

**Who we are:**

Able SC is a Center for Independent Living (CIL), an organization not about “helping” people with disabilities but built on the central concept of self-empowerment. It’s a consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability nonprofit that provides an array of independent living services. We do everything it takes to empower people with disabilities to live active, self-determined lives including advocacy, services, and support. More than half of our staff are persons with disabilities, as are over half of our Board of Directors. We didn’t just learn this– we live it!



**Contact Us:**

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[www.able-sc.org](http://www.able-sc.org)

# Ending Violence and Abuse of People with Disabilities



**Able South Carolina**

This booklet is for people with disabilities. It helps people know more about abuse and violence. It also offers tips on what you can do if you are being abused.

## What are abuse and violence?

**Abuse and violence are forceful acts that cause physical, emotional, or financial harm to a person.**

**Abuse can take place at home, in the community, on public transportation or in established settings like school, hospitals, work, or even a group home.**

**Violence and abuse are about power and control.**

**People with more power can abuse those with less power. Because of ableism or bias towards people with disabilities, individuals with disabilities are more likely to experience violence or abuse.**

**Types of abuse or violence that can impact people with disabilities are:**

- **Physical**
- **Sexual**
- **Psychological/Emotional**
- **Financial**
- **Neglect**

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## Resources for Help

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### Able South Carolina

Columbia and Greenville Office: (803) 779-5121

Toll-free: (800) 681-6805

TTY:(803) 779-0949

### Sexual Trauma Services of the Midlands

24-hour Crisis Line (803) 771-7273

Toll Free Line 1-800-491-7273

Administrative (803) 790-8208

### YWCA of the Upper Lowlands

Main Office (803) 773-7158

Hotline (877) 268-9922

### Additional Crisis Hotlines:

Columbia Area Mental Health Hotline (803) 898-8888

Helpline of the Midlands (Suicide Prevention) (803) 790-4357

National STI and AIDS Hotline 1-800-227-8922

National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-7233

National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline 1-866-331-9474

State Office of Victim Assistance (SOVA) (803)734-1900

## Are you someone who is at risk?

- Do you have someone in your life who may take control of you or take advantage of you?
- Are you alone or isolated from other people in the community?
- Do you need to rely on another person for eating, bathing, dressing, or grooming?
- If you answered yes to one or more of the questions above, you could be at risk for violence or abuse!

## What Should You Do if Violence or Abuse Impacts You?

- Decide what you would like to do and where you would like to get help.
- When you are ready, talk about it with someone you trust.
- Contact an organization you feel comfortable with for help.

## Say No to Abuse and Violence!

Remember, you are not alone. Here are steps you can take to stay safe:

- Become an active community leader and speak out against the abuse and violence of people with disabilities.
- Let people know that you have the right to be treated with dignity, to be respected, and to be heard.
- Go to community places to learn about violence and abuse, seek help if you need it.
- Let your caregivers know that you have a right to be treated fairly and that you always deserve respectful care.

# Important words:

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**Consent:** This is when an individual with a disability or anyone else gives permission. People need your agreement to take money, to come into your home, or to care for you. You also use consent in your private relationships. If someone wants to touch you in a physical or sexual way, you need to give consent. If you don't agree to the touching, it is thought of as abuse.

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**Ableism:** This is bias against people with disabilities. People with disabilities can face discrimination and humiliation from others in our society as a result.

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# Types of Abuse:

## Psychological or Emotional Abuse:

Abusers will threaten you, using their voice or words or non-verbal acts. This abuse is done to make you feel low and humiliates you. It takes away your sense of self-worth and self-esteem.

Example: Calling you names, threatening you, intimidating you, or isolating you.

## Physical Abuse:

Abuser or a person causes you bodily pain or injury.

Examples:

- Grabbing, pushing, hitting, kicking, and shoving you.
- Biting you.
- Pulling your hair or choking you.
- Taking away your medical equipment, glasses, or service animal.

Daisy is 20 years old and has Cerebral Palsy and PTSD. She has been dating for a few years, but she is now seeing Lily on a regular basis. Lily has been a great girlfriend. Daisy hopes that it will turn into a long-term relationship. Recently, Lily has not been so kind. Lily has shoved Daisy and has refused to help her into her wheelchair. She has even threatened her service animal. Lily always says sorry and wants to make up. Daisy does not know what to do.

## Sexual Abuse:

Abuser or a person does the following to a person:

- Sex act without your consent.
- Attempted sex act without your permission.
- Abuses you in a sexual way, either through contact or non-contact.
- Sexually harasses you either verbally or physically.
- Touches or fondles your genitals (private parts).
- Sexually assaults or rapes you.

## Financial Abuse:

Abusers withhold or deny a person access to their money.

- Forges your signatures, misuses your money.
- Gets you into debt or defrauds you.
- Gives you a budget and asks you to defend all the money choices you have spent.
- Destroys your belongings or personal items.

## Neglect:

Abuser or a caregiver does not give a person what they need to live.

- Denied heat, food, clothing, personal or medical care, or good assistance.

DaQuan is 75 years old. He has Parkinson's Disease. He uses a wheelchair and needs help with meals and personal care. He lives in a nursing home. His care providers often leave DaQuan in his room all day without giving him bathroom care or meals.