



Leadership for Empowerment and Abuse Prevention

LEAP

Family and Children's Trust Fund of Virginia
September 27, 2023



VCU

School of Education

Nice to meet you!



And THANKS!!



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Our Agenda



01 The Problem

Why?

02 Do people with disabilities
experience high rates of
violence?

03 LEAP
Leadership for Empowerment
and Abuse Prevention

04 What's next?

attitudes and beliefs

What is Disability?



Physical Disabilities

Physical Disabilities
Mobility Impaired
Sensory Impaired

Intellectual Disabilities

Cognitive Disabilities
Down Syndrome



Autism Spectrum

May or may not include physical or intellectual disabilities

Hidden Disabilities

Autism, TBI, Mental health,
Substance misuse, learning disability,
Oppositional defiance



Abuse, violence, neglect of people with IDD



90% women 86% of men

Have experienced abuse



Intellectual Disability

People with **intellectual disabilities** had highest **victimization rate** among the disability types measured for total violent crime. (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2017)



Children with Disabilities

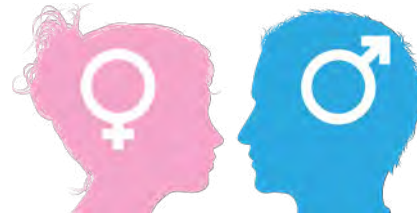
Children with disabilities are **at least three times more likely** to be abused or neglected than their peers without disabilities (Jones et al., 2012), and they are more likely to be **seriously injured or harmed** by maltreatment (Sedlak et al., 2010).

Epidemic of Abuse and Sexual Assault for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities



90% women 86% of men

Experience abuse
in their lifetime



83% 32%

83% of women and 32%
of men are victims of
sexual assault at some
point in their lifetime.
(Johnson & Sigler, 2000)



49%

49% of people
who are victims of
sexual violence
will experience **10
or more incidents**
(Valenti-Heim & Schwartz,
1995)

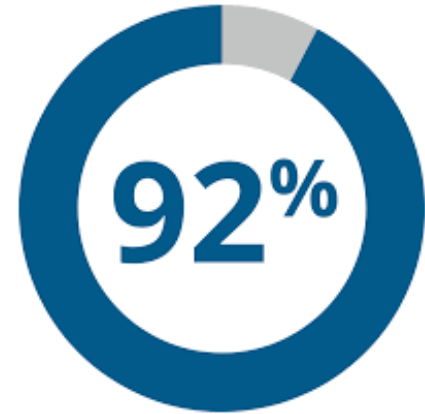
Violence and Sexual Assault Autistic Youth



**Experience Violence
in their lifetime**



**Experience Violence
within the past year**




Polyvictimization
Experienced a 2nd victimization
within the same year.

Pfeffer, R.D., (2016), Childhood Victimization in a National Sample of Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities, 13, 4, 311-319. N = 262 between 5-18 years.

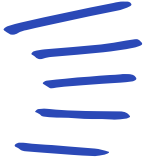


Bureau of Justice Statistics


2021



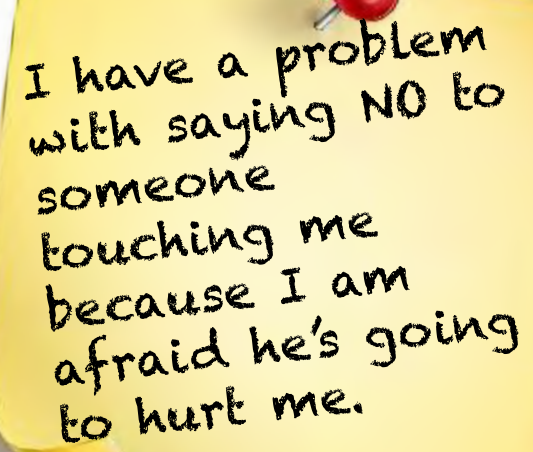
A higher percentage of violence against people with disabilities was **committed by persons the victim knew well** or who were casual acquaintances than for victims without disabilities.



People with **cognitive disabilities** had **highest victimization rate** among the disability types measured for total violent crime.



Parking Lot



I have a problem
with saying NO to
someone
touching me
because I am
afraid he's going
to hurt me.



Why?



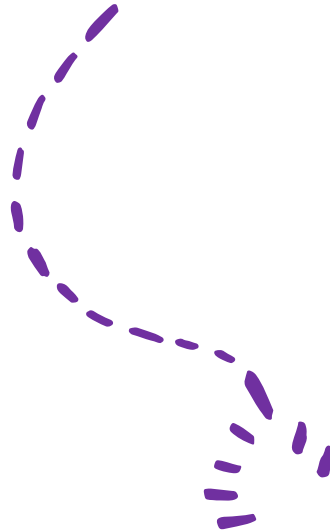
do children with disabilities
experience abuse at such
epidemic rates?



