

Reaching Crime Victims with Disabilities: Promoting Accessibility Through VOCA Assistance Grant Making

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Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this webinar are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Objectives

- As a result of this training, participants will:
- Be able to define disability and Deaf culture
- Understand risks, unique tactics, and barriers faced by survivors with disabilities & Deaf survivors
- Understand implications for your work
- Identify steps for achieving access

About Us: The National Resource Center for Reaching Victims

The National Resource Center for Reaching Victims is a one-stop shop for victim service providers, culturally specific organizations, criminal justice professionals, and policymakers to get information and expert guidance to enhance their capacity to identify, reach, and serve all victims, especially those from communities that are underrepresented in healing services and avenues to justice.

About Us: The National Resource Center for Reaching Victims (2)

We are a collaboration among:

- Caminar Latino
- Casa de Esperanza
- Common Justice
- FORGE
- The National Children's Advocacy Center
- The National Center for Victims of Crime
- The National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later in Life
- Vera Institute of Justice
- Women of Color Network, Inc.

We are supported by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime.

About Us: The National Resource Center for Reaching Victims (3)

We are working to:

- increase the number of victims who receive healing supports by understanding who is underrepresented and why some people access services while others don't;
- design and implement best practices for connecting people to the services they need; and
- empower and equip organizations to provide the most useful and effective services to crime victims.

Vera Institute of Justice, Center on Victimization and Safety

Our mission

- Work to create victim services that reach, appeal to, and benefit all victims of crime.
- Focus on groups of people who are at elevated risk of harm but who are underserved.
- Cornerstone of our work is addressing abuse of people with disabilities
- Work began in 2005

Vera Institute of Justice, Center on Victimization and Safety (2)

Our goals

- Promote a framework for understanding, responding to, and ending domestic and sexual violence that accounts for disability;
- Build and strengthen a diverse, inclusive, and coordinated movement working to end abuse of people with disabilities;
- Enhance capacity to prevent and respond to violence against people with disabilities; and
- Increase the availability and use of research and evaluation in these efforts.

Exploring Disability & Deaf culture

Defining Disability (1)

- The **Americans with Disabilities Act** defines disability as any physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity.

Defining Disability (2)

- World Health Organization: Disabilities is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions.
- Impairment is a problem in body function or structure;
- an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action;
- while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations.

Disability is common

19% of the population in the United States have at least one disability.



Students with disabilities

11% of secondary education students in the United States have at least one disability.



Types of disability

- **Physical:** Restricts motion or agility
- **Cognitive and/or intellectual:** Limitations in cognitive and/or intellectual capacity
- **Psychiatric:** Conditions that produce emotional, behavioral, or mental health issues or challenges that impair functioning.
- **Sensory:** Limitations in vision, hearing, and other senses

Understanding disability (1)

- Disability can be acquired or congenital.
- Disability can be temporary, episodic, or persistent.
- Diagnosis does not predict experience.
- Disabilities can be hidden.
- Some Deaf and hard of hearing people do not identify as having a disability.

Understanding disability (2)

- You can't rely on self-identification.
- People with disabilities have intersecting identities. Their cultural identity is as important as the disability.
- The experiences of people with disabilities and Deaf people are profoundly shaped by ableism and audism.

Understanding Deaf culture (1)

- **Language**
 - American Sign Language
 - English is often second language.
- **Cultural identification**
 - Many not identify as having a disability
 - Cultural & linguistic group
 - Use term Deaf to reflect cultural identification

Understanding Deaf culture (2)

- **Behavioral Norms**
 - Direct communication
 - Eye contact
- **Values**
 - Collectivist
 - Transparency
 - Visual
- **Traditions**
 - Schools for the Deaf
 - Deaf clubs & events

Ableism

Ableism is the intentional or unintentional discrimination or oppression of individuals with disabilities.

Marginalization throughout the life cycle

- Special education classes
- Group homes
- Institutions
- Broad use of guardians
- Public benefits structure and limited employment opportunities
- Sheltered workshops

Audism

The notion that one is superior based on one's ability to hear or to behave in the manner of one who hears, or that life without hearing is futile and miserable, or an attitude based on thinking which results in a negative stigma toward anyone who does not hear.

Examples of audism (1)

- Forcing a Deaf person to lip read or write instead of getting an interpreter.
- Refusing to call an interpreter because it is not in your agency's budget.
- Assuming Deaf people can't do things.
- Not honoring the cultural and linguistic identity of a Deaf person or mislabeling/misidentifying Deaf people.
- Jumping in to help a Deaf person communicate.

Examples of audism (2)

- Using hearing children to interpret for Deaf parents.
- Making phone calls or decisions for a Deaf person without asking.
- Assuming someone is less intelligent or credible because they do not hear or voice.
- Relying on a phone as the primary way for people to contact you.
- Not having visual indicators of auditory signals, such as smoke detectors.

Violence Against Students with Disabilities & Deaf Students

Increased risk of violence

- **Adults with disabilities are 3 times** more likely to experience violent victimization, including rape, sexual assault, aggravated assault, and robbery.
- **Deaf women are 1.5 times** more likely to be a victim of sexual harassment, sexual assault, psychological abuse, and physical abuse.



Violence on campuses

A study found that 31.6% of undergraduate women with disabilities reported nonconsensual sexual contact, compared to 18.4% of undergraduate women without a disability.

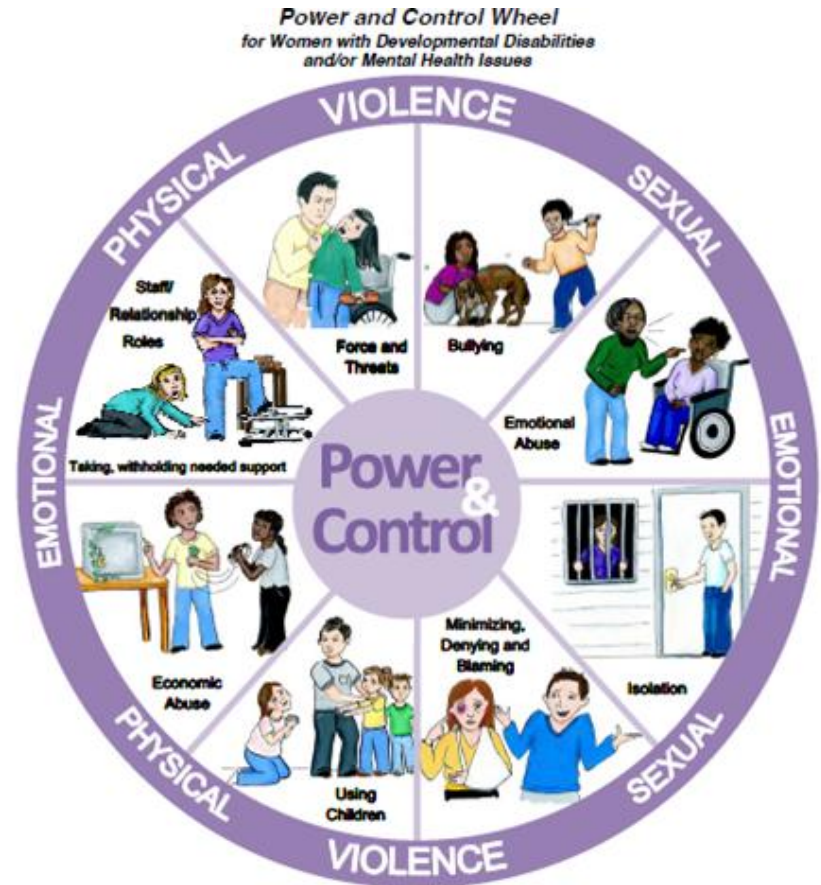
Unique dynamics (1)

People with disabilities are more likely than people without disabilities to:

- experience more severe victimization,
- experience abuse for longer duration,
- be victims of multiple episodes of abuse,
- be victims of a larger number of perpetrators, and
- have experienced abuse as a child.

