

**IT'S MY RIGHT!**



**STAYING SAFE &  
PREVENTING ABUSE**

**A Guide for People with Disabilities, 2003**

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# **WELCOME TO STAYING SAFE & PREVENTING ABUSE!**

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This guide was designed to help people with disabilities who live in the community remain as safe as possible. It was created with the help and suggestions of 52 women who have disabilities and who come from diverse backgrounds.

**If you are experiencing abuse—or if you have experienced abuse in the past—you are not alone.** Too often, people with disabilities experience abuse. This guide offers information and ways to develop skills that might help you escape from or minimize abuse. Even if you've never experienced abuse, this guide will help you remain safe and will give you tools in case you ever do find yourself in an abusive situation or relationship.

The purpose of this guide is to help you:

- Further develop your skills and strengths.
- Increase your safety.
- Reduce the possibility of abuse and mistreatment.
- Create trusting, comfortable relationships with support people.
- Improve the overall quality of your life.

This guide shares information and has small “homework” assignments which will help you build upon your existing skills and knowledge to further increase your safety. When you complete this guide you will:

- Know your rights.
- Be able to define and identify abusive behaviors.
- Have strategies in place to help you stay safe at home and in the community.
- Understand how to access and use community resources.
- Know how to set healthy limits with other people.
- Have additional skills for managing respectful relationships.

**We're pleased you're interested in this information,  
and hope you'll share it with other people who may find it useful!**

## **Suggestions for Using this Guide:**

- You can complete this Guide at your own pace. You may want to read it straight through and then go back and work on the exercises, or you may want to do a session each week. Work through the Guide in whatever way feels most comfortable to you.
- Because the purpose of this Guide is to help you be as safe as possible, it discusses how to define and identify different types of abuse. You may find some of this information upsetting to think about. You may want to find a safe place to read this Guide. For instance, you might go to a friend's home or a favorite park where you feel relaxed.
- Before you begin, you may want to find local hotline numbers for abuse-related support services. That way, if you're upset by the information, you can call to get emotional support. Hotline numbers and resources for the Portland, Oregon area are listed at the end of this Guide. If you do not live in the Portland, Oregon area, you can call the following national hotlines toll free to get your local hotline number:
  - National Domestic Violence Hotline:
    - Toll Free Telephone: 1-800-799- 7233
    - Toll Free TTY: 1-800-787-3224
  - RAINN: Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network:
    - 1-800-656-4673
- You may want to find a friend who is also interested in this information, so you can complete your Guides together. You can discuss the information and support each other through the process.
- If you are currently in an abusive situation, you may want to consider a safe place to keep your Guide where the abusive person won't see it. Possibly a trusted friend, co-worker, or family member can hold onto the Guide for you when you're not working on it.

**The Table of Contents is on the next page, so once you're in a safe place and have a support number to call, you can get started!**

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# Introduction

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It's your right to have safe, healthy, and nurturing relationships with intimate partners, family, friends, and community members. Safe and healthy relationships are built upon mutual respect, honesty, positive regard, negotiation, trust, support, and open communication.

Research has shown that abuse and violence against women and men with disabilities is a serious problem. Women with disabilities tend to experience higher rates of abuse for longer periods of time by a greater number of perpetrators than women without disabilities.

**Abuse is serious and  
can be life threatening.**

**No one deserves to be abused.**

**You have a right to  
live free from fear.**

Additionally, men and women with disabilities are more vulnerable to abuse by health providers and personal assistants or caregivers (caregivers may be intimate partners, family members, friends or paid providers).

Types of abuse towards people with disabilities include physical, sexual, financial, and verbal/emotional abuse. Although it often gets less attention, verbal/emotional abuse is very serious, and can be just as traumatizing as other forms of abuse.

People with disabilities may also face other forms of abuse such as neglect, refusal to provide essential care, manipulation of medications, destruction of equipment, or other abuse tactics related to the disability.

If you're in an abusive relationship or situation it can be scary and difficult to leave. You may have barriers that keep you from being able to stop the abuse.

People with disabilities may have trouble getting help because:

- They are isolated from safe people.
- They don't know about community supports or abuse resources.
- Some community resources are not accessible.
- They may lack emergency back-up support needed to get away from a caregiver who is the abuser.
- They may love the person who is being abusive and may feel confused.
- They may fear being put in an institution.
- They may fear they will lose their children if they acknowledge they are being abused.
- They may feel that if the abuse is reported, the abuse will get worse.
- Some people may not recognize that what they are experiencing is abusive and wrong.

This Guide will help you identify abusive behaviors, identify barriers to escaping or minimizing abuse, and develop skills and strategies to overcome those barriers. The content of the Guide is structured around your rights.

## **My Rights**

- **I have the right to be safe.**
- **I have the right to take care of myself.**
- **I have the right to access safe people and safe places in my life.**
- **I have the right to use community resources.**
- **I have the right to avoid situations and people that aren't safe.**
- **I have the right to lead a healthy life free of abuse and fear.**

## SECTION ONE

# I HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE SAFE

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### In this section, you will:

- Define what a “safe life” means to you.
- Acknowledge skills and strategies you’ve already developed to take care of yourself and keep yourself as safe as possible.
- Learn and practice additional skills to keep yourself safe.

### Imagining and Defining a Safe Life

You have the right to live a safe life that’s free of abuse and fear. Take a few minutes and think about what a “safe life” means to you. (Every person who does this exercise will have a different response, so whatever you come up with is fine.)

After giving yourself a few minutes to think about what a safe life means to you, write down some of your thoughts in the box below, or draw a picture of what a safe life looks like to you.

To me, a safe life looks like:

Great! Now that you’ve imagined what a safe life would look like and feel like, you’re in a better position to create it for yourself.

## Skills I Have Developed to Create a Safe Life

Whether you've experienced abuse or not, you've probably already developed some skills to keep yourself safe. Take a few minutes to think about things you've done (or skills you've developed) that increase your safety. These don't have to be huge things, they may be simple small things that you do to increase your safety.

Some examples might be:

- "I keep my doors locked."
- "I check my bank statement every month to make sure no one is taking money from my account."
- "I don't feel obligated to spend time with people who make me feel uncomfortable."

List four or five skills you've developed (or things you've done) that help you feel safe:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Read over your list and give yourself credit for the smart things you've done to keep yourself safe!

On the next page are additional strategies that people with disabilities have used to increase their sense of safety—these strategies may be useful to you or a friend.

## **Strategies Developed by People with Disabilities to Increase Safety**

- Know the address and telephone number of a trusted friend and support person.
- Be careful with my money at the ATM machine and store.
- Carry ID (identification) with me.
- Protect my body and my physical space.
- Leave the situation if I feel uncomfortable or unsafe.
- Call the police.
- Do not say bad words.
- Say no, and repeat saying no if I need to. Say no strongly.
- Give people I trust my phone number.
- Be aware of people and the space around me.
- Tell people who are bugging me to leave me alone.
- Use strong body language.

## **Mentally Practicing New Strategies for Safety**

Maybe some of the strategies listed above are new to you, but seem like they might be helpful. If so, you might want to mentally practice these skills. When we mentally practice skills (think about them over and over again) our responses become more automatic and comfortable.

To practice, think about a situation that felt scary or uncomfortable in the past, or an uncomfortable situation that might happen. For instance, you might imagine your personal assistant has repeatedly requested that you lend her \$50. You can mentally practice firmly saying, “No, I’m not comfortable doing that” over and over again until she stops asking.

Think of a situation and take a few minutes to describe what is happening. Try to be as specific as possible when thinking about the situation:

Where are you? \_\_\_\_\_

What is happening? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is making you feel not safe? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Who is involved? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What are your resources? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Which strategy might be helpful? \_\_\_\_\_

Now, take a few minutes, close your eyes and mentally practice handling the situation using the strategy over and over again.

