

Let's Talk About Sexual Violence... And What To Do About It!

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Before We Get Started...Self-Care is Important!

- Many of us have experienced sexual violence in different forms
- The focus today is to talk about **SOLUTIONS**
- Take a break any time you need to. This can be hard to talk about. You can leave the room for a break.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF!

- **If you need more information or need to talk to someone, please reach out to me after the presentation**



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National Center on Criminal Justice and Disability



Training and technical assistance

- Pathways to Justice®
www.nccjdpathwaystojustice.org
- Community-based program that creates Disability Response Teams (or DRTs)



Information and referral

- For people with disabilities and their families as well as criminal justice and allied professionals
- <https://thearc.org/our-initiatives/criminal-justice/>



Resource collection and creation

- Policy briefs, fact sheets, other publications



Education

- Social media, webinars, and conferences

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NCCJD: Projects & Initiatives

- **Talk About Sexual Violence**
- **Arizona's Sexual Violence and Disability Network**
- **OVC-funded Project on Language Access Barriers to Justice**
- Just Policing: Disability Inclusion Training
 - funded by US Dept of Justice COPS Office
 - Subgrants to chapters in OR, IN, NM and NoVa
- Crisis Response Intervention Training (CRIT) for Law Enforcement
- Home Safe (educating people about locative technology)
- Access to Justice international knowledge hub



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James Meadours:

“Don’t ever, ever, ever quit!”

- Why this issue is so important to me
- Nationally known civil rights, victim and self-advocate in the U.S.
- Survivor and speaker on victim’s issues
- President’s Committee on Intellectual Disabilities



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James’ Story

When Lightning Strikes Twice and Again and Again



- I was bullied into having sex around age 15 by girls my age
- As an adulthood I was sexually victimized 3 more times and I never told my parents
- The last time I was victimized, I spoke out and the offender was arrested
- Although I was strong in the self-advocacy movement, it took years before I could talk about this issue



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Questions for Discussion



- What stood out to you about my story and why?
- Why do you think it took me so long to talk about the violence I experienced throughout my life?
- Why do you think I couldn't tell my parents about it?
- How does my story inspire you to advocate for change?



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Why Are So Many People Abused?

- The problem is hidden in our society
- People with disabilities are often:
 - devalued or invisible
 - not seen as credible
 - segregated and isolated
 - expected to do what others tell them (comply)



<https://www.endabusepwd.org/problem/alarming-rates/why-are-so-many-people-with-disabilities-abused/>

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Rate of sexual violence is alarming!

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NPR's Abused & Betrayed Series

The rate of rape and sexual assault against people with intellectual disabilities is **more than seven times** the rate against people without disabilities.

