



## Crime Prevention

Crimes have gone up during COVID times, including for people who receive regional center services. It is important for you to help the individuals that you serve learn how to not be a victim. You should know what to do if you see or hear about a crime.

### Susceptibility to Crime

Anyone can be the victim of a crime, but individuals with disabilities are more susceptible:

- Limited cognitive ability may make it difficult for an individual to recognize they have been victimized.
- Communication impairments may make it difficult to report victimization.
- Individuals with disabilities may be seen as vulnerable, and perhaps less likely to be believed.
- Individuals with disabilities may be easily influenced and eager to please others, thinking that the perpetrator is a “friend.”
- Victims may believe criminals who tell them that what they are doing is okay.

**Abuse of individuals with disabilities is a crime (Penal Code §368) that often involves other crimes: sexual abuse + sexual assault, physical abuse + assault/battery, financial abuse + theft/robbery.**



### Current Statistics

#### Department of Developmental Services

In May 2021, there was a 30% increase in victim of crime special incident reports (SIRs).

#### California

In 2020, violent crime increased by almost **1%**, with aggravated assault increasing by almost **9%**, and homicide increasing by **31%**.

#### United States Population

- The rate of violent crime against individuals with disabilities is **2.5 times higher** than the rate for people without disabilities.
- People with cognitive disabilities including intellectual and developmental disabilities, have the highest rates of victimization.
- People with multiple disabilities, such as intellectual and developmental and physical disabilities or communication impairments, are at even greater risk and experience **54%** of the violence directed toward people with disabilities.
- **40% of violence** against people with disabilities is committed by people the victim knows well or with whom they are acquainted.



## Categories of Crime

*Violent crime:* crimes that involve threat or force:

- [Assault](#) – threat or causing fear of bodily harm.
- [Battery](#) – actual harm or inappropriate touching.
- [Homicide](#) – unlawful killing of person, includes murder and manslaughter.
- [Sexual Assault or Battery](#) – intimate sexual touching or conduct of another person who is unwilling to participate or unable to consent.
- [Abuse of most adults with IDD, children and elders.](#)

*Property crime:* crimes that involve taking someone's private property:

- [Theft](#) – stealing.
- [Larceny](#) – unlawful taking, including withholding the owner's possession.
- [Burglary](#) – entering a building with intent to steal.
- [Robbery](#) – taking another's property from their person or immediate presence.

[Hate crime:](#) a crime motivated by prejudice against the victim based on the victim's perceived characteristics including disability, race or sexual orientation.

## What to do if you see a Crime Happening

- Remain calm.
- If you feel safe to do so, intervene in stopping the crime.
- If you detect someone victimizing an individual in your care, tell them to stop.
- If you are in a public place, consider recording the activity on your phone.
- Report criminal activity to 911 or your local police or sheriff's department.

## Report Crime and Prevent it From Reoccurring

Regional center staff and service providers are required to report all cases or suspected cases of abuse to legal authorities.

Regional center staff and service providers have no duty to investigate before making a report.

Regional center staff and service providers must report incidents reported to them by the victim, even if they did not witness it.

If the suspected abuse results in serious bodily injury, staff must call and

**immediately** report the abuse to local law enforcement.



If the abuse does not result in serious bodily injury, staff must report the suspected abuse to law enforcement **within 24 hours.**

## How to Help Individuals Learn to Stay Safe

- Discuss safety and how to be prepared when going out.
  - See Wellness Crime Prevention Bulletin for [Self-Advocates on DDS website.](#)
- Explain the importance of being mindful of personal belongings.
- Remind consumers it is ok to say “no” to others who make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe, and to express it clearly and loudly.
- Help consumers identify people they can trust.
- Talk about how to get help if they have been the victim of a crime.



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Please provide feedback on this bulletin and what we can do better through this survey: [Bulletin Survey](#)

## How to Help a Victim of Crime



- Make sure the victim is in a safe place and stay with them until help has arrived and they are safe.
- Address any injuries or medical needs.
- Ask if the individual would like to help contacting a family member or friend.
- Ask simple questions that allow the victim to feel like they can make choices and regain control.
- Don't ask the victim too many questions about what happened until help has arrived.
  - Too many questions may tire or confuse them when answering subsequent questions by law enforcement officers.
  - It may be traumatizing for them to discuss the event in detail.
- If necessary, preserve any evidence, such as any weapons or evidence of violence or clothing the victim was wearing.
- Discourage the victim from washing or showering if it could result in the loss of physical evidence.
- Offer to support the individual if an officer comes to interview them.
  - If the individual has a communication or cognitive impairment, offer to assist with understanding and responding to officer questions.

Remember: you are required to submit a special incident report **anytime** an individual has been the victim of a crime.

### Printable Poster



Download poster: [Tips for an Assault Prevention Plan \(dds.ca.gov\)](https://dds.ca.gov)

### Additional Resources

#### Report a Crime:

[Report a Crime | State of California](#)

#### Violence Prevention Fundamentals:

[Violence Prevention Fundamentals | CDC](#)

#### Directory of Crime Victim Services:

[Directory of Crime Victim Services | Office for Victims of Crime](#)

#### Information for Crime Victims:

[Office for Victims of Crime | Help Series for Crime Victims](#)

#### Adult Protective Services Hotline:

[Report Suspected Elder Abuse or Neglect](#)

#### Child Protective Services Hotline:

[Report Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect](#)



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