



The Intellectual
and Developmental
Disabilities Council
of Tarrant County

Welcome!

SAFE, Strong, Supported: Building Safer Relationships for People with Disabilities

meet & greet



Take this opportunity to introduce yourself in the chat box.

- ❖ Who are you?
- ❖ How can you assist?
- ❖ What do you need assistance with?



The Intellectual
and Developmental
Disabilities Council
of Tarrant County

Webinar Welcome!

SAFE, Strong, Supported: Building Safer Relationships for People with Disabilities

Presented by Anna Belle Burleson and Sophie Benitez,
SAFE Austin

August 14, 2025

Weekly Caregiver Education Webinar

To transform the region into an inclusive community where individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) thrive.



Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Council of Tarrant County



MONTHLY MEETINGS

1ST THURSDAY EACH MONTH 9-10:30 a.m.

3136 W. 4th Street, Fort Worth

Next meeting: Sept. 4

SUMMER WEBINAR SERIES

WEEKDAY VARIES 12-1:30 p.m.

August 21, August 26, Sept. 4

MAKING CONNECTIONS RESOURCES FAIR

October 11 – Fort Worth

CAPEabilities CAREER EXPLORATION EXPO

February 5 – ESC 11

TRANSITION COMMITTEE MEETINGS

2ND FRIDAY EACH MONTH 9-10:30 a.m.

Location Varies

Sept. 12 - TCC Trinity River Campus

Oct. 10 – Location TBD

UPCOMING EVENTS

 The Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Council of Tarrant County

Caregiver Education Webinar Series Presents:

Healthy Habits for Picky Eaters

TUESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2025 ■ Noon – 1:30 pm



Are mealtimes a challenge for you? Do you have a picky eater? Join us for this webinar series. We will discuss the importance of healthy eating habits for individuals with IDD, and how caregivers can help them develop these habits. We will also discuss the importance of mealtime routines and how to create a positive mealtime environment.

 The Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Council of Tarrant County

Caregiver Education Webinar Series Presents:

HEART HEALTH IN INDIVIDUALS WITH IDD

AUGUST 21, 2025 ■ 12:00 pm

This webinar explores the increased risk of heart disease for individuals with IDD. We will discuss the importance of heart health and how caregivers can help them develop healthy habits. We will also discuss the importance of mealtime routines and how to create a positive mealtime environment.

Register at: <https://tinyurl.com/ynt6>

 The Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Council of Tarrant County

Caregiver Education Webinar Series Presents:

High Quality IEPs

SEPT 4, 2025 ■ 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm

Join us as we explore the process of creating high quality IEPs in accordance with the IDEA requirements, considering the Supreme Court's decision in the Endrew v. Douglas County School District case. We will emphasize the development of a high quality IEP tailored to each student's unique needs, the components of an effective IEP statement, and the creation of challenging, ambitious, and measurable goals. Additionally, we will discuss the significance of tracking a student's progress toward achieving their IEP goals and the school's responsibility to report this progress to parents.

Register at: <https://tinyurl.com/sn8x6d87>

 PRESENTED BY THE TEXAS A&M SYSTEM

 The Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Council of Tarrant County

 **FREE**

MAKING CONNECTIONS CENTRAL TARRANT

DISABILITY RESOURCES FOR ALL AGES

The IDD Council is proud to partner with Fort Worth ISD to host "MAKING CONNECTIONS" CENTRAL TARRANT

 **one** FOR WORTH, TX

SATURDAY, OCT. 11, 2025 • 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

M.G. Ellis Elementary • 215 NE 14th St., Ft. Worth, 76164

Visit with organizations that provide services for the community!
Schedule and Breakout Session Details:
<https://www.iddcouncil.org/makingconnectionsfw>

Resources for:

- Medicaid Waivers/Social Security
- Guardianship/Supported Decision-Making
- Behavioral Health
- Transition & Employment Services
- College Programs
- Assistive & Adaptive Technology
- Special Needs Trusts / Wills
- Homelessness
- Assisted Living / Housing
- Financial Planning
- Recreation & Leisure
- Therapy & Camp Providers
- Respite/Day Habilitation
- and more!

