



## **Sexual Assault and Violence Against Persons with Disabilities Fact Sheet**

### **National Data**

Violent victimization for persons with disabilities is more than triple the rate among persons without disabilities. (2015 Bureau of Justice Statistics)

Serious violent victimization for person with disabilities is more than three times than that for persons without disabilities. (2015 Bureau of Justice Statistics)

Research shows a very high rate of sexual violence against people with physical and cognitive disabilities, as well as, those with significant speech/communication disabilities.

The risk of sexual violence increases with the degree of disability.(Sobsey, 1988)

For women with severe disabilities, the risk of being a victim of sexual assault escalates to four times the likelihood of those without disabilities. (Casteel, et al. 2008)

Persons with intellectual disabilities had the highest rate of violence victimization from 2009 to 2013. (2015 Bureau of Justice Statistics)

Among persons with intellectual disabilities, the average annual rate of serious violent victimization has doubled from 2009 to 2013. (2015 Bureau of Justice Statistics)

The average annual rate of serious violent victimization against persons with self-care disabilities more than doubled from 2009 to 2013. (2015 Bureau of Justice Statistics)

From 2009 to 2013, the percentage of violent victimization against persons with disabilities in which the victim had multiple disability types increased for rape or sexual assault and robbery. (2015 Bureau of Justice Statistics)

Children with any kind of disabilities are more likely to be sexually abused. Over 90% of the time, the offender will be someone the child knows, trusts, and regularly encounters.

Only 3% of sexual abuse cases involving people with developmental disabilities are ever reported (Valenti-Hein & Schwartz, 1995).

**Marcie Davis, Project Coordinator  
New Mexico Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs, Inc.**

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**3909 Juan Tabo NE, Suite 6 ❖ Albuquerque, NM 87111 ❖ Phone (505) 424-6631  
❖ Fax: (505) 424-6631 ❖ Email: davisinnovates@gmail.com**

Over 70% of crimes against individuals with severe developmental disabilities are unreported (Wilson & Brewer, 1992).

### **New Mexico Data**

(Published by Dr. Betty Caponera, New Mexico Interpersonal Violence Data Central Repository)

In 2015, about one-third (32%) of SANE patients had a disability and over one-quarter (27%) of the victims of sexual assault that sought therapeutic services had a mental and/or physical disability before the victimization.

Among those of NM who sought therapeutic services, more adult (32%) rape victims had a disability than adolescent (19%) and child victims (26%) and service providers served more White (non-Hispanic) victims with a disability (33%), than Hispanic victims (29%), and Native American victims (15%).

In 2015 of those NM sexually assaulted patients with a disability, 88% had a mental/cognitive disability, 27% had a visual disability, 21% had an emotional disability, 18% had an unspecified physical disability, and 8% had a hearing disability.

### **Individuals Who are Incarcerated**

36% of adults in state prisons and 24% of adults in federal facilities reported having a learning, speech, hearing, vision, mobility or mental disability. (2008 Bureau of Justice Statistics)

16% of the individuals incarcerated in state facilities had multiple disabilities (2008 Bureau of Justice Statistics)

### **Why are people with disabilities more susceptible to sexual assault and violence?**

A number of factors exist that may serve to increase the likelihood that an individual with a disability will be sexually abused to include:

- Powerlessness
- Support for Activities of Daily Living (ADL)
- Isolation
- Communication Barriers
- Lack of Abuse Prevention Education
- Organizational Structures/Policies
- Attitudinal Barriers

**For more information on crimes against persons with disabilities and educational prevention materials go to:**

**<https://nmcsap.org/>**

**[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Marcie\\_Davis](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Marcie_Davis)**

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