

Safety First Initiative:

The Kansas City Collaborative

This project was supported by Grant No. 2011-FW-AX-K012 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.



Agenda

❑ Background & Context

- ✓ about Safety First
- ✓ beliefs and values
- ✓ incidence and prevalence
- ✓ Tools

❑ Domestic & Sexual Violence

- ✓ definitions
- ✓ unique power and control tactics
- ✓ challenges and safety risks



Agenda continued

☐ Safety Planning

- ✓ what is a safety plan?
- ✓ considerations when working with survivors with disabilities



About Safety First



Metropolitan Organization to Counter Sexual Assault



Institute for Human Development

A University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD)

Funded Department of Justice,
Office on Violence Against Women



About Safety First

Vision

To change the mindset in the Kansas City metropolitan area resulting in a sustained collaborative response that provides culturally competent, respectful, accessible, empowerment based services to women with disabilities who are victims/survivors of violence



About Safety First

Purpose

1. To enhance the capacity of victim service and disability support agencies to provide the protections and services needed by survivors with disabilities.
2. To improve the coordination of supports and services between victim service and disability service agencies that support victims with disabilities to navigate and access needed services.



About Safety First

Needs Assessment

1. Women with disabilities experience issues regarding believability;
2. Under-reporting of abuse is common;
3. Perception that services for women with disabilities are not always comparable to that for women in general;
4. Links between victim services and disability services is lacking;
5. Need for training and capacity building.



Safety First contributions to DV and Disability service agencies

Motivated by survivors' stories and experiences Safety First collaborators developed tools to help:

- Advocate Guide to Safety Planning for Persons with Disabilities
- Accessibility and Responsiveness Tool



Beliefs and Values



Disability Defined

The World Health Organization defines **disability** as something that occurs *outside of the person* that is based on the interaction of the person, his or her functional abilities, and the environment.

Functional Limitations and Abilities explained: A woman who uses a wheelchair may have functional limitations in her legs. The “disability” is exposed when the environment is not designed to ease her limitations & highlight her abilities.



Key Concepts Defined

- Page 36 of the Safety Planning for Persons with Disabilities Advocate Guide



Universal Design

Universal Design is an approach to the design of environments, communication, services and policies to work well for the widest range of people, taking into consideration the widest range of situations.



Universal Design

- It is not about “special design” for a particular group of people
- Rather, it acknowledges that designing for the widest range of users will benefit all users in some way, and often in ways that may have been unexpected.



Did you know...

Women with developmental disabilities are four to ten times more likely than women without disabilities to be sexually assaulted and they are at greater risk for repeat victimization.

Sobsey et al (1995)



Did you know...

A study finds 53% of women with physical disabilities report having been sexually abused.

Powers (2002)



Did you know...

The vast majority--97% of abusers-- are known by the victim who has an intellectual disability.

Of those, 32% were family members or acquaintances and 44% had a relationship with the victim/survivor specifically related to the person's disability such as a residential care staff, a provider for transportation or personal care.

Baladerian (1991)



R e m e m b e r

- Our work is motivated by and rooted in survivors' stories and experiences.
- Adele: Disability, violence, & survival



Sexual Violence

- **Sexual assault:** anything up to and including intercourse without consent (so anything up to and including rape)
 - umbrella term
- Situations of No Consent
 - Physically Forced
 - Threatened/Scared
 - Blackmailed/Coerced
 - Under the Influence
 - Under the Age
 - Sleeping/Passed Out
 - Developmental Disability



Changing the Definition of Intimate Partner Violence

Domestic violence is a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors to establish power and control over another person. Domestic violence occurs within intimate partner relationships.

Abusers can be spouses, partners, boyfriends, girlfriends, family members or **caregivers**.



Power and Control

- Perpetrators may target people with disabilities because they perceive them as more isolated and trusting
- May assume survivors will not report violence or be believed
- Remember, caregivers can be abusers
- Tactics unique to persons with disabilities



Challenges and Safety Risks

- A woman experiencing violence faces many challenges and safety risks whether she decides to stay, leave or return to an abusive relationship. Often, choosing to stay keeps the survivor and her children safe.
- It is important to recognize leaving may be a long process during which she constantly considers her options, challenges and safety risks.
- 3 out of 4 females murdered by their intimate partners had been stalked by that offender at least once in the year prior to the murder (Femicide Study, 1999)
- A woman's risk of getting killed goes up 75% when she leaves the relationship or has left (Campbell, 2007)



Challenges and Safety Risks

Unique to persons with disabilities

- Lack of resources or accommodations for disability from service providers
- Language and communication barriers
- Fear of institutionalization
- Increased possibility that service providers won't believe reports of abuse



What is a Safety Plan?

A safety plan is just what it sounds like. It is a plan you have in your head or that you have written down on paper.

Some safety plans are very simple and others look at many situations a person may find themselves in with an abuser.



Planning for Safety

The act of planning for safety helps survivors think through possible dangers in a variety of situations and have a plan in mind about what to do when their physical and/or emotional safety is threatened.



Ending the Safety Planning Conversation

- Review the plan together
- Follow through with any support you have offered
- Ask to follow up with the person
- Adapt plan to include changes
- Keep the door open



Resources: National

The Battered Women's Justice Project www.bwjp.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline www.ndvh.org or
1-800-799-SAFE

National Network to End Domestic Violence
www.nnedv.org

VERA Institute of Justice www.accessingsafety.org



Thank you!

Lisa Fleming

Rose Brooks Center
lisa@rosebrooks.org

Angie Blumel

Metropolitan Organization to Counter
Sexual Assault (MOCOSA)
816.285.1324,
ablumel@mocsa.org

