



The Arc.

National Center on Criminal
Justice & Disability NCCJD®

Talk About Sexual Violence

Conversation Tools on Sexual Violence and Developmental Disabilities for Health Care Professionals

Purpose: Health care professionals (HCPs) have the unique opportunity to talk about sexual violence with patients, but often lack the tools and time during patient appointments to do so. The high rate of sexual violence among people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) is alarming. The NPR Abused and Betrayed series uncovered data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics that revealed people with intellectual disabilities are sexually assaulted at a rate seven times higher than those without disabilities. Due to the likelihood that HCPs will be interacting with sexual assault victims with IDD, it is critical they have the tools they need to respond effectively.

Supported-Decision Making: Previous Talk About Sexual Violence (TASV) projects discovered that healthcare professionals rarely report sexual assault of victims with IDD and do not engage victims in conversation about their options as sexual assault victims. New tools are needed to encourage conversations that achieve patient and victim-centered outcomes. There are currently no tools that address this specific intersectional challenge in the health care system. By educating HCPs and survivors about the value of supported decision-making (SDM) when communicating about sexual violence, victims can begin to make their own decisions and have a voice about what happens to them after victimization occurs.

Project Objectives: Building on the success of the prior two years developing videos and other tools for HCPs on this topic, the focus will shift to not only preparing HCPs to have much-needed conversations about sexual violence, but to know how to use a SDM lens that supports victim-centered approaches. By empowering survivors with disabilities in the reporting process, HCPs can more effectively identify victims, connect them to appropriate healing services, and build their self-advocacy skills, ultimately leading to increased prevention of potential sexual violence in the future.

Project Partners & Supporters: The Arc's National Center on Criminal Justice and Disability® and The Board Resource Center, supported by The WITH Foundation, are working with a broad range of health care organizations and sexual violence survivors with IDD to ensure project tools are fully informed by those affected by this issue, and by those seeking to learn more.

For More Information:

[TalkAboutSexualViolence.org](https://www.talkaboutsexualviolence.org)

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