

Talk About Sexual Violence

For Patients: Having a Conversation with Your Medical Provider

Need

The [Talk About Sexual Violence](#) project is about the underreported sexual abuse of people with disabilities.

Sexual abuse means any unwanted sexual activity.

Every day, people with intellectual/developmental disabilities (IDD) are sexually abused.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning (LGBTQ) people also face high rates of sexual violence.

It is important that you talk openly with your medical providers about sexual abuse and abuse prevention.

Talking With Your Medical Provider

It is very hard to talk about sexual abuse.

You may not know how to talk about it with someone.

You may not know what sexual abuse is or how to describe it.

A medical provider is someone you go to when you feel sick or are injured.

Most of them do not have a lot of experience talking with their patients about sexual abuse.

Suggestions on the next page will help you share your experiences with medical providers.





Feeling Safe and Being Heard

Feeling safe is the first step to sharing your experience.

- ✓ Tell your medical provider you **need more time** when talking about what happened to you
- ✓ Ask your medical provider to **use plain, everyday language**
- ✓ Ask your medical provider to **pay attention** to what you are saying
- ✓ Remember, what happened to you is not your fault

Supported Decision-Making

Supported Decision-Making means helping people get advice without giving up their right to make decisions about their lives.

- ✓ You can **ask your caregiver/family member to leave the examination room**, if you want to talk privately
- ✓ Ask your medical provider to **explain your choices**
- ✓ Your medical provider may ask uncomfortable questions to give you guidance about what happens next
- ✓ Remember, also **talk to trusted people** in your life for support

Reporting

Medical providers are legally required to report sexual abuse or violence they hear about. They need to explain what happens when a report is made.

- ✓ **Ask questions** if you don't understand or need more information
- ✓ Ask your medical provider for **information about agencies** that provide help to people who have experienced sexual abuse
- ✓ **You can report abuse to authorities**, like law enforcement and Adult Protective Services