 Breakout Sessions

 Resources & Exhibitors

 Kid's Workshop

EXHIBITOR & SPONSOR REGISTRATION: <https://tinyurl.com/s4h334f>

The IDD Council's Making Connections Disability Resource Fair brings together the disability resources in our community to one easily accessible location for families and caregivers to collect information and learn about benefits and services they provide. Making Connections Disability Resource Fairs are held throughout the year in various Tarrant County locations.

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Register at: <https://tinyurl.com/sn8x6d87>

 PRESENTED BY THE TEXAS A&M SYSTEM

Chelsy Bahall, is a Regional Case Manager for Tarrant County's "one" agency that provides the "one stop" service for "one" disability services. She has experience in working with individuals with disabilities and their families. She is currently working on her Master's degree in Social Work from the University of North Texas. She is also a member of the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators (NAPCWA) and the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators (NAPCWA).





Intellectual and
Developmental
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of Tarrant County



GRANT WRITER NEEDED

If you are an experienced grant writer, or if you know of one, please message us or email us.



Welcome

NEW/RENEWING MEMBERS

- **Individual Members:**

- Bryan Cotton
- Daniel Durany
- Cynthia Rodriguez
- Theresa Moffitt
- Heather Crawford
- Guiyuan Li
- Amber Luckey
- Mike Anderson
- Sandy Rodriguo
- Ranella Franklin
- Joseph Barbarito
- Tammi Creed
- Stephanie Stone
- Rene Aguilar
- Deborah Norris
- Richard Garrett
- Audra Resell

- **Premier Partners:**

- Cook Children's Medical Center
- Fort Worth ISD (Founding Partner)
- Tarrant County, the office of Judge Tim O'Hare (Founding Partner)

