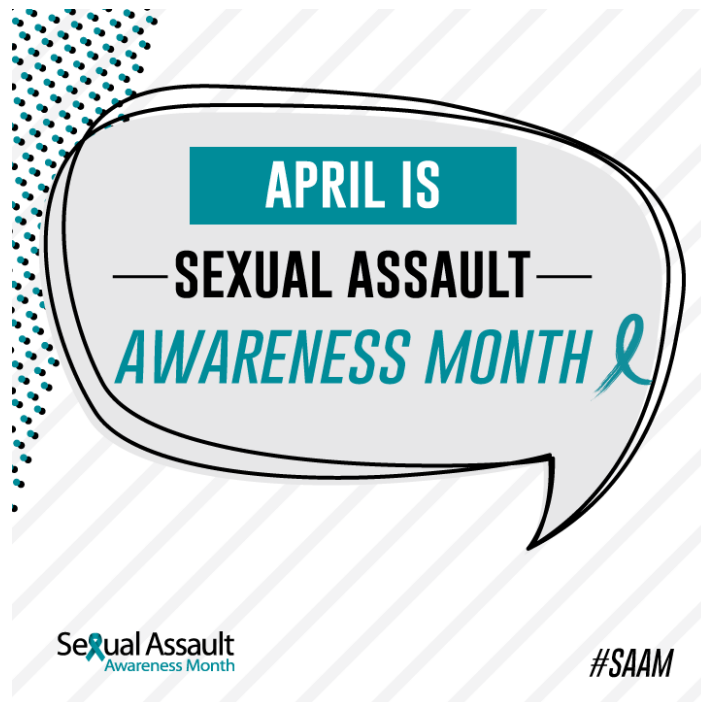




April 2018



April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. People with intellectual disabilities are sexually assaulted at a rate [more than seven times](#) that for people without disabilities, according to the U.S. Department of Justice.

- It is very important to understand what sexual assault is and how it affects members of the disability community.
- Much of our lives are intertwined with technology, which must be navigated responsibly in order to stay safe.
- There are people willing to assist people who have experienced or have questions about sexual abuse and it is important to know how to contact them.



What is Sexual Assault?

Definition

- The term sexual assault refers to sexual contact or behavior that occurs without explicit consent of the victim. Some forms of sexual assault include attempted rape, unwanted sexual touching or sexual acts, penetration of the victim's body, also known as rape.

Force

- Perpetrators may use physical pressure, emotional coercion, psychological force, or manipulation to coerce a victim into non-consensual acts. Some perpetrators will use threats to force a victim to comply, such as threatening to hurt the victim or their family or other intimidation tactics.

Consent

- Consent is a clear and unambiguous agreement to engage in a particular activity.
- Consent must be voluntarily given.
- You are allowed to change your mind.
- Staying silent or unsure doesn't automatically mean "yes".
- You shouldn't feel pressured to do something you don't want to
- Consent is absolutely necessary for a healthy relationship.

In the Disability Community

- Some disabilities may put people at higher risk for crimes like sexual assault or abuse.
- Someone who needs regular assistance may rely on a person who is abusing them for care. The perpetrator may use this power to threaten, coerce, or force someone into non-consensual sex or sexual activities.
- An abuser may take away access to the tools a person with a disability uses to communicate, such as a computer or phone.
- People with I/DD may experience barriers to reporting the abuse or getting treatment. People with disabilities may be less likely to be taken seriously when they make a report of sexual assault or abuse.
- People with I/DD may also face challenges in accessing services to make a report in the first place. For example, someone who is deaf or deaf-blind may face challenges accessing communication tools to report the crime or get help.
- Many people with disabilities may not understand or lack information about healthy sexuality and the types of touch that are appropriate or inappropriate. This can be especially challenging if a person's disability requires other people to touch them to provide care.



Web & Tech Safety

Believe Them

- We hear this all the time, but especially when someone says that their technology is being misused. When the crime is technology related, it can be even more difficult for the person to tell their story. Believing their stories is important in helping them identify what is happening and can provide reassurance and begin healing.

Don't Fear All Technology

- While it may seem right to stop using the technology, getting rid of the tech isn't always the answer to the problem; try to use it more safely instead. Some people may use technology as a means to live and getting rid of it won't stop the misuse, does not empower advocates, and it can be isolating. Additionally, some people may rely on technology for basic, day-to-day survival and cannot, even if they wanted to, stop using their technology.

Develop a Technology Safety Plan

- Include whatever technology is used on a regular basis. Think through what you may decide to leave, ways that the technology may have been compromised, and steps to take if the technology is not available. To learn more about technology safety plans visit: [Technology Safety Plan](#).

SOURCE: [The Center on Victimization and Safety](#)

Online Dating

- It is important to stay safe when using the internet, especially when using online dating apps. Watch the NJSAP training video below for helpful tips on how to approach online dating in a safe and healthy way. Contact us to host this FREE workshop at your agency: Call 732-749-8514 or email NJSAP@ArcNJ.org.



Getting Help

Report it

- If you know of or suspect sexual assault or abuse, you can [report it](#). Call your local police station or 911 to contact law enforcement. If the person being abused is considered a vulnerable adult under your state laws, you may also be able to contact the local Department of Human Services or Department of Social Services. Depending on the situation and location, you may be considered a mandatory reporter. To learn more about mandatory reporting in New Jersey [click here](#).

Talk to a Support Specialist

- To speak with someone who is trained to help, call the [National Sexual Assault Hotline](#) at 800.656.HOPE (4673) to be connected with your [local sexual assault service provider](#). They may have an advocate in your area who is specially trained to provide the the right kind of support and assistance for your particular situation.
- You can chat online anonymously with a support specialist trained by RAINN at online.rainn.org. The support specialists who answer hotline chats are specially trained to respond with respect, patience, and understanding.

Other Resources

- [CAVANET](#): This organization that addresses violence against women, human

- [National Disability Rights Network](#): NDRN members investigate reports of abuse and neglect, and seek systemic change to prevent further incidents; advocate for basic rights; and ensure accountability in health care, education, employment, housing, transportation, and within the juvenile and criminal justice systems for individuals with disabilities.
- [Disability Rights New Jersey](#): DRNJ provides information and referral, technical assistance and training, individual and system advocacy, legal and non-legal advocacy, and outreach and education.
- [New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault](#): NJCASA elevates the voice of sexual violence survivors and service providers by advocating for survivor-centered legislation, training allied professionals, and supporting statewide prevention strategies that work to address and defy the socio-cultural norms that permit and promote rape culture.

Stay Healthy and Safe!



The New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project has partnered with The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey to help you learn more about health, wellness, and being the best you! We are happy to tailor our presentation(s) to suit the needs of your group. The New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project Team will visit your location and provide free workshops on the following topics:



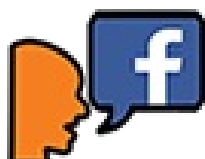
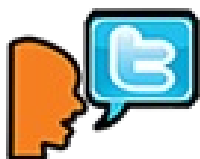
Don't see what you're looking for? We'll make it for you!
E-mail NJSAP@ArcNJ.org or call 732-749-8514 to schedule a training at your location!



The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey

The Healthy Lifestyles Project (HLP) is a program of The Arc of New Jersey and receives funding through a grant awarded by The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey.

For more information on HLP and NJSAP
follow us on social media!





New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project

A program of The Arc of New Jersey since 1983

Promoting Advocacy and Independence for People
with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities