

# Victims with Disabilities

The FBI's Uniform Crime Reports show that in 1997, of the 9,861 reported bias-motivated offenses, twelve were motivated by disability bias. (*Federal Bureau of Investigation. (released November 22, 1998). Crime in the United States, Uniform Crime Reports, 1997, p. 62. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.*)

Approximately 54 million Americans live with a wide variety of physical, cognitive, and emotional disabilities. (*Tyiska, C. (1998, September). "Working with Victims of Crime with Disabilities." Office for Victims of Crime Bulletin. Washington, DC: Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice.*)

Estimates indicate that at least 6 million serious injuries occur each year due to crime, resulting in either temporary or permanent disability. The National Rehabilitation Information Center has estimated that as much as 50 percent of patients who are long-term residents of hospitals and specialized rehabilitation centers are there due to crime-related injuries. (*Ibid.*)

Children with any kind of disability are more than twice as likely as nondisabled children to be physically abused and almost twice as likely to be sexually abused. (*Ibid., citing Petersilia, J. Report to the California Senate Public Safety Committee Hearings on Persons with Developmental Disabilities in the Criminal Justice System.*)

Research conducted by the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN) in 1993 found that of all children who are abused, 17.2 percent had disabilities. Of all children who were sexually abused, 15.2 percent had disabilities. (*Crosse, S., Kaye, E., & Ratnofsky, A. (1993). A Report on the Maltreatment of Children with Disabilities. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health, Administration for Children and*

*Families, Administration on Child, Youth, and Families, National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect.*)

Of the children with maltreatment-related injuries, child protection case workers reported that maltreatment directly contributed to, or was likely to have led to, disabilities for 62 percent of the children who experienced sexual abuse, for 48 percent of children who experienced emotional abuse, and for 55 percent of children who experienced neglect. (*Ibid.*)

Research consistently shows that women with disabilities, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or class, are assaulted, raped, and abused at a rate of two times greater than non-disabled women. (*Sobsey, D. (1994). Violence and Abuse in the Lives of People with Disabilities. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes; Cusitar, L. (1994). Strengthening the Links: Stopping the Violence. Toronto: DisAbled Women's Network (DAWN).*)

The risk of being physically or sexually assaulted for adults with developmental disabilities is likely 4 to 10 times as high as it is for other adults. (*Sobsey, D., supra.*)

People with developmental and other severe disabilities represent at least 10 percent of the population of the United States. Of this population group: 1.8 percent of individuals have developmental disabilities; five percent of individuals have adult onset brain impairment; and 2.8 percent of the individuals have severe major mental disorders. (*Sorenson, D. (1996, November). "The Invisible Victim," The California Prosecutor, Vol. XIX, No. 1.*)

*Note: OVC makes no representation concerning the accuracy of data from non-Department of Justice sources.*

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