- **Sponsor Member:**

- Green Oaks Education and Support

- **Professional Member**

- Macy Davis, Equitable Advisors, LLC

Your Name/Organization Belongs Here

www.IDDCouncil.org/join-us

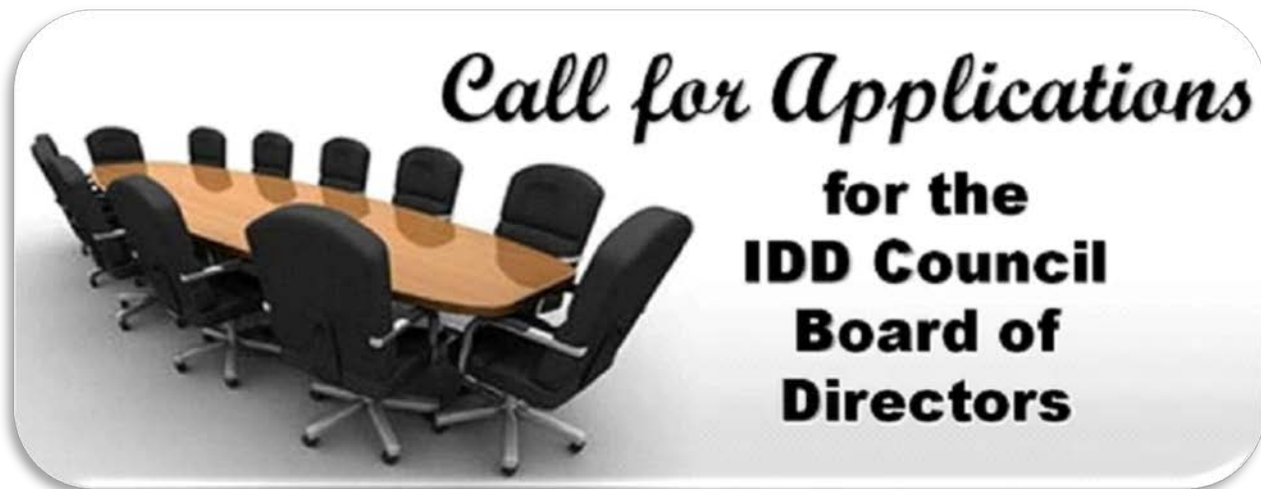


JOIN A COMMITTEE

- ❖ **COMMUNICATIONS & PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE:** Identifies and schedules topics of interest for Council events and helps create and distribute information important to members of the Council and community through written and electronic media. Meets hybrid as needed.
- ❖ **SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE:** Calling all party planners, entertainers and creative thinkers! Let's plan programs that add value to the community, advocates and creates awareness of IDD. The committee is looking for parents, providers, community leaders and event planners to join us in finding and creating new opportunities. Meets hybrid as needed.
- ❖ **TRANSITION COMMITTEE:** Provides educators the opportunity to collaborate and discover resources to share with families in the path to adulthood. The committee is looking for school counselors, transition specialists, parents and advocates interested in establishing or advancing opportunities for people with disabilities after high school. Help develop strategies that support families and students in schools and secondary education. Meets the 2nd Friday of the month from 9-10:30 a.m.



Intellectual and
Developmental
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of Tarrant County



The IDD Council is accepting applications from outstanding leaders, self-advocates and caregivers to serve as Board members. Help us to grow and prosper in our work.

<https://www.iddcouncil.org/board-member-info.>

ABOUT OUR PRESENTERS

Sophie Benitez and
Anna Belle Burleson



SAFE, Strong ,Supported: **Building Safer Relationships for People with Disabilities**

ANNA BELLE BURLESON (SHE/HER)

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR – DISABILITY SERVICES

SOPHIE BENITEZ (THEY/THEM)

EDUCATION & TRAINING SPECIALIST – DISABILITY SERVICES

About SAFE

Vision: A just and safe community free from violence and abuse

Mission: To stop abuse for everyone

24/7 SAFEline for support & access to all services

Hotline: 512-267-7233

Textline: 737-888-7233

Chatline: safeaustin.org/chat



Education and training for people with disabilities on topics that include personal safety, healthy relationships, and safer sexuality

Information, technical assistance, and training:

- disability service organizations
- victim service professionals
- criminal justice staff
- family members and other stakeholders

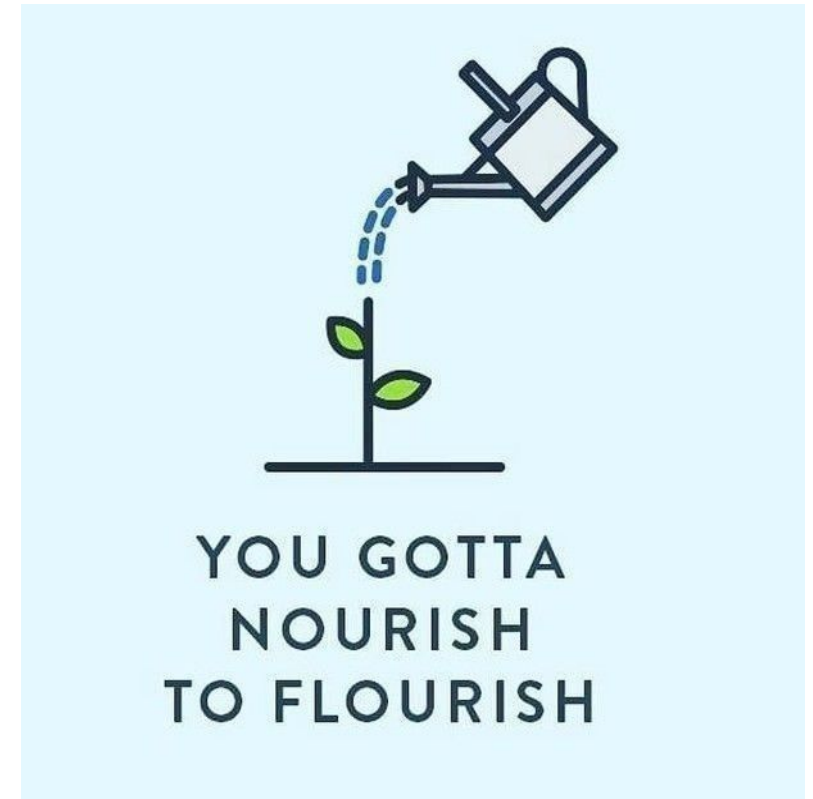
Work collaboratively with community partners to recognize and address gaps in services for people with disabilities