Skewed Boundaries



Touch





Trained Compliance

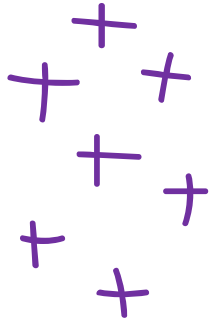


Isolation



**Relationships
differ**

What is a friend?



FRIENDS WITH ACTUAL BENEFITS

Howard F.
Paperwork?
Bring it on.

Marlene K.
Lives to move your car
from one side of the
street to the other.

Travis P.
Changing cat
litter is
his passion.



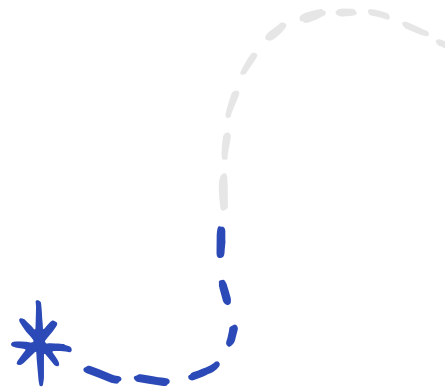
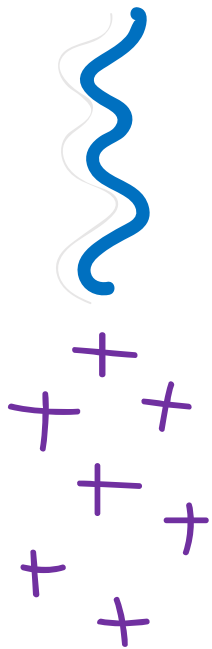
Friends vs. Paid Support Staff

Paid Supporters

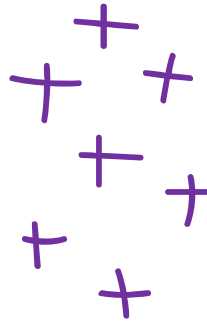
- Help you problem solve:
Listen
- Celebrate your successes
- Provide you with necessary assistance
- Advocate with you for a better quality of life
- **Receive Payment**

Friends

- Help you problem solve:
Listen
- Celebrate your successes
- Provide you with necessary assistance
- Advocate with you for a better quality of life



“You must be so...”

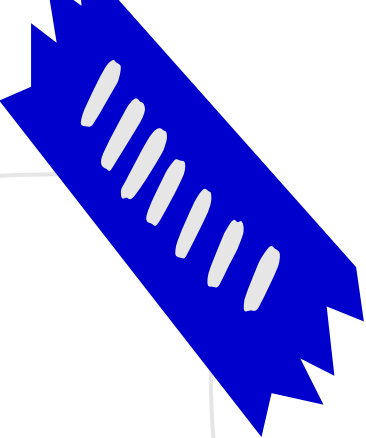

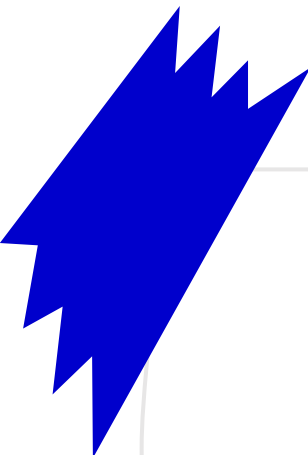


Power and Control






Cultural Myths and Attitudes



"Yes, it's happened to me. It was a staff person. It started out where he was buying pop for me and candy for me at, it was called, the canteen.

... Then one time he asked me to come down in the basement. He wanted to show me something. And I trusted him. That's where that happened."



