

VICTIMIZATION AMONG PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: PROFESSIONAL STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES IN IDAHO

DISABILITY & VICTIMIZATION

- **Approximately 12% of the US population lives with a disability***
- **In Idaho, more than 369,000 people aged 18+ live with a disability. This is 27% of people in Idaho, or 1 in 4***
- **In the US, the violent victimization rate against persons with disabilities is 4 times the rate for persons without disabilities****



THE STUDY

A list of professional stakeholders - entities involved in identifying, responding to, or serving vulnerable adults who experience abuse, neglect, or exploitation (ANE) - was created, including

- **State entities that provide disability services**
- **Community entities that provide crime victim and/or disability services**

17 interviews were conducted with 10 state and 7 non-state entities

- **7 serve multiple disability populations**
- **3 serve a specific disability population**
- **4 serve entities that are direct service providers**
- **5 serve crime victims directly or indirectly**



THE INTERVIEWS



- **30-60 minute interviews with key professional stakeholders**
- **Interview transcripts were examined to identify themes related to the research questions**
- **Interviews provided perceptions of responses, policies, procedures, experiences, challenges, and opportunities related to the intersection of disability and victimization**

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1. What are stakeholders' perceptions of victimization risk among persons with disabilities?**
- 2. What are stakeholder entities' policies and/or procedures related to victimization reports and responses to reports? What works well and what can be improved?**
- 3. What are stakeholder perceptions of clients' (victims') experiences with reporting and response? What are perceptions of service-seeking experiences?**
- 4. What training and resources do stakeholder entities have and what training and resources do they need?**
- 5. What outreach and community education do stakeholder entities engage in? What outreach/community education/awareness is needed?**

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). Disability & Health U.S. State Profile Data for Idaho. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/impacts/idaho.html>

**Harrell, E. (2021). Crime Against Persons with Disabilities, 2009-2019 - Statistical Tables. <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/capd0919st.pdf>

FINDINGS

RQ 1: PERCEPTIONS OF VICTIMIZATION RISK

- Stakeholders perceived that persons with disabilities are more vulnerable to victimization than those without disabilities
- Persons with disabilities may be more vulnerable and less likely or less able to speak up for themselves
 - At risk for:
 - Abuse
 - Financial exploitation
 - Neglect
 - Fraud or theft
 - Sexual violence
 - Trafficking
 - Domestic abuse
 - At risk from:
 - Caregivers
 - Staff
 - Family members
 - Roommates
 - Spouses
 - Friends
 - Acquaintances

RQ 2: POLICIES, PROCEDURES, & RESPONSE TO VICTIMIZATION

- What works well?
 - Dedicated staff
 - Collaboration among some entities in response to ANE reports
 - An individualized approach to response
 - Reporting policies
 - Addressing weaknesses
- What can be improved?
 - Having simple and consistent reporting procedures across service providers
 - A registry of those who commit abuse, neglect, or exploitation against a person with a disability
 - Enhancing coordination and communication related to complaints and investigations
 - Addressing root causes of staff misconduct and/or criminal offending

RQ 3: BARRIERS TO REPORTING AND ACCESSING SERVICES

Underreporting due to barriers is a significant issue. Factors influencing underreporting may include:

- Fear
- Accessibility of services
- Uncertainty about how to report
- Past negative experiences reporting
- Abuser controlling communication
- Societal stigma surrounding having a disability
- Cognitive or communication abilities



Service needs include:

- Counseling services from professionals who have experience with disability populations and co-occurring I/DD and mental health
- Support groups for persons with disabilities who have experienced victimization
- Accessibility



RQ 4: RESOURCE NEEDS

- Staffing: being able to hire and retain quality staff
- Support for staff to reduce burnout and increase retention
- Increased specialized staff, including clinicians and counselors who can work with specific disability populations, cross-disability populations, and dual-diagnoses populations
- Financial resources
- Legislative support

RQ 5: OUTREACH & COMMUNITY EDUCATION

There are three areas that can work to improve awareness and education for both those living with and without disabilities:

- Abuse, neglect, exploitation & disability awareness
- Professional outreach (for example, to health care providers)
- Raising awareness of existing services



RECOMMENDATIONS



Recommendation 1:

Expand community education, awareness, and prevention efforts

Recommendation 2:

Enhance transparency surrounding decision-making and response procedures

Recommendation 3:

Examine the current structure, responses, and accountability measures to identify gaps

Recommendation 4:

Create opportunities for collaboration, networking, and cross-training between entities that are providing disability and victimization services

Recommendation 5:

Reduce barriers to reporting ANE and other forms of victimization

Recommendation 6:

Enhance accessibility of victim services and mental and behavioral health care

Recommendation 7:

Examine opportunities for increasing Idaho's investment in disability services

Recommendation 8:

Further evaluation of barriers and measures for improvement in serving victims from traditionally underserved populations

Recommendation 9:

Identify what is working well and expand on successes

**Access the full report at
<https://idvch.com/iddstakeholder/>**

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