

## Where are the Caregivers?, a Continuation

Women with disAbilities are at greatest risk for gender based crimes, experiencing 2 to 3 times the most severe domestic violence and at least twice and as great as ten times at risk of sexual assault. We not only face the most severe domestic violence but also experience abuse longer, from a wider selection of potential abusers and face multiple barriers in trying to escape and keep ourselves safe. We do though have more similarities than differences, as each of us is an individual who wants to be heard, believed and to live violence free.

There are many different types of disAbility each having their own vulnerability and barriers.

According to the Roeher Institute study (1994)\* we face abuse not only in social groupings such as our families but residential settings such as apartments, group homes and boarding houses, service settings such as hospitals and institutions and public spaces. In addition to Caregivers the range of potential abusers includes Bus & Handi-dart drivers, therapists, medical personal and other health care professionals, other patients in institutions and group living situations, teachers, landlords and/or other tenants, guardians, social workers, police; anyone who comes into contact with us when we are alone.

In addition to potential abuse all women face women with disAbilities face we face:

- ❖ Forced/coerced abortion, birth control and sterilisation
- ❖ Forced/coerced psychiatric interventions
- ❖ Involuntary commitment to institutions
- ❖ Forced isolation
- ❖ Physical and chemical restraint
- ❖ Administration of poisonous substances or inappropriate drugs
- ❖ Strip searches
- ❖ Being denied of legal capacity
- ❖ Withholding of life's necessities and purposeful neglect
- ❖ Withholding mobility aids, communication equipment, or medications
- ❖ Threats to neglect or kill assistive animals
- ❖ Being left in physical discomfort or in embarrassing situations v for long periods
- ❖ Threats of abandonment by care

These are just a few of potential abusers and abuse that need to be taken into consideration and treated as seriously as other types. Women with disAbilities need to be able to access services that are

not only accessible, but also inclusive. You, the temporarily able-bodied need to accept and have an understanding that we face violence from this broader base of potential abusers and face serious abuse in forms that others do not.

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\* The Roeher Institute, 1994 Violence and People with disAbilities: A review of the Literature. National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, Family Violence Prevention Division, Health Canada