

# Measuring Capacity

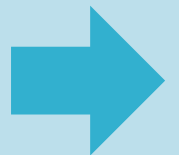
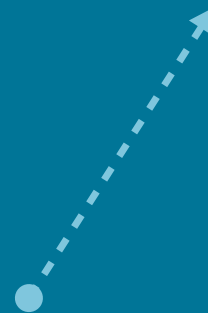
to Serve Domestic Violence  
and Sexual Assault Survivors  
with Disabilities

.....  
Disability Organizations



**Center on Victimization and Safety**

Nancy Smith • Sandra Harrell  
Jaclyn Smith • Ashley Demyan  
September 2015



## Acknowledgments

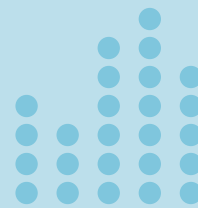
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The Vera Institute of Justice is an independent nonprofit organization that combines expertise in research, demonstration projects, and technical assistance to help leaders in government and civil society improve the systems people rely on for justice and safety.

The Center on Victimization and Safety works with communities around the country to fashion services that reach, appeal to, and benefit all victims. Our work focuses on communities of people who are at elevated risk of harm but often marginalized from victim services and the criminal justice system. We combine research, technical assistance, and training to equip policymakers and practitioners with the information, skills, and resources needed to effectively serve all victims. For more information on the Center on Victimization and Safety, please visit our website at [www.endabusepwd.org](http://www.endabusepwd.org), or contact us at [cvs@vera.org](mailto:cvs@vera.org) or 212.376.3096.

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to Serve Domestic Violence  
and Sexual Assault Survivors  
with Disabilities

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Disability Organizations

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## Introduction

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Research has shown that people with disabilities experience violent victimization—including rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault—at rates three times higher than people without disabilities.<sup>1</sup> They also routinely face barriers to help when reaching out to disability organizations ranging from staff members not knowing how to respond to limited to no connections with local victim services organizations who could help if referrals were made. In recognition of the crucial role they play in helping survivors of domestic and sexual violence, disability organizations across the country are actively working to remove these barriers and enhance their capacity to effectively serve survivors with disabilities. The success and sustainability of these efforts rely on the ability to track their progress and measure their effectiveness. Until now, no such resources were available.

In October 2012, with support from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), the Vera Institute of Justice launched the *Measuring Capacity to Serve Survivors with Disabilities* project. The project's first step was to determine the best evaluation method given the project's goals and the needs and realities of disability organizations—many of which lack specific funding to support evaluation efforts and formal evaluation training—to measure their capacity to serve people with disabilities who have experienced domestic and sexual violence and track changes in their capacity over time. After consulting experts in the field, including staff from a variety of organizations that serve people with disabilities, Vera decided to use performance indicators—measures that help determine whether, and to what

degree, progress is being made toward a certain objective.<sup>2</sup> Due to their applicability, practicality, and cost-effectiveness, social service agencies increasingly use them to determine whether they are achieving their goals and track changes over time. Vera was poised to develop performance indicators to measure an agency's capacity to serve survivors with disabilities because of its ten-year history of working at the intersection of victimization and disability and its extensive experience designing and conducting practical evaluations, including performance indicators, in other justice-related fields.

To develop the indicators, Vera defined priority areas within disability organizations that have the greatest impact on the experiences of survivors with disabilities and the ability of the staff and volunteers of these organizations to meet their needs. Vera also:

- conducted a thorough review of the academic literature on victimization of people with disabilities and best practice materials on serving survivors with disabilities;
- gathered feedback from experts on violence against people with disabilities from diverse fields including criminal justice, disability, domestic violence, medical, and sexual violence;
- applied lessons learned from other efforts that rely on indicators to measure performance in human services; and
- tested the indicators in 20 pilot sites to assess the relevancy of the indicators and determine feasibility and usability of the measurement system. The pilot sites were selected from among the grant recipients of OVW's *Training and Services to End Violence Against Women with Disabilities Grant Program*.

The final set of indicators in this guide gives disability organizations a first-of-its-kind comprehensive tool to track and improve their capacity to serve people with disabilities who have experienced domestic and sexual violence, as well as step-by-step instructions for its implementation. The indicators in this guide measure and are organized into two primary areas: commitment and capacity. Commitment is the willingness and determination of a disability organization to address domestic and sexual violence within

the community it serves. Capacity is the knowledge, skills, and resources an agency needs to do so. Within each of these areas, the indicators are further grouped into more specific categories. Each category has four to six specific indicators of an agency's ability to serve survivors with disabilities. Providers are able to measure their capacity through data collected from internal documents, observations, and self-reports from agency staff. Most agencies will have ready access to the data that is required to score or measure the indicators. The indicators are designed to be measured every six months so providers can track their progress and make adjustments as needed to maximize the impact of their capacity-building efforts.

This manual is designed to improve services for people with disabilities who have experienced domestic and sexual violence. It is our hope that disability organizations that have a strategic objective to serve survivors will adopt the indicators presented in this guide. Disability organizations that measure their capacity to address domestic and sexual violence will know with greater certainty the impact of their efforts on the people they serve, and, ultimately, whether they are meeting the global mission of the disability field to promote access, inclusion and self-determination for people with disabilities.

### About the Guide

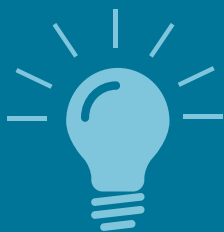
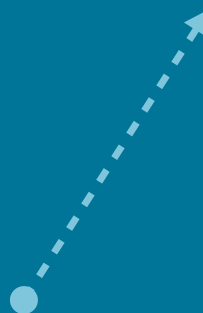
**Section I** provides an overview of performance indicators, describes how the indicators are organized, and what they are designed to measure.

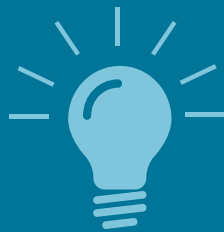
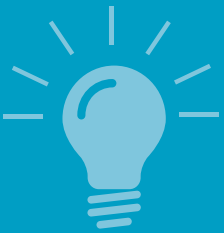
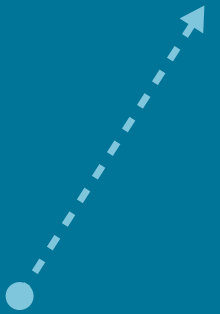
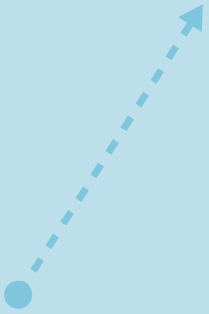
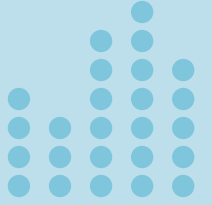
**Section II** provides detailed information on each indicator, including a definition, why it was included, and important considerations related to the area the indicator intends to measure.

**Section III** provides step-by-step instructions for implementing the indicators in disability organizations, including helpful tips and practical resources. The appendices include the full list of performance indicators for disability organizations, as well as three guides designed to help providers collect the data necessary to score their agency using the indicators.

Section I

# Understanding Performance Indicators








## Section I: Understanding Performance Indicators

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### Overview



*A performance indicator is a measure that helps answer the question of how much, or whether, progress is being made toward a certain objective.* They are simple, easily understood pieces of information that provide insights into more complicated concepts. The main value of an indicator is to make complex concepts measurable, so that they can capture change within an agency over time. In this case, the performance indicators are designed to measure an organization's capacity to serve people with disabilities who have experienced domestic and/or sexual violence.

For example, you may be interested in understanding whether your agency's services are responsive to the unique needs of people who have experienced domestic or sexual violence. On its own, responsiveness is an abstract concept and is difficult to measure without first identifying specific aspects of responsiveness. To measure responsiveness, you could assess how many people request services related to domestic and sexual violence, how many receive safety planning, and how many referrals are made to victim services organizations. This information is concrete and measurable, and can be repeatedly collected so users can track their progress, regress, or lack of change over time, and develop plans around those results.

If an agency uses the indicators once, it would have a point-in-time snapshot of its services; to understand performance over time, an agency needs to analyze the indicators at regular intervals (for example, every six months). Because they cover a wide range of service provisions and agency operations, the performance indicators are useful to organizations at all stages of addressing the issue of effectively serving survivors with disabilities, from those just starting to those who have been working at this intersection for many years.

These performance indicators can be implemented entirely by agency staff, and no evaluation experience is needed. The information used to score the indicators already exists within the agency. Agency documents, agency observations, and staff knowledge are the three sources of information needed to use the performance indicators, and each indicator links to a specific piece of information housed within the agency. The Information Collection Guide—which can be found on page 73—provides details on the exact pieces of information needed to complete the performance indicator scoring.

### **The Benefits of Using Performance Indicators**

- Allows agency to measure its performance.
- Allows agency to easily identify areas needing more attention, informing and shaping project design.
- Allows agency to develop strategic plans for reaching underserved groups and maximizing impact.
- Allows agency to compile scores over time, which can improve funding opportunities when included in grant proposals.
- Allows agency to build stakeholder support.
- Allows agency to incorporate the perspectives of service recipients and minority and marginalized groups.
- Allows agency to document progress and celebrate successes.

### **Development of the Performance Indicators**

Performance indicators are not designed to provide a comprehensive assessment of every aspect of an agency's services. Rather, they are strategically chosen, specific measures that when taken together, provide a reasonable estimation of the agency's performance in a certain area. Performance indicators are a balancing act—if there are too many, the process can become tedious and important information about an agency's capacity can be lost. If there are too few, the information on an agency's capacity in a specific area will be incomplete. For this reason, four to six indicators under each theme are ideal, as this allows for a range of information to be collected and scored without overwhelming the user or taking too much time.

The performance indicators were created to reflect elements of effective service to survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors. They were developed through reviews of academic and best practice materials and multiple rounds of feedback from external project advisors who have expertise at the intersection of violence and disability.

### Structure of the Performance Indicator Measurement System

The performance indicator measurement system represents established and best practice standards for serving survivors with disabilities. The scores provide snapshots of an agency's culture, environment, practices, and programming around accessible and welcoming services. Taken together, the system represents a set of universal standards that guide agencies in serving survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors. The structure of the performance indicator measurement system is described in detail below.

At the highest level, the indicators fall into one of two **components**—Commitment and Capacity—which represent the agency's desire and ability to effectively address domestic and sexual violence in the lives of the people it serves.



#### Component A

## Commitment

Agency demonstrates willingness and determination to address domestic and sexual violence within the community it serves.



#### Component B

## Capacity

Agency has procedures, knowledge, skills, and resources to respond to domestic and sexual violence in the lives of the people it serves.

Each component has three major **themes**, which represent important areas of service and agency operations. Under Commitment, the themes are Responsibility, Partnerships, and Policies. Under Capacity, the themes are Material Resources, Human Resources, and Procedures.

## Commitment

Theme 1: Responsibility

Theme 2: Partnerships

Theme 3: Policies

## Capacity

Theme 1: Material Resources

Theme 2: Human Resources

Theme 3: Procedures

Each theme contains a series of four to six strategically chosen **indicators**, designed to represent an agency's capacity to serve survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors in that particular area. Each indicator consists of a series of four **measures** which, when met by the agency, suggest that the agency has a high capacity in that particular aspect of service. The more measures an agency meets under each theme, the closer it is to meeting the standards for effectively serving survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors.



## Performance Indicators for Disability Organizations

### Component A

Component

# Commitment

Agency demonstrates willingness and determination to address domestic and sexual violence within the community it serves.

