

Breaking a Taboo – Let us talk about People with Disabilities' Sexuality and the Increased Risk of and for Sexual Violence

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Sexual Violence Awareness Month



About Sexual Violence Awareness Month

Find out more about Sexual Violence Awareness Month, held in October each year.



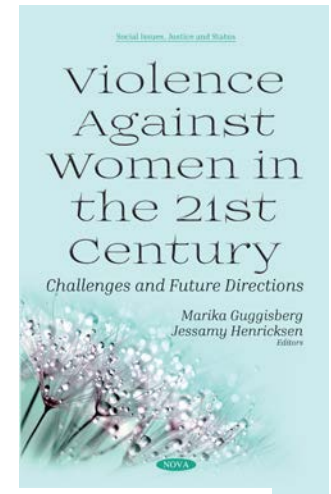
Events calendar

Get involved in local events during Sexual Violence Awareness Month.



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Who am I?



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Overview

- Discrimination
- Sexuality – Sexual Rights
- Sexual Violence – Victims
- Sexual Violence – Perpetrators
- Recommendation – Conversation Points

Discrimination

- Asexual?
- Sexually innocent?

Exclusion from sexuality education:

- Lower levels of sexual knowledge

Us health professionals have a huge responsibility

- Stereotyped views and misconceptions

Asexual → Excessively sexual

Sexuality



Sexual Rights



Why are people with ID at a higher risk of sexual violence?

- Inability to recognise behaviour as inappropriate (or indeed a criminal offence)
- Need for intimate care
- Lack of refusal skills (internalised compliance)
- Lack of knowledge and understanding of issues of sexuality, sexual behaviours, sexual rights
- Being too trusting – little sense of danger
- Credibility issues if disclosure is made

Sexual Violence Victims

- Very high rates – risk 3x higher

“I have no sexual feelings whatsoever.... [but you do have sex, so is it something you want or is it something that just happens to you?] A rather lot of it is forced on me”

McCarthy, 2001, p. 199

Sexual Violence Perpetrators

- Approximately 5% of the general population
- High rates of sexual offending
- High recidivism rates
- Specialist treatment – address needs (recognition of skills deficit)

Victim empathy

Legal details

Patterns

Cognitive distortions

Motivation to offend

Fantasies

Intervention with (potential) victims and offenders

- Numerous strategies
 - Role play
 - Watch videos
 - Quiz
 - Games
 - Discussions
 - Encourage questions

Education should account for cognitive impairment

Recommendation

- Sexuality education and soft skills development (e.g. assertiveness) can reduce vulnerability
- Primary-care focused research & practice guidelines (ensure that sexual rights are not compromised and protective measures are put in place).
- Professional development training

Take home message

- Let us:

proactively seek out windows of opportunity to speak with our clients about sexuality.

In this process:

- Don't be afraid of asking questions

References

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