

INTERVENTION

For individuals with autism, the following areas can be targeted to reduce revictimization risk and promote sexual safety:

Improve knowledge about sex and sexuality. Individuals are curious by nature, and those who have experienced abuse or assault may be more curious.

Learn to identify sexually inappropriate behavior. Teach individuals that they decide who touches them or does anything to their body. Focus on safety, personal boundaries, touching, and saying 'no'.

Improve social skills and teach individuals how to develop healthy social relationships and identify people who can help protect them from further harm. Individuals who are socially isolated are at greater risk for sexual abuse or assault.

Teach how to identify when they feel uncomfortable with inappropriate behavior from others and how to end social interactions or relationships when they occur.

Create a safety plan with the individual and teach them what to do if they feel unsafe. Make sure that people who provide services and support to the individual are aware of the safety plan, rules for safety, personal boundaries, touching, and saying 'no'.

Social stories and role-play activities can help show what to do when someone touches or does something to their body without their permission.

Know the early signs and symptoms of abuse.

Individuals who have previously experienced abuse are at increased risk for re-victimization. Quality treatment for victims of sexual assault should involve psychoeducation and training designed to prevent and decrease the risk for re-victimization.