Learning Objectives

- Increase understanding of the risk of violence for youth and adults with disabilities;
- Recognize common indicators of sexual abuse, assault, and exploitation;
- Learn practical ways to respond to disclosures of abuse that support healing; and
- Identify at least two ways to reduce risks of sexual assault.

We Acknowledge...

- o Talking about violence and assault can be difficult.
- o Talking about sex can be awkward!
- o There may be barriers to delivering healthy relationship and sex education to individuals with disabilities.
- o Self-care!



Activity

**Dating, sex,
and disability:
True or false!**

Hold up one finger for TRUE.



Hold up two fingers for FALSE.



**If people do not talk about love
and sex, then they are not sexual.**



1. True



2. False



**Learning about sex and dating
makes people have sex.**



1. True



2. False



If parents and teachers don't think someone is ready to date or have sex, then they don't need sex ed.



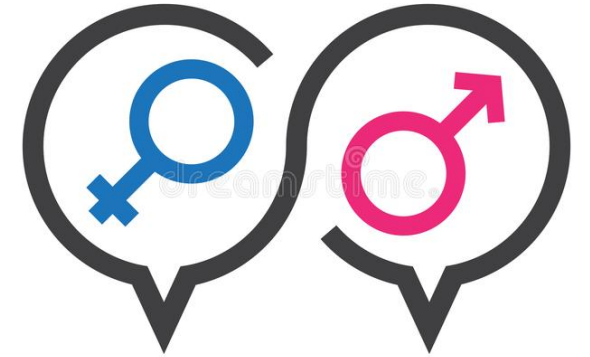
1. True



2. False



Boys & girls should not be separated when they learn about their bodies and sex.



1. True



2. False



If a person with a disability is having sex, they must be straight.



1. True



2. False



An Increased Risk of Violence

Violence & People With Disabilities

In a large-scale national study of people with disabilities:

- More than 70% said they had been victims of abuse
- Most experienced abuse on more than 20 occasions
- About half the incidents were reported to authorities
- Only 10% of alleged abusers were arrested

(Baladerian, Coleman & Stream, 2013)

Abuse of People With Disabilities

Violence is most often perpetrated by someone people know and trust

- 97-99% of victims with intellectual disabilities knew and trusted their abuser
- 44% had a relationship specifically due to the disability

Abuse can occur anywhere, but the risk is much greater in closed, institutional settings

(Baladerian, 1991)

Increased Risk for Exploitation

- Experiences of isolation, grief, and loneliness
- Communication barriers
- Learned compliance
- Lack of privacy/physical boundaries
- Lack of sexuality education
- Harmful social messages
- Threat of loss of independence



Indicators of Sexual Assault, Abuse or Exploitation

Physical Indicators

- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing or sheets
- Unexplained pain, bleeding, discharge, or injury to the genitals, anus, or mouth
- Unexplained vaginal infections or sexually transmitted infection/diseases/pregnancy
- Pain during urination or bowel movements



How To Identify (2021)

Behavioral Indicators

- Sudden change in appetite
- Fear, withdrawal or avoidance of certain people, places, activities or situations
- Sudden, significant, or unusual change in demeanor/mood/behavior
- Increased drug or alcohol use or other self-destructive behavior such as self-harming behaviors



