

Vermont Department of Corrections Annual Internal Report - Sexual Victimization

An Analysis of 2018 & 2019 Data



Prepared by Jennifer Sprafke, PREA Director – March 10, 2020

The Vermont Department of Corrections is committed to preventing sexual victimization and promoting safety and security for all inmates and staff.

Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility and Northwest State Correctional Facility have completed their audits and are in the 180 day remediation period. The Remaining facilities will be audited during year 2 and 3 of the audit cycle.

Introduction

Each year the VT DOC collects accurate and uniform data for all allegations of sexual victimization and completes the SSV (Survey of Sexual Victimization) Report. The SSV report provides information on all allegations of sexual victimization following their definition of terms and is posted on the VT DOC's Public Web Page. The following analysis is the VT DOC's annual internal report for substantiated inmate on inmate and staff on inmate sexual victimization incidents. This report provides a comparison of incidents from 2018 and 2019 and is utilized by the PREA Director, in conjunction with other department staff, to identify opportunities for corrective measures aimed to prevent future incidents of sexual victimization.

Data

The summary on the last page of this report provides the number of substantiated staff sexual misconduct, staff sexual harassment, inmate on inmate abusive sexual contacts, nonconsensual sexual acts, and sexual harassment incidents.

The number of substantiated staff on inmate sexual misconduct incidents decreased from four in 2018 to one in 2019. The number of substantiated staff sexual harassment incidents increased from zero in 2018 to two in 2019. VT DOC continues to see low numbers of staff

involved incidents. This appears to be directly related to inmate sexual safety policy, procedures, and practices, including staff and inmate education.

The number of inmate on inmate substantiated nonconsensual sexual acts remained the same from 2018 to 2019. The number of substantiated inmate on inmate abusive sexual contacts increased from three in 2018 to seven in 2019. The number of substantiated inmate on inmate sexual harassment incidents increased from three in 2018 to six in 2019. The overall increase in the number from eleven to nineteen is attributed to the systemwide recognition and awareness of sexual abuse indicators. As staff receive more and higher-level training, they identify a higher number of behaviors and indicators of abuse.

Problem Area Identification & Corrective Measures

Staff Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Harassment

Location of Incidents: There were four substantiated cases of staff on inmate victimization in 2018 and one in 2019. Most of the incidents occurred in common areas including the kitchen, unit dayroom and program service area. Two incidents occurred under more isolated areas including a cell and during a strip search.

Classification of Staff Involved: Six of the seven incidents were perpetrated by a full-time security staff member. One incident was perpetrated by a mental health clinician.

Corrective Measures: Continue with current staff orientation and training programs. Use incident by specific location data to identify areas for changes to supervision practices, increased camera coverage and/or other corrective measures. Continue training partnership with medical contract company.

Inmate Nonconsensual Sexual Acts

Location of Incidents: There were two substantiated inmate-on-inmate nonconsensual act one in each 2018 and 2019. Both incidents occurred in the victims cell.

Corrective Measures: Continue with informed housing, bed and program assignments with the goal of keeping separate those inmates at high risk of being sexually victimized from those at high risk of being sexually abusive. Use incident by specific location data to identify areas for changes to supervision practices, increased camera coverage and/or other corrective measures.

Inmate Abusive Sexual Contacts

Location of Incidents: Of the ten total substantiated incidents for the 2 years, 50% occurred in the victim's cell and 50% occurred in common areas inside the living units. The incidents occurring in the victim's cells were reported to security and case management staff, further demonstrating that victims are aware of reporting mechanisms and feel safe to report.

Corrective Measures: Continue with comprehensive staff and inmate education efforts that include intake, medical and caseworker orientations, newsletters, posters, and a comprehensive and consistent Sexual Safety and PREA information section for our facility resident handbooks. Use incident by specific location data to identify areas for increased supervision and/or increased camera coverage.

Inmate Sexual Harassment

Location of Incidents: Six of the nine substantiated incidents (or 67%) took place in common areas (5 in day rooms, and 1 in program service areas). Three incidents occurred in a shared cell between the perpetrator and the victim.

Corrective measures: Continue with comprehensive inmate education efforts that include intake, medical and caseworker orientations, newsletters, posters, and a comprehensive and consistent Sexual Safety and PREA information section for our facility resident handbooks. Use incident by specific location data to identify areas for changes to supervision practices, increased camera coverage and/or other corrective measures.

