

0344 CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES: VICTIMIZATION, SEXUALITY AND COMMUNICATION

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Studies have long established that children with disabilities are disproportionately criminally victimised. According to research children with intellectual disabilities are almost four times as likely to be neglected or emotionally abused and five times as likely to be physically or sexually abused. Perhaps most astonishingly, 97–99% of abusers of victims with developmental disabilities are known and trusted by the victim. Many significant barriers exist, both real and perceived, that limit investigation and prosecution of these cases. Specific techniques must be developed to effectively interview child victims with disabilities. This presentation is designed for victim advocates, law enforcement, prosecutors, disability advocates and other criminal justice, medical and social service personnel who work with children with disabilities. Participants will develop an awareness of victimisation of children with disabilities and how assumptions and attitudes toward disability can affect the outcome of services by law enforcement and victim advocates. Additionally, the participants will be presented with information and materials on addressing access and accessibility for children with disabilities as well as develop skills for communicating effectively with individuals with autism, intellectual and other communication disabilities. Course objectives include: Participants will develop an understanding of the unique characteristics of children with disabilities that make them susceptible to abuse.

Participants will develop specific communication skills to effectively interview children with autism, mental retardation, cerebral palsy and speech/language limitations. Participants will increase their knowledge regarding the identification of physical and programmatic barriers to provide more effective services to people with disabilities.