How To Identify (2021)

Mental / Emotional Indicators

- Signs of depression or anxiety
- Suicidal thoughts or attempts
- Thinks of self or body as repulsive, dirty, or bad
- Leaves clues that are likely to provoke a discussion about sexual issues
- Refusal to talk about a secret shared with an adult or older child



How To Identify (2021)

Respectfully Responding to Disclosures

Compassionate Care

To be trauma-informed is to consider the impact of trauma on a person's emotions, regulation, and behavior.



Trauma-Informed Responses



- ✓ Start by believing!
- ✓ Say it, “I believe you.”
- ✓ Remind the person they are safe with you, right now, in that moment.

Try to Avoid

- Asking “Why” Questions
- Minimizing
- Speaking Negatively about the Person

Who Hurt Them

- Offering Self-disclosure



Be honest!

(© Expect Respect)

Reducing the Risk of Violence

There is Hope!

- Abuse happens to many people
- There is help and healing
- Many people (with and without disabilities) go on to thrive
- Your loved one can heal with some very practical supports
- Making decisions for oneself supports healing in certain parts of the brain

Self-Determination & Community

- Greater self-determination increases ability to recognize and resist abuse
- Sex education is crucial
- Community support network



(Khemka et. al, 2005)

Self-Advocacy Skills and Safety

- ❑ Crucial for safety
- ❑ Communicating “yes” or “no” (verbal or nonverbal)
- ❑ Is a learned skill that must be supported.
- ❑ Identifying, practicing, and advocating for one's boundaries is a foundational safety skill.



Create a Culture of Consent

- ☐ Think about power and control.
- ☐ Always ask for consent before touching.
“Can I give you a hug?”
- ☐ Be honest and keep your word.
- ☐ Take care of yourself, too.



(© Expect Respect)

