

**MIYKIWAN TOOLKIT
FACT SHEET**

**VIOLENCE
AGAINST
THOSE WITH
DISABILITIES**

WHAT IS

While family violence against Aboriginal people has often been highlighted, Aboriginal people with physical disabilities have been subject to the very same forms of violence, whether they be physical, sexual, emotional or financial. Some people may have even have acquired their disability as a result of having being subjected to family violence.

Every single Aboriginal person, including those with disabilities, has the right to be properly cared for, supported, and to complete safety.



“We are less recognized and the most violated against by both races, both sexes, and both communities...We know what it is like to be down low, but for God's sake, you don't have to keep us there either”

J. Johnny—The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996

KEY THINGS TO KNOW

- 18.6% of Aboriginal persons aged 15 years and over, stated that they had a disability compared with 13.7% of the non-Aboriginal population (2012)
- In 2004, persons with disabilities experienced more severe forms of spousal violence than those without disabilities
- Persons with disabilities were between 50% and 100% more likely to have experienced violence by a spouse than those without disabilities (2004)
- 24% of disabled persons reported being subjected by their partner to emotional violence as opposed to 16.1% of persons not disabled (2004)
- Those persons with disabilities who were victims of spousal violence were less likely to report any incident to the police as they might depend on their spouse financially, for physical or medical assistance or for child care (2004)
- More victims with a disability reported that they had been injured (39% versus 30%), needed medical attention (14% versus 7%), could not carry out their daily activities (31% versus 18%) or feared for their lives (32% versus 21%) because of spousal violence than those without any disability (2004)

FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST THOSE WITH DISABILITIES

People who are known to commit violence against seniors include: their children and grandchildren, in-laws, and other family members who have a disability themselves. Here are the most common forms:

- **Physical abuse**—causing injury or the death of an adult or child
- **Sexual abuse**—forcing unwanted sexual activity on an adult or child
- **Emotional, Psychological or Spiritual abuse**—using hurtful words or actions to control or frighten an adult or child, or to attempt to destroy their own self-respect
- **Financial abuse**—control, or misuse of a person’s money or property
- **Neglect**—denying a person basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter; not willing to give medical service and support; rude and disrespectful treatment; denial of caregiver and disability support services
- **Destruction of property**—results in the damaging of necessary assistive devices such as hearing aid, wheelchair, walker, etc.

WARNING SIGNS

While there are plenty of signs that can make you aware of someone who is being abused, here are some of the most significant ones:

- Person tries to cover and explain away bruises and other suspicious physical marks
- Service equipment such as hearing device or wheelchair is always damaged or is missing
- Person appears to be sad, withdrawn, or afraid
- They are nervous when a certain family member is present and make excuses for that member's behaviour
- Changes in their job performance through slowness or poor work quality
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STRATEGIES AND NEXT STEPS

If you have been abused in the past or are being abused now, seek help immediately by calling 9-1-1 or your local police station. These services are there to help you.

VIOLENCE THROUGH THE EYES OF SOMEONE BEING ABUSED:

While violence towards any family member is hurtful, persons with disabilities are often more vulnerable to abuse than those without disabilities for the following reasons:

- Through an abuser’s attempts at control, there will be a lack of access to much needed disability support services
- Because they may have limited mobility, cognitive or communication impairments, the person may be unable to flee their abuser or be able to call for help
- At times, a disabled person may already be displaying low self-esteem or self-worth based on societal attitudes; this in turn may be made worse by the abuser’s own words and actions of humiliation and insult

If you need help or someone to talk to please contact the National Office for Victims Services Center, toll free at: **1-866-525-0554** or Kids Help Phone, toll free at: 1-800-668-6868, www.kidshelpphone.ca

To obtain more information regarding the CAP Family Violence Prevention Awareness Toolkit, please contact the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples at www.abo-peoples.org or call 1-613-747-6022.