Theme

### Theme 1: Responsibility

Agency recognizes its duty to address domestic and sexual violence in the lives of the people it serves.

#### Indicator

#### Definition

1.1

#### Recognizes Violence Against People with Disabilities as a Priority

Agency recognizes violence against people with disabilities and Deaf individuals as a priority by:

Indicator

**A.** Specifically mentioning services to address abuse in agency's public outreach brochure or social media accounts

Measures

**B.** Including efforts to increase capacity to address domestic and/or sexual violence against people with disabilities in the agency's strategic plan


**C.** Having an internal committee or work group focused on enhancing the agency's response to domestic and sexual violence against people with disabilities

**D.** Participating in community-based activities/events related to domestic violence and sexual assault awareness

The indicators rely on data from three types of information housed within agencies to determine if each measure is met and, ultimately, a score.

- **Agency documents** include such things as intake forms, policies, procedures, and resource sheets.
- **Agency observations** focus on details of the agency that are unable to be captured in documents, and will require a staff member to make a series of observations related to safety and accessibility within the agency.
- **Staff interview questions** focus on different aspects of agency service and operations and capitalize on the knowledge staff have about agency capacity.

Each indicator relies on data points from one or more of these sources for scoring.




### Document Checklist

Some of the information you will need to measure your agency's capacity to serve survivors of domestic and sexual violence with disabilities comes from pre-existing agency documents. Gather the documents listed below, and then consult them in order to answer the questions in the *Indicator Scoring Tool*.

<p><b>Policies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory reporting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Abuse by employees</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Service to victims and perpetrators</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Confidentiality</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Anti-sexual harassment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Workplace domestic violence</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Guardianship</li> </ul> <p><b>Curriculum</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Direct services staff training</li> </ul> <p><b>Programmatic Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Agency brochures and/or social media accounts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Written Protocols</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory reporting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Screening for domestic and sexual violence for clients</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Immediate safety planning</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Informed referrals</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Addressing abuse by employees</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Serving victims and perpetrators</li> </ul> <p><b>Interagency Agreements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> MOU with domestic violence agency</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> MOU with rape crisis center</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> MOU with local law enforcement agency</li> </ul>	<p><b>Other</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Safety and responsiveness review tool</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Safety and responsiveness review team roster</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Safety and responsiveness review team meeting minutes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Agency strategic plan (current)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Annual statistical report</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Grant proposal submitted in partnership with DV agency</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Grant proposal submitted in partnership with rape crisis center</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Job announcements/postings</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Redacted budget</li> </ul>
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Document Checklist



### Observation Guide


Some of the data you will need to measure your agency's capacity to serve survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence with disabilities comes from observations you will make of your agency's physical, communication, and information environment. This guide provides you with step-by-step instructions for conducting a review of these environments and recording your findings, which you will enter into the *Indicator Scoring Tool* once you have completed the assessments.

**Informational Environment**

Go to all areas where signage/posters/artwork are displayed and record your responses to the following observations.

<p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>1. Does your agency display informational posters addressing domestic and sexual violence?</p> <p><b>If Yes:</b> Record your answer in row 5 in the <i>Indicator Scoring Tool</i> (Observation Guide Tab).</p>
<p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>2. Does your agency have safe space/safe person signage displayed in staff offices and agency work areas to indicate a safe environment for individuals to disclose domestic and/or sexual violence?</p> <p><b>If Yes:</b> Record your answer in row 6 in the <i>Indicator Scoring Tool</i>.</p>

Observation Guide



### Staff Interview Questions

Some of the information you will need to measure your agency's capacity to serve survivors of domestic and sexual violence with disabilities comes from agency staff members who have specific knowledge of agency operations. You will need to ask staff members who are knowledgeable about your agency's accessibility, information-keeping, partnerships, hiring, and outreach the questions listed below. Each question should be answered with a Yes or No, and once you have recorded answers for all of the questions, you will enter these answers into the *Indicator Scoring Tool*.

**Safety and Responsiveness**

Find the staff person who is most likely to have the information pertaining to agency safety and responsiveness.

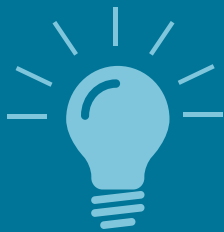
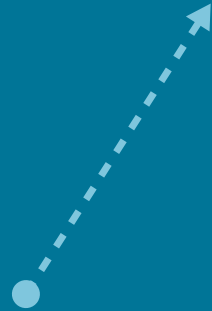
That person is:

<p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>1. Does our agency have an internal committee or work group focused on enhancing the agency's response to domestic and sexual violence against people with disabilities?</p>
<p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>2. Does our agency participate in community-based activities/events related to domestic violence and sexual assault awareness?</p>

Staff Interview Questions

Section II

# The Indicators



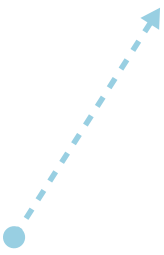




### Component A

# Commitment

## Categories: Responsibility, Partnerships, Policies



Disability organizations with a high capacity to address domestic and sexual violence in the lives of people with disabilities take tangible steps to demonstrate their commitment to addressing this issue within their organizations. Their commitment reflects their willingness and determination to be a leader in this area and to be as effective as possible in their work to end domestic and sexual violence against people with disabilities. Importantly, these organizations have also communicated their commitment to their staff and volunteers, as well as the community at large.

The commitment indicators will help disability organizations measure their willingness and determination to address domestic and sexual violence. How do they reflect their responsibility to address this violence in the lives of the people they serve internally and externally? What partnerships do they forge to enhance their ability to support people with disabilities who have experienced domestic and sexual violence? Do their policies establish a baseline of safe and responsive services?

### 1. Responsibility

It is important for an agency to be explicit about including domestic and sexual violence among the range of areas it can address in the lives of the people it serves. There are many indications of this commitment within disability organizations, from integrating issues related to victimization and safety into day-to-day operations and long-term planning, to publicly communicating their commitment to address domestic and sexual violence against people with disabilities and Deaf people. The following indicators will help disability organizations measure the extent to which they recognize their duty to address domestic and sexual violence.

## 1.1

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### **Recognizes Violence Against People with Disabilities as a Priority**

**Agency recognizes violence against people with disabilities and Deaf individuals as a priority by:**

- Specifically mentioning services to address abuse in agency's public outreach brochure or social media accounts.
- Including efforts to increase capacity to address domestic and/or sexual violence against people with disabilities in the agency's strategic plan.
- Having an internal committee or work group focused on enhancing the agency's response to domestic and sexual violence against people with disabilities.
- Participating in community-based activities/events related to domestic violence and sexual assault awareness.

#### **Why This Indicator Matters**

Specifically including domestic and sexual violence against people with disabilities and Deaf individuals among its priorities reaffirms a disability organization's commitment to addressing this issue and can spur it to dedicate the resources necessary to build its capacity to address these issues. It signals to staff and volunteers that addressing violence and abuse is central to the agency's mission and empowers them to tailor their services to meet the needs of people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced violence. Specifically naming the services the agency offers to survivors in public materials, such as outreach brochures and client policies, communicates to people with disabilities and Deaf people a commitment to address these critical issues and confirms that the agency can meet their needs for support and safety.

## 1.2

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### **Assesses for Safety and Responsiveness**

**Agency has infrastructure to routinely assess its safety and responsiveness to domestic and sexual violence, including:**

- A trained review team of internal staff and external experts from the fields of domestic and sexual violence.
- A standardized review process and tool.
- A scheduled week each year dedicated to conducting the review.
- A process to review findings with staff and external experts to develop possible solutions to identified issues.

### Why This Indicator Matters

The safety and responsiveness of a disability organization is vital to successfully addressing domestic and sexual violence in the lives of the people the organization serves. It shapes all aspects of a survivor's journey from crisis to healing, including her or his decision to reach out to the agency for help, whether or not she or he receives a supportive response to the disclosure, the type of services and supports she or he receives, and her or his overall feeling of comfort and confidence throughout the process.

Conducting formal safety and responsiveness reviews allows an agency to identify and remove barriers through a systematic process. Conducting these reviews on a routine basis helps an agency track and monitor changes in its responsiveness and reflects its ongoing commitment to operate with the highest degree of safety and responsiveness. An element of the review process that has proven invaluable is to include survivors with disabilities and those who are Deaf, as well as representatives of organizations in the community that address domestic and sexual violence. These collaborators can weigh in on the assessment process and make suggestions for how to improve the agency's response to violence and abuse.

## 1.3

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### Raises Funds

**The agency seeks funding to address domestic and sexual violence against people with disabilities in the following ways:**

- Agency has raised the issue of addressing domestic and sexual violence among people with disabilities to its primary funding source.

- Agency has added activities that address domestic and sexual violence among the people it serves to the scope of services outlined in at least one of its grant applications.
- Agency has submitted at least one proposal in partnership with a domestic violence program
- Agency has submitted at least one proposal in partnership with a rape crisis center.

### Why This Indicator Matters

Funding specifically allocated to address domestic and sexual violence against people with disabilities and Deaf people allows disability organizations to improve their safety and responsiveness, build their knowledge and skill base, expand their resources, and provide tailored services to survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors. There are many strategies to secure this type of funding, from expanding currently funded work to include efforts specific to addressing violence and abuse to cultivating new sources of support for this area of a disability organization's work. Submitting proposals in partnership with organizations that are specifically designed to address domestic and sexual violence ensures organizations have experts in these areas involved in their efforts and access to established services for victims in the community.

## 1.4

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### Includes in Budget

Agency has a separate line item(s) in overall agency budget dedicated to addressing domestic and sexual violence among the people it serves, including funds for:

- Staff time spent addressing these issues.
- Staff development and training.
- Safety enhancements to the agency's core environments (physical, information/communication, policy, and social).
- Emergency resources for clients, such as taxi cabs and hotel rooms.

## Why This Indicator Matters

While not all strategies to increase an organization's capacity to address domestic and sexual violence require financial resources, instituting some changes—providing training to staff and volunteers, adding lighting in the parking lot to increase safety, providing emergency resources such as taxi cabs and hotel rooms to survivors with disabilities fleeing abuse—do. Routinely including line items in an agency's budget ensures that agency staff have the resources available to improve the overall responsiveness of the agency. Moreover, the budget of an organization is often a window into its values and priorities and, in this case, an indication of an agency's commitment to safety and addressing violence and abuse.

## 1.5

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### Collects Data

**Agency collects the following information, in either paper or electronic form:**

- Number of people served who request support from the agency related to domestic or sexual violence.
- Number of people served who disclose a past history of trauma or victimization.
- Number of internal reports of domestic and/or sexual violence made to supervisors or other agency staff named in the agency's mandatory reporting policy.
- Number of people referred to outside victim service providers.

## Why This Indicator Matters

Collecting violence- and abuse-related information from the people requesting and receiving an agency's services is a reflection of an organization's willingness to build a knowledge base around victimization of people with disabilities. It can help an organization identify gaps in services and can lead to a better understanding of victimization in the lives of people with disabilities and the unique needs of these survivors. With this information, it can allocate resources to tailor its outreach, services, and financial supports to

meet these needs. By collecting this information over time, it can also identify trends and emerging issues, which may inform how the agency allocates future resources in the area of victimization.

## 1.6

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### Uses Data

**Agency adjusts its programmatic priorities to better meet the needs of survivors with disabilities based on an analysis of the following data:**

- National trends on victimization of people with disabilities, using data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS).
- Jurisdictional needs, including the number of reports of vulnerable adults made to adult protective services, the type(s) of abuse, perpetrators, and report outcomes.
- Agency trends, including the number of domestic and/or sexual violence disclosures by clients, the type(s) of abuse disclosed, and the requests for services.
- Gaps between the identified needs of survivors and available programming.