My Rights My Life: A Curriculum for Healthy Relationships and Safer Sexuality

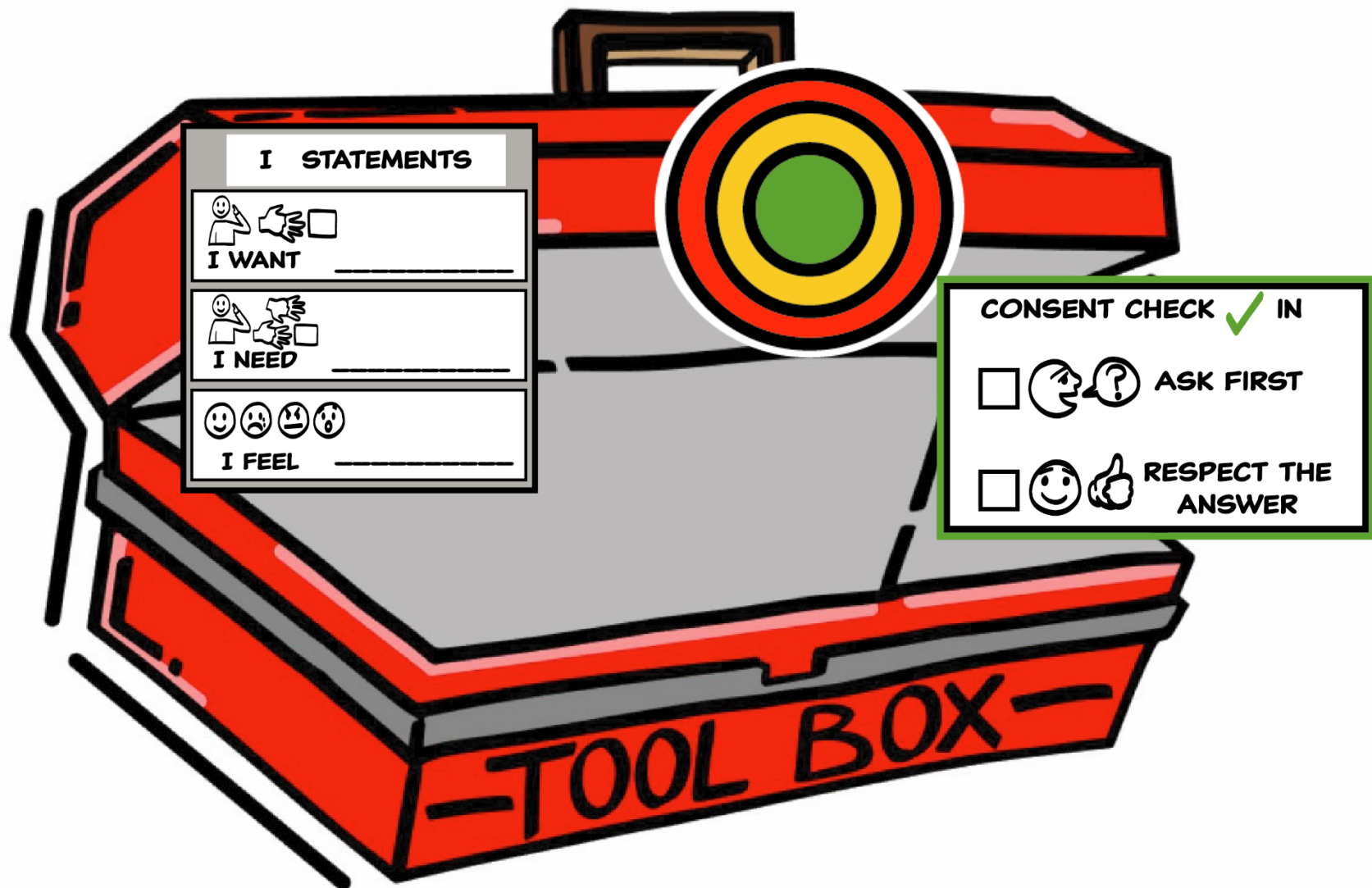
My Rights My Life

- *My Rights My Life* curriculum is online and free to all
 - www.myrightsmylife.safeaustin.org
- Each class includes a downloadable facilitator's guide and slides.
- Curriculum is available in English & Spanish.
- Public/private school special education 18+ programs, adult day programs, rehabilitation settings, congregate living centers.





HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS TOOLBOX SAFE



1. If people do not talk about love and sex, then they are not sexual.
2. Learning about sex and dating makes people have sex.
3. If parents and teachers don't think someone is ready to date or have sex, then they don't need sex ed.
4. Boys & girls should not be separated when they learn about their bodies and sex.
5. If a person with a disability is having sex, they must be straight.

Report Suspected or Known Abuse in Texas

Link: https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact_Us/report_abuse.asp

By Phone: 1-800-252-5400

Online: [Texas Abuse Hotline](#)

Call the Abuse Hotline toll-free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nationwide, or report with the secure website and get a response within 24 hours.

Call your local law enforcement agency or 911 immediately if you have an emergency or life-threatening situation.



This work is supported by the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities through a grant from the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Washington, D.C. 20201, with a 100% federal funding award totaling \$6,121,860. Council efforts are those of the grantee and do not necessarily represent the official views of nor are endorsed by ACL, HHS, or the U.S. government.

Thank you!

aburleson@safeaustin.org

sbenitez@safeaustin.org

disabilityservices@safeaustin.org

24-hour SAFEline

Call: 512.267.SAFE (7233)

Text: 737.888.SAFE (7233)

Chat: www.safeaustin.org/chat

For Deaf, DeafBlind, DeafDisabled, Late-Deafened, and Hard of Hearing people, use relay/VRS

If someone with a disability discloses abuse to you...

LISTEN

- Allow the person to tell you what happened without interruption or judgment.
- Victims of abuse may test the waters by telling the mildest part of their victimization first.

