

Promoting Bodily Autonomy

in Michigan's Disability Community to Prevent Sexual Violence

Did you know?



People with disabilities are
4 times
more likely to experience sexual
violence, and, less likely to report it to
police than people without disabilities.

SOURCE: BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS
2009-2019 REPORT



'Sexual violence' is any sexual activity that happens without consent, including sexual assault, harassment, abuse, and rape.

There is hope!



Communities can help prevent sexual violence by increasing
Protective Factors
which are strengths that make it less likely that someone will experience sexual violence or choose to commit sexual violence.

Bodily Autonomy

is an important protective factor for people with disabilities in Michigan.



What is Bodily Autonomy?

Bodily autonomy means I have complete say over my body. No one else gets to control what happens to it.

Bodily autonomy means I am free to make choices about my sexuality, and medical care without others getting in the way.

The Michigan Community Sexual Violence Prevention Assessment (CSVPA) heard from members of the Disabled community about how to increase bodily autonomy. The following page shares needs and actions you can take to help prevent sexual violence in Michigan's Disability community.

What Can We Do to Increase Bodily Autonomy?

Provide healthy maturation programs

from a young age to empower people with disabilities to feel in charge of their own body and to set healthy boundaries.

Provide inclusive, comprehensive, and accessible sex education for youth, adults, and families.

Create safe, welcoming community spaces where people with disabilities can ask questions, find resources and role models, and access peer support for building healthy relationships and boundaries.



[Bodily Autonomy] happens when people have a partner that encourages open communication and listens to them. Folks being believed when they say that they need something, and not feeling shamed or judged from that, and **being able to start conversations with needs and wants**, and to have that be mutual, is a really big strength.”

-CSVPA interview participant

Background: These are select findings from the Michigan Community Sexual Violence Prevention Assessment (CSVPA). The CSVPA consisted of interviews with individuals from Michigan’s Disabled communities, guidance from an Advisory Council of professionals working in the field of sexual violence prevention, and secondary data collection. To learn more about the CSVPA and sexual violence prevention work in Michigan, visit: www.mphi.org/svp

1. Harrell, E. (2021). Crime against persons with disabilities, 2009–2019, statistical tables. <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/capd0919st.pdf>