

### **Persons with Disabilities**

- A review of evaluations of all female sexual assault victims (892) presenting to an urban hospital emergency over a 34 month period found that 26% of the patients had a major psychiatric diagnosis before presentation. Ten percent were homeless.<sup>1</sup>
- Research indicates that in addition to the emotional, physical and sexual abuse all women may experience, women with a disability were also likely to be abused by caregivers withholding needed orthotic equipment (wheelchairs, walkers etc.), medications, transportation or essential assistance with personal tasks.<sup>2</sup>
- Among developmentally disabled adults, as many as 83% of the females, and 32% of the males are the victims of sexual assault.<sup>3</sup>
- Women with disabilities are raped and abused at a rate at least twice that of the general population of women.<sup>4</sup>
- 97% to 99% of abusers are known and trusted by the victim who has developmental disabilities.<sup>5</sup>
- Children who are deaf and hard-of-hearing (66.7%), speech and language impaired (59.1%) or who have a language learning disability were significantly more likely to be sexually abused than children without an identifiable disability.<sup>6</sup>
- The lifetime risk for violent victimization is so high for homeless women with severe mental illness (97%) as to amount to normative experiences for this population.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sugar, N.F., Fine, D.N., & Eckert, T. (2004). "Physical Injury After Sexual Assault: Findings of a Large Case Series" American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Vol. 190, No. 1.: 71-76

<sup>2</sup> Nosek, MA; Howland, CA; Rintala, DH; Young, ME; and Chanpong, GF. 1997. National Study for Women with Physical Disabilities. Final Report. Houston, TX: Center for Research on Women with Disabilities.

<sup>3</sup> Stimson, L. and Best, M.C., Courage Above All: Sexual Assault against Women with Disabilities. Toronto, Disabled Women's Network Canada, 1991

<sup>4</sup> Sobsey, D., 1994. Violence and Abuse in the Lives of People with Disabilities: The End of Silent Acceptance, Baltimore, Maryland: Paul H. Brooks Publishing Co., Inc.

<sup>5</sup> Balderian, N. (1991). "Sexual abuse of people with developmental disabilities." Sexuality and Disability, 9 (4), 323-335

<sup>6</sup> Sullivan, P.M., & Knutson, J.F. (1998). "Maltreatment and Behavioral Characteristics of Youth Who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing" Sexuality and Disability Vol. 16, No. 4.: 295-319

<sup>7</sup> Goodman et al., 2006