmate will see the video at least twice (at the intake facility and on their way to their prison), and more times than that if they are transferred.

One potential drawback of airing the video during transport is that it does not allow for moderated Q&A. To ensure that inmates can address their concerns or ask questions, WADOC's orientation handbook explains that anyone who wants to follow up with staff can do so upon reaching the facility. The orientation handbook itself expands upon many of the film's key themes. It defines PREA and other key terms and then reviews, point-by-point, the agency's procedures around reporting sexual abuse, official investigations, and the provision of medical and mental health care.

Inmates are also given a PREA brochure when they arrive at a prison. The brochure reiterates the key points from the film and handbook, most notably that every inmate has the right to be safe from sexual abuse and sexual harassment, to report this abuse, and to be free from retaliation. It also includes information on how to contact outside crisis services, as do posters that are displayed in locations across the facility. All materials have been translated into Spanish.

## Small Jails

### *Lincoln County Jail*

Located in Hugo, Colorado, about 100 miles from Denver on the Eastern Colorado Plains, the Lincoln County Jail is a small facility with a capacity of 40 and an average daily population of 32 inmates. The jail houses men and women, recent arrestees, pre-trial detainees, inmates serving sentences of less than two years for misdemeanor crimes, and Colorado state prisoners who are attending court. To date, the jail has received very few allegations of sexual abuse or sexual harassment of inmates.

The Lincoln County Jail has developed a comprehensive PREA inmate education program. During the intake process, jail deputies provide inmates with a brochure that describes the agency's zero-tolerance policy, their right to be free from sexual abuse, how to report any concerns related to sexual abuse or sexual harassment, and how to request confidential victim services. The brochure is available in English and Spanish. The agency has also developed PREA posters, which have been placed in all housing units, the intake and booking areas, and other common areas, including the medical clinic. The posters are available in English and Spanish. Finally, inmates receive comprehensive education from the jail nurse during the medical screening process. This information includes more detail about definitions of sexual abuse and sexual harassment, ways inmates can report and receive help, and how they can get medical and mental health care and victim services if they have been abused. A Spanish-speaking deputy meets individually with Spanish-speaking inmates to share this information.

Following implementation of the jail's comprehensive PREA education, the jail saw a marked increase in the number of inmates coming forward. This increase was not because rates of abuse went up, but because inmates had the information they needed to report and the jail had made clear its commitment to having zero tolerance for any sexual abuse and sexual harassment.

## Lockups

### *Los Angeles Police Department*

The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) is the third largest police agency in the nation. LAPD administers 10 detention facilities, ranging in size from station-based lockups with an average daily population of 13 people to larger regional detention facilities with an average daily population of 104 detainees. In total, more than 100,000 detainees are held at LAPD lockups annually.

The PREA standards for lockups require that all detainees be notified of the agency's zero-tolerance policy regarding sexual abuse and sexual harassment during intake.<sup>13</sup> Recognizing the importance of giving detainees this information, the LAPD project team crafted a program that goes beyond PREA's education requirements by offering information in a variety of formats. Placards have been posted throughout its lockups that include information on the agency's zero-tolerance policy and how inmates can report sexual abuse or sexual harassment. The placards also explain the victim services and medical care that are available for detainees who have been sexually abused. LAPD also displays information about sexual abuse prevention and response in its booking area, using a slideshow format. These slides contain the same information as the placards, but with more detail, and are available in multiple languages.

Finally, the department has included key information on its inmate receipts, known as "[pink slips](#),"<sup>14</sup> which are the only identification documents that arrestees receive during their stay in the lockups. The pink slips also serve as a paper reporting mechanism for arrestees. The department has printed the words "Zero Tolerance" on the corner of the pink slip; arrestees can report sexual abuse and sexual harassment by folding over that corner of the slip and handing it to a staff member. Arrestees do not have access to paper or pens while they are in the lockup. The "fold-over method" allows inmates to request to speak with a staff member

safely and privately if they have any concerns related to sexual abuse or sexual harassment. This approach also enables deaf, speech impaired, or limited English proficient people to signal that they need assistance.

## Juvenile Facilities

### *New York Administration for Children's Services*

The New York Administration for Children's Services (ACS) focused on creating educational materials for youth that were accessible and interesting, but would not add to their fears.

Before being placed in a juvenile facility, all New York City youth go to the Horizon Juvenile Center for intake. During intake, staff provide youth with a pamphlet about staying safe from sexual abuse, which is available in [English](#)<sup>15</sup> and [Spanish](#).<sup>16</sup> The intake staff give a presentation that covers three key messages — zero tolerance, how to report, and agency policy around protection from retaliation — and provides time for youth to ask questions.