How does this feel for you? \_\_\_\_\_

Maybe it feels good and powerful. Maybe it feels uncomfortable or strange. Replacing old habits with healthier responses takes time and practice, so be gentle with yourself as you learn new strategies and practice new skills.

This guide will build on these skills and offer additional ideas to help you stay as safe as possible. But, remember sometimes—even when we do everything we can to be safe—someone might still hurt us. **If someone is hurting you, it's not your fault.** The abusive person is making a choice and it's a reflection of that person, not of you.

## SECTION TWO

# I HAVE THE RIGHT TO TAKE CARE OF MYSELF

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### In this section, you will:

- Learn what “self-care” means and why it’s important.
- Identify ways to take care of yourself emotionally, physically, and spiritually.
- Define healthy boundaries.
- Practice setting limits.
- Learn about healing from abuse.

### Taking Care of Yourself

“Self-Care” means that you take care of your physical, emotional, and spiritual health.

Taking care of your **physical health** includes things such as:

- getting enough sleep
- taking medications as prescribed
- eating healthfully

Taking care of your **emotional health** includes things such as:

- expressing your emotions
- being able to say “no” to people when you don’t want to do something
- ending or changing relationships with people who hurt your feelings or are mean to you

Taking care of your **spiritual health** includes things such as:

- creating time to practice your faith or spirituality
- connecting with other members of your spiritual community

Often people think it's selfish to take care of themselves. They feel they have to meet everyone else's needs instead of their own needs. Some people have trouble expressing their emotions (such as anger) or telling someone something that might hurt their feelings (such as "I need some time alone, so I can't go to the movie tonight after all.")

When we don't take care of ourselves and we take care of everyone else, we may feel secretly angry or resentful. We may feel people don't appreciate us or are taking us for granted. It's hard to take care of other people when we ourselves are feeling grumpy and irritated.

You're an important person with important needs! You're allowed to take care of yourself! And if you take care of yourself, you'll have more energy and happiness to share with the people in your life.

Think about some ways that you can take care of yourself:

3 ways I can take care of my **physical health**:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

3 ways I can take care of my **emotional health**:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

3 ways I can take care of my **spiritual health**:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Five simple things that make me happy** (examples: lighting candles, working out, renting a movie, walking barefoot in the grass, singing, calling a friend who makes me laugh):

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

It might be helpful to have a “self-care buddy.” You can agree to remind each other to take care of yourselves, and you can make contracts with each other: “I’ll promise to relax by reading a favorite book tonight if you promise to do something nice for yourself, too.”

## **Defining Healthy Boundaries**

Another important way to take care of yourself is to define healthy boundaries.

Boundaries are like invisible fences that we construct around ourselves to keep important healthy things in and to keep unhealthy, abusive things out. We have both physical and emotional boundaries.

Boundaries vary from person to person. Some people like a lot of touching and hugging. Other people are very cautious about who they touch and who they want to touch them. Often, we define our own boundaries based on our upbringing, culture, and values. Your boundaries may be different than the boundaries other people have established for themselves. It’s important that we respect other people’s boundaries and that they respect ours.

When our boundaries are broken (when people aren't respecting our physical or emotional limits), we may feel angry, resentful, depressed, fearful, or hopeless.

Having healthy physical boundaries means that we keep a safe, comfortable distance from people we don't know or trust. It also means letting people know if they are in your space, if they are standing or sitting too close to you, or if they are touching you in a way that you don't like.

Having healthy emotional boundaries means that we accept responsibility for our feelings and emotions. It means being able to say "No," to people when they ask us to do things that aren't comfortable for us. Sometimes it's hard to say "No" if you think you're going to upset or disappoint someone, but it's not healthy to ignore your own needs and feelings to take care of someone else. You may upset someone in the process of saying "No," but they'll survive. They may also respect the fact that you're being honest about what you can and can't do.

**Having healthy boundaries means being able to say "no" to people who ask us to do things that aren't comfortable for us.**

We often have different physical and emotional boundaries for different people in our lives. For instance, your sister might be a safe person. You might let her touch and hug you, and you might share personal information with her.

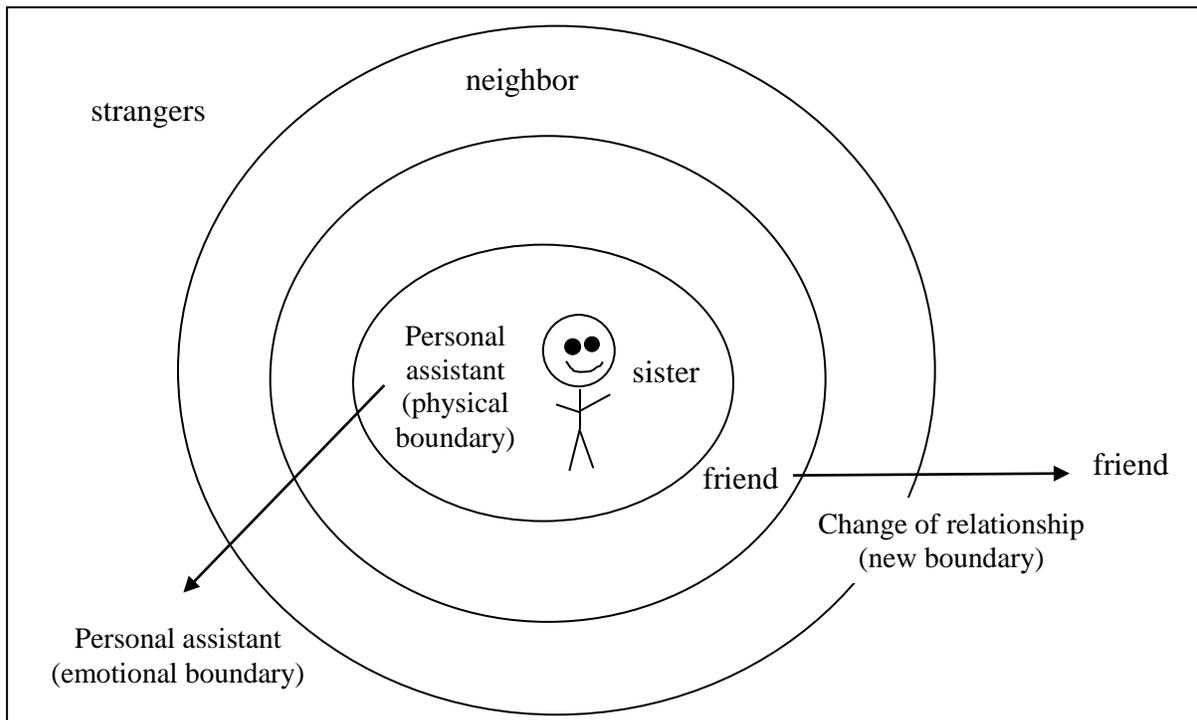
But maybe you have a neighbor who makes you uncomfortable. Your boundaries might be that you don't want the neighbor within several feet of you, and you decide to not share any personal information with that person. Or, if you have a friend who is often mean or abusive toward you, you might decide that you no longer want to spend time with that person to protect your emotional health.

If you have a personal assistant, the assistant might help you get dressed or assist with other activities that involve the person touching you. If you don't trust the person or don't like the way they touch you, your physical boundaries may feel threatened. If this is the case, you may want to consider finding another assistant. If that's not an immediate option, you

may want to address your concerns (if it feels safe to do so) by saying something such as, “It hurts when you scrub my back so hard. I need for you to be more gentle.”

For someone who is physically close to you such as a personal assistant, you can still set strong *emotional boundaries* around what information you share with that person.

These are all examples of being aware of how people impact you and how close you want them to be physically and emotionally. The different boundary layers for the relationships listed above might look like the picture on the next page.



