

## What Do You Do If You Suspect Or Witness Someone Being Sexually Abused?

Do not have the person take a bath or change clothes

Go to the nearest hospital

Notify the authorities

Contact the Rape Crisis Center

Follow the policies & procedures of your agency

**Call 911 if someone is in immediate danger**



### References:

Pennsylvania Incident Management Bulletin  
National Task Force on Abuse and Disabilities  
The National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse  
Violence and Abuse in the Lives of People with Disabilities

## Who Can Help?

### Bucks County—Network Of Victim Assistance

Business 215-343-6543  
Hotline 800-675-6900  
Website: [www.novabucks.org](http://www.novabucks.org)

### Chester County—The Crimes Victim Center of Chester County, Inc.

Business 610-692-1926  
Hotline 610-692-7273  
Website: [www.cvcofcc.org](http://www.cvcofcc.org)

### Delaware County—Delaware County Women Against Rape

Crisis Hotline 610-566-4342  
Website: [www.dapdc.org](http://www.dapdc.org)

### Montgomery County—Victim Services Center of Montgomery County, Inc.

Hotline 610-277-5200  
610-ASSIST1  
Toll Free 888-521-0983  
Website: [www.vscmontcopa.org](http://www.vscmontcopa.org)

### Philadelphia—Women Organized Against Rape (WOAR)

Business 215-985-3315  
TTY: 215-564-1413  
Hotline 215-985-3333

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Southeast Regional Health Care Quality Unit  
123 S. Broad St., 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19109  
(215) 546-0300, Extension 3685

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# Sexual Abuse

*In 2007 Americans with disabilities age 12 or older were victims of 47,000 rapes. The rate of rapes or sexual assaults against people with disabilities were more than twice the rate for people without disabilities.*

National Crime Victimization Study 2007

**Know** the signs of sexual abuse

**Talk** with the person

**Report** the incident

**Assist** the person emotionally/physically



A Core Program



**What Is Sexual Abuse?**

“An act or attempted acts such as rape, incest, sexual molestation, sexual exploitation or sexual harassment, and inappropriate or unwanted touching of an individual by another. Any sexual contact between staff person and an individual is abuse. Nonconsensual sex between individuals receiving services is abuse.”

*(PA Mental Retardation Bulletin #6000-04-01, section 6000.922: February 28, 2004.)*

**Why Are People With I/DD More Likely To Be Abused?**

- ⇒ targeted because they are perceived as easier marks who have difficulty recognizing the abuse
- ⇒ likely to have difficulty reporting what has happened
- ⇒ less likely to be believed
- ⇒ may not qualify to testify in court
- ⇒ majority of sexual abuse occurs in the victims home
- ⇒ exposure to caregivers and other relationships that foster dependency or create isolation

*(AAIDD, Sexuality and Intellectual Disability [ww.aamr.org/ontent\\_189.cfm](http://www.aamr.org/ontent_189.cfm))*

**What Are The Risk Factors?**

- ⇒ Social powerlessness—years of living in a protected environment and living in a culture of being told what to do
- ⇒ Lack of sexual education
- ⇒ Lack of personal safety concepts
- ⇒ Communication issues
- ⇒ Impaired judgment
- ⇒ Lack of assurance that they will be listened to

**What Should You Look For?**

**Behavioral Signs**

- ⇒ Changes in: Socialization, Sleep patterns, Continenence, Habits
- ⇒ Signs of depression, irritability or anger
- ⇒ Feelings of panic, severe anxiety, crying
- ⇒ Low self-esteem, guilt, shame,
- ⇒ Withdrawal, phobias, regression
- ⇒ Avoidance of specific settings
- ⇒ Resistance of physical examinations
- ⇒ Self-destructive behavior
- ⇒ Sexually inappropriate behavior

**Physical Signs**

- ⇒ Any signs of physical trauma
- ⇒ Bruising to mouth or genitals
- ⇒ Tearing or bleeding vaginal or
- ⇒ Anal area
- ⇒ Pain genital area
- ⇒ Headaches
- ⇒ Stomachaches
- ⇒ Change in appetite
- ⇒ Weight loss or weight gain



**How Can You Help?**

**Provide ...**

- ⇒ Sexual education—*using simple, concrete terms*
- ⇒ Education on personal safety
- ⇒ Discussion about good touch/bad touch
- ⇒ Support for healthy, caring relationships

**Teach The Person ...**

- ⇒ To trust their feelings
- ⇒ To identify someone they can go to for help
- ⇒ The “Just say NO” concept
- ⇒ That secrets that scare or hurt them should not be kept

Be available to talk and talk with the person on a regular basis - *know their activities and feelings*

Understand that everyone has the right to privacy

Be cautious of relationships that foster dependency or create isolation

Watch for changes in personality or behavior

Ensure that anyone providing support receives education

Ensure that any paid employees or volunteers are carefully screened

**What Should Education Include?**

- Privacy
- Appropriate/Inappropriate Touch
- Self Defense
- Reporting
- Self Determination