— Sam Maxwell, Meadville, PA





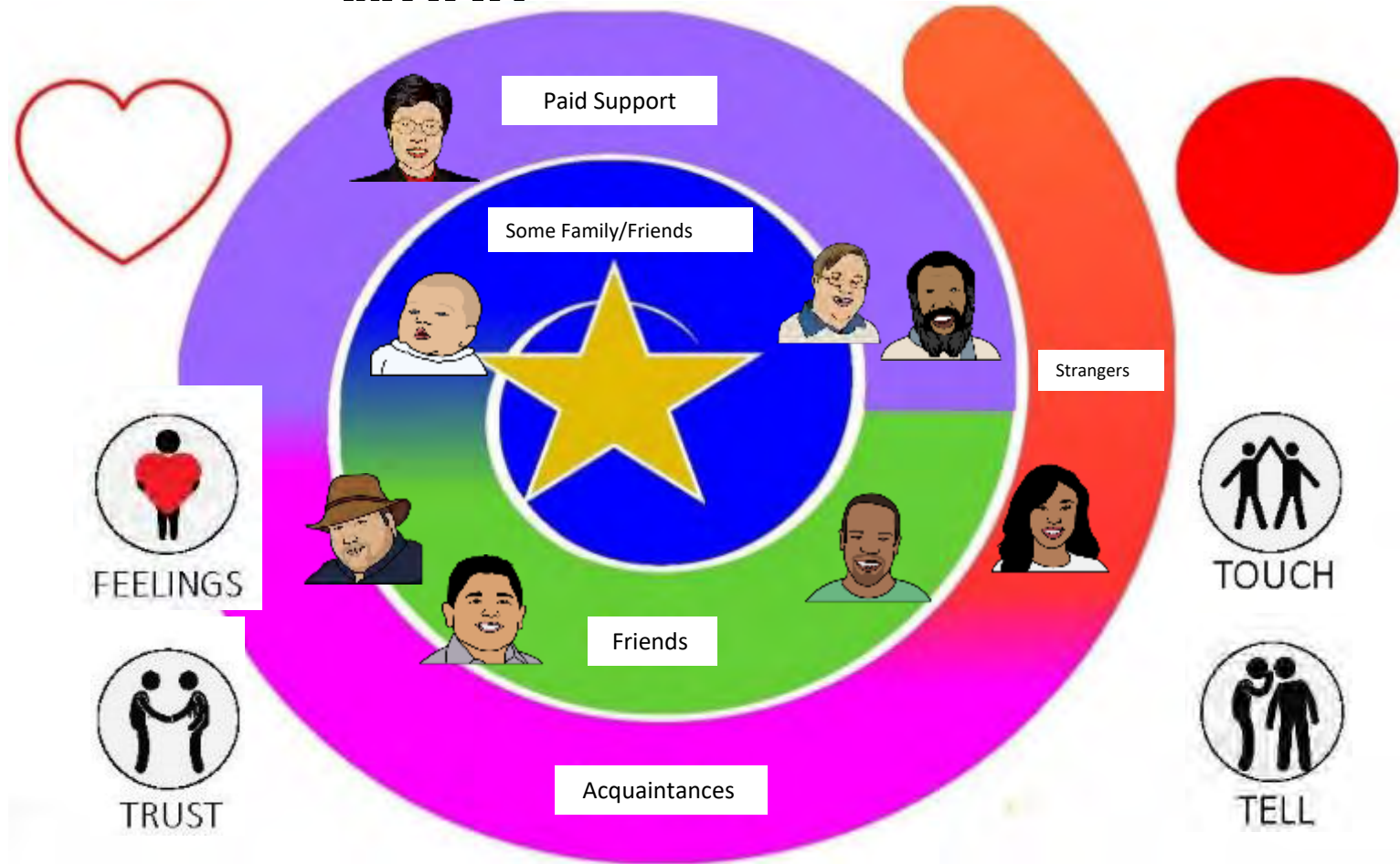
Prevention

** you deserve better*

Guiding Principles



LEAP: Map of People in Your World



Curriculum Team





- 4 sessions, 90 minutes each
- Taught by a person with a disability + a co-trainer
- Designed to meet needs of people ages 18+ with mild, moderate and severe support needs

Core Concepts of LEAP

1. Trust - You CAN change your mind about who you trust!
2. Respect - Everyone deserves respect. Your feelings are important.
3. Boundaries - roles of paid support
4. Paid staff vs. Friends
5. Consent and permission to touch



Evaluation: Pre, Post and 3 Month Post-post



1. Could the participant *discriminate* between healthy and unhealthy relationships?
2. Could the participant explain *why* a relationship was healthy or unhealthy?
3. If the relationship were unhealthy, could the participant suggest *what to do next?*

Published Research in 2021: People with IDD who participated in LEAP

- Are better able to explain **why a relationship is unhealthy**
- Are better able to describe **ways to seek help**
- Score more highly on **EMPOWERMENT** scale

Dinora, P., Prohn, S., Cramer, E. P., Dellinger-Wray, M., Mayton, C., & D'Aguiar, A. (2021). Testing the efficacy of Leadership for Empowerment and Abuse Prevention (LEAP), a healthy relationship training intervention for people with intellectual disability. *Developmental Disabilities Network Journal*, 2(1), 10.



Looking toward the Future



Power Statement



I am strong.



My feelings are important.



I deserve to feel safe.



I deserve respect.



THANKS!

Do you have any questions?

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