### Why This Indicator Matters

Collecting agency data is the first step to identifying issues and making appropriate changes. To do so, an agency needs information about incidence and prevalence, and service utilization and satisfaction, among other areas. In most communities, there is a dearth of data on service area-specific incidence and prevalence rates. To fill this gap, organizations that want to make data-driven decisions must look to national data sources, such as BJS. Applying this national data to the local community's statistics can give an estimate of who is in need in their community. Comparing this estimate to the agency trends then allows the agency to identify unmet needs and gaps in services, which serves as a foundation for any decisions around programmatic changes. This type of analysis requires time and expertise on the part of agency staff and affords opportunities to make enhancements with a laser focus.

## 2. Partnerships

No one organization offers all the services survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors need, or possesses all the expertise necessary to provide those services in a way that is safe and accessible. Partnering with other organizations that specialize in serving people who have experienced domestic and sexual violence, as well as enforcement agencies, such as law enforcement and protective services departments, is an effective way for disability organizations to expand their ability to address domestic and sexual violence of people with disabilities and Deaf people. Developing and sustaining these partnerships requires disability organizations to dedicate time and resources toward relationship building, frequent communication, and joint action.

### 2.1

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#### **Collaborates with Domestic Violence Agency**

Agency has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), collaboration charter, or equivalent agreement with at least one domestic violence program that serves people living in the agency's service area that:

- Is current and signed by agency leaders.
- Commits the agency to provide consultation and other assistance to the domestic violence agency as needed.
- Dedicates staff time to participate in cross-agency meetings.
- Commits the agencies represented in the MOU to provide training at one another's new employee/volunteer orientations.

#### **Why This Indicator Matters**

Domestic violence programs are a natural partner for disability organizations. With a formal agreement in place, their staff can serve as an invaluable resource and enhance the ability of disability organizations to address domestic violence in the lives of the people it serves. They can help identify barriers to safety and confidentiality within disability organizations and offer practical solutions

for removing them, provide domestic violence-related training to their staff, co-advocate on behalf of survivors with disabilities, and more.

Reaching out to a domestic violence program to talk about abuse of people with disabilities is the first step toward formalizing a partnership. Most geographic areas in the country are served by at least one domestic violence program. Each state, and many of the territories, has a coalition that coordinates and supports the domestic violence programs in their state/territory. Their websites typically include a list of domestic violence resources in their service area and are a good resource to help identify programs in your area. Other important steps in the process of formalizing collaboration include learning about each other's organizations; determining a shared purpose for the collaboration; determining roles, responsibilities, and resources; and sharing the news of the collaboration with everyone who works and volunteers at both agencies.

## 2.2

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### **Collaborates with Rape Crisis Center**

**Agency has an MOU, collaboration charter, or equivalent agreement with at least one rape crisis center that serves people living in the agency's service area that:**

- Is current and signed by agency leaders.
- Commits the agency to provide consultation and other assistance to the rape crisis center as needed.
- Dedicates staff time to participate in cross-agency meetings.
- Commits the agencies represented in the MOU to provide training at one another's new employee/volunteer orientations.

#### **Why This Indicator Matters**

Like domestic violence programs, rape crisis centers are a natural partner for disability organizations. With a formal agreement in place, their staff can serve as an invaluable resource and enhance the ability of disability organizations to address sexual violence in the lives of the people it serves. They can help identify barriers to



safety and healing within disability organizations and offer practical solutions for removing them, provide sexual violence-related training to their staff, co-advocate on behalf of survivors with disabilities, and more.

Reaching out to a rape crisis center to talk about abuse of people with disabilities is the first step toward formalizing a partnership. Most geographic areas in the country are served by at least one rape crisis center. The National Sexual Violence Resource Center ([www.nsvrc.org](http://www.nsvrc.org)) maintains an online directory of organizations and projects working to end sexual violence that may serve as useful resources to organizations looking for rape crisis centers in their area. Other important steps in the process of formalizing collaboration include learning about each other's organizations; determining a shared purpose for the collaboration; determining roles, responsibilities, and resources; and sharing the news of the collaboration with everyone who works and volunteers at both agencies.

## 2.3

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### Collaborates with Law Enforcement

#### Agency has an MOU with its local law enforcement department that:

- Commits the agency to provide annual training to enhance law enforcement's capacity to serve people with disabilities.
- Identifies a law enforcement liaison(s).
- Commits the agency staff to meet with law enforcement liaison(s) on a semi-annual basis.
- Commits the law enforcement liaison(s) to provide annual education events for the people the agency serves about the services and resources offered by law enforcement.

#### Why This Indicator Matters

Disability organizations are a likely place for people with disabilities who are being abused to reach out for help and seek justice. While justice means many different things to different people, the criminal justice system is one of the most common tools society has for holding people accountable for the crimes they commit.

Reporting a crime to law enforcement, especially crimes that are sexual in nature, can be very difficult. Challenges to reporting are compounded for people who have had limited to no interaction with law enforcement or are concerned about law enforcement's ability to understand and meet their needs, as is often the case with people with disabilities. Having a formal relationship with a local law enforcement agency helps to overcome some of the barriers that prevent people with disabilities from reporting crimes against them by creating opportunities for relationship-building, cross-training, and community education. It also reflects a high degree of commitment and dedication to meeting the needs of people who have experienced violence and abuse.

## 2.4

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### **Engages Protective Service Agencies**

**Agency sponsors staff training by its local protective services (i.e., children protective services, adult protective services, and ombudsman) to educate its staff on the following topics:**

- Relevant mandatory reporting laws.
- Reporting requirements.
- Reporting procedures.
- Rights of individuals with disabilities.

### **Why This Indicator Matters**

Many disability organizations have staff members who are mandated to report abuse of people with disabilities to the authorities, as specified by state law. In many cases, those reports are made to child or adult protective services, depending on the age of the person who has been abused. Through training, these enforcement agencies can assist disability organizations in understanding their responsibilities under mandatory reporting laws, including who within the organization is a mandated reporter, under what circumstances reports must be filed, and the appropriate process to follow when making a report. Moreover, having local protective service agencies provide training helps foster relationships between staff of those agencies and disability organizations, which is necessary to ensure survivors' needs are met when reports are made.

## 2.5

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### Includes People with Disabilities

#### Agency supports service users/self-advocates by:

- Supporting their participation in community efforts to address domestic and/or sexual violence.
- Facilitating opportunities for participants to conduct outreach to persons with disabilities about domestic and/or sexual violence.
- Preparing its peer support participants to address domestic and sexual violence through specialized training.
- Supporting their service on agency's safety and responsiveness review team.

#### Why This Indicator Matters

Disability organizations have a deep commitment to and long tradition of supporting people with disabilities to play an active role in shaping the policies and practices that impact their lives. People with disabilities have expertise and unique insights to contribute to improving services for survivors with disabilities and, ultimately, eliminating sexual abuse and domestic violence all together. They can help improve an agency's capacity to serve survivors with disabilities by training staff and making recommendations to improve policies and practices. They can also bolster the agency's direct services to the community by conducting outreach, facilitating educational or empowerment groups, and providing peer support. People with disabilities can be involved as volunteers and staff. Disability organizations can help foster these opportunities in much the same way they promote people with disabilities involvement in areas such as housing, health care, and voting. Self-advocates may require a range of supports—services to support their own healing from trauma, general training on domestic and sexual violence, and specialized training on providing peer support to someone who has experienced abuse—to meaningfully participate in efforts to address domestic and sexual violence depending on their previous experience.

## 2.6

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### Participates in Multi-Disciplinary Collaboration

Agency participates in a community-based multidisciplinary collaboration to end violence against people with disabilities and attends its meetings:

- Doesn't attend meetings
- Once a year
- Semi-annually
- Quarterly
- Monthly

#### Why This Indicator Matters

Domestic and sexual violence against people with disabilities and Deaf people has cascading effects on the entire community, not just the survivor, and requires the community to work together to address this issue. Survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors often turn to a variety of social systems in their journey to justice and healing. Participating in a multi-disciplinary collaboration that addresses violence against people with disabilities allows key players in community systems to develop strategies for a cohesive community response to this issue. These collaborations may include members of other disability organizations, domestic violence programs, rape crisis centers, the criminal justice system, the education system, and the public health system, among others, and create a system wide network of support for survivors with disabilities. The frequency of an agency's participation in these meetings is one way to measure its overall commitment to providing effective services to survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors.

## 3. Policies

An organization's policies affirm its mission, provide the framework for the organization's culture, and establish its expectations for individual members of its staff. Integrating confidentiality, safety, and healing into its policies communicates a clear message of commitment to staff members as well as the people using a disability organization's services. Furthermore, adopting policies specific to abuse of people with disabilities obligates the disability organization to ensure consistent follow through. The following indicators provide a barometer for disability organizations to determine the extent to which their policies contribute to a culture and framework for effectively serving people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced domestic and sexual violence.

### 3.1

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#### Mandatory Reporting

Agency has a policy about staff mandatory reporting responsibilities for people with disabilities that outlines:

- Who is a mandated reporter.
- What type(s) of abuse triggers a report.
- What type(s) of disability the person must have to trigger a report.
- Who the staff must report abuse to, both inside and outside of the agency.

#### Why This Indicator Matters

Every state and territory of the United States has mandatory reporting laws for "vulnerable adults," which require specified individuals to report certain injuries or cases of abuse or neglect of "vulnerable adults" to law enforcement, social services, and/or a regulatory agency. These laws are often vague in their definitions and requirements, leading to variations in how they are interpreted and applied from person to person and organization to organization. For people with disabilities who have experienced violence to feel safe and comfortable enough to talk about their experiences with staff at disability organizations, they need transparency in

mandatory reporting requirements and consistency in how those requirements are applied. A mandatory reporting policy articulates an organization's expectations for its staff regarding who mandatory reporters are within the agency, the type of abuse that triggers a report, the type of disability a person must have to trigger a report, and who the staff person must report allegations of abuse to, both inside and outside of the agency.

## 3.2

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### Confidentiality

#### Agency has a confidentiality policy that:

- Outlines any limitations of the agency's ability to hold confidential information about a person's experiences with domestic or sexual violence.
- Emphasizes survivor autonomy in deciding who to tell.
- Emphasizes that a limited number of people should be told about the incident, unless the survivor desires otherwise.
- Clearly articulates who within and outside of the agency will be told about disclosures of violence.

#### Why This Indicator Matters

Given the deeply personal, complex, and critical safety issues faced by survivors of domestic and sexual violence, confidentiality is a cornerstone of effective services and practices for people who have experienced violence and abuse. It is critical that survivors understand an organization's policies and practice surrounding the safeguarding and sharing of any information an organization collects or holds. This allows them to make informed decisions about what personal information to share and with whom. Additionally, survivors should have autonomy in deciding when, how, and what personal information will be shared or not shared and with whom both inside and outside of the organization. A confidentiality policy establishes an organization's expectations, obligations, and limitations surrounding the confidentiality of any of the survivor's information that its staff members collect or hold.

### 3.3

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#### Abuse by Employees

Agency has a policy establishing zero-tolerance for abuse committed by employees that outlines:

- The responsibility of its staff to report any suspected abuse by staff.
- Its commitment to investigating all allegations of abuse.
- What accused employees can expect during the investigation.
- Consequences of a finding of responsible for accused employees.

