Disclosure

We have nothing to disclose
We have no financial conflicts of interest
Overview

Efforts to address sexual violence - even movements like #MeToo have not focused on people with disabilities.

However, people with disabilities experience sexual violence at a very high rate and have comparatively few resources to support them.

Being silent creates more violence

Overview

This session focuses on sexual assault and violence against persons with intellectual/developmental disabilities.

We will share information about the “epidemic of violence” and provide recommendations about how all of us can decrease victimization
Learning Objectives

1. Identify reasons why people with disabilities face greater risk of sexual violence.
2. Hear recommendations from survivors about what agencies, organizations and providers can do to reduce sexual violence.
3. Learn about new tools that self-advocate leaders developed to help healthcare professionals, and social workers communicate with victims.

Before We Get Started

- This topic can be difficult for many people. Some may have reactions. This is ok
- Some of us have experienced sexual violence. If you are having strong emotions, feel free to leave the room
- Self-care is needed to be an effective advocate
The Abuse Epidemic

Rates of Serious Crimes

Violent crime (rape/sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault) for persons with disabilities (12.7 per 1,000)

• More than three times the rate for persons without disabilities (4.0 per 1,000)

• Persons with cognitive disabilities had the highest rates (57.9 per 1,000)

Rate of violent victimization against persons with disabilities, by disability type and type of crime, 2011–2015

Non-institutionalized population age 12 or older.
Rates per 1,000 persons age 12 or older.

Bureau of Justice Statistics,
The rate of rape and sexual assault against people with an intellectual disability is more than seven times the rate for people without disabilities.

Abuse Epidemic

Sexual Assault Rates Among People With Developmental Disabilities 2011-2015

More than 7 times the rate

Persons with intellectual disabilities

Persons with disabilities

Persons with no disabilities
Offender Relationship

- Acquaintance: 66%
- Intimate partner: 34%
- Other relative: 70%
- Stranger: 34%
- Unknown: 70%

Reporting Facts

Abuse cases against adults with disabilities that go unreported

Reporting Dilemma
... as reported by self-advocate survivors

- Not seen as credible due to disability
- Many people are told and believe there will be more abuse
- Fear of losing homes, jobs and relationships
- Lack having someone they trust to share with
- Communicate in non-traditional ways
- Taught to be compliant

“Without reporting, the cycle of abuse continues”

James Meadours

Ongoing Barriers to Support

Leigh Ann Davis, National Center on Criminal Justice and Disability – The Arc, 2019
**Additional Barriers**

*... as reported by self-advocate leaders*

- Not taught how to identify abuse
- Sexual violence is a taboo subject that people avoid
- People with I/DD typically live an overprotected life and sheltered from the community
- Abuse that happens in programs is often treated as an employment issue, and not reported

---

**Summary**

*The abuse epidemic has grown despite media attention, and alarming statistics*

1. Lack of agency focus on the issue
2. Minimal interagency collaboration, data collection and sharing
3. Minimal training for healthcare professionals, social workers, and self-advocates
4. Inadequate follow-up care for victims
5. Materials typically not accessible or in “Plain Language”
6. Lack of communication to victims about what reporting means
Let’s Take a Deeper Look - Survivor Reflection

Healthcare and law enforcement are not receptive

The system failed me!

“I should be able to get the support I need from the system that is set up for people with intellectual/developmental disabilities”

Lack of accommodations and follow-up care make reporting very difficult. As a result, many cases, including mine – are dismissed.

Let’s Talk

... SOLUTIONS
Topics included:

• Barriers to reducing sexual abuse against persons with disabilities
• Ways to move trauma-informed care forward
• Organizing a “National Peer Support Network”
• Starting a national campaign to increase awareness of sexual assault, identify promising practices and reduce barriers to reporting

What Can We Do?

• Include survivors in all trainings
• Provide prevention, recognition, and reporting education
• Increase inclusive social connections, communication, and education
• Trust and believe survivors
• Educate health care professionals
• Provide trauma informed services
1. **Increase reporting by healthcare professionals**

   Provide Training:
   - Better recognize signs of sexual assault and violence
   - Mandated Reporter responsibilities
   - Role of Adult Protective Services
   - Understand needs of gender non-conforming patients
   - Use everyday language when speaking with a patient

2. **Increase victim understanding of sexual violence**

   Use short videos in facilitated group discussions
   Provide case workers with tools and training to facilitate ACCESSIBLE conversations
   Create handouts about sexual violence and victim resources
   Assist persons at risk to develop safety plans
Recommendations

3. Providers

Know your legal responsibilities
Require reporting training for all employees
Do deeper background checks
When a person reports, provide them privacy
Ensure accommodations are available

Leadership is Required

….Collaborative leadership & coalition-building to bring innovation and action across a decentralized network

Coalition Building
Identify and collaborate with organizations that are making a difference

Silence = Violence Network was established by self-advocates, disability organizations and their allies to address abuse against people with disabilities and older persons
Partners work collaboratively to reduce abuse and neglect against older persons and people with disabilities
Talk About Sexual Violence