In the above example, the inner circle represents people who are physically and/or emotionally close to the person. In the case of the personal care assistant, the assistant is physically close due to the nature of the job, but the person has strong emotional boundaries about sharing personal information with the assistant, so the assistant (in terms of emotional closeness) is put far away.

The person's sister is a safe person and is close both physically and emotionally, so she is within the person's inner circle.

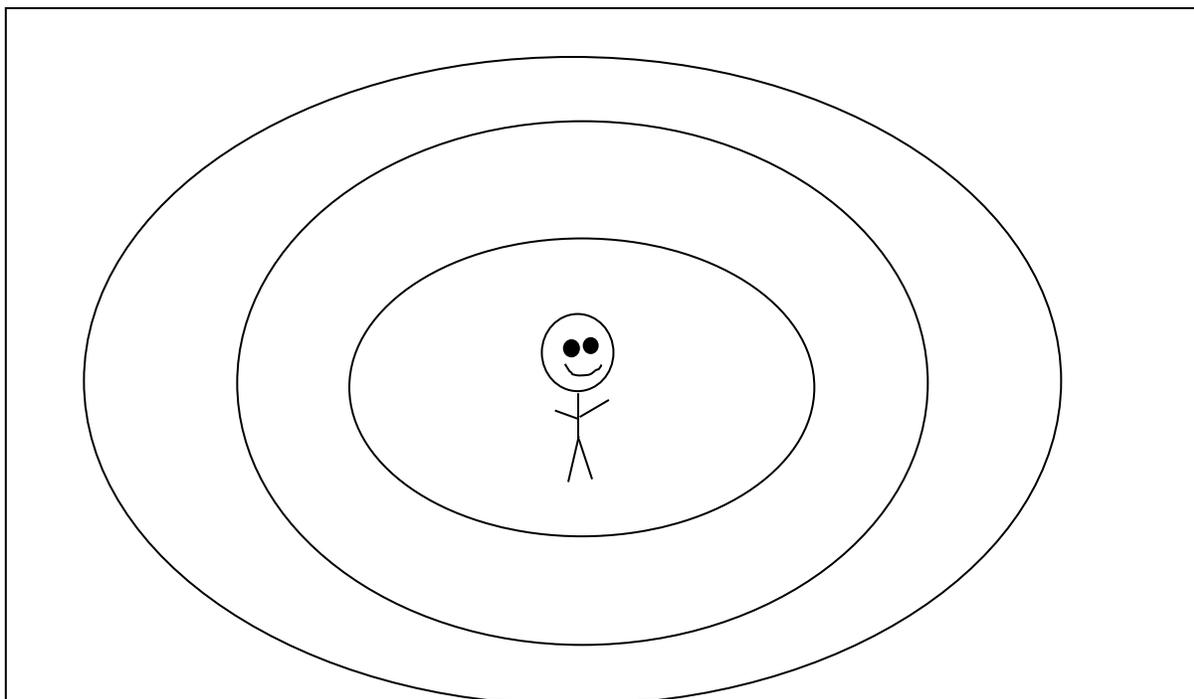
The mean friend was moved from being a close friend to a more outside position to create greater emotional and physical space.

Strangers are usually kept at a distance until we get to know them and feel they are safe to move closer to ourselves.

Take a couple of minutes and think about where different people in your life fit into your emotional and physical boundaries.

In the below picture, list where family members, relatives, friends, and other people you have regular contact with fall into your boundaries. Some people may be in one place physically and in another place emotionally, so you may want to list the same people twice in different places.

### **My Personal Boundaries for People in My Life**



Now that you've listed where people fit into your boundaries, think about whether you'd be happier or more comfortable if you changed any of these relationships to be closer or to be more distant by drawing arrows to where you'd like to move the person.

For instance, in the first example, the person created new boundaries around a friendship that wasn't healthy. The person moved her former friend to a place where there was more physical and emotional distance. If you want to move a person to a place where you'd have more emotional distance you can draw an arrow to where you'd like to move that person.

Sometimes we want to change our boundaries or relationships with other people and it's hard because the other person might not like the changes we're making. And, if you grew up in a home where your physical or emotional boundaries weren't respected, it might feel uncomfortable or strange when you first start defining and protecting your boundaries. If this is the case, you may want to mentally practice changing boundaries so you're prepared for people's reactions.

**You're allowed to define relationships in a way that feels healthy to you, and to end relationships that don't feel safe.**

Maybe you feel that your mother is too involved in your personal life, and you decide to not share personal information with her anymore. She might not like it, and she might try to keep the relationship as it was. It's up to you to practice the new boundary over and over until it starts to feel comfortable. Again, this means taking good care of yourself and respecting your own needs even when it upsets other people. This can be a hard process; be gentle with yourself. Remind yourself that you're allowed to define your relationships in a way that feels good to you.

Thinking about relationships in terms of boundary circles around us can help us visualize what feels healthy and comfortable to us. You need to decide what feels best to you, and then communicate that to other people. For instance, if someone is standing too close or touching you and you don't like it, you could say, "I need some more personal space" or "I don't like it when people I don't know very well hug me, please don't do that again."

Other phrases you can practice to protect your boundaries would be:

- "That's inappropriate, please don't ask me that again."
- "That's personal information that I'm not comfortable sharing with you."
- "That's not okay for you to ask me."
- "If you touch me like that again, I'll need to end your employment."

## Practicing Setting Limits

Many people have trouble saying “no” in order to take care of themselves. They may feel guilty or selfish saying “no” to a friend or a family member. Some people even feel badly saying “no” to strangers because we want people to think we’re nice. But when we really don’t want to do something, we need to be able to say “no.” Otherwise, we’ll be busy taking care of everyone else and doing what they want us to do rather than taking care of ourselves and doing what we want to do. If we end up living for other people, we may become angry or frustrated.

Setting limits and defining our boundaries are not only ways to increase safety and trust with yourself, but also a way to increase safety and trust between yourself and other people.

## Mini Homework Assignment

For the next few days, whenever someone asks you to do something, say “Let me think about it.” And then give yourself enough time (maybe a few minutes or maybe a few hours) to ask yourself, “Do I *really* want to say ‘yes’? Or do I just feel like I *should* say ‘yes’?”

If you realize you don’t want to agree with the person’s request, practice saying “no.” Maybe you could say something such as, “Thanks for inviting me to dinner, but I can’t make it.” You don’t need to make excuses or explain yourself. If someone asks for more information, you can simply say, “I prefer to not discuss it.”

Or, let’s say your personal assistant calls and says that she has a date and can’t make it to work that evening, but you need her to show up. Rather than saying, “That’s okay” and being secretly angry, you could say, “I need you to be here this evening. It’s not okay for you to cancel work at the last minute. In the future, if you need time off, we’ll need to plan for it in advance, but I need you to work tonight.”

When you practice saying what you think and feel more directly and honestly, you may want to keep notes about how it works for you. It may

feel awkward or uncomfortable at first. Just remember that you're taking care of yourself by asserting yourself and that you have a right to say what you need.

Each time you practice, ask yourself:

- How did I feel when I did assert myself? (Scared? Happy? Nervous? Selfish?)
- How did the other person react? (Confused? Angry? Sad? Fine?)
- How did I feel afterward? (Proud? Happy? Nervous? Relieved?)

Each time you practice saying what you think and feel, it will likely become a little bit easier. And most people will respect the fact that you're being honest and taking care of yourself. You can also serve as a role model for other people by being able to say "no" because it gives them permission to take care of themselves and say "no," too!

## **Healing from Abuse**

If you're experiencing abuse, your spirit may feel damaged. You may start to believe all of the terrible things your abuser has told you. And, yet, you've found the strength to survive.

