

The INTERSECTION of ABUSE and DISABILITY- By Sharon Langer Esq.

NPR recently highlighted sexual abuse of people with intellectual disabilities in a series entitled "Abused and Betrayed: People with Intellectual Disabilities and an Epidemic of Sexual Assault" that aired between January 8th and January 18th.

[Explore the "Abused and Betrayed" series on the NPR website](#). The series explored the epidemic of sexual abuse against people with intellectual disabilities, spoke to professionals in the field, and, most importantly, featured individuals with intellectual disabilities discussing sexual abuse from their perspectives.

The series offers four different presentations. The first explores the problem itself and how the evidence is before us, but we simply are not looking. People with intellectual disabilities are sexually assaulted at rates over 7 times that of the victims without intellectual disabilities. Yet, these crimes often go unrecognized and unpunished. The US Department of Justice recently calculated the 7 times figure and experts are now calling this an *epidemic*. The next episode in the series proposes the need for Sex Ed including the need for classes on healthy relationships. The third episode profiles how some prosecutors are changing the odds and starting to win rape cases with new strategies and the third episode highlights therapists that work with these victims. The final episode is the most powerful and is the voices of these victims telling their stories. I have attached a link to these powerful programs and I hope you will take the time to listen. I will be exploring this *EPIDEMIC* in future articles.