I believe you.

Thank you for trusting me with that information.

VALIDATE

- Let the person know that it is NOT their fault.
- Give the person space to identify and label their own feelings.
- Affirm to them that they did the right thing by telling you what happened.

REMEMBER

- Do not make promises that are out of your control, (e.g., "This will never happen again").
- Record as many facts about the incident(s) as possible - time/place, events, and the suspected perpetrator's information.

Let's get help.

GET HELP

- Call 911 if the person is in immediate danger.
- Tell the person that **you are obligated under the law to report** to Child Protective Services (CPS), Adult Protective Services (APS) or other investigative authorities (as determined by individual state legislatures).
- Inform them that a worker from the agency may want to talk.
- If the person is an adult, inform that they have the right to refuse APS services. Give the person a choice to have you call APS with them present, have them self-report with you present, or to self-report by themselves.
- Support them in seeking medical attention to ensure proper treatment as needed.

Any person with reasonable cause to believe a child, a person 65 years or older, or an adult with disabilities is being abused, neglected, or exploited is **mandated to report** according to Texas laws. You do not need evidence to prove that abuse is occurring. It is up to investigators to look into your suspicion of abuse.

Texas Abuse Hotline for Children and Adults: (800) 252-5400

For Deaf, DeafBlind, DeafDisabled, and Hard of Hearing people: Use Relay Texas at 711 and tell the operator to call the Texas Abuse Hotline



Scan here to go to the Texas Abuse Hotline website, or go to txabusehotline.org

Si alguien con discapacidad le cuenta que abusaron de él/ella/elle...

ESCUCHE

- Permita que la persona le cuente lo que sucedió sin interrupción ni juicio.
- Las víctimas de abuso pueden ser cautelosas y contar primero la parte más leve de su victimización.

Te creo.

Gracias por confiarme esa información.

VALIDE

- Hazle saber a la persona que NO es su culpa.
- Dele a la persona espacio para identificar y nombrar sus propios sentimientos.
- Asegúrele que hizo lo correcto al contarle lo sucedido.

RECUERDA

- No haga promesas que estén fuera de su control (por ejemplo, "Esto nunca volverá a suceder").
- Registre tantos hechos como sea posible sobre los incidentes: hora/lugar, eventos e información del presunto autor.

Busquemos ayuda.

CONSIGA AYUDA

- Llame al 911 si la persona está en peligro inmediato.
- Dígle a la persona que **usted está obligado/a/e por ley a informar** a los Servicios de Protección Infantil (CPS), Servicios de Protección de Adultos (APS) u otras autoridades de investigación (según lo determinen las legislaturas estatales individuales).
- Infórmele que es posible que un trabajador de la agencia quiera hablar con él/ella/elle.
- Si la persona es mayor de edad, infórmele que tiene derecho a rechazar los servicios de APS. Dele a la persona la opción de que usted llame a APS estando él/ella/elle presente, que informe por sí mismo con usted presente o que informe por sí misma.
- Apoye a la persona en la búsqueda de atención médica para asegurar el tratamiento adecuado según sea necesario.

Cualquier persona que tenga motivos razonables para creer que un/una/une menor de edad, una persona de 65 años o más o un adulto con discapacidades está siendo abusado, descuidado o explotado **tiene la obligación de informar** de acuerdo con las leyes de Texas. No necesita pruebas para demostrar que ocurre el abuso. Corresponde a los investigadores investigar su sospecha de abuso.

Línea directa de abuso de Texas para menores y adultos: (800) 252-5400

Para personas sordas, sordociegas, con discapacidad auditiva oy con problemas de audición: utilice Relay Texas al 711 y dígle al operador que llame a la línea directa de abuso de Texas.



