



Personal Safety and Well-Being

What does MODDC think about safety for people with disabilities?

People with disabilities should never have to face violence or get taken advantage of. Some of the ways people with disabilities experience violence are:

- Physical violence (when someone hits, bites, or chokes you)
- Emotional violence (when someone hurts your feelings on purpose)
- Sexual violence (when someone touches your body in a way you don't want)
- Abuse (going through physical, emotional, or sexual violence for a long time)
- Neglect (when someone who is supposed to take care of you doesn't do their job)
- Financial exploitation (when someone takes money that belongs to you)
- Cyber violence (when someone uses the internet to hurt you)

Missouri must help protect people with disabilities. When people do get hurt, they need to be able to report it. Their reports should be taken seriously and looked into as much as possible.

Why is this important?

People with disabilities are more likely to be hurt or taken advantage of. This is especially bad for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

Nine out of 10 women with disabilities went through violence from someone else. Almost 9 out of 10 men with disabilities said they went through violence. One out of 3 kids and teens with disabilities went through abuse and teenagers experienced emotional abuse. One in 5 went through neglect, and 1 in 10 went through sexual abuse.

In 2021, someone looked at reports of people with disabilities being hurt in institutions. They found 700 reports of violence over about two years. They found out that people with disabilities got hurt more since COVID-19 started. Only around 2% of violence against people with disabilities is reported or looked into. So we have no way of knowing exactly how many disabled people go through violence. It is probably a lot more than the numbers say.

People with disabilities run into problems when they try to report violence. Other people believe them less than when non-disabled people report violence. Sometimes people with disabilities get punished for reporting violence. They might end up getting put in an institution or under guardianship.



Other times, ways to report violence are not accessible to people with disabilities. People whose job it is to report violence might not know how to talk to people with disabilities. This leads to their reports not being taken seriously or looked into enough.

Research shows these things are problems in Missouri just like other places. Abuse and neglect of people with disabilities get reported less here. Missouri needs to do more to keep people with disabilities safe.

What should Missouri do?

People with disabilities deserve to be a part of their communities. They deserve to be free from violence. They deserve to be treated with the same respect as anyone else.

There are some jobs that have rules about dealing with violence. If someone in these jobs hears about violence against a disabled person, they have to report it. People in these jobs are called **mandated reporters**. Some kinds of mandated reporters are:

- Teachers
- Doctors and therapists
- Police
- Some first responders (people who handle emergencies, like firefighters and EMTs)

Mandated reporters should know how to work with people with disabilities. They should get extra training on helping people with disabilities report violence. When someone with a disability reports violence, they should take it seriously. They should learn the best way to interview people with disabilities who report violence.

Missouri should make sure disabled people get treated fairly when they report violence. The state should find ways to help people know how to work with people with disabilities. For example, Missouri could make Crisis Intervention Teams to help disabled people during hard times. These teams would get training on how to help people going through violence.

Missouri should make a reporting system for the whole state for abuse. This system needs to be accessible and easy for people with disabilities to use. A guide to making a reporting system can be found at www.AndWeCanStopIt.org

Missouri should create materials to help disabled people understand abuse. This can help people with disabilities avoid abuse. These materials need to talk about sexual abuse. The materials should also cover how to report abuse.



Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council

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People who don't get to make decisions for themselves get hurt by others more often. Programs that help people with disabilities should make sure they can make their own choices. This will help keep them safe and let them be a part of their community.



To Learn More

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