

Many disabled women experience domestic violence

Domestic violence affects 1 In 4 women in their lifetime. But very little is known about the effects and frequency of attacks on disabled individuals. What is known is this:

Disabled women are reportedly twice as likely as non-disabled women to experience domestic violence, they are less likely to report it, and are more likely to experience it for longer periods of time before attempting to escape. One difference between people with and without disabilities is, people with disabilities can experience abuse from a partner, but also abuse from a caregiver who may be a family member, friend or hired and trained worker.

Domestic abuse victims with disabilities face many barriers to reporting abuse and seeking services. This includes structural (ramps, bathrooms, etc.) as well as attitudinal (social stigma and stereotyping) barriers. Also included in these barriers is Caregiver Abuse. Reports of Caregiver abuse appears to be on the rise.

More than half of all abuse of people with disabilities is estimated to be perpetrated by family members and peers with disabilities. Disability professionals are generally believed to be responsible for the other half.

Studies estimate that between 70 to 85 percent of cases of abuse against disabled adults go unreported. Disabled victims are sometimes dependent on abusive caregivers. If they choose to report this abuse, they run the risk of losing their caregiver, as well as the risk of being institutionalized or placed in a nursing home. If their abusive caregiver is their spouse or partner, they may also risk losing custody of any children they may have together. Because of their reliance on a caregiver, they may be physically unable to leave their abusive situation.

But today there are many more resources available. So, if you are a disabled person experiencing domestic violence, or know of someone who is, please call the White Earth Dove at 218-983-4656 or the Crisis Line at 1-877-830-3683.