

# Building Community Safety

## 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.

#### Community Safety

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



#### What is Community Safety?

Community safety means I can use support services such as healthcare, emergency services, and law enforcement without experiencing fear, discrimination, stigma or harm. I can live and express myself freely without fear of harm. My community fully supports my safety and wellbeing.

The Michigan Community Sexual Violence Prevention Assessment (CSVPA) heard from members of the Disabled community about how to increase community safety. 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 Community Safety?

**Provide disability cultural competency training** for healthcare, law enforcement, and legal system professionals so they are able to provide accessible and unbiased support services.

**Reform rules for caregivers**, including requiring training for employees, to create safer environments for those receiving caregiving support.

**Reform civil and criminal legal system policies and practices** to better protect sexual violence survivors and prevent re-traumatizing them.



“The **more training** for police and airport and even hospital[s] [about] what to expect if someone has a severe cognitive disability, like ways to engage them or to... be calming in a situation... **that helps everybody else with a disability.**”

-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](http://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>