



Sexual Violence Told Through Lived Experiences of Survivors and Families

The goal of this research project was to better understand the impact of sexual violence on individuals with disabilities, families and professionals in Arizona. A report published in 2024 includes experiences of 26 individuals. This provides a brief summary of the data.

This information may trigger difficult emotions and memories. Take care of yourself and those around you.

It is important to believe what individuals tell us through their behaviors and words.

Key Terms

- “Consent” means giving someone permission to do something. To give consent, a person must know what they are agreeing to, not be forced, and not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- A “perpetrator” is a person who commits a sexual act against someone without their consent. This includes any behavior that involves coercion, force, manipulation, or taking advantage of another person’s inability to give consent.



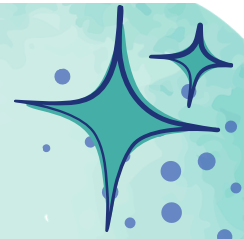
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- Perpetrators of sexual violence are often individuals the person knows. Perpetrators look for opportunities to control, harm, or take advantage of other people.
- Individuals with disabilities who need more personal care and support from caregivers can be more vulnerable to sexual violence. Caregivers can be family members, friends, partners, and hired staff.
- Individuals with disabilities experienced behaviors like intimidation, manipulation, physical aggression, verbal threats, sexual assault, and other non-consensual behaviors.
- An individual can experience abuse at a young age. The abuse may continue for years, from the same perpetrator or from multiple perpetrators.
- The impact of sexual violence on the individual is devastating and affects all aspects of their life. It can affect current and future relationships, success at work or school, and their mental health.

Perpetrators will try to keep a person away from their loved ones, friends, or supports.



For more information:
[Bit.ly/FromSilenceToSafety](https://bit.ly/FromSilenceToSafety)



It can take a long time before an individual feels ready to share what happened to them. They may be isolated and can't get the help they need.

Individuals often feel that they are not believed by family, friends, health care providers, staff, police, or legal professionals.

Access to long term counseling and behavioral health services is very important. Healing is possible.

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