

# Living Well Safe and Free WORKSHOP #5

## Abuse Awareness

*Wisconsin Living Well adapted these materials from the Green Mountain Self-Advocates' Stay Safe Curriculum*

### Introduction:

Unfortunately, many youth and adults with developmental disabilities do not have sufficient opportunities to learn about abuse prevention or sexual education because some people worry it may frighten or upset the person. Often, talking about sexuality can be uncomfortable for some family members and support staff. However, sexual education enables a person to recognize if they are being sexually abused and enhances a person's ability to provide accurate information when reporting sexual abuse. "Experience has shown that prevention and sexuality education not only helps to prevent abuse, it can help to increase self-esteem, support assertiveness, enhance understanding of personal rights and increase self-awareness of needs and desires in relationships with others (SafePlace, 1999).

Although this particular Unit can be very uncomfortable to cover it is extremely important to do so. Research (Sobsey & Doe, 1991) has shown that people with intellectual impairment are at greatest risk for being abused. The research (Reynolds, 1997) also reports that over 80% of people with developmental disabilities experience sexual abuse. It is recommended that you guide and direct your discussions suitably for your particular group. It is also recommended to have support persons or other instructors available and team teach this unit. Having this support available will allow participants who become uncomfortable the option of leaving to talk privately with someone and not in a class discussion format. Let participants know that sharing your story is a private matter. Stress throughout the session **It's your Body! You're the Boss!**

### Materials Needed:

- Laptop, speakers, projector and internet access
- Presentation flip chart paper and markers
- Access to Open Future Learning (OFL) Side by Side Modules
- Copies of People First's handout "People with Disabilities are at Risk of Abuse"
- Copies of "Definitions: What These Words Mean to Us"
- Handout "How to Report Abuse" (Note: prior to the class instructors will need to update the document with the important contact information in their county and/or organization (for by-county information go to: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/aps/aar-agencies.htm>)

### Activities: Abuse Awareness

**Step 1:** Handout copies of People First's handout "People with Disabilities are at Risk of Abuse" and review/discuss with the group.

**Step 2:** Watch the OFL "About Abuse" Side by Side Module. Use the discussion questions provided in the module for group discussion. The video/discussion takes about 30 minutes to complete.

**Step 3:** Watch the OFL "Preventing Abuse & Staying Safe" Side by Side Module Use the discussion questions provided in the module for group discussion. The video/discussion takes about 30 minutes to complete.

**Step 4:** Handout and review "Definitions: What These Words Mean to Us". Stress that assault and abuse of any kind entails force. Talk with participants about how healthy relationships never involve someone forcing you physically or verbally to do something that you don't want to do and that you know is not right. Review with them the uncomfortable feelings that tell them a situation isn't right, as covered in the previous class. Ask participants to share examples of healthy and unhealthy relationships. The Instructor may need to guide by giving examples (i.e. unhealthy = using any kind of force).

When discussing unwanted touches, it should be stressed to the students that any area covered by a bathing suit would be considered their private parts.

Reinforce the "NO AND GO" strategy previously learned. Stress that when they say "NO" they must mean it in a very firm voice. They need to say "NO" and keep saying "NO" and leave the situation immediately. Stress that **it is not your fault if you have been a victim of sexual abuse**. Continue the discussion with ways to prevent it from happening or happening again. Stress how they need to tell so it doesn't happen to someone else or them again. Ask them to share who the trusted person is that they would tell. Assure participants that it is OK to be afraid to tell somebody but that they must. Remind them, "Its your Body. You're the Boss!"

**Step 5:** Talk about and review the "How to Report Abuse" handout with the group. Encourage people to keep this handout somewhere they will remember it if they need it in the future.

**Step 6:** Discuss some of the following scenarios with the group. Ask them how they would respond/coach them on appropriate responses as needed.

What would you do if...

1. You and your friend are getting a ride home from a party with your friend's uncle. You stop at Kwik Trip. Your friend runs into the store for something. While your friend is in the store her uncle puts his hand on your leg, you feel uncomfortable.
2. You are waiting at the bus stop. A car stops and a man asks if you want a ride home, then he exposes himself to you.

3. You and your friends are at McDonalds. A group of guys is sitting at the table nearby. You overhear them say they are looking for something fun to do after skiing all day. You and your friends start talking with them and before long they have invited you to their place that night to “party”.
4. You work as a volunteer at the Humane Society. Part of your job is to hold and pet the cats so they will be friendly to their new owners. Sometimes when you are there other volunteers are also there. There is a man who seems to show up when you are there and sits really close to you and tries to pet the cat you are holding. Sometimes he touches you “by mistake”. He doesn’t say anything when this happens, so you don’t either even though you feel very uncomfortable.
5. You have made the wrong choice and decided to meet with someone you’ve met on the Internet. You decide to meet him in a vacant area of a parking lot. You get into the truck. He starts talking; you’re feeling that this is OK. Then he starts to touch you and is trying to put his hands down your pants.
6. At work your boss makes comments about your body that make you uncomfortable. You ask her to stop but she won’t. This has continued for a few weeks.
7. You are walking home in the evening from a friend’s house. Someone pulls up in a car, rolls down the window and asks if you have seen their black and white cat. You say you haven’t and keep walking. The car keeps following you. The person asks you to get in and please help to find the cat.
8. You are over at a friend’s house for pizza. Your friend’s parents go out to the movies. Your good friend decided to take a beer out of the fridge and starts drinking it. Neither of you is 21 years old.
9. You are at the mall and you have to go to the bathroom, but your friend doesn’t. You go in and a person standing by the sink asks you if you want something that will make you feel good.
10. You are at a friend’s house for a party. You have to go to the bathroom. When you get to the bathroom you find a used needle or syringe.
11. You go to visit your aunt in the hospital. Your ride is supposed to pick you up at 4:30 at the Allen Street entrance. You decide you want something to eat and go to the coffee shop. Your ride was at the Allen Street entrance at 4:30. You were not. Your ride left, thinking you already went home.
12. You are waiting at the bus stop. A car stops and a man asks if you want a ride home, then he exposes himself to you.
13. You are riding your bike around town. You see a woman searching for something. She stops you and asks you to help her look for her lost dog, which may have gone into that empty parking lot.

14. You are at the grocery store shopping for dinner. You decide to go to the little coffee shop in the grocery store. While you are sitting at the table you take out your money and count it. The woman sitting next to you says: "I think I know your parents, isn't your name Selena?"
15. You are at Wal Mart shopping. Someone walks up to you and asks what the time is. You tell them and walk away. You notice that they are now following you around the store.
16. You are bowling with friends at the Bowlerama. Your ride is supposed to pick you up at 9:00, it is now 9:30 and your ride isn't there yet. The guy who works at Bowlerama offers to take you home.

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