Incidents by Facility

Facility Locations: The numbers that follow are the collective total of substantiated incidents over the period of 2018 to 2019, Northwest State Correctional Facility (NWSCF) reported 10 substantiated incidents. Southern State Correctional Facility (SSCF) reported 6 substantiated incidents. Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility (CRCF) reported 4 substantiated incidents. Marble Valley Regional Correctional Facility (MVRCF) reported 2 substantiated incidents. Northeast Correctional Facility (NECC) reported 5 substantiated incidents. Northern State Correctional Facility (NSCF) reported 1 substantiated incident.

Corrective Measures: Continue with staff training and comprehensive inmate education efforts that include intake, medical and caseworker orientations, newsletters, posters, and a comprehensive and consistent Sexual Safety and PREA information section for our

website, facility handbooks, inmate tablets, and facility signage. Use incident by specific location data to identify areas for changes to supervision practices, increased camera coverage and/or other corrective measures.

Predatory and Vulnerable Classification Strategies

All inmates are assessed during intake and upon transfer to another facility for their risk of being sexually victimized by other inmates or sexually predatory toward other inmates. This is now a part of OMS (Offender Management System) which is set to send automatic alerts to supervisory and management staff. This ensures that initial assessments are not missed, and reminders are sent to case management staff when their 28-day assessment is coming up. Inmates identifying as transgender or intersex have housing and program assignments reviewed at minimum twice annually. We are currently in the process of developing this process in OMS as well. We are developing online form completion, team review, and alerts upon completion. This will expedite the process and ensure that assessments are not missed.

Corrective Actions: Continue with current screening and review protocols to make informed bed, housing, and work and program assignments for all inmates.

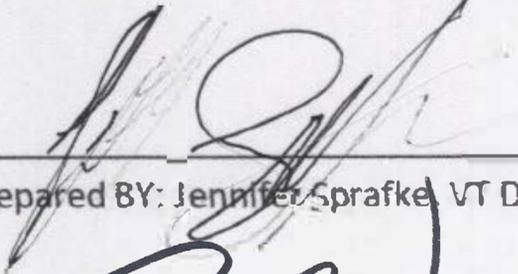
Incident Review and Follow-up

The VT DOC conducts incident reviews for all substantiated and unsubstantiated incidents of sexual abuse.

Corrective Measures: Continue with individual incident review and corrective measure practices to include review and sign off by key personnel at both the facility and central office level. Use aggregated incident by specific location data to identify areas for changes to supervision practices, increased camera coverage and/or other corrective measures.

Conclusion

Inmate sexual safety has and continues to be a top priority for the VT DOC. The requirements outlined in the Final PREA Standards for Adult Prisons and Jails provide direction for the department to expand its efforts toward preventing, detecting and responding to sexual victimization. Implementing the corrective measures outlined in this report will ensure that the VT DOC continues taking steps toward achieving inmate sexual safety.



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8.29.20
Date



Approved By: James Baker-- VT DOC Commissioner

9.22.2020
Date

**Vermont Department of Corrections 2018 – 2019
Survey of Sexual Victimization (SSV) - Summary Data**

YEAR	NONCONSENSUAL SEXUAL ACTS	SEXUAL ABUSIVE CONTACTS	SEXUAL HARASSMENT	STAFF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT	STAFF SEXUAL HARASSMENT	TOTAL SUBSTANTIATED INCIDENTS
	Substantiated	Substantiated	Substantiated	Substantiated	Substantiated	
Total 2018	1	3	3	4	0	11
Total 2019	1	7	6	1	2	17
TOTAL	2	10	9	5	2	28
Location						
CRCF						
2018	0	1	0	1	0	2
2019	0	2	0	0	0	2
CRCF TOTAL	0	3	0	1	0	4
MVRCF						
2018	0	0	0	0	0	0
2019	0	1	1	0	0	2
MVRCF TOTAL	0	1	1	0	0	2
NECC						
2018	0	1	1	1	0	3
2019	0	1	1	0	0	2
NECC TOTAL	0	2	2	1	0	5
NSCF						
2018	1	0	0	0	0	1
2019	0	0	0	0	0	0
NSCF TOTAL	1	0	0	0	0	1
NWSCF						
2018	0	0	2	1	0	3
2019	1	3	3	0	0	7
NWSCF TOTAL	1	3	5	1	0	10
SSCF						
2018	0	1	0	1	0	2
2019	0	0	1	1	2	4
SSCF TOTAL	0	1	1	2	2	6