

Resources

Disability Rights Network

1-800-692-7443
www.dmpa.org

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape

1-888-772-7227
www.pcar.org

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence

1-800-932-4632
www.pcadv.com

Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)

202-265-2405
www.siecus.org



1777 N. Main Street Ext.
Butler, PA 16001

Phone: 724-283-0990

Fax: 724-283-1012

MilestonePA.org

Sexual

& assault & abuse

against people with
intellectual disabilities

KNOW!

It's not okay.



What is

Sexual Assault and Violence?

The use of physical force to compel a person to engage in a sexual act against his or her will.

The act does not have to be completed.

People with intellectual disabilities are particularly vulnerable because they are often:

- Unable to understand the nature or condition of the act
- Unable to communicate unwillingness to engage in the sex act
- Unable to report or not believed when reporting

the problem...

Who are the Offenders?

Offenders are most often known by the victim and hold positions of trust and authority.

For example:

- Bus Drivers
- Direct Care Workers
- Health Care Workers
- Family Members
- Friends
- Significant Others

Why are People At Risk?

People with intellectual disabilities are 4 to 10 times more likely to be sexually assaulted than people without intellectual disabilities.

Research attributes this to:

- Lack of cognitively appropriate sex education
- Lack of knowledge about what constitutes abuse
- Socialization that encourages compliance

How Often?

Does This Happen

As many as 90% of people with intellectual disabilities will experience sexual abuse at some point in their lifetime.

49% of all victims will be assaulted 10 or more times in their lifetime.

39-83% of women with intellectual disabilities will be sexually assaulted before they turn 18.

Only 3% of sexual abuse cases are ever reported to authorities.

the solution...

How to

Do Something

About it

Acknowledge that sexual assault exists and adopt a zero tolerance policy.

Learn to recognize and report signs of abuse in people with intellectual disabilities.

Take all signs of sexual abuse seriously and report them to the proper authorities.

Teach those with intellectual disabilities skills for recognizing and reporting sexual abuse.

Teach those with intellectual disabilities assertiveness and choice making skills.

The worst thing to do is nothing.

KNOW!

It's not okay.

KNOW the **signs** of **abuse**

Physical and Behavioral Signs:

- Repeated headaches
- Stomach aches
- Bowel disorders, soiling oneself
- Eating disorders, anorexia
- Sleeping disturbances
- Genital discomfort
- Bruises in the genital areas
- School or work issues
- Withdrawal from family, friends, or usual activities
- Excessive bathing or poor hygiene
- Signs of physical abuse
- Torn or missing clothing
- Depression
- Substance abuse
- Atypical attachments
- Avoiding specific settings
- Avoiding specific people
- Seizures
- Excessive crying spells
- Disclosure
- Poor self-esteem
- Noncompliance
- Resisting exams
- Sexually inappropriate behavior
- Regression

Circumstantial Signs:

- Alcohol or drug abuse by caregiver
- Devaluing attitudes
- Excessive or inappropriate eroticism
- Isolation of social unit
- Previous or unresolved history of abuse
- Seeks isolated contact with victim
- Strong preference for victim
- Surrogate caregivers
- Pornography usage

respond to signs of abuse

Tips to help recognize and respond to the possible signs of victimization:

A person may not have the ability to tell you exactly what happened, but may convey physical, sexual, or emotional trauma through behavior changes. Be alert to any sudden changes. Whenever a sudden or dramatic change occurs, investigate the cause immediately.

Use your own intuition and do not deny any feelings you may have that something is wrong. More often than not, your feeling is correct.

As you begin paying more attention and asking yourself about victimization, be prepared for the information you receive. The more prepared you are, the more likely you will be open to receiving the information and seeking help for the victim.

Keep in mind that false disclosures are rare. People retract their stories of victimization due to fear, confusion, or pressure from the perpetrator or others.

The simplest way to find out if someone has been hurt is to ask. Victimization is so common among people with disabilities that it should be asked routinely.

Reference:

Violence & Abuse in the Lives of People with Disabilities, Dr. Dick Sobsey
www.livestrong.com, Signs and Symptoms of Sexual Abuse.

KNOW!
It's not okay.