People who survive abuse are often very hard on themselves. They often feel they should "get over" the abuse quickly, should be able to leave the relationship easily, and often feel guilty if they still care about the person who has abused them. They may wonder why they got into the relationship in the first place and blame themselves for not having "used better judgment."

Try to be patient with yourself and talk to yourself as if you were your own best friend. Remind yourself that abuse is never acceptable and that you don't deserve to be abused.

## **Tips for self-care and healing:**

- Keep a journal of your thoughts and feelings. (Try to keep the journal in a safe place where the abusive person won't see it.)
- Identify safe people to talk to.
- If you get away from the person and still feel strong emotions (anger, sadness, grief, etc.) be patient with yourself. Healing takes time.
- Consider joining a support group where you can give and receive peer support.
- If possible, schedule some personal time when you give yourself permission to cry, be angry, or do something that gives you joy.
- Trauma is never easy to “get over.” It can take months or years to process and heal from ongoing abuse. Honor whatever you did to survive the abuse and acknowledge the strength it took for you to stay as safe as possible.
- Draw, paint, write, speak out, express yourself, and tell your story if doing so feels safe.
- Understand that many intelligent, wonderful women and men find themselves in scary situations. You are not alone and you didn't use “bad judgment” when picking your partner or your assistant—abusers are rarely abusive at the beginning of the relationship. They are good at hiding their abusive behaviors until they have you in a vulnerable situation where they think they can get away with the abuse.
- It takes many survivors a long time (or multiple attempts) before they leave an abusive relationship permanently. Leaving can be difficult for many, valid reasons.
- Some people with disabilities find they've been involved in more than one abusive relationship and may start blaming themselves for attracting abusive people into their lives. Unfortunately, there are many abusive people in the world and some people prey upon people who've already experienced abuse. Being abusive is a decision the abuser makes. There's nothing you can do (or could have done) that would justify someone hurting you. There's no excuse for abuse.
- Remember: abuse can happen to anyone. You are not alone.

## SECTION THREE

# KNOWING PEOPLE & PLACES THAT ARE SAFE

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### **In this section, you will:**

- Use what you've learned about boundaries and setting limits to identify safe people and safe places in your world.

One of the most important things in life is having safe and healthy relationships with family members, partners, personal assistants, acquaintances, and others.

Sometimes we have people in our lives who make us feel badly about ourselves, and we forget that we have a right to end or redefine relationships that aren't healthy.

The goal of the section is to think about the people in your life and decide who is safe and who is not in terms of your emotional and physical health. If you identify people currently in your life who are not safe, you can consider whether you want to change that relationship by setting new boundaries with that person or whether you want to end that relationship.

Sometimes it doesn't feel safe to end relationships with certain people because it may feel like they'll become dangerous or more abusive. If this is the case, there is information later on in this guide that can help you with safety planning as you attempt to minimize or eliminate the abusive situation.

Take a few minutes and think about people who are safe, trustworthy, and reliable, and places where you feel comfortable and relaxed. When thinking about safe people ask yourself questions such as, "Could I rely on this person in an emergency?" "Does this person treat me with respect?" or "Could I call this person in the middle of the night if I need emotional support?"

**Safe People:**

Example: my best friend Sue

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Safe Places:**

Example: local community center

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Trust and safety with people in our lives is often based on consistency (that they are people you can rely on). Sometimes, relationships change and people that once felt safe are no longer there for us in the same way they used to be (just as we sometimes move away from some people in our lives). For that reason, it's a good idea to update these lists once in a while.

**Mini Homework Assignment**

Sometimes we take important people in our lives for granted, so take a few minutes to call or write a note to the people on your "safe list" to let them know how much you value and appreciate their friendship and support!

## SECTION FOUR

# KNOWING WHAT IS NOT SAFE

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### **In this section, you will:**

- Create a safe environment for yourself before diving into this information.
- Identify different kinds of abuse.
- Learn about mandatory reporting in Oregon.

In this section, we'll discuss specific types of abuse and mistreatment. This information may be difficult or upsetting to read—especially if you are currently experiencing abuse or have experienced abuse in the past.

Some survivors of abuse have flashbacks if something triggers a memory of a traumatic event. A “flashback” is when you feel like you are re-living a scary situation. Flashbacks can be very intense and upsetting. “Triggers” are sounds, sights, smells, or other things that tend to cause flashbacks.

Reading through this information may trigger you to experience flashbacks, anxiety, fear, or deep sadness. So, we suggest that you make sure you're in a safe place before you begin this section, and that you have a list of phone numbers to call where you can get some emotional support if you need it. You may even want to ask a safe friend to be with you when you work through this section.

Take care of yourself when reading this information. If you feel stress or anxiety, you might want to take a break. If you experience intense emotions there are ways you can “ground” yourself. “Grounding” means calming yourself and reminding yourself that you're in a safe place. To ground yourself, you can try these things:

- Take several deep, slow breaths.
- Place your hands flat on the table (or on a wall) and press your feet to the floor. Concentrate on the temperature and texture of the wall. Or, rub your hands slowly together and focus on the sensation of your hands.

- Slowly repeat something over and over that calms you. It can be your name and address, your favorite quote, lyrics to a song, or a phrase such as “ I am safe right now, I am okay.”

What are other things that help calm you when you're upset?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Once you're feeling ready to move on, you can get started on this section on the next page.

When you're done with the next section, you may want to review the “self-care” lists you completed earlier in this Guide. (Section 2, pages 14-15.)

# What is Abuse?

The types of abuse people often experience include physical, sexual, verbal/emotional, spiritual, and financial abuse. While people with disabilities often experience these types of abuse, people with disabilities often experience additional types of abuse including things such as:

- Someone damaging, destroying or taking away assistive devices including things such as wheelchairs, walkers, canes, hearing aids, TTYs, communication boards, and so forth.
- Someone over-medicating you, under-medicating you, stealing your medicines, mixing your medicines with alcohol, not allowing you to eat food that's necessary to take with your medication, or withholding medication in order to threaten or coerce you.
- Someone threatening or hurting your service animal.
- Someone who works for a system that's supposed to help you (legal system, medical system, advocacy system, etc.) who is verbally, emotionally, physically, or sexually abusive rather than professional and helpful.

**Physical Abuse** includes things such as:

- Refusing to provide you with essential care such as eating, drinking, or using the bathroom.
- Pushing you beyond your physical limits.
- A support person leaving early or not showing up to provide scheduled care.
- Physically restraining you (including things such as grabbing you, locking you in a room, tying you down, or taking away mobility devices).
- Standing over you or physically intimidating you (such as blocking a door so you can't leave or shaking a finger or fist in your face).
- Grabbing you roughly, pinching you, or pulling your hair.
- Humiliating you (such as spitting on you or neglecting your personal care needs).
- Isolating you from people in your life.

- Destroying your equipment (such as a communication or mobility device) or taking equipment away from you to create dependency or increase isolation.
- Withholding medication or forcing you to take drugs that you shouldn't be taking.
- Leaving you stuck in bed or on the toilet or somewhere else for extended periods of time.
- Not letting you sleep.
- Transferring you roughly or hurting you during physical care procedures.
- Tickling you when you don't like or enjoy it.
- Threatening to use—or actually using—a weapon.
- Controlling where you go
- Pushing, slapping, or kicking you.
- Strangling or hitting you.
- Slapping, pushing, kicking, grabbing, burning or tripping you.

**Sexual Abuse** includes things such as:

- Touching you in a sexual way that makes you uncomfortable.
- Telling you sexual jokes or making sexual comments that make you uncomfortable.
- Not respecting your privacy when you request it (such as when you bathe or get dressed).
- Forcing you to engage in sexual activity.
- Forcing you to look at sexual material that you don't want to look at.
- Asking you about your sexual history or experiences.
- Making sexual comments about your body or making fun of your body.
- Sharing details about their sex life that you don't want to hear about.
- Withholding care or medication for sexual favors.
- Touching you inappropriately from fondling and kissing to rape.
- Calling you sexualized, derogatory names (whore, bitch, slut).

