

# Possible Risk Factors Faced by People with Disabilities

Research says that people with disabilities experience abuse more frequently than people without disabilities. Some factors that may put an individual at higher risk include:

1. A person with a physical disability may need assistance from others to meet their basic needs. Care providers may be a part of intimate care routines like bathing, bathroom, and dressing, which can increase the opportunity for abusive acts.
2. A person with a cognitive disability may trust too much of others and be easier to trick, bribe, or coerce. The person may not know the differences between sexual and non-sexual touches and not know that the sexual violation is not alright.
3. A person who has a disability that impacts their ability to communicate face additional barriers to disclose abuse or assault.
4. People with disabilities are told to be obedient, passive, polite, and to control difficult behaviors. This is called compliance training. Abusers take advantage of compliance training to trick people with disabilities into abusive situations.
5. People with disabilities sometimes grow up without sexuality education, abuse prevention information, or assertiveness education. People with

disabilities may be misinformed about their bodies, healthy sexuality, or how to tell if someone is being abusive or not.

6. A person with a mental health diagnoses may be taken advantage of by an abusive person if they cannot tell between reality and non-reality from their mental health symptoms.

Abusive people take advantage of negative attitudes in our society about people with disabilities, mental health diagnoses, and other perceived vulnerabilities. Abusers use this method to try to justify abuse towards other people.

Living with a disability, mental health diagnoses, or any other perceived vulnerability never invites abuse to happen.

**It is always the abuser's choice to violate and abuse others.**

**Sexual violence/abuse is NEVER the victim's fault.**

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