

## SEXUAL CONTACT IS ABUSIVE IF SOMEONE IS:

- Physically forced into contact
- Threatened, manipulated, or tricked into contact
- Unable to consent to the activity
- A service provider engages in sexual contact with a client

## SEXUALLY ASSAULTIVE BEHAVIORS

### "Hands-off" offenses:

Includes exhibitionism; voyeurism; forced viewing of pornography; sexual harassment and threats

### "Hands-on" offenses:

Includes forced kissing; molesting breasts, genitals, buttocks; oral/genital contact; penetration of vagina or rectum with penis, fingers, or objects

### "Harmful genital practices":

Includes unwarranted, intrusive, and/or painful procedures in caring for genitals or rectal area

*Widening the Circle- Sexual Assault/Abuse and People with Disabilities and the Elderly. "Dynamics of Sexual Assault/Abuse Against People with Disabilities and the Elderly," Contributed by Holly Ramsey-Klawnsnik. Pages 10-11. Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault. 1997.*

## STATISTICS

- More than 90% of people with developmental disabilities will experience sexual abuse at some point in their lives.
- 49% of people with developmental disabilities who are victims of sexual violence will experience 10 or more abusive incidents.
- Only 3% of sexual abuse cases involving people with developmental disabilities are ever reported.

(Valenti-Hein, D., Schwartz, L. 1995. *The Sexual Abuse Interview for those with Developmental Disabilities.*)

## PREVENTION

- Educate individuals about healthy sexuality and sexual assault
- Offer and respect choices
- Teach that it is ok to say no in both abusive and nonabusive situations
- Teach appropriate boundaries
- Provide personal care in a respectful and private way
- Teach people to tell if someone makes them feel uncomfortable, or if they are assaulted

## INDICATORS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

### Physical Indicators

- Bleeding, bruising, infection, scarring, or irritation to a person's genitals, rectum, mouth, or breasts
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Sexually transmitted infection or unexplained pregnancy
- Ongoing, unexplained medical problems like stomachaches, headaches, etc.

### Behavioral Indicators:

- Any significant change in behavior
- Depression, withdrawal, or suicidal feelings
- Sleep disturbances
- Sudden avoidance or fear of specific people; specific genders; or situations
- Shying away from being touched
- Hints about sexual activity and/or has a new or detailed understanding of sexual behavior

## CAREGIVER ABUSE REDFLAGS

- Past history of abusive behavior
- Devaluing/objectifying attitudes
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Pornography usage

## GROOMING

- Many offenders will groom their victims before the assault, often violating the person's boundaries
- This is done over a period of days, weeks, or months in order to "test the waters" and see how the person will react

## Indicators of Possible Grooming Behavior

- Taking a special interest in the person
- Giving the person gifts or treats
- Getting them used to sensual touch by giving the person massages
- Setting up times that they can be alone on a regular basis, such as showering the person late at night when others are not around

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU WITNESS/SUSPECT ABUSE

- Ask the person about abuse
- Report the abuse to law enforcement and/or your supervisor
- Take the victim to the hospital for an examination by a sexual assault nurse examiner or other doctor
- Contact your local sexual assault service provider

## THINGS YOU CAN SAY TO HELP A PERSON THAT HAS BEEN SEXUALLY ASSAULTED

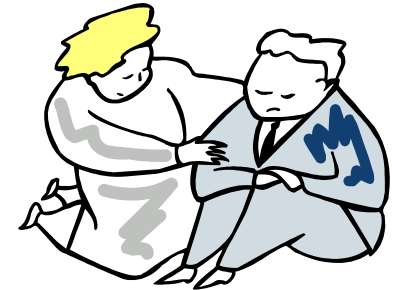
People with disabilities, like anyone else will be affected by the trauma of a sexual assault. It may help to tell the person:

- I believe you
- It is not your fault
- You are not alone

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# Sexual Assault and People with Developmental Disabilities

## A Guide for Family, Friends, and Caregivers



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