- Withholding affection as a form of punishment.
- Forcing you to have sex after you have been physically hurt or when you're not feeling well.
- Making you dress in a more (or less) sexualized manner than they prefer.
- Flaunting affairs or flirtations to hurt you.
- Exposing you to sexual infections or diseases; refusing to wear a condom.

**Verbal/Emotional Abuse:** Verbal and emotional abuse can be just as damaging as physical and sexual abuse because they target your sense of self and your spirit. When these things are broken, it can take months of years to heal. Verbal and emotional abuse include things such as:

- Threatening to put you in an institution.
- Threatening to have you declared an unfit parent based on disability status so that you lose custody of your children.
- Ignoring your preferences and decisions.
- Calling you names or putting you down.
- Focusing abuse toward your disability to increase shame (making fun of your disability or disability-related needs, telling you no one will ever love you because of your disability, targeting the part of your body that is disabled for physical or sexual abuse).
- Screaming or yelling at you.
- Destroying your relationships with your friends or family to keep you isolated.
- Blackmailing you with personal information or spreading rumors.
- Threatening or intimidating you.
- Breaking or taking away your mobility equipment (cane, walker, wheelchair, etc.) or communication devices (TTY, liberator, etc.).
- Creating intricate "rules" you must follow, and then changing the rules.
- Not respecting your boundaries (such as always asking you personal questions).

- Being extremely jealous.
- Accusing you of having affairs or flirting with other people.
- Being sarcastic.
- Calling you names or telling you that you are stupid, worthless, and that no one will ever love you.
- Threatening to hurt your children, pets, or service animal.
- Breaking things or throwing things.
- Driving recklessly to frighten you.
- Blaming you for “causing” the abuse.

**Spiritual Abuse** includes things such as:

- Not letting you practice your faith or spirituality.
- Making fun of your belief system.
- Humiliating you in front of members of your faith/spiritual community.
- Forcing you to worship in a way that’s not comfortable for you.

**Financial Abuse:** Financial abuse is serious because it can be used to control a person and keep them in a dependent role so they’re unable to escape from other types of abuse. Financial abuse includes things such as:

- Taking your SSI or DDS checks.
- Not letting you work or forcing you to work multiple jobs.
- Controlling all of the household money.
- Stealing money or other valuables.
- Forging checks or using your credit cards.

In each of the above categories, there are unfortunately, many additional examples we could list. Often, abusive people use tactics from more than one of the above categories. For instance, you may be experiencing emotional, physical, and financial abuse all at once.

Women with disabilities created the following list that details the ways in which a support person might be abusive.

## **Abusive Behaviors that May be Used by Support People:**

- Leaves or doesn't show up
- Does an inadequate job
- Does not work assigned hours
- Insults or puts you down
- Ignores your requests
- Makes decisions without asking you
- Steals your money
- Gossips about you
- Forges checks
- Denies choice
- Threatens to leave
- Interferes with personal business
- Blocks your path or puts things out of reach
- Doesn't let you have time alone
- Snoops in your belongings
- Shows up drunk on the job
- Handles you roughly
- Neglects your physical needs
- Pressures you for money
- Threatens physical abuse
- Pushes beyond physical limits
- Violates body privacy
- Physically abusive
- Immobilizes you
- Alters your medication dose
- Touches you in a sexual manner
- Withholds communication device
- Threatens to hurt or hurts your pets

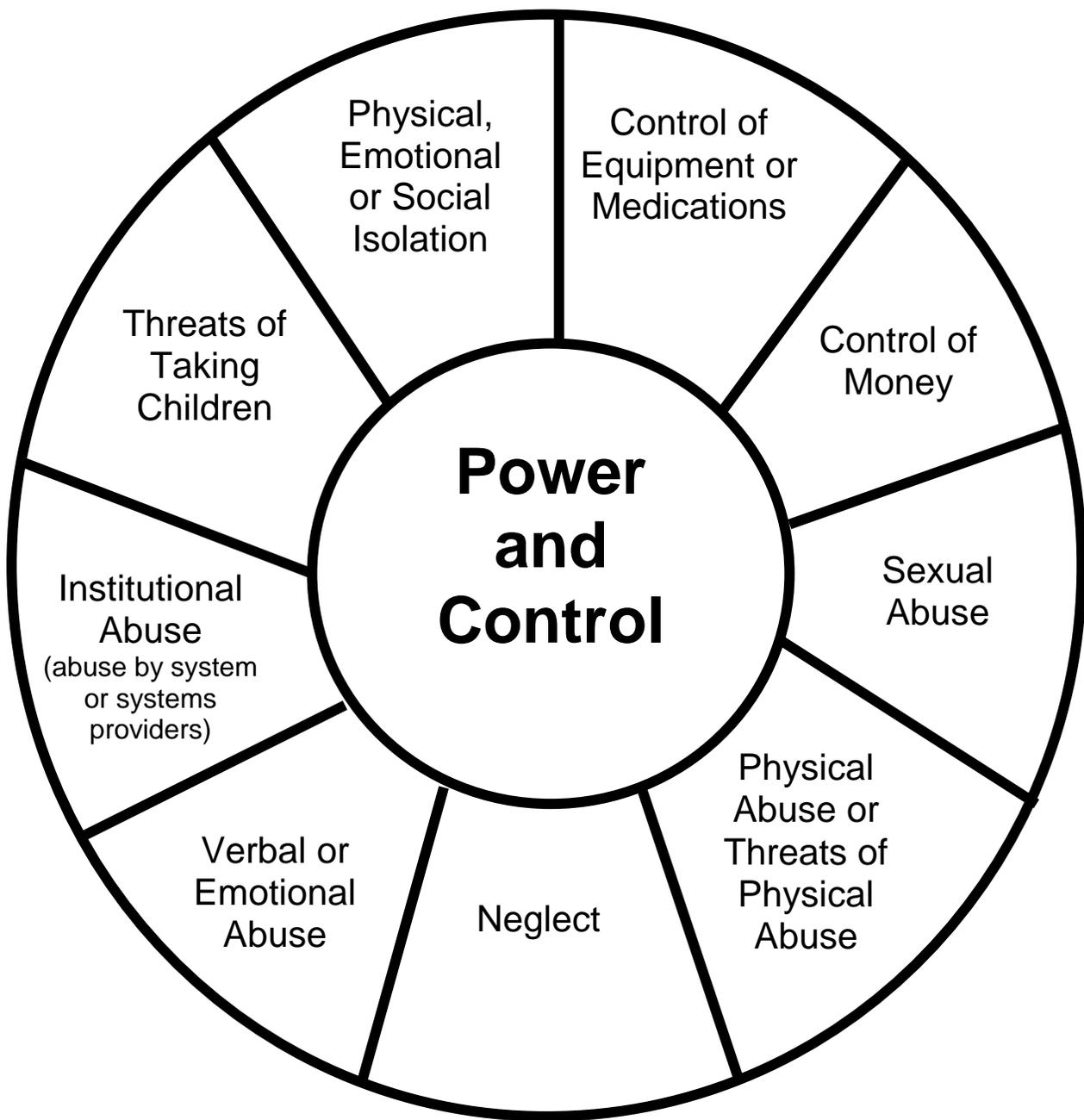
- Forces sex or sexual activity
- Abuses your child or children

Sometimes, we tend to make excuses for people who are abusive. We may think, “She’s having a bad day,” or “He’s stressed out from his job and that’s why he hurt me.” But abuse is about power and control.

Abusive people manipulate people and situations in order to have as much power and control as possible. They often first break people’s spirits down by being emotionally abusive (“You deserve to be treated this way because you’re no good!”) and then often move on to other types of abuse.