Unique dynamics (2)

- Perpetrator relationship to survivors
- Tactics of abuse
- Barriers to safety and services



Power and Control Wheel for Women with Developmental Disabilities and/or Mental Health Issues, created by Project Peer in Washington, DC.

Factors contributing to heightened risk of victimization

- Devaluation – ableism
- Presumed lack of credibility
- Isolation and segregation
- Increased exposure to potential abusers
- Culture of compliance
- Seen as “easy targets”

Factors re: underreporting

- Assume they won't be believed
- Loss of independence & fear of institutionalization
- Lack of knowledge about health sexuality and safety
- Lack of effective criminal justice response
- A mistrust of authorities

NCD study: Findings (1)

- Campus assault prevention & education programs are not inclusive of students with disabilities, and college staff lack awareness that such programs should be accessible.
- Staff are not trained in disability accommodations.

NCD study: Findings (2)

- College sexual assault prevention and education programs are not fully accessible to students with disabilities.
- College websites and printed information about sexual assault resources and information are not accessible to students with visual impairments and students with print-based disabilities (e.g., dyslexia).

Creating access

Nothing About Us Without Us

- > Disability rights movement was founded on the principal of **participation**.
- > Emphasizes the active involvement of people with disabilities in planning and implementation of strategies, policies, and practices that impact their lives.



Access goals

- “Normalize” needs and experiences
- Be welcoming and inclusive
- Create a comparable experience
- Go beyond the legal requirements.

Achieving access

Approach

- > Be prepared. Be proactive.
- > Assume and design for the widest array of people.
- > Meet individual requests/needs.

Guide Posts

- > Federal, State, and local laws
- > Principles of universal design
- > Experiences/expertise of people with disabilities and Deaf people

Secondary & Tertiary Prevention

Critical access points

- Staff knowledge
- Accommodations – asking about and providing
- Physical access
- Implications for student conduct

Staff knowledge

- Working with people with disabilities and Deaf people
 - Disability etiquette
 - Deaf culture
- Intersection of disability & domestic violence
- Best practices for serving survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors

Disability etiquette (1)



Disability etiquette (2)

- Ask before you help
- Recognize individuality
- Person-first language
- Use the term "disability," not "handicap."
 - E.g., accessible parking spot
- Talk directly to the person with a disability – do not speak to the person with the person with a disability

Do Say	Don't Say
Disability	Differently abled, challenged
Guests with disabilities	The disabled, handicapped
Uses a wheelchair	Confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair bound
Intellectual disability	Retarded, mental retardation
Service animal or dog	Seeing eye dog
Psychiatric disability, mental illness	Crazy, psycho, schizo
Accessible parking or restroom, family restroom	Handicapped parking or disabled restroom

Providing accommodations

■ Assumption:

- ✓ Organizations are ethnically and legally required to provide accommodations and auxiliary aides.
- ✓ Disability is common

■ Recommendations:

- ✓ Be prepared to inquire about and provide accommodations in a timely manner.
- ✓ Do not rely solely on Disability Services/ADA coordinator.
- ✓ Consider the language used in inquiring about an accommodation.
- ✓ Develop relationships with interpreting agencies.

Physical access

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
 - > The ADA sets objective baseline standards for physical access.
 - > ADA compliance is a legal obligation.
 - > Don't assume that space is physically accessible and meets the requirements of the ADA
 - > The Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) is a resource.
- > Recommendations
 - > Conduct a access review on a yearly basis
 - > Develop a barrier removal plan

Implications for student conduct

Overview of disability

Key considerations when working with people with disabilities

Interviewing the victim (1)

- Use plain language. Use the simplest words to convey your thoughts or questions. Avoid childlike words.
- Break “why” questions into concrete thoughts.
- Use “when” questions in the context of the individuals daily or weekly activities.
- Ask the individual to repeat the answer if you do not understand what they said.
- Ask one question at a time.
- Avoid compound questions.