The residents meet with a case manager within 24 hours of admission. The case manager is trained to ask the youth if she or he received the pamphlet, and record the response for their file. The case managers offer youth a chance to ask questions and express any concerns.

Within 10 days of admission, youth are shown the *Safe is Safe* video, followed by a staff-facilitated conversation. Staff members are trained in how to show the video, facilitate a discussion that highlights the key points of the video, and answer the range of questions that are likely to come up. Once a week, each facility's sexual abuse prevention point person sends headquarters a list of residents who saw the video and participated in the discussion. Additionally, posters that were inspired by the pamphlet have been posted throughout all facilities, reinforcing key messages.

Developing materials that are interesting and accessible was a key goal for ACS's resident education program. Working with its project partners, the department created engaging, informative materials

that place sexual abuse and sexual harassment awareness and prevention within the larger context of safety. The goal was also to make sure that the materials promoted positive youth behavior and peer-to-peer information-sharing.

ACS's printed materials focus on a fictional conversation between two typical youth via text message. In addition to being accessible, texting shorthand is concise, which made the pamphlet easy to understand for youth with reading challenges. The relationship between the two youth is not defined in the text exchange, and the gender of the perpetrator is not identified. The ambiguity is intentional, to allow for readers of many backgrounds to apply the scenario to their own experiences. Before finalizing the pamphlet, ACS solicited feedback from its youth residents — both girls and boys — to ensure it met the agency's goals.

ACS determined that a video was the most effective way to provide consistent and comprehensive information to residents. With *pro bono* help from the graduate Television and Radio program at Brooklyn College, ACS created a video that dramatized the youth-led production of an educational video — a twist on the theme of peer-to-peer delivery. Two of the characters in the video, who have experienced sexual abuse and sexual harassment, also appear in the pamphlet. Like the pamphlet, the video script incorporated feedback from youth residents.

Taking on a project that is so complex requires a commitment; it also carries with it some risk of being misunderstood or missing the mark. Fortunately, the final product accomplishes ACS's resident education goals. The video models positive social behavior and provides important messages without being boring, relentlessly serious, or threatening.

### *Trinity County Juvenile Hall*

Trinity County Juvenile Hall is a small facility based in a rural community in Northern California. The facility typically houses fewer than 10 residents at any given time, and may have just one or two intakes in a week. The project team created effective intake and

comprehensive education programs. During intake, a staff member almost always conducts one-on-one sessions. The youth are provided with basic information about zero tolerance and how to make a report, and informed of where they can find informational placards throughout the facility.

The small size of the facility makes it possible for a case manager to conduct individual comprehensive youth education. The case manager meets with youth within 24-72 hours of their arrival to begin developing a case plan and to answer any questions about their stay. In keeping with the personal, direct nature of other services in the facility, staff decided that providing one-on-one comprehensive education would make the most sense, matching the facility culture and giving youth a comfortable, safe environment to receive the information and ask questions.

While the staff wanted to provide one-on-one education sessions, they also recognized that the information should be consistent and not vary depending on the case manager. To that end, the juvenile hall administrator created a draft script based on the PREA standards and agency policy. The project team then revised the script several times, making the language simple, clear, and conversational.

### *Oregon County Youth Facilities*

A coalition of juvenile agencies from three counties in Oregon — Linn, Lane, and Marion — came together to work on full implementation of the PREA standards in their facilities. Several meetings were held with all project partners to discuss the goals of resident education, clarify the requirements of the standards, and develop strategies that might work for the different counties, which have rural and urban facilities of different sizes. The outcome of the planning process was a team decision to create an online guide to PREA resident education, housed on the Linn County website and password-protected, that includes guidance, templates, sample materials, and model curricula. The guide allows each facility to customize its resident education program.

Several of the facilities wanted the PREA resident education to be incorporated into their ongoing psycho-educational group structure, building zero-tolerance messages into their facility culture and ensuring that all youth receive them. Doing so is also a way to vary the content of gatherings, so that youth who are at the facility for longer stays do not have to sit through the same class multiple times, which could lead to push-back or resentment.

