



EDUCATING ABOUT SEXUAL ABUSE AND ASSAULT



GENERAL

It's important to teach people of ALL ages about sexual abuse and assault, as knowledge is the best way to prevent sexual assault from occurring. It also teaches individuals what behaviors are okay and not okay – and that they should tell someone they trust if they ever feel uncomfortable.

Sexual assault is higher among people with autism



Approximately 8-10% of people with autism report history of sexual assault. However due to many factors, it's believed many more individuals with autism experience abuse or assault, but do not report it.

Many providers don't ask about abuse or assault

They may assume they can tell if a patient has been abused, they don't know how to ask, or might be nervous to ask. It's important to become comfortable asking specific questions about abuse and assault, especially if you notice warning signs of abuse or assault.

Create a safe place where people with autism can talk openly about sexual assault

Ways to create a safe place include: encouraging conversations about body safety, creating an environment where there is open communication about sexual health, allowing individuals to ask questions without judgment, and listen and believe individuals when they talk about situations that made them uncomfortable.



Teach individuals with autism how to identify sexual abuse and assault

For people with autism, confusion about what sexual abuse or assault is often keeps the trend continuing. It's also important to identify trusted adults who they can turn to for help if they ever experience abuse or assault.



Listen and believe someone who says they might have been abused

Allow the individual to share their experience without judging or asking questions. Ask what you can do to help, and let them know they did the right thing by talking about what happened. Finish the conversation by letting them know you will help keep them safe and get them help.



www.pautism.org/BeSafe

These resources were developed in collaboration with Angela Moreland, PhD and Grace Hubel, PhD, National Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center, Medical University of South Carolina.

ASERT is funded by the PA Department of Human Services, Office of Developmental Programs, Bureau of Autism Services