



Community Health Connections

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Supporting People with ID/DD: Sexual Abuse

What We Know

- The people you work with have likely experienced sexual violence, probably numerous times
- As many as 90% of people with developmental disabilities will be victimized by sexual violence at some point during their life; 49% experience 10 or more incidents
- 15,000-19,000 people with developmental disabilities are raped each year
- Only 3% of sexual abuse cases involving people with ID/DD are reported
- **Free counseling** is available in every county, but few people with ID/DD receive treatment for sexual assault. Access to treatment, therapy and counseling after a sexual assault is as critical for people with ID/DD as for all victims.

What You May See

Physical and Behavioral Signs of abuse

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

What You Should Do

- If you suspect abuse, don't be afraid to ask the person whom you think has been abused
- Follow RADAR. R=Remember to ask (and ask again). A= Ask directly. D=Document findings. A=Assess safety. R=Review options
- Believe the person and let them know it's not their fault
- If the assault occurred within 72 hours, go to the hospital for a rape kit; after 3 days but recent, go to the hospital for medical treatment
- Report as indicated by ODP and your agency
- **Refer the person to talk to a sexual violence advocate or facilitate contact** (per ODP incident management bulletin, 6000-04-01).