



Access to

Equality Coalition

Joining together to ensure equal access and justice for
crime victims with disabilities in Hampshire County

Stavros Center for Independent Living

The Everywoman's Center

The Freedom Center

Safe Passage

Access to Equality Coalition

Stavros Center for Independent Living

210 Old Farm Road

Amherst, MA 01002

For confidential support and
advocacy, contact project partners:

Stavros Center for Independent Living

Expertise: Caregiver Abuse
Phone: 413-256-0473 (TTY/VOICE)
Toll-free: 800-804-1899 (TTY/VOICE)
Website: www.stavros.org

Stavros Deaf and Hard of Hearing Independent Living Services Program

Expertise: Communication Advocacy
Phone: 413-781-5555 (TTY/VOICE)
Website: www.stavros.org

The Everywoman's Center

Expertise: Sexual Assault
Phone: 413-545-5832
Confidential hotline numbers:
413-545-0800 (TTY/VOICE) or
888-337-0800 (TTY/VOICE)
Website: www.umass.edu/ewc

Safe Passage

Expertise: Domestic Violence
Accessible Shelter/Counseling Center
Phone: 413-586-1125 (TTY/VOICE)
24 hr confidential hotline numbers:
413-586-5066 (TTY/VOICE) or
888-345-5282 (TTY/VOICE)
Website: www.safepass.org

The Freedom Center

Expertise: Psychiatric Disabilities
Phone: 413-582-9948
Website: www.freedom-center.org

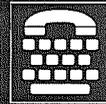
To report a crime of abuse directly to law enforcement, contact:

Amherst Police Department
111 Main Street
Amherst, MA 01002
413-256-4011 (Business)
413-253-5378 (TTY)

Northampton Police Department
29 Center Street
Northampton, MA 01060
413-587-1100 (Business)
413-582-0396 (TTY)



‡ Access to Equality Coalition



After several years of collaboration, four local nonprofit agencies are establishing ourselves as a coalition of grassroots advocates to better respond to crime victims with disabilities. Our mission is to work closely together to improve access to safety and justice for people with disabilities who are survivors of the crimes of caregiver abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, and/or psychiatric abuse. By contacting a partner agency, survivors of abuse will be able to access coordinated services and support from any of the partners. As a coalition, we are strengthened by our numbers, enriched by our diverse experience, and united in our philosophy of self-determination.

People with disabilities are abused at an alarming rate. People with disabilities can be more vulnerable to abuse because they may depend on others to meet their basic needs, have health care workers routinely examine or handle their bodies, and/or have limited mobility or cognitive ability. Studies show that people with disabilities experience abuse for longer periods of time, from more sources, and face significant barriers in escaping and reporting their abusers.

WHAT IS CAREGIVER ABUSE?

Caregiver abuse is mistreatment by someone providing personal assistance or household help. This could include a paid employee or a non-paid person who is a family member, relative, friend, domestic partner, or spouse.

Did you know?

- Caregiver abuse can take many forms, including physical or sexual assault.
- A common form of caregiver abuse is psychological or emotional abuse—abusing the person verbally, re-traumatizing the person, ignoring the person's requests or needs, or disrespecting the person.
- Caregivers may also abuse a person with a disability by mismanaging his/her finances, stealing personal belongings, or withholding medication or equipment.
- People with disabilities are between two and five times as likely to be abused as people without disabilities (Sobsey and Doe).

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Domestic violence is a pattern of behaviors where one person tries to control the thoughts, beliefs, conduct, or actions of his/her partner. Domestic violence takes many forms, including physical, emotional, sexual, and/or economic abuse. People with disabilities have additional challenges and barriers in attempting to leave their abusers.

Did you know?

- Domestic violence occurs in a cycle which often escalates in frequency and intensity over time.
- The abuser may be the primary caretaker of a person with a disability, and separation from that person can be life-threatening.
- Many survivors of domestic violence become disabled, temporarily or permanently, because of the abuse.
- Transportation and survivor services may not be accessible.
- Recent reports indicate that domestic violence affects women with disabilities at a rate up to three times higher than women without disabilities.

WHAT IS SEXUAL ASSAULT?

Sexual assault is a broad term referring to forced, manipulated, or non-consensual sexual activity. Rape is one form of sexual assault that is considered a violent crime. Rape and sexual assault are not sexually motivated acts; rather, they stem from aggression, rage, sexism, and the determination to exercise power over someone else.

Did you know?

- Nearly one out of every seven adult women, or about 340,000 women in Massachusetts, has been the victim of forcible rape in her lifetime (National Violence Against Women Prevention Research Center).
- Sexual assault disproportionately impacts people with disabilities.
- Survivors with disabilities are less likely to report their sexual assault to police than are survivors without disabilities.
- One study estimates that 83% of women and 32% of men with developmental disabilities experienced sexual abuse (Johnson & Sigler).

WHAT IS PSYCHIATRIC ABUSE?

Psychiatric abuse is a term for a broad range of human rights abuses of people labeled with mental illnesses by people in the mental health system.

Did you know?

Psychiatric abuse can include:

- The use of force or coercion, including involuntary treatment and forced drugging.
- Treatment decisions that are made without true informed consent.
- The use of toxic psychiatric drugs.
- The widespread use of psychiatric and pharmaceutical industry myths and propaganda.
- Being dehumanized, disrespected, or disregarded.
- Individuals with psychiatric disabilities are twice as likely to experience sexual assault (Hiday, Swartz, Swanson, et.al).

**ABUSE OF PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES IS A CRIME!**