The online guide includes sample class curricula for a basic session that covers the required comprehensive education information. Some of the facilities, however, wanted curricula that would allow them to offer richer education than what was included in the basic curricula, as well as discussion about related issues. In response, the team developed a five-part series of classes, with each module addressing basic information about zero tolerance and how to report or get help, while also covering issues such as dynamics of sexual abuse and sexual harassment, bystander intervention, risk reduction and positive communication strategies, and how to create bullying- and harassment-free zones.

## **Large Jails**

### *Staff-led: Kern County Sheriff's Office*

Kern County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) serves a geographically large county in California that is a mix of rural and urban areas. The Sheriff's Office operates four jails and two lockups. The jails can house a total of 2,896 inmates; their combined daily average population is 2,635. The lockups have an average daily population of three to four people, and each is usually staffed by one deputy.

The particular challenge here was to develop a program that would work well in both a large jail in an urban area and in a small lockup in a rural area. KCSO had already developed staff training on the dynamics of sexual abuse, preventing sexual abuse and sexual harassment, effective communication with inmates who are LGBT, and staff roles and responsibilities related to sexual abuse

and sexual harassment prevention, detection, and response. KCSO was committed to making its inmate education as robust as its staff education.

KCSO's intake education plan is to give inmates a brochure and show a video (in development at the time of this writing). Using the PRC and JDI-produced inmate education video as a guide (available here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ag-vbx5Mg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ag-vbx5Mg)), KCSO developed a customized script and is shooting its video in-house. The department was careful not to date the video, using consultants and former inmates as speakers instead of current staff members. The video can be requested by contacting KCSO.

Once placed in a housing unit, inmates attend a 30-minute, in-person, classroom-style education session. The class is led either by the agency's PREA Coordinator or counselors from the Women's Center-High Desert, which is the local rape crisis center.

The project team worked together to develop a curriculum for the class. The curriculum is laid out as a script, a format that lends itself to the consistent delivery of information. At the same time, this format enables instructors to customize their presentation to match their own teaching style and fit the needs of a particular class. JDI and KCSO conducted several pilot sessions of the curriculum, gathering feedback to make revisions around content and language. The curriculum includes examples of types of sexual abuse and sexual harassment, as well as red flags that may indicate that someone might become abusive. Participants have reported that they appreciate the examples, or mini-scenarios, explaining that they help them understand what specific behaviors are reportable. The staff instructor is available to answer questions and demonstrate how seriously KCSO takes sexual abuse and sexual harassment. Because the instructors are either the PREA Coordinator or a counselor from the rape crisis program, inmates have the opportunity to connect a face with the names listed on inmate education materials. The PREA Coordinator requires all class attendees to sign in and to confirm that they understand the materials.

The in-person education sessions require a time and resources commitment on the part of KCSO — a commitment whose reward is a robust education program.

*Peer-led: Miami-Dade Corrections and Rehabilitation Department*

Beginning in 2012, the Miami-Dade Corrections and Rehabilitation Department (MDCR), with support from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime, piloted a PREA peer education program in its facilities. The project included MDCR's Pre-Trial Detention Center and several facilities that hold sentenced inmates. The Pre-Trial Detention Center is an old, high-security unit built in a linear, tiered style. Jail officials involved in the program decided to begin the peer education program in one of MDCR's newer, direct supervision units so that they could try different models before taking on the challenges of the older facility.

At first glance, it might seem that a PREA peer education program is better suited to prisons and would not be feasible in a jail setting, given the typically short lengths of stay and the large number of inmates being booked on a daily basis in big, urban jails. However, MDCR's Director at the time of the project, Tim Ryan, was committed to piloting PREA peer education. Thanks to his leadership, as well as the flexibility of peer education models, the project team was able to establish a program that works for the department.

In order to adapt peer education to a jail setting, MDCR officials request that potential peer educators commit to the program for a minimum of three months. People who do not expect to be at the facility for at least three months are ineligible. Because it can be difficult to estimate the duration of a pre-trial inmate's incarceration, the project team considered limiting the peer educator positions to sentenced inmates. However, since even sentenced inmates may drop out or become ineligible for the position of peer educator — due to disciplinary infractions or a lack of interest or comfort with the subject matter — it was decided that any interested inmates could qualify.



The project team identified corrections counselors as the optimal staff to serve as liaisons for the program and developed class curricula for the comprehensive education sessions. MDCR produced a video for use as intake education, which can be seen here: [www.vimeo.com/71527042](http://www.vimeo.com/71527042).