Being able to identify the different types of abuse (being able to name the behavior as abusive and “not okay”) is important in order to think of strategies to overcome the abuse.

On the next page is the “Wheel of Power & Control” which further details abuse tactics. You might want to think about whether anything you’ve experienced fits anywhere on this wheel. Sometimes, we’re so used to being abused in small, subtle ways, that it starts to feel “normal” and we forget that it’s not okay!



If you are experiencing one or more of the types of abuse listed above, it's important to know that abuse tends to become more severe and frequent over time. If you're experiencing abuse and hoping that it will get better, it might not and you might want to consider options to get away from the person if possible. (Options and safety planning are included in this Guide on page 39-48.)

But you are the expert on your situation and only you know what feels safest to you. If you're in an abusive relationship it may feel safer to remain

in that relationship than to leave. Statistically, women are at more risk for serious injury when in the process of leaving an abusive relationship because the abuser feels like he or she is losing power and control and may react strongly. This is why safety planning (listed on the following pages) is so important if you decide to end the relationship or get away from the person. Even if you decide to stay in the relationship, safety planning can sometimes increase your safety while in the relationship.

We respect that you're the expert on your situation, and that whatever choices you make are the right ones for you.

Just remember that the abuse is *never* your fault. No one is perfect and we all make mistakes, but that never gives another person the right to hurt us or intimidate us. If someone is hurting us, it's a reflection of the other person, not of us.

Even if you do want to escape from the abuse, there are often barriers to being able to get away safely and quickly. On the next page is a list of barriers identified by people with disabilities. It's possible that you may experience additional barriers that are not on this list.

## **Barriers That Impede Safety**

- Shortage of qualified, dependable support people
- Low wages, lack of benefits, and burnout of support people
- Lack of emergency back-up support people
- Lack of knowledge or experience about how to recruit, train, or supervise support people
- No support available to deal with the abuse and mistreatment
- Survivor is embarrassed or ashamed and may not talk about the abuse
- Don't know who or where to call to get help or disclose the abuse
- Domestic violence programs do not understand the complexities that people with disabilities need to deal with
- Lack of accessible shelters or temporary housing
- The abusive support person is a family member or friend
- Lack of specialized equipment in shelters

While some barriers might be out of your control, there are some barriers that you can overcome if you create a safety plan and research community resources. There are worksheets in this Guide that will help you put together these resources.

Now that you are familiar with various types of abuse, and once you've completed the worksheets on community resources, you may want to resources and discuss the abuse. If so you should be aware of mandatory reporting laws in Oregon.

## Mandatory Reporting of Abuse in Oregon

If you choose to disclose physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse/neglect when accessing services or resources, it's important that you understand that many people are mandatory reporters.

Mandatory reporters are people who, by Oregon law, *must* report abuse (or suspected abuse) to authorities. The idea behind mandatory reporting is to keep people safe from abuse. However, some people feel that the abuse will become more severe if an abuse report is filed.

For these reasons, it's important that you understand who must report abuse and who you can talk to confidentially.

According to the Department of Human Services website, mandatory reporters include:

- **All employees of the Oregon Department of Human Services**
- **Medical personnel:** Physicians, psychiatrists, surgeons, residents, interns, dentists, dentist hygienists, medical examiners, pathologists, osteopaths, coroners, Christian Science practitioners, chiropractors, podiatrists, registered and licensed practical nurses, emergency medical technicians, substance abuse treatment personnel, hospital administrators and other personnel involved in the examination, care or treatment of patients.
- **School and child care personnel:** Teachers, school personnel, educational advocates assigned to a child pursuant to the School Code, truant officers, directors and staff assistants of day care centers and nursery schools.
- **Law Enforcement:** Truant officers, probation officers, law enforcement officers, and field personnel of the Department of Corrections.
- **Others:** Social workers, social service administrators, substance abuse treatment personnel, domestic violence program personnel, crisis line or hotline personnel, foster parents, homemakers, recreational program or facility personnel, registered psychologists and assistants working under the direct supervision of a psychologist.

If you feel having the abuse formally reported would put you at risk for greater harm, you can call a domestic violence hotline and seek emotional support and resources without giving your name or any identifying information. (Most hotlines will not ask for your full name unless you are attempting to access to a domestic violence shelter.)

If you have concerns about reporting when talking to someone on the telephone, you can always ask a person whether they are a mandatory reporter before you disclose abuse. If they are, you can decide whether or not you want to give identifying information.

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In the following section, you will create a personalized safety plan to help you overcome barriers, develop confidence, and recognize options if you are—or if you ever find yourself in—an abusive situation.

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## SECTION FIVE

# CREATING A SAFETY PLANNING

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### **In this section, you will:**

- Learn about safety plans and why they're important.
- Organize important items into a safety kit.
- Gather information about personal and community resources.

### **What is a “safety plan”?**

A safety plan is a list of resources, options, ideas, and strategies that will help keep you safe. Safety plans are personalized to fit your specific needs and situation. When you develop a safety plan, you not only organize information and find community resources, but you also develop new skills and honor the things you've already put in place to take care of yourself.

Safety plans can be developed to keep you safe when you're planning to leave an abusive situation. They can also be used to remain as safe as possible even if you decide to stay in the relationship.

### **Why are safety plans important?**

Safety plans are important because it's hard to think clearly in crisis situations. If there comes a point in time when you need to quickly leave your home (or have someone such as an intimate partner or a personal assistant removed), it's good to have a plan in place in advance of the situation. It's similar to doing a fire drill—practicing what you'll do and where you'll go in case there's a fire. That way, you can be as clear headed and calm as possible if it ever happens.

### **What does a safety plan include?**

Safety plans generally include:

- The names and contact information of safe people.

- Things to take if you ever need to leave a situation quickly (such as health records, medications, identification, etc.).
- The names and telephone numbers of community agencies and resources.
- Places to go during an emergency.
- Emergency telephone numbers.
- A list of transportation options.

### **Developing your Safety Plan**

On the following pages are worksheets that will guide you through the process of developing your safety plan. These worksheets include exercises that will help you organize important items and gather information such as the telephone numbers of safe people and resources. Having all of the items and information in one place is helpful if you ever need to leave your home in a hurry.

## Things to Organize in case of an Emergency Situation

The following items are things you might want to organize into a “safety kit” so they are ready to go in case you’re ever in an emergency situation. You may want to ask a safe person to hold onto the kit for you if it feels unsafe to have the kit at home.

Having copies of important documents (social security cards, birth certificates, legal papers) is a good idea because some abusive people will destroy original paperwork in order to control you.

Checklist of things to organize:

Other things you might need:

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of identification card                         | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of driver’s license                            | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of social security card                        | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of medical card                                | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of birth certificate                           | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bus tokens / bus pass                               | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quarters for phone call / phone cards               | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Purse   | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Money   | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Credit / debit cards                                | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clean clothes                                       |       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency button                                    |       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medic Alert bracelet                                |       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Copies of medical records for you and children      |       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Copies of legal papers (such as restraining orders) |       |

**Medicines or Pills**

Medicine name	Time of day to take the medicine

**SAFE PEOPLE TO CONTACT**

**Safe Family Members**

Name	Home Phone	Cell Phone
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**Safe Friends**

Name	Home Phone	Cell Phone
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**Safe Neighbors**

Name	Home Phone	Cell Phone
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**Safe Personal Assistants**

Name	Home Phone	Cell Phone
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**Additional Safe Support People**

Name	Home Phone	Cell Phone
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Good! Even though you probably had all of this information written down in various places, it's great to have it all organized in one place in case you're ever in a crisis situation.