#### Why This Indicator Matters

Similar to perpetrators of crimes against people without disabilities, the majority of people who commit crimes against people with disabilities are known to their victims, such as family members.<sup>3</sup> Perpetrators of crimes against people with disabilities are also uniquely connected to their victims through service relationships. People working in disability-related fields (paid or unpaid caregivers, group home staff, occupational therapists, doctors, nurses, and other professionals) are also believed to be responsible for significant numbers of incidents.<sup>4</sup> A policy addressing abuse committed by employees articulates to all its employees the organization's expectations that allegations of abuse will be reported, investigated, and not tolerated. Having a policy that establishes zero-tolerance for abuse committed by staff members reflects a disability organization's commitment to providing a safe environment for all of its employees, service users, and visitors, which is an essential component of effectively addressing domestic and sexual violence.

## 3.4

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### Service to Victims and Perpetrators

Agency has a policy that addresses the instances when it is serving both the survivor and perpetrator of sexual and/or domestic violence that outlines:

- The agency's commitment to safe and respectful service delivery when serving victims and perpetrators.
- The agency's protections and limitations around confidentiality.
- The circumstances under which services can be terminated for perpetrators.
- The agency's commitment to ensuring victim safety and choice.

### Why This Indicator Matters

Just as disability organizations are likely serving survivors of domestic and sexual violence, they are also likely serving perpetrators of these crimes. For example, many disability organizations provide services to entire families and family members are often the likeliest to commit crimes against people with disabilities.<sup>5</sup> Acquaintances, which would include other service users or group home residents, for example, are also often responsible for these crimes. Significant safety concerns arise in settings where both survivors and perpetrators are being served. Having a policy that address how its staff should address these instances can mitigate these concerns by centralizing decision-making in victim safety and perpetrator accountability.

## 3.5

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### Guardianship

Agency has a guardianship policy that:

- Provides staff guidance on how to identify the level of guardianship in place.
- Articulates the emergency services that can be provided without guardian consent and regardless of the level of guardianship.



- Articulates the expectations of what can be said and done in front of a guardian.
- Guides staff to encourage the guardian to allow provision of services to people in private (i.e., without the guardian present).

### **Why This Indicator Matters**

Legal guardianship is the process by which a person assumes the position of decision maker for someone who is deemed by a court of law to be unable to make some decisions.<sup>6</sup> Understanding guardianship is essential to any organization committed to serving people with disabilities. Terminology for guardians differs from state to state and may include terms such as conservators and curators. In general, guardianship can be imposed over a person, their estate or finances, or both. Each level of guardianship has specific implications for a person's ability to independently consent to and receive services from a disability organization, from limited decision-making ability to broader authority. Without policies in place, it is common for staff to assume that people with disabilities who have guardians cannot make any decisions on their own behalf. This assumption creates barriers for several reasons: the person may not feel comfortable disclosing sexual violence or domestic abuse to their guardian, the guardian may be the offender, or the staff may wait for the guardian's consent before delivering crisis intervention, which delays services. Moreover, even when people with disabilities do have a guardian who has full decision-making authority, there are often legal exceptions to requiring a guardian's consent in matters involving crisis intervention and health and safety. Having a guardianship policy allows disability organizations to clearly delineate their state's guardianship laws and the different levels of guardianship that staff should understand while also clarifying expectations about service provision when a guardian is present.

# Capacity

## Categories: Material Resources, Human Resources, and Procedures

The capacity of a disability organization to address domestic and sexual violence in the lives of people with disabilities is reflected in its:

- physical and material resources: buildings, equipment, and written materials;
- human resources: the composition of its staff and volunteers, as well as their skill and experience; and
- procedures: the written protocols that guide how its staff members address domestic and sexual violence.

By proactively accounting for violence and abuse in all of these areas, disability organizations eliminate barriers to accessing services and equip their staff to meet the needs of people with disabilities who have experienced violence and abuse.

The capacity indicators will help staff members determine whether their agency possesses the building blocks necessary to address domestic and sexual violence against people with disabilities. Do physical spaces and materials facilitate people with disabilities disclosing their experiences with domestic and sexual violence and reaching out for help? What training and other learning opportunities are provided to staff and volunteers to bolster their capacity to support people who have experienced violence and abuse? Do the agency's procedures ground the interactions of its staff with the people it serves in safety, self-determination, and healing?

## 4. Material Resources

A welcoming environment that promotes safety, privacy, and comfort is an essential element of a disability organization's capacity to support people with disabilities who have experienced domestic and sexual violence. Using posters and brochures to let people know the organization is a safe place to talk about domestic and sexual violence, creating safe and private spaces within the organization for people to do so, and helping survivors find their voice and share their experiences are just a few strategies that help create that welcoming environment. The following indicators will help disability organizations measure the extent to which their material resources foster safety, discretion, and healing.

### 4.1

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#### Communicates Safe Space

Agency has visual/audio indicators that communicate to the people it serves that the agency is a safe environment for individuals to disclose domestic and/or sexual violence and to request help, including:

- Displaying informational posters addressing sexual and domestic violence.
- Displaying safe space/safe person signage in staff member's offices/agency work areas.
- Broadcasting safe space/safe person audio/electronic information for service users who have low vision or are blind.
- Having at least one public brochure that explicitly states that people can reach out to agency staff for help related to domestic and/or sexual violence.

#### Why This Indicator Matters

Many survivors are reluctant to reach out for help and share their personal experiences of domestic and sexual violence with the social service providers in their lives. They fear blame and judgment, and are wary that disclosure will jeopardize their safety. This fear is amplified if questions exist about the provider's familiarity

with and competency surrounding domestic and sexual violence. A disability organization can alleviate these concerns by communicating to the communities it serves that it is a safe place to discuss such issues.

## 4.2

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### Appropriate Disclosure Space

Agency has one or more designated spaces in its office that are used by staff to discuss experiences with domestic and/or sexual violence with the people it serves that:

- Maintains multiple purposes, so that a person who enters the room is not identified as a victim.
- Is private by sight, so that others cannot see who is in the room.
- Is private by sound, so that others cannot hear what is being said in the room.
- Includes measures of comfort such as tissues, blankets, pillows, and soft lighting.

### Why This Indicator Matters

Privacy is critical to ensuring that people who have experienced domestic and sexual violence can reach out for help and discuss their experiences with a trusted staff member. Most people do not want their private details, especially those relating to violence and abuse, exposed to other service users, other employees, or the community at large. If a survivor's experiences are accidentally exposed, the results may be emotionally devastating, and, for some, dangerous, if not fatal. A private, comfortable space within an organization that staff and survivors can use to have private conversations minimizes the chance that information will be released unintentionally and fosters disclosures among people the organization serves, which is a critical step for survivors to get support and heal.

## 4.3

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### Victimization-Oriented Communication Boards

Agency has a communication board that includes pictures/words that allow service users to:

- Disclose domestic violence.
- Disclose sexual violence.
- Report to police.
- Request resources.

#### Why This Indicator Matters

An important service many disability organizations offer is to help people with disabilities find and secure assistive technology (equipment, software, or other products that are used to increase, maintain, or enhance the capabilities of individuals with disabilities). An important type of assistive technology is an augmentative communication board, which is used to facilitate communication for people with limited expressive language ability. A person communicates through the board by pointing and gesturing or gazing at the various symbols and pictures attached. Recently, pictures of police officers, sexual anatomy, and acts of abuse have been added to some communication boards to facilitate disclosures of abuse. Having these communication boards available reflects a disability organization's capacity to support survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

## 4.4

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### Safe & Flexible Transportation

Does the transportation provider that the agency works with:

- Have flexible times and routes.
- Screen potential drivers for criminal histories that involve domestic and sexual violence.

- Keep transportation logs to guard against unaccounted time of its drivers.
- Have set-up/securement protocols and training for drivers.

### Why This Indicator Matters

Many disability organizations offer or arrange transportation as a service to the community, but transportation can raise safety concerns for people with disabilities. For example, people with disabilities have reported being sexually assaulted by bus drivers or other transportation system personnel. Not screening potential personnel for histories of domestic and sexual violence, a lack of training for personnel on organizational policies regarding abuse, and not requiring personnel to account for their time and travel contribute to these instances of abuse. Disability organizations can integrate the measures listed above into their transportation program or work with their transportation providers to adopt these measures.

## 5. Human Resources

A disability organization's staff and volunteers represent its human capital and are essential to supporting and building the desired organizational culture. The policies and practices the disability organization employs to ensure its staff and volunteers represent the diversity of the communities it serves and has the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to effectively address domestic and sexual violence have a significant impact on its capacity to serve survivors with disabilities. The following indicators provide a measure for disability organizations to determine how its human resources policies and practices are supporting staff members' and volunteers' ability to fulfill their mission.

### 5.1

#### Inclusive Hiring Practices

Agency recruitment and hiring practices include:

- Conducting background checks on applicants for histories of domestic and sexual violence perpetration.

- Including substantive knowledge of domestic and/or sexual violence as an employment qualification in at least one job announcement.
- Posting job announcements at domestic and sexual violence partner agencies.
- Recruiting board members with substantive knowledge of domestic and/or sexual violence.

### **Why This Indicator Matters**

Creating a safe and knowledgeable workforce requires a human resources department that understands the ways in which domestic and sexual violence intersect with recruitment, hiring, and retention and incorporates related best practices. This includes conducting background checks on applicants to screen for histories of domestic and sexual violence as a strategy to prevent acts of violence by employees. Additionally, ensuring that an agency's staff members are knowledgeable about and skilled at addressing domestic and sexual violence requires it to adopt practices that will recruit people with this talent.

## **5.2**

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### **Workplace Domestic Violence and Sexual Harassment Policies**

#### **Agency addresses sexual harassment and domestic violence involving staff by having:**

- An anti-sexual harassment policy.
- A workplace domestic violence policy.
- A mandatory, annual training for staff on sexual harassment.
- A mandatory, annual training for staff on domestic violence.

### **Why This Indicator Matters**

Domestic and sexual violence are issues at every workplace even if the violence occurs elsewhere. They create unique issues for employers and employees that must be addressed in a proactive and uniform manner. Policies that address domestic and sexual

violence provide clear guidelines on how a disability organization will prevent and address these dangerous and damaging forms of violence in the workplace. Providing its staff with annual trainings in domestic and sexual violence helps to ensure staff members have the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively implement these policies. These policies and their accompanying trainings also reflect an organization's commitment to a healthy, safe work environment.

## 5.3

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### Direct Service Staff Training

**Agency trains direct service staff to build competency on serving survivors with disabilities, including:**

- Understanding dynamics of domestic violence in the lives of people with disabilities.
- How to identify sexual violence and information on the criteria for consensual sexual activity.
- How to conduct basic safety planning with survivors with disabilities.
- How to assist survivors with disabilities who want to make a report to law enforcement.

### Why This Indicator Matters

The knowledge and skills of the people who work at disability organizations have a direct bearing on the organization's ability to effectively address domestic and sexual violence. Doing so requires that its staff have specialized knowledge on a number of topics ranging from understanding power and control tactics to identifying safety considerations to knowing the trauma-related resources in the community. Specialized skills are also needed to provide basic safety planning to people with disabilities who are experiencing domestic violence, to identify whether sexual activity is consensual, and to assist survivors who chose to pursue a criminal case file a report with law enforcement. Disability organizations can help to build their staff members' competencies in these areas by offering specialized training on an ongoing basis. These trainings are an



excellent opportunity for disability organizations to partner with domestic violence programs and rape crisis centers, as their staff can help design the curriculum and can serve as co-trainers.

## 5.4

### Practical Learning Opportunities

Agency provides its staff and volunteers with the following learning opportunities:

- Tours of a domestic violence agency.
- Tours of a rape crisis center.
- Presentations from domestic violence survivors with disabilities.
- Presentations from sexual violence survivors with disabilities.