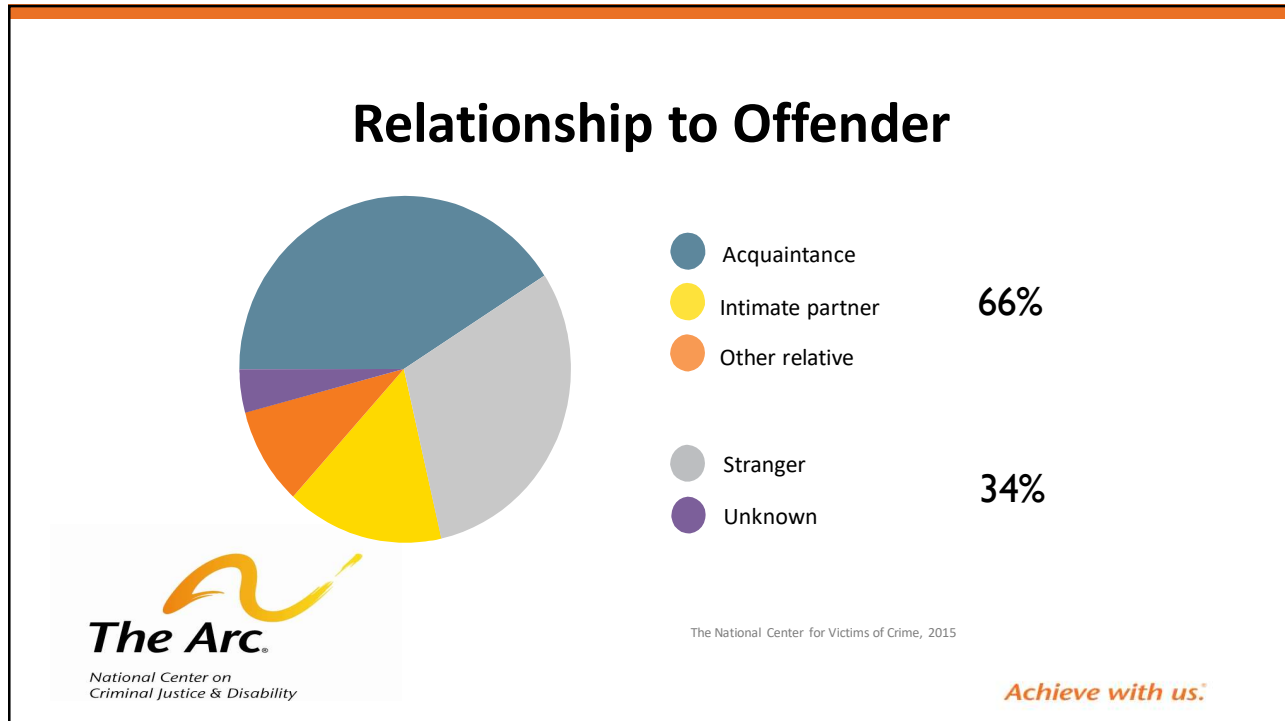
Photo available at:
<https://www.npr.org/series/575502633/abused-and-betrayed>



Image: Three pictures of people with disabilities whose stories were shared in NPR's Abused and Betrayed series.



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2017 Vera Brief: Male Survivors with Disabilities

- 2010 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence survey found men with disabilities were twice as likely to experience sexual violence other than rape
- The prevalence of lifetime sexual violent victimization was 14% among men with disabilities compared to 4% without disabilities

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WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS?

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Barriers Victims Face

- Not viewed as sexual or as oversexual (bias/stereotypes)
- Not provided education on sex and relationships
- Not considered credible witnesses
- Difficulties reporting or knowing what is a crime
- Lack of inclusive and accessible crime victim or healing services



***Key question: How are we
working to reach the victim
that is most marginalized
in society?***

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Challenges for IDD Community in Addressing Violence

- Victim service providers don't know about the issue, or understand how critical it is, or how to connect to disability organizations
- Different cultures and terminology than anti-violence or sexual assault organizations
- Lack of opportunity to work together, co-train, and learn from each other
- Few funding streams or opportunities



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**WHAT ARE THE
SOLUTIONS?**

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Examples of Solutions

Person-to-Person Change

- Speak openly and honestly about sexual violence
- Learn how to tell our stories and solutions effectively
- Outreach to victim advocates, police, health care staff and others

Systems Change

- Training and Co-Training (Pathways to Justice)
- Media and mass communication (Facebook, blogs, PSAs, podcasts)
- Advocate for changes in legislation, policy and practice



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Talk About Sexual Violence Project



www.talkaboutsexualviolence.org

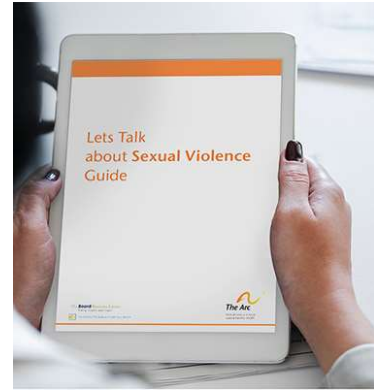
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Talk About Sexual Violence: An Overview

Easy-to-use training tools for
Health Care Providers designed to:

- Increase patient-centered conversations
- Increase reporting of sexual violence
- Decrease discomfort talking about sexual violence with patients with I/DD



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“We must work together to protect each other!”