Inmates were interviewed, screened, and trained by JDI and the corrections counselors. Corrections counselors and peer educators work together to recruit new peer educators, as current ones get closer to their release or transfer date. Peer educators can recommend candidates to the corrections counselors, who then screen and interview the person for suitability. Corrections counselors and experienced peer educators work together to train new peer educators.

Unlike most prisons, the jail does not have paid jobs for inmates. Even though all of the peer educators stated that they would work on a volunteer basis, it was important to MDCR staff that the inmates receive compensation. It was agreed that sentenced inmates would receive good time credit toward their sentence for their work, while unsentenced inmates would receive credit toward commissary purchases.

After running a pilot in one facility, the department successfully implemented the program in other facilities, including the large, crowded, and very busy Pre-Trial Detention Center. The main lesson learned from the Miami-Dade inmate peer education program has been that, with careful planning and creativity, peer education can be effective in all kinds of facilities.

## 8. Conclusion

**I**NMATE EDUCATION is crucial for ensuring that inmates are safe from sexual abuse and sexual harassment. Advocates have found that a strong education program behind bars leads to a positive culture in which inmates know about their right to be free from abuse, and trust that staff will protect this right.

The intent of *PREA and Inmate Education* is to help detention facilities put in place inmate education programs that are effective, sustainable, and meet the requirements of the Prison Rape Elimination Act standards. As this guide shows, there are a variety of inmate education models. The best approach for any given facility will depend on many factors, including the type of facility, the demographics of its popula-

tion, and its available resources. This guide provides a number of examples of facilities that have successful inmate education programs; these case studies can serve as a guide for agencies nationwide looking to establish their own program, or improve upon an existing one.

The inmate education programs described in this guide vary greatly, but they share an overall goal: to give people in custody information about their absolute right to stay safe. Such programs will achieve more than the education of inmates; they will help create an environment where no sexual abuse or sexual harassment is ever tolerated and where inmates and staff alike feel safe to report, and survivors are able to get the help that they need and deserve.



# Notes

1. In this report, the term “inmate” is used to refer to any person housed in a prison, jail, police lockup, or community corrections facility.
2. Allen J. Beck et al, *Sexual Victimization in Prisons and Jails Reported by Inmates, 2008–2009* (Bureau of Justice Statistics, August 2010)
3. Facilities should refer to any agreements that have been developed with community rape crisis or other support agencies, per standards 115.21/115.121/115.221/115.321 and 115.53/115.253/115.353
4. The comprehensive education requirement does not apply to lockups, due to the short amount of time inmates spend in these facilities. Community confinement facilities are not required to offer separate intake and comprehensive education. Instead, they are required to provide all of the content of comprehensive education sessions at the time of intake.
5. Allen J. Beck and Candace Johnson, *Sexual Victimization Reported by Former Prisoners, 2008* (Bureau of Justice Statistics, May 2012)
6. Ibid.
7. See PREA standards 115.82/115.83/115.282/115.283/115.382/115.383
8. For a table of contents of the four sets of PREA standards, visit [www.prearesourcecenter.org/training-technical-assistance/prea-essentials](http://www.prearesourcecenter.org/training-technical-assistance/prea-essentials). This webpage also has a summary of every category covered under the PREA standards.
9. The best source of information on sexual abuse in detention comes from BJS, which was tasked under PREA with carrying out “a comprehensive statistical review and analysis of the incidence and effects of prison rape.” To date, BJS has surveyed inmates and residents nationwide. Based on their most recent surveys, BJS estimates that about 200,000 adults and children are sexually abused in facilities for adults and children in a single year.
10. See PREA standards 115.21/115.121/115.221/115.321
11. Remember that, while ASL is commonly used in the US, other sign language formats are used elsewhere, including dialects created by individual deaf people and their families.
12. Peer education programs are up and running mostly in prisons, but jails, too, have had success using this model. Juvenile facilities should consider their population and capacity for peer education carefully. While young people can be effective teachers about topics like dynamics of sexual abuse and setting boundaries, messages around zero tolerance resonate more strongly coming from an adult.
13. See PREA standard 115.132
14. [www.justdetention.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/pinkslip.docx](http://www.justdetention.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/pinkslip.docx)
15. [www.justdetention.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/NYC-ACS-youth-education-pamphlet-FINAL.pdf](http://www.justdetention.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/NYC-ACS-youth-education-pamphlet-FINAL.pdf)
16. [www.justdetention.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/NYC-ACS-youth-education-pamphlet-Spanish-FINAL.pdf](http://www.justdetention.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/NYC-ACS-youth-education-pamphlet-Spanish-FINAL.pdf)