

Ending Violence in the Deaf Communities

www.deafdove.org



DOVE Mission Statement

Supporting Colorado Deaf Survivors' healing Journey



4x - 7x

This is how many more Deaf, DeafBlind, DeafDisabled and Hard of Hearing people experience violence within their lifetime than the general population.



DID YOU KNOW?

Although it is calculated that youth who identify as LGBTQ+ and/or queer are four more times likely to experience sexual abuse compared to youth who identify as straight and cisgender (Friedman et al., 2011), we, unfortunately, were not able to find statistics on the extent of sexual abuse specifically for Deaf LGBTQ+ and/or queer youth.



DID YOU KNOW?

Deaf children are three times more likely to experience sexual abuse compared to hearing children, and it is estimated that as high as 50% of Deaf children are subjected to sexual abuse (Rainville, 2013).

Comparing Statistics

50% of deaf girls have been sexually abused as compared to 25% of hearing girls. (Sullivan et al., 1987)

54% of Deaf boys have been sexually abused as compared to 10% of hearing boys. (Sullivan et al., 1987)

Deaf children are at increased risk for traumatization. The ongoing communication barriers that often exist within the family and in other key settings can cause. For example:

Merry Christmas...



Gaps [in research] are particularly evident in the shortage of literature on Deaf people and intimate partner violence (IPV), defined as physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former intimate partner or spouse (CDC, 2013).

This absence wrongly implies that IPV is a non-issue in the Deaf community, an assumption that has been disproved by recent empirical and clinical findings. This Issue Brief details important facts about IPV within the Deaf community and provides specific recommendations for providers about best practices for working with Deaf clients.



Domestic Violence (In the Deaf community)

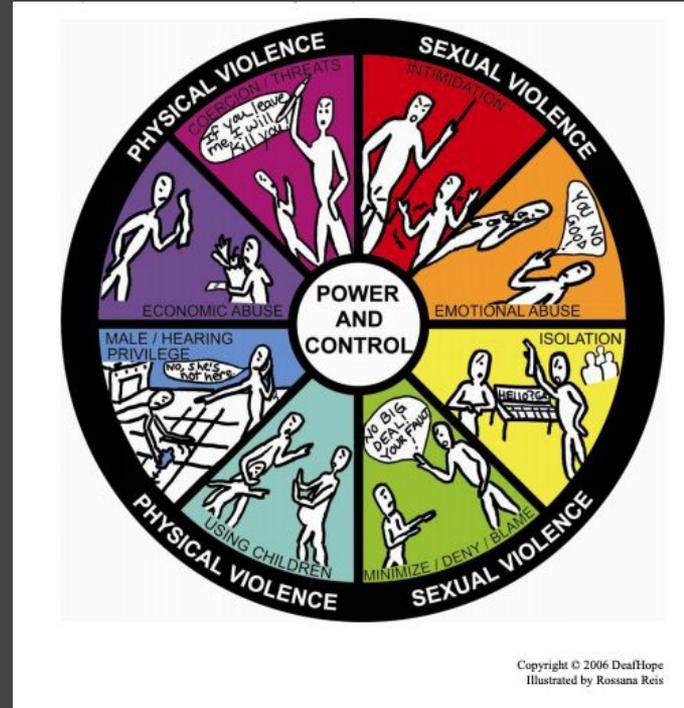
Control Wheel in Deaf community includes “Hearing Privileges”

Excludes you from important conversations (talking to the bank without you knowing) 70-75% families do not sign.

Leaves you out in social situations (such as a party or dinner) with hearing people

Talks negatively about the Deaf community

If you call the police, he interprets to manipulate the situation to his benefit



A hearing perpetrator does not inform the Deaf victim when people try to call; excludes the victim from important conversations and financial decisions; leaves the victim out of social situations with other hearing people; talks negatively about the Deaf community or disallows access to Deaf culture; criticizes the victim's speech and English skills; and manipulates police officers when they are called to the house.

<https://www.bflnyc.org/core/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/intimate-partner-violence-in-the-deaf-community.pdf>



Case Study - Male Victim John*

- John at 11 years old experienced a horrific crime. (Perp was an adult female)
- 12 years old, he reported it to his counselor in front of his family
- 19 years old a detective contacted him to discuss the incident
- It took 2 years for court because...
- 21 years old, pled guilty to molestation of a child and Statutory Rape
- Now John is 46 years old: How deaf community responds to him
 - Death threats on a daily basis
 - Harassed, stalked, and beat up by local community
 - Community members will sabotage him every chance they get.

Long Term Impact within the Deaf Communities

- Language delay/deprivation (and dysfluency)
- Difficulty in learning about safety
- Lack of educational resources such as safety curricula
- Difficulty in sharing or disclosing information about abuse
- Skill building abilities and social skills are poor
- Lack of trust in relationships
- Increased interpersonal violence (IPV)
- Higher chance of becoming a perpetrator (abuser) because of lack of understanding about healthy boundaries.

Institutional Impact

- Wisconsin Priest (1960's-1970's)
 - From 1950 to 1974 the headmaster of St. Johns, Father Lawrence C. Murphy, raped and molested as many as 200 deaf boys, according to court and church documents.
- Death at Illinois School for the Deaf (hanging)
 - Student molested by Dorm staff member and nobody did anything
- The normalcy of sex between the ages of 10-15
 - Kansas school for the Deaf (This is my story)

Should you shut down schools for the Deaf?



What can YOU do?

- Always provide a certified interpreter and agree to a Certified Deaf Interpreter if someone asks for one.
- When in doubt, ask for an assessment of their understanding. This needs to be done by someone that has understanding about Deaf culture.
- Consult with specialized agencies such as DOVE for any survivor based support or meetings with survivors of any form of abuse.
- Find a way to fund and recruit someone that is able to provide adequate services for Deaf abusers. (Preferable that you hire a Deaf individual for this position)

Some concerns DOVE has

- Lack of qualified mental health services that are affordable and accessible for community members.
- Hearing individuals that are not fluent in ASL are often given higher clout. This needs to be avoided at all costs.
- Funding sources for Deaf advocacy services are not adequate.
- No additional research opportunities are afforded to agencies such as ourselves.
- Providing interpreters are perceived as a burden not an accessibility tool.
- For accessibility needs, people are often assuming “one size fits all”.



Any Questions?



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Available for: presentations, consultation, and accessibility assessments

