Mission Statement
To promote the independent living philosophy so that people with disabilities can have the same opportunities that all citizens have without discrimination. Independence Northwest is a vehicle for community change, acting as a catalyst to improve the attitudes of people with disabilities and those without disabilities, to accept integration of everyone into the community and to ensure equal access and equal opportunity.

Do you suspect that an individual with disabilities is being abused?

THE SILENT POPULATION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Fear
Uncertainty
Abandonment
Hopelessness
Helplessness
Shame

A Disability and Advocacy Resource Center
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Made possible by a grant from
The Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Abuse is the use of power and control in a relationship.

Power and control.

Abuse

- Psychological and Emotional Abuse
  - Putting the person down and making them feel bad about themselves
  - Playing mind games or making them feel crazy
  - Telling "secrets to others"
  - Ignoring or "silent treatment"

- Verbal Abuse
  - Name calling
  - Criticizing
  - Public humiliation
  - Put downs
  - Embarrassments

- Physical Abuse
  - Any attempt to hurt or scare the person physically
  - Hitting, biting, hair-pulling, grabbing, shoving, kicking

- Sexual Abuse
  - Unwanted touching
  - Forced sex
  - "Playful" use of force during sex
  - Treating person like a sex object
  - Continued advances after "NO"
  - Sexual harassment

- Destruction of Property
  - Destroying personal items (pictures, clothing, letters, etc.)
  - Damaging car or home
  - Ruining or snooping through belongings

- Abuse of Power
  - Making all the decisions
  - Master-Servant treatment
  - Inflexible definition of men/women roles

- Jealousy, Isolation, Possessiveness and Restriction of Freedom
  - Using jealousy as a sign of love
  - Controlling behavior toward the other person
  - Refusing to let person work, go to school, join activities
  - Spying/Stalking

- Threats, Anger and Intimidation
  - Threats of harm
  - Homicide/Suicide threats
  - Abuse of animals
  - Use of looks, actions and words to intimidate
Abuse is the use of power and control in a relationship

Fear is a very real emotion for someone in an abusive situation. For people with disabilities, those fears may be compounded by their disability.

Perpetrators generally perceive individuals with disabilities as easy targets for victimization.

- Individuals with physical disabilities may be less able to defend themselves or to escape violent situations.

- Speech disabilities may pose barriers to disclosing abuse and seeking help (e.g., when calling a hotline, a person with cerebral palsy may be perceived as drunk or making a prank call).

- People with developmental disabilities often go through life with incorrect information or no education about sexuality, abuse prevention or self-protection strategies.

Although many individuals with disabilities experience positive intimate relationships and receive exemplary personal care, many endure sexual, physical, emotional and financial exploitation or neglect, perpetrated by a partner, family member or caregiver.

Many people with disabilities are taught to be obedient and passive. This compliance training may be setting them up to become victims. Abuse goes unreported because they choose silence, and suffering in silence becomes a way of life.

Signs to look for that may indicate that you or someone you know is being abused, exploited or neglected:

- Bruises anywhere on the body
- Appears withdrawn and fearful
- Repeated bladder infections
- Difficulty with their normal activities
- Agitation
- Self-neglect
- Weight loss
- Broken assistive devices

Indicators of caregiver abuse and neglect:

- The person being cared for is not given the opportunity to speak for him/herself without the presence of the caregiver.
- The caregiver has an attitude of indifference or anger toward the person being cared for.
- The caregiver exhibits aggressive behavior, including threats and insults, towards the person being cared for.
- Inappropriate displays of affection towards the person being cared for.
- Leaving an individual with a disability in an unsafe or isolated place.
- Untreated medical condition.
- The caregiver can also become physically, emotionally and verbally abusive.
Indicators of financial exploitation:

- Unusual or inappropriate activity surrounding investment properties or in bank accounts, including the use of ATM cards to make large or repeated withdrawals.
- Signatures on checks, etc. that do not resemble the person's signature, or signatures when the person cannot write.
- Power of attorney given, or recent changes in or creation of a will or trust, when the person is incapable of making such decisions.
- Unpaid bills, overdue rent, utility shutoff notices.
- Excessive spending by a caregiver on him/herself for new clothing and jewelry.
- Lack of spending on the care of the person, including personal grooming items.
- Missing personal belongings, such as art, silverware or jewelry.

Do you suspect that an individual with disabilities is being abused?

If you or anyone you know needs help, call our statewide numbers for victims of domestic violence.

- Statewide Domestic Violence Hotline:
  1-888-774-2900
  1-800-787-3224 (TTY)

- Statewide Protective Services:
  1-888-385-4225
  1-203-597-4175 (TTY)

- Cherish Program:
  1-203-736-9944
  1-800-787-3224 (TTY)

- Department of Children and Families:
  1-800-338-6037

- Independence Northwest:
  1-203-729-3299
  1-203-729-1281 (TTY)

What to take with you when you leave an abusive relationship:

- Driver's license or State I.D. card
- Birth certificates for everyone in the family
- Social Security card or Social Security award letter
- Proof of disability
- Food stamps/TANF card
- Insurance, Medicaid, Medicare and/or clinic card
- Money, credit card, ATM card
- Bank book/account information/checkbook
- Lease, house payment information/deed
- Car registration, car title, car insurance papers
- Life insurance papers
- Medical records/doctor's orders
- Children's school records and immunization cards
- Assistive devices
- Medications for you and your children
- Protective or restraining orders
- Clothes for you and your children