## Community Resources

Now, to do a bit of research on community resources. It's good to have a sense of the community resources available to you *before* you find yourself in a scary situation. By completing the worksheets on the following pages, you'll have a better sense of what's available to you, how to contact each agency, and which services each agency offers.

If you're not sure where to start when you begin organizing the worksheets, you may want to call your county's social service department and ask for some referrals. Also, a place such as a local domestic violence shelter or a disability provider agency (such as a Center for Independent Living, United Cerebral Palsy, and so forth), can refer you to other community agencies such as food banks, clothing banks, community support groups, and so forth. *You have a right to use these services!*

At the end of this Guide you will find a list of community resources for the Portland, Oregon metropolitan area. You may want to use some of those numbers as you fill in the worksheets, but it's a good idea to call the various numbers and familiarize yourself with the resources so you can decide which are best for your personalized safety plan. For instance, there are several domestic violence shelters in the Portland area, you may want to call each and see which is most accessible and which seems most comfortable to you.

When contacting community resources, keep in mind that many social service agencies, especially non-profits such as domestic violence shelters, have limited resources and may not be able to immediately meet your needs. When calling agencies, be persistent if you don't get the information you need the first time you call.

## Worksheets for Community Resources

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**Dial 911 if you are ever in a life-threatening situation.**

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Local Police Station Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Local Domestic Violence Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

- Hotline Number: \_\_\_\_\_
- Do they offer shelter? \_\_\_\_\_
- Can you take your kids to shelter? \_\_\_\_\_
- Can they accommodate your disability-related needs?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Do they offer 24-hour telephone emotional support? \_\_\_\_\_
- Do they have support groups? \_\_\_\_\_
- Can they assist with filing restraining orders? \_\_\_\_\_
- What other services do they offer? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Are their services free and confidential? \_\_\_\_\_
- Are they mandatory reporters? \_\_\_\_\_
- Can they refer you to clothing banks for you and your kids? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Are there additional services available in the area that they can refer you to?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Your community may have more than one domestic violence agency nearby. If so, it's good to familiarize yourself with each agency to see which is more accessible and comfortable for you to work with.

Safe places you could go in case of an emergency (such as a friend's home, a local business, an emergency room, a police station, etc.):

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Personal Assistants:

- Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_
- Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_
- Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Transportation Options (friends, public transportation, taxi, etc.):

- Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_
- Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_
- Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Food Bank Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

- Address: \_\_\_\_\_
- Any requirements to get food? \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number for your children's school: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number for Human Society if you need help with pet care:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name of religious/spiritual support person: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact information for doctors:

Doctor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of local clinic or hospital: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number for clinic or hospital: \_\_\_\_\_

Attorney's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone for local legal aid services: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number for local community center: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional important numbers:

Agency: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional notes to myself:

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Great! Now, if you need to leave in a hurry, you have an organized packet of essential things to take (identification, medications, etc.) and a complete list of important contact information all in one place.

It's important to keep this information as current as possible, so you may want to verify that numbers are current every couple of months.

Creating a safety plan is a good form of self-care because it means you're taking control of your life and situation! In the next section, you'll develop strategies to add to your overall safety plan.

Now that you're done with your safety plan, you may want to consider a safe place to keep it where abusive people won't find it. You may also want to make a copy of your plan and ask a safe friend or relative to hold onto it for you.

## SECTION SIX

# PREVENTING ABUSE

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### **In this section, you will:**

- Learn the “Red Flags” of potentially abusive people.
- Review strategies for staying safe and preventing abuse.

There are “red flags” or signs of abusive personalities that you can look for when hiring a personal care assistant or when deciding whether to get involved with someone romantically. Often, people who are abusive seem very nice or charming when you first meet them. Abusive people are usually good at hiding their abusive tendencies until they have the person they intend to abuse in a vulnerable position. Some of the following behaviors may be obvious right up front, and others might emerge early in the relationship. The more severe behaviors are often what happens once the relationship has progressed.

Knowing the following “red flags” can help prevent establishing relationships with abusive people.

## Red Flags of People Who Are or May Become Abusive:

1. **JEALOUSY:** At the beginning of a dating relationship, a potentially abusive person may express extreme jealousy and may say things such as, “I love you so much that I can’t stand sharing you with anyone else.” But jealousy has nothing to do with love; it’s a sign of possessiveness and lack of trust. A potentially abusive partner may accuse you of flirting with other people or may be jealous of time you spend with your family, friends or children. If someone is very jealous, it’s a warning sign that they may become more and more abusive over time.
2. **CONTROLLING BEHAVIORS:** The abuser may try to control you and claim that he (or she) is doing so out of “love” or “concern” for you. For instance, the abuser may say, “I’m not letting you eat anything tonight because you’ll be healthier if you lose weight.” They may try to control where you go and who you spend time with. They may not let you make decisions about your living arrangements, your clothing, medical decisions, or how you spend your free time. The abusive person may control all of the money or make you ask permission to leave the house or room. They may withhold access to needed equipment or medication to control you.
3. **QUICK INVOLVEMENT:** Many people who become involved with an abusive person dated or knew their abuser for a very short period of time before they were married, engaged or living together. At first, the person may have seemed like a kind, charming, romantic person. People who have abusive tendencies often pressure people to commit to the relationship very quickly and will make you feel guilty if you want to slow down or end the relationship. They may tell you no one else will ever love you because of your disability.
4. **UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS:** An abusive partner may expect you to meet all of their needs. Or may expect you to be the perfect partner, parent, lover, and friend. Your partner may say things like “if you love me, then you’ll...” Often the abuser will give you “rules” you must follow, yet the rules constantly change and are often impossible to follow. The abuser may ask you to do things that are not realistic based on the nature of your disability and then tell you that you just need to “try harder.”
5. **ISOLATION:** An abusive partner or personal assistant may not let you talk to friends, family, and other support people to emotionally isolate you. Physical isolation includes physically restraining you; taking away

(or destroying) mobility or communication equipment; locking you in the house or in a room; moving you to a rural area where you don't know anyone; or taking away your car or transportation options.

6. **HISTORY OF ABUSIVE BEHAVIORS:** The abuser may admit to having hit or threatened partners or providers in the past, but claims they “deserved it” or “made him do it.” People who have been abusive to others in the past will eventually become abusive to you.
7. **BLAMES OTHERS FOR PROBLEMS:** Abusers do not accept responsibility for their failures or mistakes. Rather, they blame everyone else. Be wary of hiring or getting involved with someone who doesn't seem to accept accountability for their actions.
8. **RIGID GENDER ROLES:** Abusers generally expect women to serve them. Often male abusers see women as inferior to men.
9. **CRUELTY TO ANIMALS OR CHILDREN:** Many men who abuse their female partners, also abuse their children. Abusers often punish children or animals brutally. He/she may expect children to be capable of doing things beyond their ability. The abuser may also use children as pawns to manipulate the mother. The abuser may threaten to take custody of the kids or have you declared an incompetent mother.
10. **DR JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE:** Many survivors are confused by the abuser's frequent changes in mood. One minute he (or she) is sweet and the next minute angry. Often survivors still love or respect the abuser's “good side” and tries to be perfect so the “bad side” won't emerge. But no matter how perfect or careful you are, abusive people will find an excuse to be abusive.
11. **VERBAL ABUSE:** Abusers often say things to be cruel and hurtful. They may tell you that you are stupid, fat, incompetent, worthless, irrational, and clumsy. Verbal abuse also includes sarcasm, screaming, and yelling. Nasty comments may be made about your disability, disability-related needs, appearance, skills, ethnicity, or culture.
12. **THREATS OF VIOLENCE:** This could include any threat or physical force meant to control you such as “I'll hide your medicine if you don't do as I say” or “I'll take your wheelchair so you'll be stuck in bed all day.”
13. **BREAKING OR STRIKING OBJECTS:** The abuser may beat on the table with his/her fist, throw objects at you, or break items of sentimental value to intimidate and humiliate you.

