

*Research estimates that **9 out of 10** people with developmental disabilities will be physically or sexually abused sometime during their life.*

Educating people with disabilities to recognize, report and respond to abuse is an important step in reducing the violence and crimes committed against them.

The University of Delaware's Center for Disabilities Studies—partnering with victim's advocacy service organizations, health and human services agencies and state government entities—has trained a core group to implement the Awareness and Action training program. Funding is from the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services.

Awareness and Action is a three-hour interactive program for people with disabilities and their direct support staff, family members and/or professional staff. The training teaches people with disabilities to identify cases of abuse and gives them the tools they need to report abuse and protect themselves from victimization. Awareness and Action also helps those serving in a support role to understand the importance of timely and effective response to abuse. The training promotes safety and awareness.

Action and Awareness Quick Facts:

- Training is carried out during a single three-hour session.
- Each person with a disability must be accompanied by a family member, direct support professional or other professional staff member.
- Each training team includes two disability advocate trainers and a self-advocate trainer who is a person with a disability.
- A trained victims' advocate is present at the session in case a participant wants to share a personal story confidentially with a professional.
- The training curriculum is presented through a PowerPoint presentation, video presentations and a participant workbook. There are opportunities for participants to engage in activities and discussions and to complete program evaluations.
- The curriculum focuses on neglect and physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse.

Delaware's initial trainings are available at no cost to community-based groups and organizations and residential and day services provider agencies. To sponsor or participate in an Awareness and Action training, contact Debbie Bain, training coordinator, Center for Disabilities Studies, at dbain@udel.edu, or call 302-831-6974 and ask for information about the Awareness and Action program.