Crime Toward People with Intellectual Disabilities

• Thinking about violence can be scary. It can feel like a huge problem that is impossible to solve.
• Because it is hard to know what to do, a lot of people do not want to talk or think about violence. But, we can’t ignore this problem. Everyone has to help end violence. No one can fix everything all at once. But, there is always a way to help.
• Let's take a minute to relax before we dive into this hard conversation.
John Mullaly is self-advocate from Massachusetts. He will guide us through some breathing and relaxing exercises.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E056qvneDr4&t=1s
Police bodycam footage of a 17-year-old who escaped from a “house of horror” after years of abuse by her parents. The girl and her siblings were rescued and the parents are in jail for life.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iaPkpYG-ZPg
People with disabilities have a higher chance, or greater risk, of experiencing a violent crime compared to people without disabilities. If something is three to five times more likely to happen, it means it happens three to five times as often.

This information is from the Activating Change Website www.activatingchange.org
People with disabilities experience high rates of violence

→ Women who have experienced intimate partner violence are more than twice as likely to also report a disability.

→ 14% of men with disabilities reported experiencing sexual violence at some point in their lifetime compared to 4% of men without disabilities.

→ 49% of people with developmental disabilities were assaulted 10 or more times.

→ 20% of Deaf adults have experienced physical abuse by an intimate partner. 15% have experienced forced sex in an intimate partner relationship.
Only 13% of survivors with disabilities receive victim services.
Unique Offenders

- The vast majority of offenders are known and hold positions of power or authority.
- 44% of offenders have a relationship with the individual because of their disability.
  - Caregivers
  - Attendants
  - Drivers
  - Family members
  - Partners, Girlfriends, Boyfriends
  - Acquaintances

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● People with intellectual disabilities had the highest rate of violent crime among all people with disabilities.
● 49% of people with developmental disabilities were assaulted 10 or more times.
● 1 in 3 robbery victims had a disability.

This information is from the federal Department of Justice - https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/capd0919st.pdf
● People with disabilities face all the typical risks for being exploited or victimized that all people face, and more.

● Potential predators view us as weak and unable to take care of themselves. Often they assume they can get away with robbing or hurting us because we won’t be believed.
• Low reporting and conviction rates back this up.

• Perhaps even worse, when an abuser is a family member or someone providing care, we may feel pressure to stay silent for long periods of time.

• People with disabilities who are immigrants, meanwhile, may be dependent on an abuser for citizenship or immigration status.
Watch This Video About a Peer Training Program

Peer to Peer: Bridging the Gap Through Self-Advocacy Curriculum

https://www.endabusepwd.org/resource/peer-to-peer/
More Resources for Self-Advocates

#1 Survivor Support Packet Resources: A guide for survivors of sexual abuse. From Mass Advocates Standing Strong

#2 What Do I Need to Know About Sexual Assault? By ASAN both in plain language and easy read

#3 Starting the Conversation: A toolkit for self-advocates to talk about sexual violence in their community - from Indiana

#4 A Peer to Peer Guide on Domestic and Sexual Violence Green Mountain Self-Advocates developed this guide to support self-advocates, staff, members, volunteers, and allies to know what domestic and sexual violence is and to know what to say and what to do when they hear about abusive situations.
Discussion questions:

Do you feel confident that you know who to talk to or how to report if something happens?

Do you do training with self-advocates about who to talk to or how to report if something happens?

Do you do training with self-advocates about personal safety?

Green Mountain Self-Advocates and SARTAC www.selfadvocacyinfo.org