

The Arc NM provides sexual assault victim advocacy to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Bernalillo, Sandoval, Valencia, Torrance, Cibola and Santa Fe Counties.

If you suspect someone you care for has been assaulted, or to learn more about our program, please contact Amanda at (505)-883-4630 Ext. 119



Indicators of Sexual Assault
3655 Carlisle Blvd
Albuquerque, NM 87110

(505)-883-4630 Ext 119

athompson@arcnm.org

Indicators of Sexual Assault

For People with
Intellectual and
Developmental
Disabilities



Most victims do not have physical signs. A perpetrator is more likely to use coercion or intimidation or threat of force.

- Bruising on inner thighs or on arms
- Trauma to the genital area: pain, discoloration, bleeding or discharges in genitals, anus or mouth
- Persistent or recurring pain during urination and bowel movements
- Pregnancy or STI
- Abdominal pain, nausea, gastrointestinal difficulties
- Changes in appetite, weight gain/loss
- Tension headaches
- Sleep disturbances
- Unexplained bruises, scratches, or other bodily injuries
- Menstrual cycle disruption

So-called “problem behaviors” are often a first sign that sexual assault has occurred

People with cognitive and communication disabilities may have limited ability to understand or disclose their victimization. Often times, changes in behavior are a reaction to sexual assault.

Behavior Changes Common after Sexual Assault

- Sudden rejection of normal physical affection
- Overzealous person hygiene OR sudden refusal to bathe
- Refusal to go to bed or going to bed fully clothed
- Withdrawal from family/friends/caregivers
- Aggressive or bullying behaviors
- Not speaking, even though the person has the ability to do so
- Acting out behaviors
- Suddenly speaking much more about sexual matters
- Isolation from peers or withdrawal from usual activities

Frequent Emotional Signs of Sexual Assault

“Each person reacts differently to emotional trauma. It is critical that a service provider not judge a victim based on his or her response to the violence” –WV.S.A.F.E

- Changes in temperament, sudden mood shifts
- Anger, anxiety, irritability
- Feeling powerless, helpless or vulnerable
- Depression
- Avoidance behaviors
- Nightmares, flashbacks
- Distrust of others
- Fear or avoidance of particular people or places
- Secrecy
- Diminished ability to concentrate, confusion