*Example:* Easy-to-use training tools for Healthcare Providers

**Purpose:**
- Increase patient-centered conversations
- Increase community referrals and reporting
- Decrease discomfort talking about sexual violence

Talk About Sexual Violence Video Training

*Phase One*
- Look for signs of sexual assault
- Kecia Weller
- “How to Have the Conversation”

*Phase Two*
- James Meadours
- Dr. Howard
- “James Meets with his Doctor”

[www.talkaboutsexualviolence.org](http://www.talkaboutsexualviolence.org)
Recommendations From Project Advisors

- Educate HCPs about accessible communication with patients
- Ensure all HCPs have community resource information available
- Initiate MOUs between APS and regional centers
- Educate community support providers, rape crisis centers
- Conduct ongoing peer led safety training at peer advocacy groups
- Provide resources for self-advocates

Together We Can

Train
Advocate
Educate
Make a change!

We are stronger together
Join the conversation, talk about sexual violence, take action and together we can end the silent epidemic!

Kecia Weller

Contact Information

Kecia Weller  kecia.weller7@gmail.com
Mark Starford  mark@brcenter.org
NCCJD®  www.thearc.org/NCCJD
Talk About Sexual Violence  www.talkaboutsexualviolence.org
Learn More

- Talk About Sexual Violence
  www.talkaboutsexualviolence.org
- NCCJD Pathways to Justice®
  www.nccjdpaywaysstojustice.org
- Papers/webinars
  https://www.thearc.org/NCCJD/publications
- Self-Advocates Leadership
  https://www.endabusepwd.org/projects/promoting-self-advocates-as-leaders/
- Other Projects
  https://www.endabusepwd.org/projects/

Learn More

Supporting the Adult Protective Services Workforce, UCSF

The Arc’s Violence, Abuse and Bullying white paper
https://www.thearc.org/NCCJD/publications

Vera Report

Child Welfare Information Gateway
https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/statistics/can/stat-disabilities/
Learn More – Human Trafficking

CDC resources on sexual violence and trafficking
https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/sexualviolence/resources.html

Human Trafficking Report in San Francisco, 2015, City and County of San Francisco, Dept. on the Status of Women
https://sfgov.org/dosw/sites/default/files/HT%20Report_FINAL.pdf

Human Trafficking Task Force e-Guide. Office for Victims of Crime
https://www.ovcttac.gov/taskforceguide/eguide/4-supporting-victims/45-victim-populations

Trafficking of Girls with ID
Reid, J.A. Sex Trafficking of Girls with ID. 2018. 30(2
/victims-with-physical-cognitive-or-emotional-disabilities/

https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/

Silence is Violence
Resources

Kecia Weller & Mark Starford
mark@brcenter.org
Board Resource Center
As I see it:
One of the primary problems with both regional centers and health care providers is the failure to make an APS report when a victim of abuse reports abuse to them. The personnel who work at regional centers and health care providers are mandated reporters. Another problem that regional centers and health care providers face are inconsistent training or lack of training regarding their mandatory reporting requirements. A third problem I see with both regional centers and health care providers is that they do not provide enough support to abuse victims.

Like in my own sexual assault case, I was let down because a report was not filed with APS after I shared my story. I was not provided with resources to start the recovery process. Regional centers and health care providers must provide resources to individuals who have been victimized by a perpetrator.

What I would like regional centers and healthcare providers to do differently
- Always report an abuse victimization to APS
- Have mandatory reporting requirement trainings at least every 6 to 12 months for all mandatory reporters
- Provide accessible resources to abuse victims and their trusted allies
- Work with local rape crisis centers to ensure they are trained on how to work with people with intellectual/developmental disabilities
- Make sure SANE Nurses are trained on accessible accommodations
- Refer victims for psychological support services that utilize “Trauma Informed Care”
- Work closely with APS, victim provider agencies and law enforcement agencies
- Provide a “warm handoff” to support agencies

Kecia’s Message:
August, 2019
NAPSA Conference, Denver, CO.


Abuse prevention is so important for all Self-Advocates to understand - because abuse happens to us 7 times more often than it happens to people who do not have disabilities.

7 times more – that’s a lot. Here’s something else to think about – once a person with disabilities is abused they are often abused many times afterward. That happened to me and to many people I know.

Introduction
I am at the Convening today to help create systematic change in terms of abuse prevention and interagency collaboration for helping the survivors of sexual abuse and other kinds of abuse nationally. The Convening is very important because NAPSA, Massachusetts DPPC and the Board Resource Center are collaborating to create a learning environment for survivors of abuse, APS personnel, and other abuse prevention personnel to learn from each other about how to support survivors of abuse with Trauma Informed Care.