Kecia Weller

- Co-Producer, Abuse of People with Disabilities: A Silent Epidemic PSA
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yhLsATwOOo4>
- Author, Ms. Magazine article
<https://msmagazine.com/2019/03/08/seeking-justice-for-survivors-with-disabilities/>




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“OFTEN
IT ISN'T
THE INITIATING
TRAUMA
THAT CREATES
SEEMINGLY
INSURMOUNTABLE
PAIN, BUT
THE LACK
OF SUPPORT
AFTER.”

The Fresh Quotes



Peer Support is Needed!

“For victims with disabilities,
help is often too little, too late”


Kecia Weller

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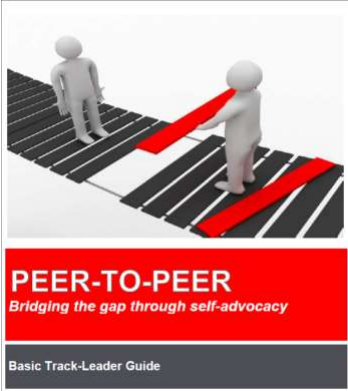
Training Manual for Peer Supporters

- Vera Institute of Justice
 - Provides guidelines on how sexual assault providers can make their services accessible
 - Training for Self-Advocates on how to become peer supporters



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PEER-TO-PEER

Bridging the gap through self-advocacy

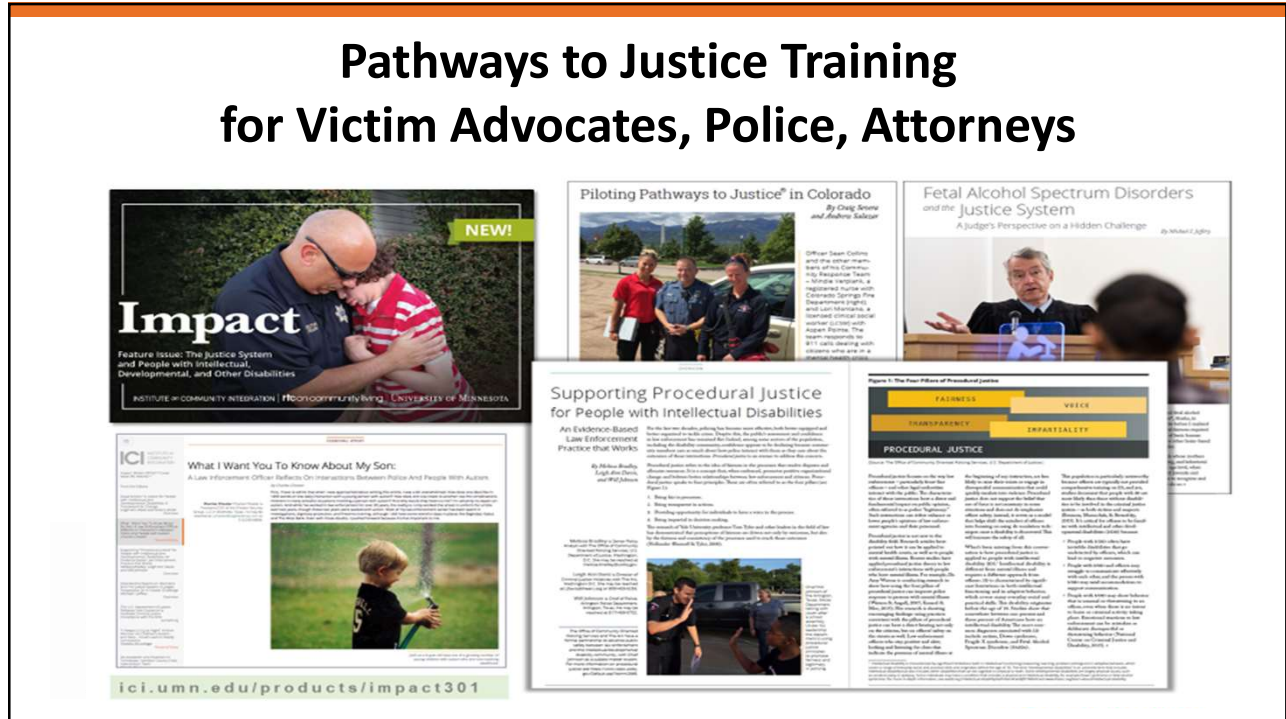
Basic Track-Leader Guide

<https://selfadvocacyinfo.org/resource/learn-how-to-become-a-peer-supporter-of-a-person-who-was-abused/>

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Pathways to Justice Training for Victim Advocates, Police, Attorneys



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ADA Accommodations for Victims

- Take extra time; allow for additional processing time
- Speak slowly, clearly; check for understanding
- Use simple language, pictures, symbols, communication boards as needed
- Call on local disability agencies for potential assistance
- Assist filling out forms as needed



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- At least 1 in 6 men have been sexually assaulted
- 1in6 PSA released this week; first time to include man with disabilities

Image: Picture of man (James Meadours) shaking hands with woman who just read his story about surviving sexual assault for the first time. Both are sitting on stools and smiling.



Used with permission from 1in6



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The Arc of New Jersey's Blueprint to Address Sexual Violence



Photos available at: <https://www.npr.org/2018/06/25/623189167/states-aim-to-halt-sexual-abuse-of-people-with-intellectual-disabilities>



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Sexual Violence: Gaps in Research

- How often are people with I/DD victimized, and what forms are most common?
- What are the strongest barriers to reporting and why?
- What solutions work best and what evidence do we have to prove it?



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Research Article Co-Authored by James Meadours

- The Safety Project – Rosemary Hughes, Ph.D., University of Montana
