

## About ACCD and This Brochure

The Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities (ACCD) is a consumer-driven, provincial organization of persons within the cross-disability community. We actively promote the full participation of persons with disabilities within the social, economic, and political life of our communities.

We believe that all people have the right to be safe and to be protected from abuse. Recent research we've undertaken shows that women with disabilities are extremely vulnerable to violence and abuse. We want to share our findings with you and encourage you to join us as we work to end the violence.

## What is Abuse?

Abuse occurs when a person in a position of power takes advantage of someone in a less powerful position. There are many types of abuse, including financial, physical, sexual, verbal, and emotional. Neglect and exploitation are also types of abuse.



*Together, We Hold The Power!*

## Did You Know?

Women with disabilities in Canada “face the threat and the reality of all forms of violence confronting non-disabled women, but their disability compounds, alters, and increases their vulnerability” (Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women).

Statistics concerning violence against women with disabilities paint a grim picture.

- › 83% of women with disabilities will be abused in their lifetime. (Stimpson and Best, 1991)
- › An Alberta study found that 88% of victims with disabilities knew their abusers. (Sobsey, 1988)
- › 40% of women with developmental and/or learning disabilities will be victims of sexual abuse before they turn eighteen. (Morin and Biosvert, 1992)
- › More than 50% of perpetrators in violence against persons with disabilities are paid caregivers, family members, or other persons with disabilities. (Sobsey and Doe, 1991)
- › 39% of women with disabilities have been physically or sexually abused by their husbands. (Statistics Canada, 1994)

## Why are Women with Disabilities More Vulnerable to Abuse?

Like you, we at ACCD are shocked and appalled to hear about the violence faced by many women with disabilities. How can this be happening in a society that respects and values all individuals?

The Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres (CAILC) suggests that women with disabilities are more vulnerable to abuse because society's perceptions of them are clouded by myths and stereotypes.

Take a minute to examine your own perceptions of women with disabilities. Have you ever thought that women with disabilities

- › Are like children?
- › Are not sexual?
- › Need you to make decisions for them?
- › Are helpless and need our pity?
- › Are overly sexual?
- › Do not contribute to society?
- › Need special treatment?

***If you answered yes to any of these questions, you are contributing to a perception of women with disabilities that increases their vulnerability to abuse.***

## What Can We Do?

First of all, we need to examine our perceptions regarding women with disabilities. We need to raise our own level of awareness and educate ourselves about the realities, not the myths, shaping the lives of women with disabilities in Alberta.

Secondly, we need to raise the awareness of others. By educating people in our homes, workplaces, volunteer organizations, and communities we can begin to challenge stereotypical views.

There are many service organizations committed to raising awareness about violence against women with disabilities in Alberta.

Please call one of the numbers on the back panel and ask about guest speakers, invite us to speak to you, your colleagues, your constituents, your child's school, your rotary club or community organization, your community league, etc.

ACCD believes we all have a role in making Alberta a safer place for women with disabilities. Together, we can make a difference!



## For More Information

**ACCD**  
707, 10339 – 124 Street NW  
Edmonton, AB T5N 3W1  
Phone: 1-800-387-2514  
TTY: (780) 488-9090  
WWW: [www.accd.net](http://www.accd.net)  
e-mail: [accd@accd.net](mailto:accd@accd.net)

**Persons with Developmental Disabilities  
Provincial Board**  
4th Floor, 10011 - 109 Street  
Edmonton, AB T5J 3S8  
Phone: (780) 427-1177 or toll free 310-0000

**Independent Living Resource Centre  
of Calgary**  
7 – 11 Street NE  
Calgary, AB T2E 4Z2  
Phone: (403) 263-6880  
TTY: (403) 263-6874

**Independent Living Society**  
205, 10006 – 101 Avenue  
Grande Prairie, AB T8V 0X9  
Phone: (780) 539-0433

**The Office for the Prevention of Family  
Violence**  
10030 - 107 Street  
Edmonton, AB. T5J 3E4  
Phone: (780) 422-5916  
Toll-free 310-0000

*If the organizations listed here are not in  
your community, they will be able to  
refer you to a local contact.*

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## Violence Against Women with Disabilities: Facts About Abuse