Interviewing the victim (2)

- Do not expect a chronological rendition of the victim's experience. Someone with a cognitive disability may process information differently than someone without a disability.
- A person with a cognitive disability may not tell you when (s)he does not understand the question.
- The person may say what (s)he thinks you want him/her to say.
- The interviewee may want to please you. Do not indicate that you prefer a particular answer.

Interviewing the victim (3)

- Allow the interviewee to speak at his/her own pace; do not rush the interviewee.
- If you are having a hard time understanding the victim, you may need to call in someone as an interpreter, e.g., a speech therapist.
- Be prepared for multiple, short interviews.
- Take breaks.

Primary prevention

Accessible print & electronic materials

Accessible in-person and virtual events

Create accessible materials

There are multiple elements within print materials that work together to affect a document's accessibility.

- > Font type and style
- > Text size
- > Line length and justification
- > Color
- > Use of pictures

Font type: Use Sans Serif

Sans Serif

Arial

Helvetica

Verdana

Font type: Do not use serif

Serif

Times New Roman

Georgia

Font style and size

- Use upper and lowercase letters.
- Avoid extra thin, extra black, and italicized fonts
- Avoid the use of highly decorative and script fonts.
- Font size:
 - > Use 14 pt. font as a standard font size.
 - > Use 18 pt. font for a large-print publication.

Text: Line length & justification

- > Lines should be made up of 8 – 15 words.
- > Justify on the LEFT margin.
- > Avoid awkward hyphenation.

Color: Black & white

- Contrast:
 - More Effective Contrast
 - Effective Contrast
 - Less Effective Contrast
- Use reverse text to help call out important information.

Confidentiality

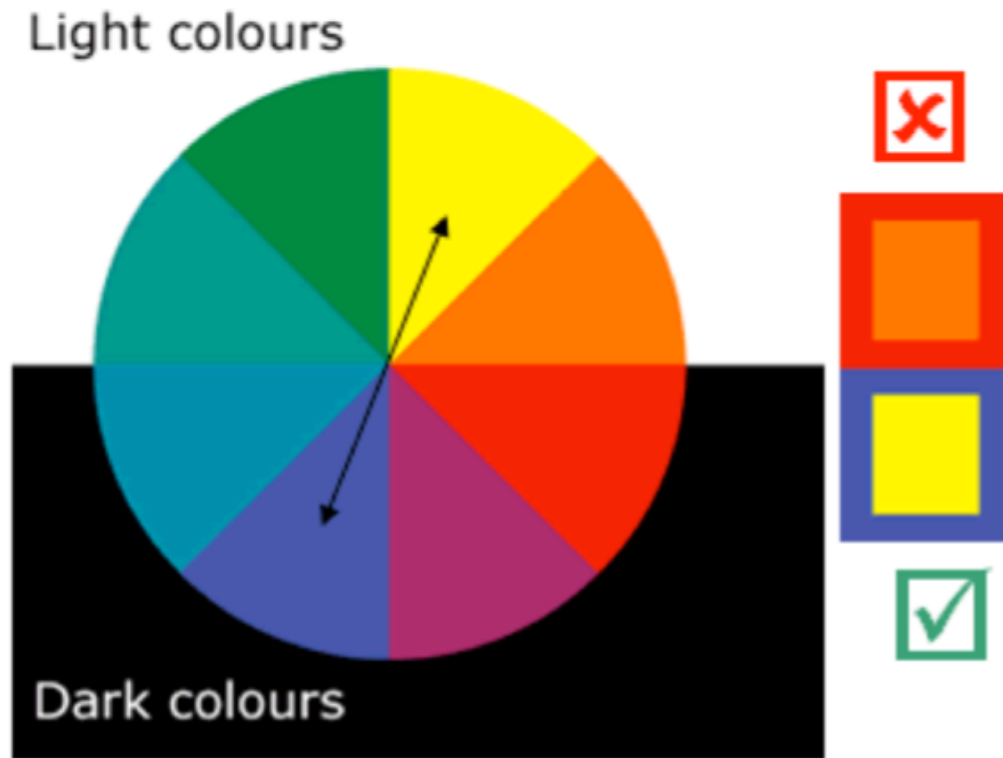
In order to ensure Vera House is a safe place for everyone currently and in the future, it is **YOUR RESPONSIBILITY** to not tell anyone:

- ! **The street address of Vera House, any nearby businesses, schools, and street names.**
- ! **Names and/or information of any residents**

- ➔ Friends/family are not allowed to visit you here.
- ➔ You are only allowed to be picked up or dropped off at the:
 - Regional Transportation Center (RTC)
 - Carousel Mall
 - Downtown Syracuse(other locations may be arranged with staff)

Color contrast

- Ensure sufficient contrast between color elements.



Pictures

Avoid using photos behind text.



Support your content with images

Vera Institute of Justice | Bridging the Gap: Creating a Community of Support

Agenda: October 31, 2012

7:30 – 8:30 **Registration and Continental Breakfast**



Foyer Marriott Ballroom, Second Level

8:30 – 9:30 **Welcome and Opening Remarks**



Nancy Smith, *Vera Institute of Justice*
Amy Walker, *Self-Advocate*
Bea Hanson, *Office on Violence Against Women*

Marriott Ballroom, Second Level

9:30 – 10:00 **Exploring the Conference Features**



Promising Practices Showcase
Art Display
Interpreter Meet and Greet

Marriott Ballroom, Exhibit Area, Second Level

10:00 – 10:30 **Break**



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Accessible websites

- Web content accessibility guidelines (WCAG)
- The tab order of the page should allow users to quickly navigate the site using only the tab and enter keys.
- Every photo needs to have alternate text description so individuals using a screen reader can understand the meaning behind the photo.
- All audio should either be captioned or have an accompanying script.

Accessible in-person & virtual events

In-person events

- **Budgeting** – interpreters, larger spaces, etc.
- **Selecting venue** – e.g., accessible for people who use mobility devices
- **Registration** – asking about needed accommodations
- **On-site** – how are you setting the room to accommodate for interpreters & people with mobility devices

Meeting room set-up guidelines

- Plan for 30% more space to accommodate people with disabilities.
- Meeting room tables should have a 30-inch clearance between the floor and table apron.
- Aisles should be at least 36 inches around all furniture items in the room (participant tables, presenter table, podium, etc.)
- Provide ample space between chairs and tables to enable people with mobility devices to maneuver.

Meeting room set-up guidelines (2)

- Plan for the whole space to be accessible rather than having one area reserved for people with disabilities or Deaf participants. People should be able to sit where they want and with whom they want unless someone requests to do so.
- Be sure to factor in the seating needs of your sign language interpreters and to allow a clear line of sight to interpreters.

General set-up

- Make sure all cords are taped down.
- Make sure that there are not items blocking anyone's line of sight.
- Keep obstructions out of aisle ways.
- Work with the hotel to proactively address possible room set problems.
- Work with the hotel to problem solve issues as they arise.

Virtual events

- Platform that is accessible with screen readers.
- Communication needs
- Registration to ask about, inc. accommodation needs
 - Large font
 - Materials in advance
 - Interpreters/captioning

Steps you can take

- 1. Build relationships with disability and Deaf organizations/offices.**
2. Start a dialogue with others on your campus.
3. Start budgeting and planning for access.
4. Educate staff about the unique needs of students survivors with disabilities and Deaf student survivors.
5. Assess and address your agency' s/office's accessibility.
- 6. Be flexible.**

Additional information

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