Personal outcomes
I have made the decision to use my experience as an opportunity to engage in advocacy work and educate others about sexual violence against people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and older persons. I use my leadership role to bring together different agencies to develop solutions to this problem.
Kecia’s Recommendations:

Increase conversations at advocacy meetings
Increasing conversations regarding abuse at Self-Advocacy Meeting is important. Meeting Self-Advocates at their most comfortable meeting is important and bring necessary supports to make sure Self-Advocates are not traumatized by having an open discussion on abuse prevention.

Topics to Consider:
1. Why Abuse Awareness important for Self-Advocates to know
2. Learn about the different types of abuse and the red flags to each abuse type
3. Abuse statistics – know the abuse statistics helps to prevent abuse
4. Why it’s important to create a support system to help prevent abuse

How can Self-Advocates, case management agencies and DDS benefit from more open conversations?
When Self-Advocates, case management agencies and DDS talk openly about abuse prevention, they all come out of their individual silos to collaborate with each other to create a community against abuse. When all the stakeholders come together for an open discussion on abuse prevention, they will not be duplicating services and will be able to find solutions together.

I believe we can “together” improve the lives of many people. In the end, these are the words I live by:
• I DO NOT need to suffer in silence.
• I have hope.
• I reach out – there are good people who will help.
• I advocate for myself, and for others.

All of us deserve to have a safe life, listened to and respected, not bullied.

Resource Links – Vera Institute of Justice, Center on Victimization and Safety
https://www.vera.org/centers/victimization-and-safety

Measuring Capacity to Serve Survivors with Disabilities: Two publications developed to measure the capacity of organizations to serve survivors of sexual assault with disabilities. Each presents the performance indicators developed for the specific type of organization—one for rape crisis centers (90 pp) and one for disability organizations (86).

How Safe Are Americans with Disabilities?

Full report (39 pp):


Resource Links – The 1st Annual Convening to Develop a National Vision to Address Sexual Abuses Against Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Resources List (August 19, 2019)

End Abuse of Persons with Disabilities: https://www.endabusepwd.org/community/center-on-victimization-and-safety/

Disability and Abuse Project: https://www.endabusepwd.org/community/disability-and-abuse-project/

Sexual Assault

National Sexual Violence Resource Center: https://www.nsvrc.org/

SART Toolkit on Working with Survivors with Disabilities: https://www.nsvrc.org/sarts/toolkit/6-6 Find Help https://www.nsvrc.org/find-help


RAINN https://www.rainn.org/
About Sexual Assault https://www.rainn.org/about-sexual-assault
Safety and Prevention https://www.rainn.org/safety-prevention
Consulting and Training https://www.rainn.org/consulting-services

Illinois Imagines - Illinois Imagines was a statewide project to improve services to women with disabilities who have been victims of sexual violence from 2006-2018. http://icasa.org/resources/Illinois-imagines
Resources http://icasa.org/resources/Illinois-imagines/imagines-resources
Collaborative Teams http://icasa.org/resources/Illinois-imagines/collaborative-teams

Talk About Sexual Violence
Talk About Sexual Violence gives healthcare professionals the tools they need for simple, direct, and honest conversations with their patients about the all too common experience faced by individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). https://thearc.org/our-initiatives/criminal-justice/talk-about-sexual-violence/

Resource Links – The 1st Annual Convening to Develop a National Vision to Address Sexual Abuses Against Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Resources List (August 19, 2019)

Kecia Weller Blog Post


James Meadours, Chris Miller, and Kecia Weller Blog Post
On the Front Lines: https://thearc.org/category/from-the-frontlines/

Mark Starford, Kecia Weller, and Molly Kennedy
Abuse of People with Disabilities: A Silent Epidemic (YouTube Video – Public Service Announcement) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yhLs4Tw6Oo4


Raising the Voices of Individuals with IDD Podcast
(Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, University of Texas) Into the Fold, Episode 54: Abuse, Recovery and Self-Advocacy http://hogg.utexas.edu/podcast-self-advocacy-idd

Joseph Shapiro, National Public Radio: Abused and Betrayed Series
https://www.npr.org/series/575502633/abused-and-betrayed

Resource Links – The 1st Annual Convening to Develop a National Vision to Address Sexual Abuses Against Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Resources List (August 19, 2019)

Using Model Protocols to Guide Criminal Justice Responses to Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Victims with Disabilities (The Arc’s National Center on Criminal Justice and Disability Webinar)


Sexual Abuse of Arizonans with Developmental and Other Disabilities https://addpc.az.gov/sites/default/files/media/2019%20ADOCP%20recomendations%20on%20preventing%20abuse_se_2.pdf

SAFE [Stop Abuse for Everyone] Place, Austin, TX

Barrier-Free Living:

Other
The Board Resource Center: https://www.brcenter.org/index.html

Resource Links – The 1st Annual Convening to Develop a National Vision to Address Sexual Abuses Against Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Resources List (August 19, 2019)

Trauma-Informed


Improving Recovery From Sexual Assault with Trauma-Informed Care (June 27, 2019, in From Our Chapters, by The Arc) https://thearc.org/improving-recovery-from-sexual-assault-the-arc-1m/

Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice https://www.ovc.gov

