

	<p><b>Sexual Violence Against Women with Disabilities</b></p> <p>Cat Fribley  Resource Sharing Project Coordinator  Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault  rsp@iowacasa.org</p>

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	<p><b>Our time today</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ what is sexual violence</li> <li>■ statistics and prevalence</li> <li>■ unique dynamics</li> <li>■ impact and experience of trauma</li> <li>■ implications for those who work with survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors</li> </ul>

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	<p><b>Sexual Violence is:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Rape (touching under or over clothes, or any penetration, or forcing victim to touch the perpetrator's body)</li> <li>■ By strangers and non-strangers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– acquaintances, dates, spouses, helpers, care givers, friends and family members</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Includes incest, child sexual abuse, sexual harassment, indecent exposure, and voyeurism</li> </ul> <p><i>This is not a legal definition, which varies from state to state.</i></p>

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	<p><b>Sexual Violence is:</b></p>
	<p>Sexual contact becomes abusive when</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a person is unable to consent to an activity</li> <li>- a person does not consent</li> <li>- a service provider engages in sexual contact with a client</li> </ul> <p>How</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Force and threats</li> <li>- Coercion, manipulation &amp; being tricked or having lack of information</li> <li>- Grooming</li> </ul>

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	<p>Research has documented that individuals with disabilities face increased risks for sexual assault as compared to persons without disabilities.</p>

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	<p>The assault and abuse of people with disabilities is most often perpetrated by someone whom the individual has an established relationship (family member, intimate partner, personal care provider).</p> <p>This is true across the board for sexual assault.</p>

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	<p><b>Statistics and Prevalence</b></p>
	<p>Difficult to generalize statistics across a broad spectrum of disability types experienced by women who are assaulted.</p>

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	<p><b>Why might that be?</b></p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. different experiences of disability – since birth, recently impacted, cognitive, psychiatric, or physical, or combination</li> <li>2. different obstacles to reporting,</li> <li>3. different levels of need/reliance on others for caretaking</li> <li>4. differing perceptions of vulnerabilities by perpetrators</li> </ol>

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	<p><b>From Center for Research on Women with Disabilities - Baylor</b></p>
	<p>In our national study comparing women with physical disabilities to women without disabilities, rates of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse were equally high in both groups.</p>

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	<p><b>From Center for Research on Women with Disabilities - Baylor</b></p>
	<p>Important differences between the groups, however, were that women with disabilities reported a larger number of perpetrators, with the most common being intimate partners, followed by family members, and the duration of the abuse was longer</p>

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	<p><b>From Center for Research on Women with Disabilities - Baylor</b></p>
	<p>They were also more likely to experience abuse by attendants, strangers, and health care providers. Compared to women without disabilities, women with disabilities were more likely to report more intense experiences of abuse, including the combination of multiple incidents, multiple perpetrators, and longer duration.</p>

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	<p><b>Statistics Specific to Women with Developmental Disabilities</b></p>
	<p>Women with developmental disabilities are four to ten times more likely than women without disabilities to be sexually assaulted and they are at greater risk for repeat victimization</p>

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	<b>Statistics Specific to Women with Cognitive Disabilities</b>
	<p>According to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 76% of adults with cognitive disabilities have been sexually assaulted</p>

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	<b>Unique Dynamics</b>
	<p>As varied as the individuals who experience sexual assault, domestic violence and stalking</p>

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	<b>Unique Dynamics</b>
	<p>Along with the unique dynamics posed by the intersection of disability and sexual violence, it is important to consider survivors who face multiple and intersecting identities around disability, race, class, sexual orientation, etc.</p>

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	<b>Unique Dynamics</b>
	Some perpetrators use tactics that expressly target women with disabilities and Deaf women

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	<b>Unique Dynamics</b>
	Some examples would be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ becoming a primary and relied upon caregiver before assaulting her (using position of trust)</li><li>■ holding her captive by removing access to adaptive or assistive equipment</li><li>■ exploiting the fact that she may not be believed by a police officer or court even if she does report</li></ul>

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	<b>Unique Dynamics</b>
	What are other examples that you have seen in your work with survivors with disabilities?

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	<b>Unique Dynamics</b>
	Some abusers use tactics that even more specifically target a woman's specific functional abilities and limitation.....

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	<b>Unique Dynamics</b>
	Women with disabilities and Deaf women commonly encounter barriers to accessing assistance and support when attempting to report a sexual assault to legal or law enforcement services

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	<b>How myth impacts:</b>
	Beliefs and myths about people with disabilities can make it more difficult for sexual assault survivors with disabilities to access and receive appropriate services if they have experienced sexual violence.

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	<p><b>How myth impacts:</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Benefit the perpetrator by focusing on victim</li> <li>■ Remove accountability from perpetrator</li> <li>■ Keep others feeling safe from the possibility of being assaulted</li> <li>■ Isolate the victim</li> <li>■ Ensure the cycle of victimization</li> </ul>

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	<p><b>How myth impacts:</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ One example that fits over the whole spectrum of impacts of myth is survivors with cognitive disabilities being disbelieved when disclosing sexual abuse or violence</li> </ul>

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	<p>Research shows that people with mental and cognitive disabilities do not receive equal access to community resources even though they are just as or more likely to experience sexual violence than people without disabilities.</p>

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	<b>Impacts and Experience of Trauma</b>
	Sexual assault is sometimes experienced as a life threatening event.

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	<b>Impacts and Experience of Trauma</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Am I injured from the assault?</li> <li>■ Do I want medical treatment? – (injuries, HIV, STDs, pregnancy prevention)</li> <li>■ Do I want evidence collected?</li> <li>■ Do I want to report to the police?</li> <li>■ Do I want to tell anyone?</li> </ul>

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	<b>Additional Possible Impacts for Survivors with Disabilities</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Not know how or where to report</li> <li>■ Fear retaliation, disbelief, loss of personal care/other services and independence</li> <li>■ May not have the language to verbally express and explain what has happened to them</li> <li>■ May not know what they experienced is abusive or criminal</li> </ul>

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	<p>All survivors of sexual assault are taking a big personal risk when they report to anyone</p> <p>Especially true for survivors with disabilities</p>

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	<p><b>Impacts and Experience of Trauma- long term</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Many survivors that we work with will have experienced victimization in the past, and have different needs than those disclosing immediate assaults.</li> </ul>

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	<p><b>Implications for Services</b></p>
	<p>How does the information we have discussed today impact the systems that we have built to support survivors? People with disabilities?</p>

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	<b>Resources Consulted/Used:</b>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="245 384 461 407">1. Accessingsafety.org</li><li data-bbox="245 415 716 468">2. Center for Research on Women with Disabilities - Baylor</li><li data-bbox="245 476 683 499">3. Making Safety Accessible for All, IowaCASA</li><li data-bbox="245 508 672 560">4. VSDVA Fact Sheet on SV and People with Disabilities</li><li data-bbox="245 569 683 621">5. WCASA -People with Disabilities and Sexual Assault</li></ol>

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