### Why This Indicator Matters

In addition to formal training opportunities, there are a number of learning opportunities disability organizations can offer to its staff and volunteers to increase their comfort and confidence around domestic and sexual violence. Having staff members tour domestic violence programs and rape crisis centers, for example, builds their awareness of the services these organizations provide and fosters relationship building among staff of the organizations. Having presentations from survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors provides staff and volunteers with opportunities to interact with survivors and learn about their unique experiences and needs.

## 6. Procedures

Ensuring its staff members are equipped to respond to disclosures of domestic and sexual violence in ways that support safety and healing is a critical component of an organization's capacity to serve survivors with disabilities. There are many indications of this capacity within disability organizations, including how staff members identify survivors of domestic and sexual violence, provide immediate safety planning, file mandatory reports, and navigate potentially complex and dangerous situations—such as

when other staff members or service users are responsible for the reported abuse. The following indicators will help disability organizations measure the extent to which their procedures related to domestic and sexual violence are grounded in confidentiality and survivor choice and autonomy.

## 6.1

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### Mandatory Reporting Procedures

Agency's written mandatory reporting procedures require staff to:

- Inform service recipients about mandatory reporting requirements of staff so they can make informed decisions about disclosure.
- Allow service recipients who wish to talk about sexual and/or domestic violence to speak with a non-mandated reporter or agency.
- Provide affected service recipients with the option of making the report themselves or co-reporting with the agency staff.
- Meet with affected service recipients after mandatory reports have been made to determine what supports they may need because of the mandatory reporting process.

### Why This Indicator Matters

Mandatory reporting laws for “vulnerable adults” were designed to keep people with disabilities and/or older adults safe, under the assumption that they may not recognize that they are being victimized; are unaware of services; and/or may be too ashamed, afraid, or physically unable to seek help without outside intervention. However, for some people with disabilities, these laws have a silencing effect and actually serve as a barrier to people reaching out for help, in part because these laws do not allow people with disabilities to decide for themselves whether, when, and from whom to ask for help. Adopting procedures around mandatory reporting in ways that give survivors choice and control is essential to an organization's capacity to serve survivors, since autonomy and control are often stripped from survivors and regaining these elements is necessary to heal.

## 6.2

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### Screening for Domestic and Sexual Violence

Agency's screening of people it serves for sexual or domestic violence victimization is done:

- On an ongoing basis.
- By a non-mandated reporter.
- To assess for histories of domestic and sexual violence as well as current victimization.
- One-on-one, without a partner, family member, guardian, or other caregiver present.

#### Why This Indicator Matters

There is a growing awareness of the high rates of domestic and sexual violence among people with disabilities, as well as the gap that exists between this community and the organizations—domestic violence shelters and rape crisis centers—that are there to help. Many people with disabilities interact at some point with a disability organization, and those providers can play a critical role in identifying domestic and sexual violence, providing supports, and linking survivors to partner agencies that specifically address domestic and sexual violence. Having a screening procedure in place for domestic and sexual violence reflects a disability organization's capacity to address these issues and ensures a consistent protocol is followed among all its staff members.

## 6.3

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### Immediate Safety Planning

Agency's safety planning protocol guides its staff in helping survivors:

- Create a bag with important items (documents, assistive technology, medications, etc.) the person will need in an emergency situation and to determine where best to keep it.
- Determine if calling 911 is a safe and viable option.

- Determine if any escape options exist and prepare survivor to use them.
- Connect survivor with ongoing, accessible victim services and support.

### Why This Indicator Matters

Safety planning is an important process that providers can use to help survivor's protect themselves emotionally and physically in an abusive relationship. A safety plan is a personalized, practical plan to keep a person, any children, and pets safe. It helps a person avoid dangerous situations, know the best way to react when s/he is in danger, cope with emotions, tell friends and family about the abuse, take action, and more. Having staff members that are skilled at safety planning is essential in any organization that is committed to addressing domestic and sexual violence, especially since a survivor's safety and well-being is most at risk during episodes of violence and when reaching out for help and attempting to leave an abuser.

## 6.4

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### Informed Referrals

**Agency has a written protocol on how to make informed referrals to a domestic violence organization or rape crisis center that includes:**

- Identifying the best, most appropriate agency(s) for referral.
- Offering options for contacting the agency (together or alone in a private area).
- Strategizing with the person to ensure the service user's access needs are met by the referral agency.
- Honoring the person's choice on whether or not to make contact.

### Why This Indicator Matters

Victim services organizations—domestic violence programs, rape crisis centers, child advocacy centers, etc.—offer specialized and comprehensive services for people experiencing violence and

abuse, including crisis intervention, counseling, emergency shelter, criminal justice advocacy, medical advocacy, and emergency transportation. Having a formalized process in place to link survivors with disabilities to these organizations is an important reflection of a disability organization's capacity to address domestic and sexual violence.

## 6.5

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### Addressing Abuse by Employees and Volunteers

Agency has written procedures addressing how to handle allegations of abuse committed by agency employees and volunteers that outline:

- The confidentiality protections and limitations of the involved employees, volunteers, and service users.
- How and by whom an investigation will be conducted.
- Options for holding the responsible person accountable.
- The support provided to victims.

#### Why This Indicator Matters

Having a policy in place that articulates zero-tolerance for abuse committed by employees and volunteers of the organization is critical for establishing a culture of prevention and non-violence, but a policy alone is not enough. If not done properly, handling allegations of abuse against employees and volunteers can be complicated and potentially dangerous for the victims and other people in the organization. A strong written protocol for handling these situations is essential. It provides employees with guidelines for information sharing and confidentiality, protocols for conducting investigations, options for holding the responsible person accountable, and steps to ensure victims are provided with proper support throughout the process.

## 6.6

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### Serving Victims and Perpetrators

Agency has written procedures on handling instances when both the victim and perpetrator are being served by the agency that address:

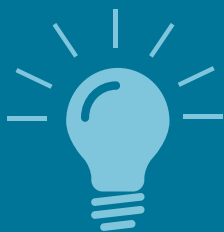
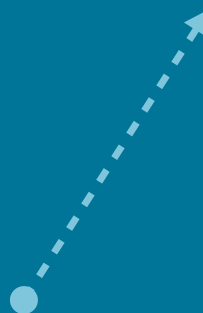
- Confidentiality protections and limitations.
- How victim/perpetrator status affects service eligibility and termination of services.
- How and when to link survivor to resources and supports.
- How and when to link perpetrator to appropriate interventions.

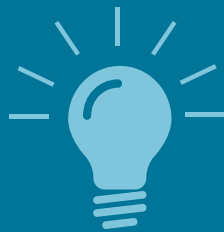
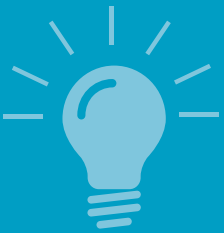
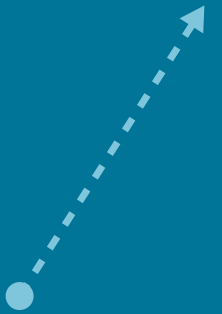
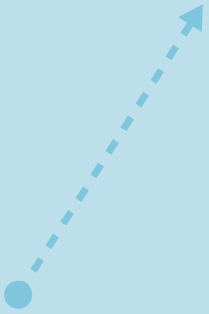
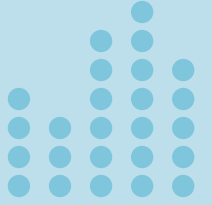
### Why This Indicator Matters

A written protocol on how staff should address instances when the organization is serving victims and perpetrators is an important complement to an organization's policy on the same topic. Effective protocols outline confidentiality protections and limitations, under what circumstances services will be terminated, how to link survivors to support, and how to link perpetrators to appropriate interventions.

Section III

# Using the Indicators in Your Organization








## Section III. Using the Indicators in Your Organization

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Once you are ready to use the performance indicators within your agency, you can follow the steps below to successfully collect data, score the indicators, interpret your scores, and use the results to increase your capacity to serve survivors with disabilities. If you have not already done so, familiarize yourself with the performance indicators and the process discussed in sections I and II before proceeding.

### Step 1

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#### Build a Culture of Indicator Appreciation

Before your agency begins the process of using the indicators, it will be helpful to build a culture of indicator appreciation throughout your agency. You should discuss the performance indicator system with your staff, why your agency is using it, and its benefits, such as developing strategic plans, documenting progress, and celebrating successes around effectively serving survivors with disabilities (See box on page 10 for more benefits). In addition, it is important to communicate to staff that the indicators are not meant to be a comprehensive assessment of the agency's services, nor are they an audit of employees' individual performances. Openly communicating these points to your staff will maximize the utility of the indicator system within your agency, allowing you to use the scores in a wide variety of ways, such as grant applications, fundraising appeals, and annual reports.

### Step 2

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#### Notify Your Agency Staff

Once you have set a date to begin using the performance indicator measurement system, notify your agency staff about the timeline, thus alerting them to the possibility that they may be asked to assist in the process and communicating to them that this process is an agency priority.

## Step 3

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### Assemble an Indicators Team

The next step is to create an indicators team that will gather information and score the indicators. Depending upon the size of your agency, the team may consist of multiple staff members or just one staff member and your project director. Select team members who are best suited for collecting the various pieces of information listed in the Information Collection Guide. Choose staff members who have a strong working knowledge of agency policies and procedures, agency programming and operations, or outreach activities. Once you have selected your team, meet to determine everyone's roles and responsibilities in the process. Members of the team within the agency will work together to collect the relevant information (listed in the Information Collection Guide) and then meet to score the indicators (using the Indicator Scoring Tool).

## Step 4

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### Collect the Information

Once you have established your indicators team, the next step is collecting the three types of information needed to score the indicators: agency documents, agency observations, and staff knowledge. To gather this information, use the Information Collection Guide, located on page 73. The guide is divided into three sections—a **document checklist**, an **observation guide**, and **staff interview questions**—that instruct you on what information to collect and how to collect it. Review the Information Collection Guide with your indicators team and assign collection tasks based on the following information sources:

1. The **document checklist** section requires indicators team members to compile various agency documents (such as intake forms, policies, procedures, and resource sheets) that they will review together. Pull the relevant documents (either digital or hard copies) and house them in a central location so they are easily accessible during the scoring portion of the process. You can check off each document you have collected as you go.

- The **observation guide** focuses on details of the agency that are not captured in agency documents and instead must be directly observed. It leads agency staff through a series of observations of the agency's physical environment and asks Yes/No questions based on these observations related to safety and accessibility. The team member(s) responsible for collecting this information will record answers in the space provided on the sheet.
- Finally, the **staff interview questions** are Yes/No questions designed to obtain information about the agency from various agency employees. The questions are grouped by theme and should be answered by the staff member most knowledgeable in each area. The team member(s) responsible for collecting this information will record answers in the space provided on the sheet.



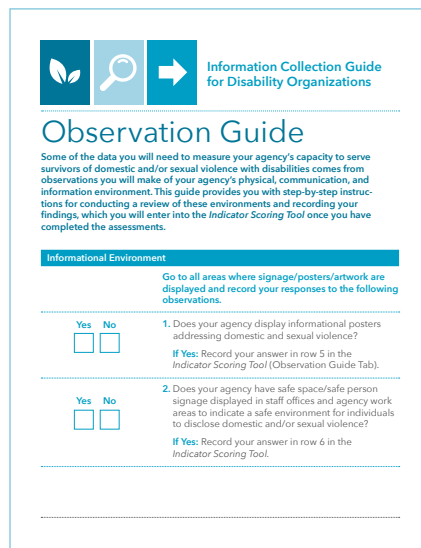
**Information Collection Guide for Disability Organizations**

### Document Checklist

Some of the information you will need to measure your agency's capacity to serve survivors of domestic and sexual violence with disabilities comes from pre-existing agency documents. Gather the documents listed below, and then consult them in order to answer the questions in the *Indicator Scoring Tool*.

