

Hyde County Hotline, Inc.

24-Hour Crisis Line 252-925-2500

Visit us at: HydeCounty-Hotline.org Facebook: Hyde County Hotline

End Abuse of People with Development Disabilities



Jesus left there and went along the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up on a mountainside and sat down. Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at his feet; and he healed them. The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel. ---Matthew 15:29-31

This verse highlights the heart of Jesus toward those who are disabled. The God of the Universe aches for our pain. Throughout scripture we see Jesus stop and take time for those with disabilities. Over and over He has compassion on them and loves them. He would always take the time to really see them in their suffering and very often heal them.

God did not create people with disabilities to be less than anyone. They were chosen to be stronger, braver, and, most likely, a little more compassionate than most of the world. Unfortunately, many people take advantage of the trusting nature and vulnerabilities of people who are disabled. They are often singled out and abused verbally, physically and sexually. We, as a community, need to stop and take the time to really see what is happening to the people with developmental disabilities that live in our communities.

Abuse and exploitation are constant dangers for people with disabilities. In fact, they are four to ten times more likely to be abused than their peers without disabilities. Compared to the general population, people with developmental disabilities are at greatest risk of abuse and –

- Tend to be abused more frequently.
- Are abused for longer periods of time.
- Are less likely to access the justice system.
- Are more likely to be abused by a caregiver or someone they know; many are repeatedly abused by the same person.
- Are more likely to remain in abusive situations.

Children with disabilities have a higher risk of being abused or neglected. According to the United States Department of Health and Human Services, 11 percent of all child abuse victims who have a physical, cognitive and/or behavioral disability and children with disabilities are almost two times more likely to be physically or sexually abused or neglected than children without disabilities.

In addition, abuse is typically more severe, is more likely to occur multiple times and is more likely to be repeated for a longer period of time.

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The United States Department of Justice reports that as many as one out of three girls and one out of five boys, will be sexually abused by the time they are 18; this rate is even higher among children with disabilities. According to one study, children with disabilities are three times more likely to be abused than their peers without disabilities, while children with intellectual and mental health disabilities have nearly five times the risk of being sexually abused.

People with disabilities are more susceptible to abuse for many reasons. Some of these reasons are:

- Predators may perceive a person with disabilities as weak, vulnerable or less likely to report abuse, making them easy targets.
- People with disabilities are often isolated and dependent on a small circle of friends or caregivers for critical support, including assistance with basic physical needs. These same caregivers are often the abusers, which poses a difficult decision for the victim who is required to choose between the potential for continuing abuse and an uncertain future.
- Many people with disabilities live in segregated environments, such as group homes, where abuse can occur and be hidden more easily. In addition, victims who are abused in group settings may have limited access to police, advocates, medical or social services representatives, or others who can intervene and help.
- People with limited communication abilities and/or cognitive disabilities may find it difficult to report abuse effectively.
- Many people with disabilities are afraid that they will not be believed when they do report abuse.
- Many people with disabilities have been verbally abused, resulting in low self-esteem and, in some cases, a belief that the abuse is somehow deserved.
- It is easier to abuse or exploit someone if you inherently believe that people with disabilities are less human, less valuable or do not contribute to society. Unfortunately, this is the case for many people.

Abuse can take many forms, ranging from overt physical and/or sexual assaults to bullying and emotional abuse that are more difficult to prove, but this type of abuse can whittle away at a person's dignity and sense of worth. The word "abuse" is a broad term that describes any behavior that is:

- Unwanted.
- Intentionally harms an individual.
- Is demeaning or insulting.
- Causes another person to be afraid.
-

People with disabilities experience the same forms of physical violence, sexual abuse and molestation and neglect as the general population. However, they experience these abuses at much higher rates. For example, according to the United States Department of Justice, people with disabilities are victims of nearly 1 million non-fatal, violent crimes every year, including rape, sexual assault, aggravated and simple physical assault, and robbery. People with disabilities are also more likely to experience several less common forms of abuse. For example, it is not uncommon for an abuser to manipulate medications or to withhold access to medical care, assistive equipment and technology,

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including communications devices, in order to control behavior. In other cases, a personal care assistant might refuse to provide essential assistance.

