

LGBTQIA+ survivors with disabilities: the impact of discrimination

- Without healthy sexuality education, people are at increased risk of experiencing sexual violence/victimization
- When a society or culture lacks understanding about the LGBTQIA+ disability community, it often means they do not accept their sexuality, or that they are sexual beings
- Survivors often feel misunderstood and judged, so they don't feel safe reaching out for help – so they don't
- May face painful rejection by family and friends, discrimination at work – a barrier to getting help
- May not be supported by others (“allowed”) to make their own choices
- Not having support to help meet and date others or establish fulfilling relationships can cause feelings of isolation

“People might assume that everyone is heterosexual and so they assume that consensual same-sex relationships are abuse. They might feel like they have no one to trust if they want to report abuse. Sometimes when LGBTQ+ people with IDD report same-sex abuse, people think it was consensual, even if it was not.” - Pauline Bosma, Rainbow Program Coordinator



Support for LGBTQIA+ survivors with disabilities

Did you know?

- Rainbow groups are groups for self-advocates who are members of both the intellectual and developmental disability community as well as the LGBTQIA+ community.
- To learn more about the Rainbow Group, visit:
<https://www.WeAreMASS.org/rainbow-group>

Contact The Arc of New Mexico's Sexual Assault Victim Advocacy Program and ask about the NM Rainbow Support community!

(505) 883-4630



Ways to support LGBTQIA+ survivors with disabilities

- Critical to educate communities about:
 - How to include the LGBTQIA+ disability community in sexual education and violence prevention
 - How to provide necessary accommodations & support that allows survivors to feel **and actually be included** in their own sexual education, justice & healing process
- Truly inclusive communities mean...
 - we actively listen to the survivor with curiosity and compassion
 - we believe the survivor
 - our personal values don't impact the quality of care we provide
 - we see the person as a trauma survivor first (before a disability)
- Supporting sexual education, justice and the healing process means...
 - We speak to them directly, not to a care provider or family member
 - We ask if they want peer support
 - We use active listening skills when talking to the survivor
 - We show real concern for the person and are patient with him/her
 - We comfort the person in ways he/she can understand
 - We use everyday words and ask the person if he/she understands what we are saying
 - We help them understand any paperwork they need to read or sign



How do we as a society make real change?

“Nothing About Us Without Us!” Survivors within the LGBTQIA+ disability community must lead the way to provide training and education on this topic, be seen as experts on their own experiences, and be sought out by the community and policymakers for their valuable contributions – not be seen or treated as a token in any way.

LGBTQIA+ survivors with disabilities guidance on how to make change:

- We can learn how to speak up for ourselves and others!
- We want to be active in our healthcare and recovery
- We can train professionals about how they can speak to use so we understand them and how to make our own choices
- We can join coalitions related to this topic in our communities and states
- We can be on the frontlines to help start a national conversation about sexual violence prevention
- We can make sure to talk about self-care in advocacy groups so people feel supported
- We can dream up ways to ensure long term support for survivors

“We believe APS, healthcare and law enforcement can collaborate to strengthen their understanding about how people with disabilities and people in the LGBTQIA+ community have experienced discrimination when reporting abuse. We can all work together with survivors taking a leadership role in training. Nothing About Us Without Us!” - Patty Quatieri and Kecia Weller, Survivor Self-Advocates

