



The Intersection of Disability, Healthy Sexuality and Sexual Violence

Connecting the Pieces:
The Picture May Be Different From What You
Think

It's About Us

Our experiences, whether professional or personal, shape the perspective we ultimately bring to bear on how we provide supports and services to victims with disabilities.

Connecting the Dots

People with disabilities do not live in a vacuum. Their daily lives take place in a matrix of oppositional ideologies, educational models, and acts of resistance.

Objectives

Recognize disability terminology, common characteristics of intellectual disability, prevalence, and risk factors for sexual abuse in the lives of people with intellectual disabilities.

Explain the intersection and dynamics of sexual violence, intellectual disabilities, and healthy sexuality.

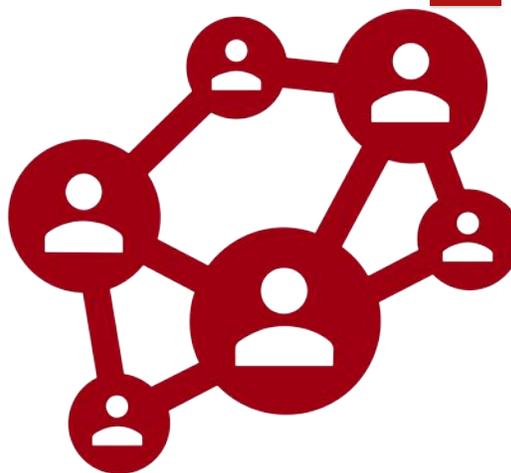
Provide an understanding of the importance of working collaboratively with local and state disability entities.

ACTIVITY



ODP Mission and Vision

- *The mission of the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) is to support Pennsylvanians with developmental disabilities to achieve greater independence, choice and opportunity in their lives.*
- *ODP's vision is to continue refining a system of quality services and supports delivered in respectful, inclusive environments, to foster competent, evidence-based practice, and to extend our reach to all Pennsylvanians with developmental disabilities who need our service.*



What is an Intellectual Disability?

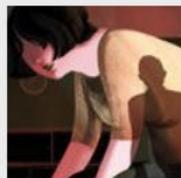
IQ test score of around 70 or as high as 75

Results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity:

self-care	receptive and expressive language	learning	mobility	self-direction	capacity for independent living, and	economic self-sufficiency;
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Reflects the person's need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic care, treatment, or other services which are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated;

National Public Radio (NPR) Series

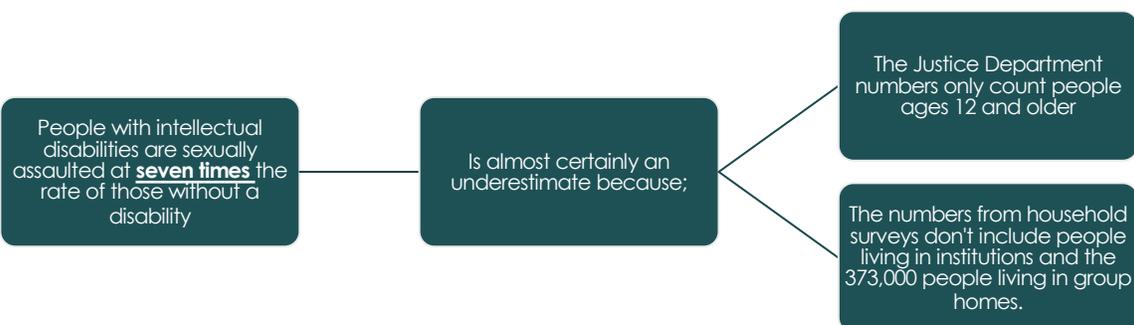


SPECIAL SERIES

abused and betrayed



Sexual Violence and People with Intellectual Disabilities

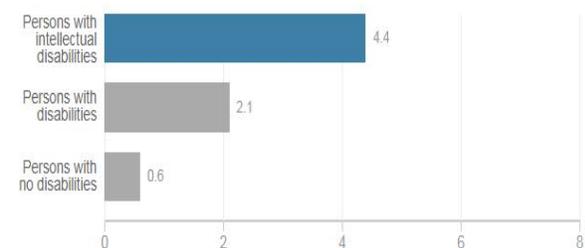


Shapiro, 2017, NPR-Special Investigation-Abused and Betrayed

Justice Department Statistics

- ▶ The rate of rape and sexual assault among people with intellectual disabilities is more than seven times the rate against people without disabilities.
- ▶ Among women with intellectual disabilities, it is about 12 times the rate.

RATE PER 1,000 PEOPLE



RATE PER 1,000 PEOPLE WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY, BY GENDER



Repeated Abuse

- ▶ In a study of 162 reports of sexual assault against victims with disabilities, 49.6% of victims disclosed 10 or more separate sexual victimizations.

Sobsey, D., & Doe, T. (1991). Patterns of sexual abuse and assault. *Sexuality and Disability*, 9, 243-259.