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Written Protocols</b>	<b>Other</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory reporting	<input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory reporting	<input type="checkbox"/> Safety and responsiveness review tool
<input type="checkbox"/> Abuse by employees	<input type="checkbox"/> Screening for domestic and sexual violence for clients	<input type="checkbox"/> Safety and responsiveness review team roster
<input type="checkbox"/> Service to victims and perpetrators	<input type="checkbox"/> Immediate safety planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Safety and responsiveness review team meeting minutes
<input type="checkbox"/> Confidentiality	<input type="checkbox"/> Informed referrals	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency strategic plan (current)
<input type="checkbox"/> Anti-sexual harassment	<input type="checkbox"/> Addressing abuse by employees	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual statistical report
<input type="checkbox"/> Workplace domestic violence	<input type="checkbox"/> Serving victims and perpetrators	<input type="checkbox"/> Grant proposal submitted in partnership with DV agency
<input type="checkbox"/> Guardianship		<input type="checkbox"/> Grant proposal submitted in partnership with rape crisis center
<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>Interagency Agreements</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Job announcements/postings
<input type="checkbox"/> Direct services staff training	<input type="checkbox"/> MOU with domestic violence agency	<input type="checkbox"/> Redacted budget
<b>Programmatic Resources</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> MOU with rape crisis center	
<input type="checkbox"/> Agency brochures and/or social media accounts	<input type="checkbox"/> MOU with local law enforcement agency	

Document Checklist



**Information Collection Guide for Disability Organizations**

### Observation Guide

Some of the data you will need to measure your agency's capacity to serve survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence with disabilities comes from observations you will make of your agency's physical, communication, and information environment. This guide provides you with step-by-step instructions for conducting a review of these environments and recording your findings, which you will enter into the *Indicator Scoring Tool* once you have completed the assessments.

**Informational Environment**

Go to all areas where signage/posters/artwork are displayed and record your responses to the following observations.

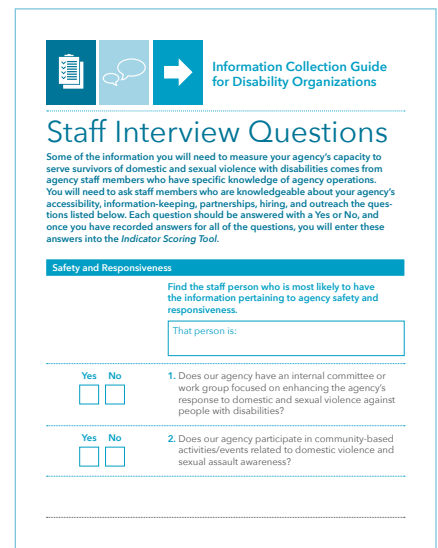
**Yes No**

1. Does your agency display informational posters addressing domestic and sexual violence?  
If Yes: Record your answer in row 5 in the *Indicator Scoring Tool* (Observation Guide Tab).

**Yes No**

2. Does your agency have safe space/safe person signage displayed in staff offices and agency work areas to indicate a safe environment for individuals to disclose domestic and/or sexual violence?  
If Yes: Record your answer in row 6 in the *Indicator Scoring Tool*.

Observation Guide



**Information Collection Guide for Disability Organizations**

### Staff Interview Questions

Some of the information you will need to measure your agency's capacity to serve survivors of domestic and sexual violence with disabilities comes from agency staff members who have specific knowledge of agency operations. You will need to ask staff members who are knowledgeable about your agency's accessibility, information-keeping, partnerships, hiring, and outreach the questions listed below. Each question should be answered with a Yes or No, and once you have recorded answers for all of the questions, you will enter these answers into the *Indicator Scoring Tool*.

**Safety and Responsiveness**

Find the staff person who is most likely to have the information pertaining to agency safety and responsiveness.

That person is:

**Yes No**

1. Does our agency have an internal committee or work group focused on enhancing the agency's response to domestic and sexual violence against people with disabilities?

**Yes No**

2. Does our agency participate in community-based activities/events related to domestic violence and sexual assault awareness?

Staff Interview Questions

**\*Tip: Record the person's name and position on the answer sheet, and store this information with the documents, so that you do not need to re-identify agency experts in future rounds of information collection.**

## Step 5

### Score Your Agency

Once all of the information is collected and entered into the Indicator Scoring Tool—a Microsoft Excel file—compare those data to the performance indicators to determine your agency’s overall score. The scoring sheet calculates your agency’s scores automatically. Use the gathered documents and information to answer the Yes/No questions found in the scoring tool. The scoring tool has six tabs along the bottom—Document Checklist, Observation Guide, Staff Interview Guide, Scores at a Glance, Component A Commitment Progress, and Component B Capacity Progress. The following instructions were designed to help you to score the performance indicators.

Document Checklist

Scores at a Glance

Observation Guide

Component A Commitment Progress

Staff Interview Guide

Component B Capacity Progress

**Note:** To score the indicators, you will need access to a computer, all of the documents listed in the document checklist, and answers to the agency observation and staff interview questions.

- Open the Indicator Scoring Sheet and save it to your desktop.
- Beginning with the first tab, “Document Checklist,” use the designated document listed in the first column to answer the Yes/No questions listed in the “Questions to Answer” column. Check the box next to the question if your answer is yes. **Please note: you must actually pull the document and review it to determine the answer. Do not answer these questions simply from memory.**
- If the answer to the question is “Yes”, you will receive a point for that measurement. The tool will automatically calculate your scores as you answer the questions.

- Move to the next tab, “Observation Guide,” and enter your answers from the observations you conducted, found in the information collection guide.
- Move to the next tab, “Staff Interview Guide,” and enter your answers from the information you collected from various staff members.
- Review your scores, which are the percentage of indicator measures your agency has met. You can view the completed measurements for each individual indicator in the “Component A Commitment Progress” and “Component B Capacity Progress” tabs. You can view the themes, component, and overall agency scores in the “Scores at a Glance” tab. Use these to identify areas of strength and areas of need.
- Once you have completed answering the questions in these three tabs, save the Excel file as “YOUR AGENCY NAME\_Month\_Year.”

## Step 6

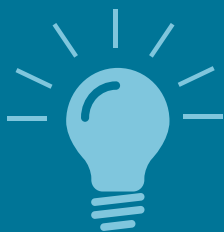
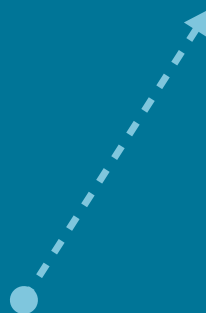
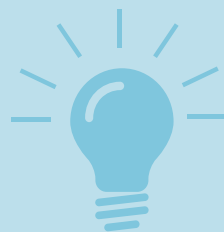
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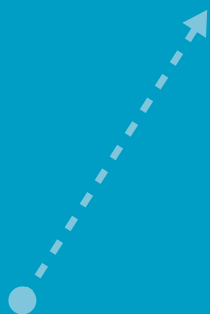
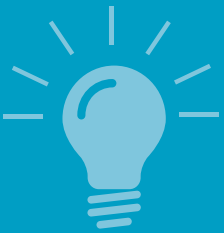
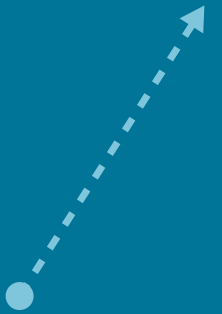
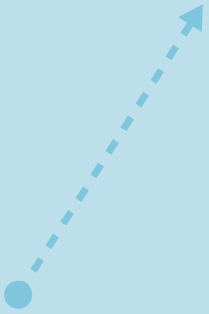
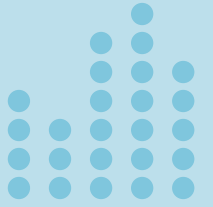
### Interpret the Results

After you have completed the Indicator Scoring Sheet, you can view your results in Tabs 4 through 6. Tab 4—Scores at a Glance— contains your agency’s scores. Scores are determined as the percentage of measurements complete within each theme, component, and overall. Tabs 5 and 6—Component A Commitment Progress and Component B Capacity Progress—have the indicators and measures listed. Those that your agency has met are marked as “Achieved,” and those that your agency has yet to meet are marked as “Not Achieved.” These tabs are useful for agency planning and in deciding where to focus short and long-term efforts to increase levels of service to survivors with disabilities or Deaf survivors. You can share the results with the indicators team and the agency as a whole. To learn more about enhancing levels of service, agencies can visit [www.endabusepwd.org](http://www.endabusepwd.org).

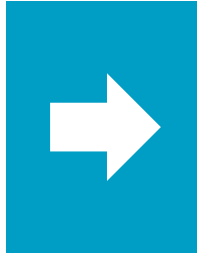
As you collect this information periodically over time, you will also be able to track areas of progress, regress, and lack of change. The most important thing to remember when looking at your agency's results is not to get discouraged if your scores are low. The indicators do not capture all of the work that your agency has done at the intersection of violence and disability. It is okay to begin with a low score; changes take time. What matters is that your agency demonstrates an improvement in scores over time.

# Appendices









## Performance Indicators for Disability Organizations

### Component A

# Commitment

Agency demonstrates willingness and determination to address domestic and sexual violence within the community it serves.

### Theme 1: Responsibility

Agency recognizes its duty to address domestic and sexual violence in the lives of the people it serves.

#### Indicator

1.1

**Recognizes Violence Against People with Disabilities as a Priority**

#### Definition

**Agency recognizes violence against people with disabilities and Deaf individuals as a priority by:**

- A.** Specifically mentioning services to address abuse in agency’s public outreach brochure or social media accounts
- B.** Including efforts to increase capacity to address domestic and/or sexual violence against people with disabilities in the agency’s strategic plan
- C.** Having an internal committee or work group focused on enhancing the agency’s response to domestic and sexual violence against people with disabilities
- D.** Participating in community-based activities/events related to domestic violence and sexual assault awareness

**Indicator**

**Definition**

**1.2**

**Assesses for Safety and Responsiveness**

**Agency has infrastructure to routinely assess its safety and responsiveness to domestic and sexual violence, including:**

- A.** A trained review team of internal staff and external experts from the fields of domestic and sexual violence
- B.** A standardized review process and tool
- C.** A scheduled week each year dedicated to conducting the review
- D.** A process to review findings with staff and external experts to develop possible solutions to identified issues

**1.3**

**Raises Funds**

**The agency seeks funding to address domestic and sexual violence against people with disabilities in the following ways:**

- A.** Agency has raised the issue of addressing domestic and sexual violence among people with disabilities to its primary funding source
- B.** Agency has added activities that address domestic and sexual violence among the people it serves to the scope of services outlined in at least one of its grant applications
- C.** Agency has submitted at least one proposal in partnership with a domestic violence program
- D.** Agency has submitted at least one proposal in partnership with a rape crisis center

## Commitment / Responsibility

---

### Indicator

### Definition

1.4

Includes in Budget

**Agency has a separate line item(s) in overall agency budget dedicated to addressing domestic and sexual violence among the people it serves, including funds for:**

- A. Staff time spent addressing these issues
- B. Staff development and training
- C. Safety enhancements to the agency's core environments (physical, information/communication, policy, and social)
- D. Emergency resources for clients, such as taxi cabs and hotel rooms