Unfortunately, in many cases, the victim knows his or her attacker. The majority of abusers are family members, relatives, caregivers, neighbors, classmates, educators or staff members assigned to support the person with disabilities.

Are we doing all we can to see what is really happening to the disabled in our communities? Are we, like Jesus, taking the time to see them and hear them and help them? Are we taking the time to love them enough to help them find healing from the abuse many of them are suffering from? Our hope is that we can all answer yes to each of these questions. If we cannot, we can start today.

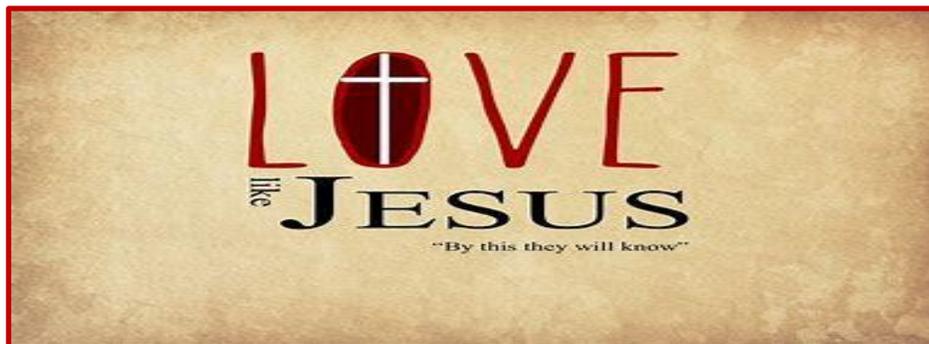
Start by learning the signs of abuse. Start by taking the time to really see the people you know who have developmental disabilities. Start by listening to what they tell you. Take the time to show love and compassion like Jesus.

Stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves!

Speak for those who cannot speak for themselves!

You can make a difference!

(Source: <https://disabilityjustice.org>)



Mandatory Reporting

If you are being abused by someone you rely on to take care of you, you may feel trapped. If you can, reach out for help to someone you trust, such as a doctor, family member, friend, or neighbor.

If someone you know is being abused, you are required by law to report the abuse to Social Services. General Statute, 108A-102 (a)-(b) states that: (a) Any person having reasonable cause to believe that a disabled adult is in need of protective services shall report such information to the director. (b) The report may be made orally or in writing. The report shall include the name and address of the disabled adult, the name and address of the adult's caretaker, the age of the disabled adult, the nature and extent of the disabled adult's injury or condition resulting from the abuse or neglect and other pertinent information.

Who must report? Any person who has a reasonable cause to believe that a person with a disability is in need of protective services.

What does that mean? If there is suspicion that someone is being abused (sexually, physically, financially, or verbally), neglected, or exploited you must report.

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Hyde County Hotline's Mission:

The purpose of Hyde County Hotline, Inc. is to work to eliminate domestic abuse, sexual victimization, and human trafficking and provide safe shelter in Hyde County, North Carolina through the collaborative efforts of a compassionate community. We promote dignity, respect and safety at home resulting in safer communities.

What We Do:

- Crisis Intervention
- Domestic Violence, Sexual Victimization & Human Trafficking Advocacy
- Survivor Services
- Safe Shelter
- Safety Planning
- Support Groups and Referrals
- Program Presentations for Adults & Children in Churches, Businesses and Schools
- Referrals

How You Can Help:

- Ask Us About Community Presentations
- Tell Others About Us
- Become a Crisis Line Volunteer
- Donate to Our Thrift Store
- Ask for a Copy of Our Shelter Needs List
- Monetary Donations are Accepted

We would like to send a great big **“THANK YOU”** to all of our volunteers! You make a difference in our communities and make it possible for lives to be changed!

THANK YOU
Volunteers!
We couldn't do it without you

Thank you to the N.C. Council for Women and Youth Involvement-Family Violence Prevention and Services Act Program and US DHHS for financial support.

FYSB Family & Youth
Services Bureau

Family Violence Prevention
& Services Program



**Council for Women &
Youth Involvement**
Department of Administration