WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS FOR ABUSE?

**Family-level risk factors**
- Concern about the future when parenting a child with autism
- Stressful life events: Losing a job, losing a job, physical illness, marital problems, death in the family
- Parent’s not taking care of their own physical or mental health needs
- Lack of support
- Feeling of loss for not having a “normal” child
- Poverty and unemployment
- Unrealistic expectations about child development
- Frustration and/or inappropriate methods of discipline
- Parent substance use

**Child-level risk factors**
- Feeling isolated and powerless
- Not able to protect themselves or understand what abuse is
- Need to rely on caregivers for daily needs, lack of independence and privacy

WHAT ARE THE PROTECTIVE FACTORS AGAINST ABUSE?

- Families who know how to access various services professionals
- Strong social support system, safe neighborhood, safe schools
- Feelings of love, acceptance, and safety from a caring adult
- Optimism, high self-esteem, creativity, humor, independence
- Acceptance of peers and positive influences
- Respectful communication and listening
- Consistent rules and expectations, safe opportunities to promote independence
- Ability to cope with stress
- Knowing about the warning signs of abuse and how to report abuse
- Talking openly and honestly about personal safety, boundaries, saying no, and healthy and unhealthy touch

www.paaautism.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.