1.5

Collects Data

**Agency collects the following information, in either paper or electronic form:**

- A. Number of people served who request support from the agency related to domestic or sexual violence
- B. Number of people served who disclose a past history of trauma or victimization
- C. Number of internal reports of domestic and/or sexual violence made to supervisors or other agency staff named in the agency's mandatory reporting policy
- D. Number of people referred to outside victim service providers

1.6

Uses Data

**Agency adjusts its programmatic priorities to better meet the needs of survivors with disabilities based on an analysis of the following data:**

- A. National trends on victimization of people with disabilities, using data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)

## Commitment / Responsibility / Partnerships

---

### Indicator

### Definition

- B.** Jurisdictional needs, including the number of reports of vulnerable adults made to adult protective services, the type(s) of abuse, perpetrators, and report outcomes
- C.** Agency trends, including the number of domestic and/or sexual violence disclosures by clients, the type(s) of abuse disclosed, and the requests for services
- D.** Gaps between the identified needs of survivors and available programming

## Theme 2: Partnerships

**Agency works closely with relevant organizations to enhance its ability to address domestic and sexual violence in the lives of the people it serves.**

---

### Indicator

### Definition

2.1

**Collaborates with Domestic Violence Agency**

**Agency has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), collaboration charter, or equivalent agreement with at least one domestic violence program that serves people living in the agency's service area that:**

- A.** Is current and signed by agency leaders
- B.** Commits the agency to provide consultation and other assistance to the domestic violence agency as needed
- C.** Dedicates staff time to participate in cross-agency meetings
- D.** Commits the agencies represented in the MOU to provide training at one another's new employee/volunteer orientations

## Commitment / Partnerships

---

### Indicator

### Definition

2.2

Collaborates with  
Rape Crisis Center

**Agency has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), collaboration charter, or equivalent agreement with at least one rape crisis center that serves people living in the agency's service area that:**

- A.** Is current and signed by agency leaders
- B.** Commits the agency to provide consultation and other assistance to the rape crisis center as needed
- C.** Dedicates staff time to participate in cross-agency meetings
- D.** Commits the agencies represented in the MOU to provide training at one another's new employee/volunteer orientations

2.3

Collaborates with  
Law Enforcement

**Agency has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with its local law enforcement department that:**

- A.** Commits the agency to provide annual training to enhance law enforcement's capacity to serve people with disabilities
- B.** Identifies a law enforcement liaison(s)
- C.** Commits the agency staff to meet with law enforcement liaison(s) on a semi-annual basis
- D.** Commits the law enforcement liaison(s) to provide annual education events for the people the agency serves about the services and resources offered by law enforcement

## Commitment / Partnerships

---

### Indicator

### Definition

2.4

Engages Protective Service Agencies

**Agency sponsors staff training by its local protective services (i.e., Children Protective Services, Adult Protective Services, and/or Ombudsman) to educate its staff on the following topics:**

- A. Relevant mandatory reporting laws
- B. Reporting requirements
- C. Reporting procedures
- D. Rights of individuals with disabilities

2.5

Includes People with Disabilities

**Agency supports service users/self-advocates by:**

- A. Supporting their participation in community efforts to address domestic and/or sexual violence
- B. Facilitating opportunities for participants to conduct outreach to persons with disabilities about domestic and/or sexual violence
- C. Preparing its peer support participants to address domestic and sexual violence through specialized training
- D. Supporting their service on agency's safety and responsiveness review team

2.6

Participates in Multi-Disciplinary Collaboration

**Agency participates in a community-based multidisciplinary collaboration to end violence against people with disabilities and attends its meetings:**

- A. Doesn't attend meetings
- B. Once a year
- C. Semi-annually
- D. Quarterly
- E. Monthly

**Theme 3: Policies**

Agency's written policies establish expectations for how the organization addresses domestic and sexual victimization among the people it serves.

---

**Indicator**

**Definition**

**3.1**

**Mandatory Reporting**

**Agency has a policy about staff mandatory reporting responsibilities for people with disabilities that outlines:**

- A.** Who is a mandated reporter
- B.** What type(s) of abuse triggers a report
- C.** What type(s) of disability the person must have to trigger a report
- D.** Who the staff must report abuse to, both inside and outside of the agency

**3.2**

**Confidentiality**

**Agency has a confidentiality policy that:**

- A.** Outlines any limitations of the agency's ability to hold confidential information about a person's experiences with domestic or sexual violence
- B.** Emphasizes survivor autonomy in deciding who to tell
- C.** Emphasizes that a limited number of people should be told about the incident, unless the survivor desires otherwise
- D.** Clearly articulates who within and outside of the agency will be told about disclosures of violence

**Indicator**

**Definition**

**3.3**

**Abuse by Employees**

**Agency has a policy establishing zero-tolerance for abuse committed by employees that outlines:**

- A.** The responsibility of its staff to report any suspected abuse by staff
- B.** Its commitment to investigating all allegations of abuse
- C.** What accused employees can expect during the investigation
- D.** Consequences of a finding of responsible for accused employees

**3.4**

**Service to Victims and Perpetrators**

**Agency has a policy that addresses the instances when it is serving both the survivor and perpetrator of sexual and/or domestic violence that outlines:**

- A.** The agency's commitment to safe and respectful service delivery when serving victims and perpetrators
- B.** The agency's protections and limitations around confidentiality
- C.** The circumstances under which services can be terminated for perpetrators
- D.** The agency's commitment to ensuring victim safety and choice



**Indicator**

**Definition**

**3.5**

**Agency has a guardianship policy that**

**Guardianship**

- A.** Provides staff guidance on how to identify the level of guardianship in place
- B.** Articulates the emergency services that can be provided without guardian consent and regardless of the level of guardianship
- C.** Articulates the expectations of what can be said and done in front of a guardian
- D.** Guides staff to encourage the guardian to allow provision of services to people in private (i.e., without the guardian present)



## Performance Indicators for Disability Organizations

### Component B

# Capacity

Agency has procedures, knowledge, skills, and resources to respond to domestic and sexual violence in the lives of the people it serves.

#### Theme 4: Material Resources

Agency's physical infrastructure prioritizes safety and supports service users to disclose domestic and sexual violence.

#### Indicator

4.1

Communicates  
Safe Space

#### Definition

Agency has visual/audio indicators that communicate to the people it serves that the agency is a safe environment for individuals to disclose domestic and/or sexual violence and to request help, including:

- A. Displaying informational posters addressing sexual and domestic violence
- B. Displaying safe space/safe person signage in staff member's offices/agency work areas
- C. Broadcasting safe space/safe person audio/electronic information for service recipients who have low vision or are blind
- D. Having at least one public brochure that explicitly states that people can reach out to agency staff for help related to domestic and/or sexual violence

## Capacity / Material Resources

---

### Indicator

### Definition

4.2

Appropriate  
Disclosure Space

**Agency has one or more designated spaces in its office that are used by staff to discuss experiences with domestic and/or sexual violence with the people it serves that:**

- A. Maintains multiple purposes, so that a person who enters the room is not identified as a victim
- B. Is private by sight, so that others cannot see who is in the room
- C. Is private by sound, so that others cannot hear what is being said in the room
- D. Includes measures of comfort such as tissues, blankets, pillows, and soft lighting

4.3

Victimization-Oriented  
Communication Boards

**Agency has a communication board that includes pictures/words that allow service users to:**

- A. Disclose domestic violence
- B. Disclose sexual violence
- C. Report to police
- D. Request resources

4.4

Safe & Flexible  
Transportation

**Does the transportation provider that we work with:**

- A. Have flexible times and routes
- B. Screen potential drivers for criminal histories that involve domestic and sexual violence
- C. Keep transportation logs to guard against unaccounted time of its drivers
- D. Have set-up/securement protocols and training for drivers

**Theme 5: Human Resources**

**Agency's employment and staff development practices build capacity to address domestic and sexual victimization among the people it serves.**

---

**Indicator**

**Definition**

**5.1**

**Agency recruitment and hiring practices include:**

**Inclusive Hiring Practices**

- A.** Conducting background checks on applicants for histories of domestic and sexual violence perpetration
- B.** Including substantive knowledge of domestic and/or sexual violence as an employment qualification in at least one job announcement
- C.** Posting job announcements at domestic and sexual violence partner agencies
- D.** Recruiting board members with substantive knowledge of domestic and/or sexual violence

**5.2**

**Agency addresses sexual harassment and domestic violence involving staff by having:**

**Workplace Domestic Violence and Sexual Harassment Policies**

- A.** An anti-sexual harassment policy
- B.** A workplace domestic violence policy
- C.** A mandatory, annual training for staff on sexual harassment
- D.** A mandatory, annual training for staff on domestic violence

**5.3**

**Agency trains direct service staff to build competency on serving survivors with disabilities, including:**

**Direct Service Staff Training**

- A.** Understanding dynamics of domestic violence in the lives of people with disabilities
-

**Indicator**

**Definition**

- B.** How to identify sexual violence and information on the criteria for consensual sexual activity
- C.** How to conduct basic safety planning with survivors with disabilities
- D.** How to assist survivors with disabilities who want to make a report to law enforcement

**5.4**

**Practical Learning Opportunities**

**Agency provides its staff and volunteers with the following learning opportunities:**

- A.** Tours of a domestic violence agency
- B.** Tours of a rape crisis center
- C.** Presentations from domestic violence survivors with disabilities
- D.** Presentations from sexual violence survivors with disabilities

**Theme 6: Procedures**

**Agency has written protocols that guide how its staff members address domestic and sexual violence.**

---

**Indicator**

**Definition**

**6.1**

**Mandatory Reporting Procedures**

**Agency's written mandatory reporting procedures requires staff to:**

- A.** Inform service recipients about mandatory reporting requirements of staff so they can make informed decisions about disclosure
- B.** Allow service recipients who wish to talk about sexual and/or domestic violence to speak with a non-mandated reporter or agency

### Indicator

### Definition

- C.** Provide affected service recipients with the option of making the report themselves or co-reporting with the agency staff
- D.** Meet with affected service recipients after mandatory reports have been made to determine what supports they may need because of the mandatory reporting process

### 6.2

---

#### Screening for Domestic and Sexual Violence

#### Agency's screening of people it serves for sexual or domestic violence victimization is done:

- A.** On an ongoing basis
- B.** By a non-mandated reporter
- C.** To assess for histories of domestic and sexual violence as well as current victimization
- D.** One-on-one, without a partner, family member, guardian, or other caregiver present

### 6.3

---

#### Immediate Safety Planning

#### Agency's safety planning protocol guides its staff to support survivors to:

- A.** Create a bag with important items (documents, assistive technology, medications, etc.) the person will need in an emergency situation and to determine where best to keep it
- B.** Determine if calling 911 is a safe and viable option
- C.** Determine if any escape options exist and prepare survivor to use them
- D.** Connect survivor with on-going, accessible victim services and supports

## Capacity / Procedures

---

### Indicator

### Definition

6.4

---

#### Informed Referrals

**Agency has a written protocol on how to make informed referrals to a domestic violence organization or rape crisis center that includes:**

- A.** Identifying the best, most appropriate agency(s) for referral
- B.** Offering options for contacting the agency (together or alone in a private area)
- C.** Strategizing with the person to ensure the service users access needs are met by the referral agency
- D.** Honoring the person's choice on whether or not to make contact

6.5

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#### Addressing Abuse by Employees and Volunteers

**Agency has written procedures addressing how to handle allegations of abuse committed by agency employees and volunteers that outline:**

- A.** The confidentiality protections and limitations of the involved employees, volunteers, and service users
- B.** How and by whom an investigation will be conducted
- C.** Options for holding the responsible person accountable
- D.** The support provided to victims

**Indicator**

**Definition**

6.6

Serving Victims  
and Perpetrators

Agency has written procedures on handling instances when both the victim and perpetrator are being served by the agency that address:

- A. Confidentiality protections and limitations
- B. How victim/perpetrator status affects service eligibility and termination of services
- C. How and when to link survivor to resources and supports
- D. How and when to link perpetrator to appropriate interventions





## Information Collection Guide for Disability Organizations

# Document Checklist

Some of the information you will need to measure your agency's capacity to serve survivors of domestic and sexual violence with disabilities comes from pre-existing agency documents. Gather the documents listed below, and then consult them in order to answer the questions in the *Indicator Scoring Tool*.