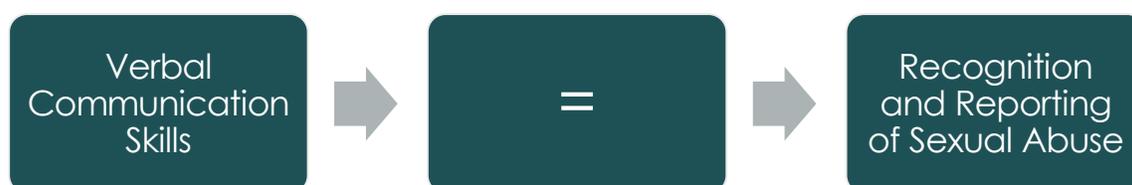
What do we Know from our Data?

- ▶ Annually, approximately 1% (400-700 per year) of the people registered with ODP have a report of sexual abuse.



Communication Skills

91% of incidents of sexual abuse reported are for people that have a verbal primary mode of communication



6.5% of the incidents reported were for people who communicate in a non-traditional way. For example, some people use sign language or utilize a communication device.

People that have profound to severe Intellectual Disability (ID), without verbal communication skills, have the lowest numbers of sexual abuse reports (1.5%)

Not a One Size Fits all Approach

- ▶ ODP has the philosophy that everyone with a disability is entitled to “Everyday Lives” and that “Everyone Can Communicate”
 - Communication abilities and needs vary
 - ▶ May be unique to an individual
 - ▶ Behavior is communication
 - ▶ May have their own language

Not a One Size Fits all Approach

- ▶ **ASSURE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**
- ▶ Every person has an effective way to communicate in order to express choice and ensure their health and safety. All forms of communication should consider and include the individual's language preferences and use of current technology.



Disclosure in the ODP System

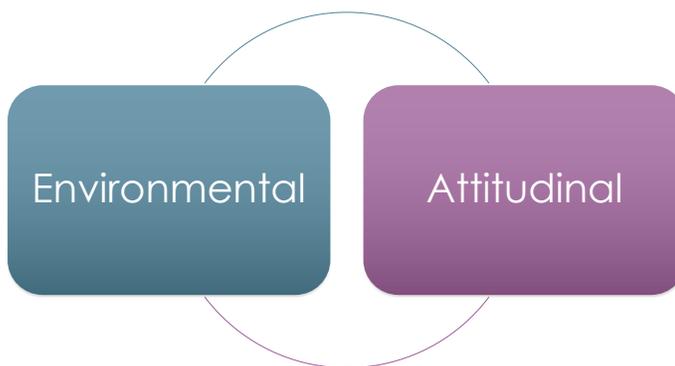
Where does ODP get it's Data? Enterprise Incident Management System (EIM)



Challenges to Accessing Victims Services

- Accessible/welcoming services
- Confidentiality concerns
- Consent
- Access to safety, healing, and justice
- Past trauma
- Staff unsure about the system
- Lack of referrals/awareness of services

What does accessibility mean to you?



Environmental Challenges



Many people feel overwhelmed



A simple hallway or entrance can cause a person to lose focus or make it harder to communicate.



The physical environment can be stressful. Some things that can be confusing and make it harder are:

- Noise
- Harsh lighting
- People moving around
- Clutter

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Modifying a Physical Environment

- ▶ When you're looking to modify the physical environment to make it more cognitively accessible, it will typically involve:
 - ▶ Minimizing distractions
 - ▶ Reducing noise
 - ▶ Adjusting lighting

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Attitudinal Challenges



WELCOMING
SERVICES



CONFIDENTIALITY
CONCERNS



CONSENT



STAFF UNSURE
ABOUT THE SYSTEM

How to Address Attitudinal Challenges?

- ▶ Recognize your own silent assumptions, biases, and attitudes
- ▶ Understand that some people require hands-on support from others to communicate-Consider confidentiality impacts
- ▶ Understand that the ODP system supports both survivors and perpetrators of sexual violence
- ▶ Understand that people with ID can give consent for services unless otherwise deemed incompetent in a court of law
- ▶ Before something happens:
 - ▶ Share information with systems that support people with intellectual disabilities.
 - ▶ Learn about the ODP system and how to advocate on a survivors behalf.

How to Increase Success?



Ask

What accommodations are needed
If someone wants assistance



Flexibility

Communication
Location/ time



Patience

Duration of appointment
Time it takes to communicate

Communication: Abstract vs. Concrete

- ▶ What's a friend?
How long must you know someone before you are friends?
How do you distinguish between a boyfriend and a boy who is a friend?
- ▶ What's the difference between a hug and a hold?
- ▶ When does watching, looking, staring become sexual harassment?

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Abstract Communication

Unfamiliar with the Word,
Context, Experience or
Communication Strategy

- ▶ Is she/he strong?
- ▶ Did someone hurt you?
- ▶ Is it heavy?
- ▶ Is she/he arriving?
- ▶ Is she/he departing?



Concrete vs Abstract





The Challenge

The Challenge

___Artery___

- The study of paintings
- Back door of cafeteria
- A letter like A,E,I,O,U
- A neighborhood in Rome
- Searching for a Kitty
- A soldier's ball game
- Getting hurt at work
- Conceited