- Advance the knowledge of disability and violence
- Evaluate The Safety Class that teaches about healthy relationships, signs of abuse, etc.



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For Survivors: Advice from One Survivor to Another

- Find someone you trust to talk about it
- It's ok if it's not a family member
- Ask someone to help you call the police
- You don't have to feel any shame!
- When you are ready and if you want to speak out, find an ALLY to help you
- Take time to HEAL



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Where to Find a Good Ally

- Local rape crisis center
- Local sexual assault center
- Local or state sexual assault coalition
- Support groups for survivors
- Disability agencies who talk about assault



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What to Look for in a Good Ally

- Is a trusted friend
- Must be a GOOD listener and respects you
- Is a survivor of sexual assault too
- Helps you brainstorm ideas
- Looks for speaking opportunities, and asks that you get paid for it
- Helps you write your story and make slides



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Telling Your Story – How to Prepare

- Make sure survivors have a way to get help and healing before speaking out
- Peer to peer support is a great option
- Provide accommodations and other supports that help get the message across
- Practice! People with disabilities can practice telling their stories to each other until they feel ready to share with others



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Key Messages

- **All people** should be valued equally
- People with disabilities must be able to report, be **believed** and heal
- **Everyone** has a role to play, what's yours?

"It took a lot to make me be this brave to talk about this. It took me years to get this brave." — Maxwell

<https://www.npr.org/2018/01/20/577064075/in-their-own-words-people-with-intellectual-disabilities-talk-about-rape>

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We Can Do This... Together!

- Think about your own journey and champions for justice who've inspired you
- Don't be afraid to share your solutions
- Support legislation, research, policy and programs that seek to make lasting change
- Train local health care providers, criminal justice professionals and others
- Stay informed and be proactive!



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Join us...

"If you be quiet, you cannot change things. But if you have a voice, you can change the world."

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Contact Information

National Center on Criminal Justice and Disability® (NCCJD)
<https://thearc.org/our-initiatives/criminal-justice/>

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