### Policies

- Mandatory reporting
- Abuse by employees
- Service to victims and perpetrators
- Confidentiality
- Anti-sexual harassment
- Workplace domestic violence
- Guardianship

### Curriculum

- Direct services staff training

### Programmatic Resources

- Agency brochures and/or social media accounts

### Written Protocols

- Mandatory reporting
- Screening for domestic and sexual violence for clients
- Immediate safety planning
- Informed referrals
- Addressing abuse by employees
- Serving victims and perpetrators

### Interagency Agreements

- MOU with domestic violence agency
- MOU with rape crisis center
- MOU with local law enforcement agency

### Other

- Safety and responsiveness review tool
- Safety and responsiveness review team roster
- Safety and responsiveness review team meeting minutes
- Agency strategic plan (current)
- Annual statistical report
- Grant proposal submitted in partnership with DV agency
- Grant proposal submitted in partnership with rape crisis center
- Job announcements/postings
- Redacted budget



## Information Collection Guide for Disability Organizations

# Observation Guide

Some of the data you will need to measure your agency's capacity to serve survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence with disabilities comes from observations you will make of your agency's physical, communication, and information environment. This guide provides you with step-by-step instructions for conducting a review of these environments and recording your findings, which you will enter into the *Indicator Scoring Tool* once you have completed the assessments.

### Informational Environment

Go to all areas where signage/posters/artwork are displayed and record your responses to the following observations.

Yes No

1. Does your agency display informational posters addressing domestic and sexual violence?

**If Yes:** Record your answer in row 5 in the *Indicator Scoring Tool* (Observation Guide Tab).

Yes No

2. Does your agency have safe space/safe person signage displayed in staff offices and agency work areas to indicate a safe environment for individuals to disclose domestic and/or sexual violence?

**If Yes:** Record your answer in row 6 in the *Indicator Scoring Tool*.

## Observation Guide / Informational Environment / Communication Environment

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Yes No

3. Does the agency broadcast safe space/safe person audio or electronic information within the agency for service recipients who have low vision or are blind?

**If Yes:** Record your answer in row 7 in the *Indicator Scoring Tool*.

---

### Communication Environment

Find the communication boards your agency uses with people with communication disabilities and record your response to the following observations.

---

Yes No

4. Does your agency have a communication board that has pictures/words that allow service recipients to disclose domestic violence?

**If Yes:** Record your answer in row 10 in the *Indicator Scoring Tool*.

---

Yes No

5. Does your agency have a communication board that has pictures/words that allow service recipients to disclose sexual violence?

**If Yes:** Record your answer in row 11 in the *Indicator Scoring Tool*.

---

Yes No

6. Does your agency have a communication board that has pictures/words that allow service recipients to report the violence to police?

**If Yes:** Record your answer in row 12 in the *Indicator Scoring Tool*.

---

## Observation Guide / Communication Environment / Physical Environment

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Yes No

7. Does your agency have a communication board that has pictures/words that allow service recipients to request resources?

**If Yes:** Record your answer in row 13 in the *Indicator Scoring Tool*.

---

### Physical Environment

**Go to the office(s) or meeting room(s) where advocates meet with survivors in your agency and answer the following questions about each area.**

---

Yes No

9. Does your agency have at least one designated space for disclosures/discussions of domestic and/or sexual violence that is not used solely for that purpose, so that entering the room does not identify the person as a victim?

**If Yes:** Record your answer in row 16 in the *Indicator Scoring Tool*.

---

Yes No

10. Does your agency have at least one designated space for disclosures/discussions of domestic and/or sexual violence that is private by sight, so that others cannot see who is in the room?

**If Yes:** Record your answer in row 17 in the *Indicator Scoring Tool*.

---

Yes No

11. Does your agency have at least one designated space for disclosures/discussions of domestic and/or sexual violence that is private by sound, so that others cannot hear what is being said in the room?

**If Yes:** Record your answer in row 18 in the *Indicator Scoring Tool*.

---

**Observation Guide / Physical Environment**

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**Yes**   **No**

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**12.** Does your agency have at least one designated space for disclosures/discussions of domestic and/or sexual violence that includes measures of comfort such as tissues, blankets, pillows, soft lighting?

**If Yes:** Record your answer in row 19 in the *Indicator Scoring Tool*.

---



## Information Collection Guide for Disability Organizations

# Staff Interview Questions

Some of the information you will need to measure your agency's capacity to serve survivors of domestic and sexual violence with disabilities comes from agency staff members who have specific knowledge of agency operations. You will need to ask staff members who are knowledgeable about your agency's accessibility, information-keeping, partnerships, hiring, and outreach the questions listed below. Each question should be answered with a Yes or No, and once you have recorded answers for all of the questions, you will enter these answers into the *Indicator Scoring Tool*.

### Safety and Responsiveness

Find the staff person who is most likely to have the information pertaining to agency safety and responsiveness.

That person is:

Yes No

1. Does our agency have an internal committee or work group focused on enhancing the agency's response to domestic and sexual violence against people with disabilities?

Yes No

2. Does our agency participate in community-based activities/events related to domestic violence and sexual assault awareness?

## Staff Interview Questions / Safety and Responsiveness / Data/Statistical Reports

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Yes No

3. Does our agency have a scheduled week each year dedicated to conducting a safety and responsiveness review?

---

Yes No

4. Have we raised the issue of addressing domestic and sexual violence among people with disabilities to our primary funding source?

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Yes No

5. Have we added activities that address domestic and sexual violence among the people we serve to the scope of services outlined in at least one of our grant applications?

---

Yes No

6. Do we conduct background checks on job applicants for histories of domestic and sexual violence perpetration?

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### Data/Statistical Reports

**Find the staff person who is most likely to have the information pertaining to agency data/statistical reports.**

That person is:

Yes No

7. Do we make data-informed programming decisions by reviewing the Bureau of Justice Statistics to understand national trends on victimization for people with disabilities?

---

Yes No

8. Do we make data-informed programming decisions by reviewing jurisdictional needs, including the number of reports of vulnerable adults made to adult protective services, the type(s) of abuse, perpetrators, and report outcomes?

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## Staff Interview Questions / Data/Statistical Reports / Peer Support

---

Yes No

9. Do we make data-informed programming decisions by reviewing agency trends, including the number of domestic and/or sexual violence disclosures by clients, the type(s) of abuse disclosed, and the requests for services?

---

Yes No

10. Do we make data-informed programming decisions by identifying the gaps between the needs of survivors and available programming?

---

### Peer Support

**Find the staff person who is most likely to have the information pertaining to agency activities around peer support.**

That person is:

Yes No

11. Does our agency have service users/self-advocates on our safety and responsiveness review team?

---

Yes No

12. Does our agency support people with disabilities to participate in community efforts to address domestic and/or sexual violence?

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Yes No

13. Does our agency facilitate opportunities for participants to conduct outreach to persons with disabilities about domestic and/or sexual violence?

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Yes No

14. Does our agency provide specialized training to its peer support participants to address domestic and sexual violence?

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### Transportation Provision

Find the staff person who is most likely to have the information pertaining to agency activities around transportation provision, such as arranging transportation for participants, screening drivers, etc.

That person is:

Yes No

15. Is the transportation provider that we work with flexible about the times and routes?

Yes No

16. Does the transportation provider that we work with screen potential drivers for criminal histories that involve domestic and sexual violence?

Yes No

17. Does the transportation provider that we work with require the drivers to keep a transportation log to guard against unaccounted time?

Yes No

18. Does the transportation provider that we work with have set-up/security protocols and training for the drivers?

### Recruitment and Retention

Find the staff person who is most likely to have the information pertaining to agency activities around recruitment and retention policies and practices.

That person is:

## Staff Interview Questions / Recruitment and Retention

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Yes No

19. Do we post job announcements at domestic and sexual violence partner agencies?

Yes No

20. Do we recruit board members with substantive knowledge of domestic and/or sexual violence?

Yes No

21. Does our agency require a mandatory, annual training for staff on sexual harassment?

Yes No

22. Does our agency require a mandatory, annual training for staff on domestic violence?

Yes No

23. Does our agency provide staff and volunteers the opportunity to tour a domestic violence agency?

Yes No

24. Does our agency provide staff and volunteers the opportunity to tour a rape crisis center?

Yes No

25. Does our agency offer presentations to staff from domestic violence survivors with disabilities?

Yes No

26. Does our agency offer presentations to staff from sexual violence survivors with disabilities?

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**Community Engagement**

**Find the staff person who is most likely to have the information pertaining to agency activities around community engagement.**

That person is:

**Yes**   **No**

**27.** Does our agency sponsor staff training by its local protective services (CPS, APS, or ombudsman) to educate our staff on relevant mandatory reporting laws?

**Yes**   **No**

**28.** Does our agency sponsor staff training by its local protective services (CPS, APS, or ombudsman) to educate our staff on reporting requirements?

**Yes**   **No**

**29.** Does our agency sponsor staff training by its local protective services (CPS, APS, or ombudsman) to educate our staff on reporting procedures?

**Yes**   **No**

**30.** Does our agency sponsor staff training by its local protective services (CPS, APS, or ombudsman) to educate our staff on rights of people with disabilities?

**Yes**   **No**

**31.** Does our agency participate in a community-based multi-disciplinary collaboration to end violence against people with disabilities and attend its meetings? If yes, how often do we attend meetings?

- a.** Doesn't attend meetings
- b.** Once a year
- c.** Semi-Annually
- d.** Quarterly
- e.** Monthly

## Endnotes

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1. E. Harrell, "Crimes Against Persons with Disabilities, 2008-2010 - Statistical Tables," *Bureau of Justice Statistics*, last modified February 25, 2014, <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/capd10st.pdf> (accessed June 17, 2015).
2. U.S. Agency for International Development, *Handbook of Democracy and Governance Program Indicators* (Washington, DC: USAID, 1998).
5. C. Hughes, *Stop the Violence, Break the Silence Training Guide: Building Bridges Between Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Organizations, People with Disabilities, Families, and Caregivers* (Austin, TX: Disability Services ASAP/SafePlace, 2003).
4. D. Sobsey and T. Doe, "Patterns of sexual abuse and assault," *Journal of Sexuality and Disability*, no. 3 (1991): 243-259.
5. C. Hughes, *Stop the Violence, Break the Silence Training Guide: Building Bridges Between Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Organizations, People with Disabilities, Families, and Caregivers* (Austin, TX: Disability Services ASAP/SafePlace, 2003).
6. Protected Tomorrows, "Understanding Guardianship for Adults with Disabilities," <http://protectedtomorrows.com/community/articles/207.php> (accessed May 10, 2015).



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 An electronic version of this report is posted on Vera's website at [www.vera.org/serving-survivors-with-disabilities](http://www.vera.org/serving-survivors-with-disabilities).





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