14. **FORCE IN SEX:** The abuser may be violent during sexual activity or force sexual activity. He/she may want to act out fantasies during sex where their partner is helpless or being hurt. He/she may show little concern about whether the partner wants to have sex and sulks or becomes angry if she refuses. He/she may start having sex with their partner while she is sleeping or demand sex when she is ill or tired. If the abuser is a care assistant, he or she may touch you in inappropriate ways when assisting you with bathing, dressing, or personal care.

In addition to knowing “red flags,” it’s also helpful to have specific strategies in mind for preventing, minimizing, or ending abuse.

Below are strategies for staying safe that were developed by women with disabilities. While all of these strategies may be useful to both men and women with disabilities, they might not all be realistic for your situation. For instance, you may want to attend a domestic violence support group, but your abuser may not let you attend or the group may not be accessible. Review the list and decide which strategies might be realistic and helpful based on your unique circumstances.

## **Strategies for preventing Abuse & Staying Safe**

- Be able to identify and name abusive behaviors.
- Know that the abuse is not your fault and that the abuse is not okay.
- Be aware of which services are available to you (shelters, crisis lines, food banks, transportation). Know how to access those services.
- Have a list of back-up personal assistants who could help in a crisis situation.
- Have a clear job description for personal care assistants and screening potential applicants during the hiring process.
- Supervise and manage the relationship with support people.
- Have control over the authorization of payments to support people.
- Give ongoing feedback and evaluation of support people / services received.
- Be comfortable in providing clear communication to support people when you ask for assistance.

- Be able to set clear limits.
- Respect your own needs and be able to say “no.”
- Have firm boundaries.
- Be able to negotiate and compromise with support people when in disagreement with them.
- Develop a strong, trustworthy social support network.
- Take classes or read information related to effective communication, support-person management skills, assertiveness, abuse, and abuse prevention.
- Be able to choose your own support people.
- Get involved in support groups.
- Wait until it is safe to do something about the abuse.
- Seek religious or spiritual support.
- Learn about what is appropriate behavior for support people.
- Remind yourself to not to put up with abuse or mistreatment.
- Call the police if necessary.

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Knowing the red flags of abusive people, having strategies in place, and having a personalized safety plan are all great tools to keep increase your level of safety and well-being!

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## SECTION SEVEN

# CONCLUSION

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### **In conclusion, let's review your rights:**

- I have the right to define and create a safe life for myself.
- I have the right to develop and practice new strategies to remain safe.
- I have the right to take care of physical, emotional and spiritual health.
- I have the right to set firm boundaries and to set limits.
- I have the right to heal from abuse.
- I have the right to speak out and tell my story.
- I have the right to say "no" to other people.
- I have the right to access safe people and safe places in my life.
- I have the right to use community resources.
- I have the right to be seen as the expert in my own situation; only I know what is safest and best for me.
- I have the right to develop a safety plan.
- I have the right to avoid situations and people that aren't safe.
- I have the right to end relationships that aren't healthy.
- I have the right to screen personal assistants to ensure I'm comfortable with them.
- I have the right to lead a healthy life free of abuse and fear!

Here are a few final questions you might want to think about:

1. What is the most important thing you learned while completing this Guide?

2. How will you use this information?

3. How can you continue to take care of yourself?

4. Who might I share this information with to help them stay as safe as possible?

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# **Congratulations on completing this Guide!**

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We hope that you'll do something nice for yourself to celebrate the hard work you've completed!

If you're really excited about this information, you may want to consider volunteering at a local women's shelter. You have expertise you can share!

On the following pages you'll find additional community resources and a feedback form regarding this guide. We're interested in your input and ideas to improve this guide.

APPENDIX 1

**RESOURCES IN THE PORTLAND, OREGON AREA**

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**Emergency Shelter CHECK THESE NUMBERS!!!**

Bradley-Angle House	503.281.3540
Clackamas Women's Services*	503.654.2288
Domestic Violence Resource Center	503.640.1171
Volunteers of America	503.232.6562
Raphael House	503.222.6222
West Women's Shelter	503.224.7718
Yolanda House	503.977.7911
After hours	503.977.7930

**YWCA**

**503.223.6182**

x 3020

Vancouver Safechoice 360.695.0501

\*Wheelchair accessible

**Crisis Lines**

Disability Help Line	503.988.3646
TTY	503.988.3683
Metro Crisis Line	503.223.6161
Portland Women's Crisis Line	503.235.5333
TTY	503.988.3683

**Transportation**

Emergency Tri-Met Lift	503.801.8000
TTY	503.802.8058
Green Cab	
Radio Cab	503.227.1212
Relay	800.735.2900

**Non-emergency (24 hours)**

Helpline	503.988.3646
Multnomah County only-TTY	503.760.2212
Police	503.823.3333

**Legal**

Clackamas County Victim's assistance	503.655.8616
Domestic Legal Advice Line	503.299.6101
Low income only 1:30-4pm, Tu./Th.	
Lawyer Referral Service	503.684.3763
Lewis & Clark Legal Clinic	503.222.6429
Legal Aid Services of Oregon (Multnomah County)	503.224.4094
Multnomah County District Attorney's DV Prosecutors	503.248.3873
Multnomah County Family Services	503.988.3189
Multnomah County Restraining Order Info.	503.988.3943
Multnomah County's Victim's Assistance	503.988.3222
Oregon Advocacy Center	503.243.2081
Oregon Legal Services	503.655.2518
Oregon State Bar Modest Means Program	503.684.3763
Portland Branch-Support Enforcement Div.	503.229.5825
St. Andrews Legal clinic	503.281.1500
Low income only	
VIP domestic violence Project	503.224.1512
Help with restraining orders	
Volunteers Lawyers Project	503.224.1606
Low income only	
Oregon Advocacy	503.243.2081
TTY	503.323.9161
<b>Other</b>	
Alcohol & Drug Helpline	503.232.8083
Child Abuse Reporting Hotline	503.238.7555
Child Services Division	503.731.7555
Garlington community Mental Health Care (24 hour crisis)	503.249.0066
Hotline TTY (24 hours)	800.787.3224
Independent Living Resources	503.232.7411
TTY	503.323.9161
National MS Society	503.223.9511
National Domestic Violence	800.799.7233
Oregon Safenet (24 hours)	800.723.3638
Relay	800.735.2900
Senior/Disabled Services, Abuse Prevention Unit	503.945.6399 800.232.3020

United Cerebral Palsy	503.777.8791
United Way Information & referral	503.222.5555
Volunteers of America Family Center	503.232.6562

**Counseling Services**

Northwest Nursing Clinic	503.224.0289
Women's Agenda Counseling Center	503.235.4050
YWCA Safe Choice	360.696.0167
Clackamas County Marylhurst Clinic	503.655.8338
Oregon City Clinic	503.655.8401
Center for Community Mental Health	503.289.1167

**Medical Resources for Uninsured/Low Income**

Neighborhood Health Clinics	503.288.5995
North Portland Nurse Practitioner Community Health Clinic	503.284.5239

Parts of this protocol have been adapted from the Oregon Medical Association, Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health systems, and the Professionals in Partnership's Recognizing Abuse-A Health Care Provider's Guide to Identifying & Treating Domestic Violence.

**(Last updated 5/5/04.)**

APPENDIX 2

**OPTIONAL FEEDBACK FORM**

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Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone, TTY number, or email: \_\_\_\_\_

1. The thing I like best about this Guide was: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. The thing I liked least about this Guide was: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. I would have liked more information on these topics:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Other suggestions I have: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Thanks for taking the time to complete and return this form!

Please mail to: Center on Self-Determination      Or fax: 503-232-6423  
Attn: Mary Oschwald  
3608 SE Powell Blvd.  
Portland, OR 97202