Escanee aquí para ir al sitio web de la Línea Directa de Abuso de Texas, o visite txabusehotline.org

Possible Signs of Abuse of People with Disabilities & Helpful Resources

Research shows that people with disabilities experience abuse more frequently than people without disabilities. Some possible signs of abuse of people with disabilities are:

- **Any change in a person's usual behavior:** This can include *sudden and unexplained* change in attitudes, behavior, or demeanor. For example, the person was typically outgoing/happy and suddenly they are withdrawn.
- **Bruises**, abrasions, cuts/scratches in different stages of healing.
- **Improper clothing** for the weather.
- **Hygiene is poor and/or gets worse over time:** For example, the person keeps wearing the same clothes over and over again without cleaning them, not brushing their hair, etc. *
- **Weight loss** or weight gain.
- **Easily startled.**
- **Talks glowingly** about their caregiver despite apparent neglect.

*Certain people with disabilities (e.g., autism) have sensory issues and this may make it challenging for them to complete daily self-care such as brushing their teeth, etc.

Below are some helpful resources to have on hand in case you need to report suspected abuse and/or get help for a person with a disability.

- **SAFEline.** Access to all SAFE services. 24/7 Call: 512.267.SAFE (7233); Text: 737.888.7233; Chat: safeaustin.org/chat
- **National Sexual Assault Hotline.** 24/7 Call: 800.656.HOPE (4673); Chat: www.rainn.org
- **National Domestic Violence Hotline.** 24/7 Call: 800.799.SAFE (7233); TTY: 800.787.3224; Text START to 88788; Chat: <https://www.thehotline.org/>
- **The Trevor Project.** 24/7 Call 866.488.7386; Trevor Chat: www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help-now (LGBTQ+ youth)
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.** 24/7 Call: 800.273.8255; Chat: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>
- **Texas Abuse Hotline.** Report suspicions of abuse, neglect and exploitation of children, adults with disabilities, or people 65 years or older. 24/7 Call: 800.252.5400; <https://www.txabusehotline.org/>

A Comprehensive Curriculum for Healthy Relationships, Personal Safety, and Sexuality



All materials are
FREE!

For young adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

- ✓ Inclusive, identity affirming language
- ✓ Downloadable lesson plans and slides for every class
- ✓ Facilitator script with pre and post teach activities
- ✓ Communication boards for every class
- ✓ Available in Spanish

scan here!



30 classes!

<https://myrightsmylife.safeaustin.org>

To request technical support or for more information, contact
disabilityservices@safeaustin.org

Un plan de estudio completo para relaciones sanas, la seguridad personal y la sexualidad

¡Todos los materiales son **GRATIS!**

Para adultos jóvenes con discapacidades intelectuales y del desarrollo

- ✓ Lenguaje inclusivo y que afirme la identidad
- ✓ Planes de clases descargables y presentaciones para cada clase
- ✓ Guion para facilitadores con actividades para antes y después de la enseñanza
- ✓ Tableros de comunicación para cada clase
- ✓ Disponible en español



Escanee aquí



¡30 clases!

<https://myrightsmylife.safeaustin.org>

Para solicitar apoyo técnico o más información, comuníquese a **disabilityservices@safeaustin.org**

Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities

Participant Satisfaction Survey





Intellectual and
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of Tarrant County

SHOP, EAT AND SUPPORT THE IDD COUNCIL



Kroger Shopper Card Community Rewards: <https://bit.ly/2Sw9WX1>

Rosa's Cards \$20 value / \$20 each: Email request with Qty: Rita@IDDCouncil.org

More info and ways to support our mission: <https://www.iddcouncil.org/partners>

PAYMENTS MADE EASY WITH ZELLE, PAYPAL, OR ON OUR WEBSITE!



zelle®



<https://paypal.me/IDDCouncil>



<https://myqrcode.mobi/d2648a48>
(www.IDDCouncil.org/gift)



Intellectual and
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of Tarrant County

Thank you for joining us!

Rita Stevenson
Executive Director
Rita@IDDCouncil.org
www.IDDCouncil.org

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