

Sample Fact Sheet



A Guide for Professionals working with People with Disabilities or Deaf/Hard of Hearing Individuals who may be abused

The Bureau of Justice Programs indicates that people with disabilities are 1.5 times more likely to experience nonfatal violent crime than people without disabilities. Additionally, a person with a disability is twice as likely to be sexually assaulted than a person without a disability.

(Crime Against People with Disabilities Report, 2007 <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov>)

Possible indicators of abuse:

- Bruises in different areas of the body, bruises in various stages of healing
- Burns, cigarette or cigar butt-shaped burns
- Abrasions from restraints, scratches, cuts, lacerations, punches, bite marks
- Sprains, dislocations, fractures, broken bones or missing teeth
- Internal injuries, pain, bleeding
- Vaginal or rectal pain, bleeding, tear(s), scarring, itching, swelling, infection
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Sexually transmitted infection or pregnancy

Examples of neglectful conditions:

- Poor hygiene, malnourishment
- Unclothed or improperly clothed for weather
- Untreated medical conditions such as bed sores
- Overmedicated or medications not given at prescribed times
- Lack of necessary adaptive aids: wheelchair, oxygen, dentures, hearing aids
- Crowded living space, architectural barriers, and/or fire hazards
- Inadequate sanitation or substandard cleanliness
- Mismanagement of finances by caregiver or relative

Possible behavioral indicators or reactions to abuse:

- Asks to be separated from the caregiver/abuser
- Speaks positively of the caregiver despite apparent abuse/neglect
- Regression in behaviors (bedwetting, thumb sucking or rocking)
- Overwhelmed, numb, withdrawn, cries often, mood swings, emotional outbursts
- Fear of being alone or with a particular person
- Unusual or inappropriate expression of affection, fear of being touched
- Alcohol or substance abuse
- Change in appetite/eating disorders
- Difficulty sleeping
- New or detailed interest in or knowledge of sexual matters