



# Abuse Happened

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An After-Abuse Guide  
for Missourians with Disabilities

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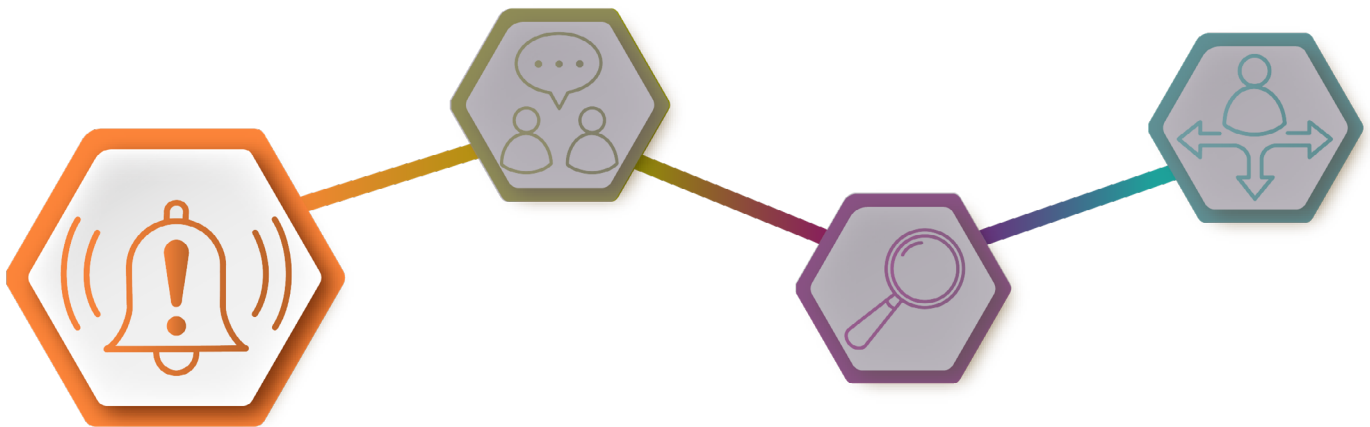
## Welcome to After Abuse: Resources for Missourians with Disabilities

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This is a series of toolkits for adults with disabilities who have been abused. Sometimes, it can be hard to know what to expect after abuse happens. This series can help guide you along your journey when abuse has happened to you.

### This is Phase 1: Abuse Happened

To find the other guides or to access the info videos and Easy Readers, visit [www.afterabuseMOguide.com](http://www.afterabuseMOguide.com).



Abuse Happened

**Made for people with disabilities and their allies  
by experts in the field of adult protective services,  
with help from the disability community.**

# Abuse Happened

## These toolkits include:

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- Information about the different phases of the process
- Some important words and people to know
- Helpful tips for allies who are supporting you
- Information to help you talk about your feelings
- Information about choices you can make
- Resources and supports for survivors of abuse
- Easy Readers and info videos to help you understand important ideas

## There are four toolkits to help you.

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- 1. Abuse Happened:** This toolkit helps you know when you have been abused and how to start thinking about what to do next.
- 2. Tell Someone:** This toolkit shares ideas of who you can tell about the abuse, and how to know when someone is being a good ally.
- 3. Gather Information:** This toolkit tells you what will happen after you have reported abuse and gives you ideas for how to take care of yourself.
- 4. What Happens Next:** This toolkit helps you prepare for court and tells you about the possible endings to your reporting journey.



### Allies

An ally is someone who is on your side. They can help you understand the information in this guide. You can talk to an ally, and they will be supportive and understanding. They listen to how you are feeling about what has happened to you. They help you find resources or other people to help.

When you see “For Allies,” it means that part is for your supporter to help them help you.

# Abuse Happened

## Why Learn About Abuse?

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Abuse can happen to anyone; however, people with disabilities are at a higher risk for being abused. People with disabilities are often not given information or education about what abuse is. This makes it hard to know when it happens.

You have the right to be free from abuse. Learning about abuse can help you know when it happens to you.

## What is Abuse?

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Abuse happens when a person mistreats or hurts you or misuses your things on purpose. Abuse can happen one time or it can happen many times.

## Who Abuses?

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A person who abuses someone else is called an abuser. Anyone can be an abuser: caregivers, residential care staff, transportation providers, personal care attendants, acquaintances, co-workers, friends, family members, religious leaders or strangers.

## TYPES OF ABUSE



### Verbal Abuse

When someone hurts your feelings by talking mean to you, name-calling or making fun of you.



### Physical Abuse

When someone hurts your body or threatens to hurt your body.



### Sexual Abuse

When someone has sex with you, touches your body or makes you do something sexual without your consent.



### Financial Abuse

When someone misuses or takes your money, things or property for their own use or benefit.

## Feelings You May Have

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If you have been abused, you are probably having a lot of feelings and emotions about what happened to you. There is no right or wrong way to feel after abuse. Whatever you are feeling is natural and normal. How you feel might change from one minute to the next. Listed below are some common feelings and thoughts that you might have.



**Sad:** *“Why do bad things keep happening to me?”*

**Mad:** *“I’m going to make them pay for hurting me.”*

**Scared:** *“What if I get in trouble or it happens again?”*

**Worried:** *“I don’t want to get anyone in trouble...”*

**Confused:** *“I didn’t know that what happened to me was abuse.”*

**Tricked:** *“I can’t believe I trusted them!”*

**Alone:** *“No one else understands how this feels.”*

**Hurt:** *“I feel like my heart is breaking.”*

## Words To Know

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### **Abuser or Perpetrator:**

- This is what we call people who hurt other people.

### **Abuse Victim or Abuse Survivor:**

- These are words people will use for someone who has been hurt.
- If you prefer to be called one or the other, you can tell people that.

### **Crisis Support Person:**

- This is someone who works for a crisis hotline. They will answer when you call a crisis hotline number or online chat.
- Their job is to be a good listener. This means being supportive and kind.

## Your Choices

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Now that you know that you have been abused, you get to decide what to do.

### **You can call a crisis hotline.**

- A crisis hotline is a free phone number you can call to talk to someone who will listen to you. See some possible crisis hotline numbers under Resources.

You can report the abuse or tell someone you trust. See **Tell Someone** for help with that.

## For Allies

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This guide is designed for someone with a disability to be used “side-by-side” with a supporter. We call supporters in this role an “ally.” An ally is someone who can help the person read the information in the guide and talk with them about what they have learned. An ally is a good listener who is understanding and supportive.

The section, “For Allies,” gives useful tips to allies as they give support to the person who experienced abuse. These tips can start conversations, prepare the ally to respond to emotions the person might be feeling and support decision-making. This section helps an ally become a good listener and resource.



### ARE YOU AN ALLY?

**Abuse Happened** is to help a person learn what abuse is and recognize that they have been harmed.

**What can you do:** You can be a good listener, paying attention to any feelings or emotions they might express. You can also take notes on any details they might tell you while it is still fresh in their memory.

**For more** on what you can do when someone has told you about abuse that has happened to them, see **Tell Someone** for helpful tips on how to respond.

## RESOURCES

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### Missouri Adult Abuse Hotline and Online Reporting

To report abuse to Missouri's adult abuse investigators, call the hotline at **800-392-0210** or visit the online form at [health.mo.gov/safety/abuse/](https://health.mo.gov/safety/abuse/).

### National Sexual Assault Hotline

RAINN gives 24/7 crisis support, information and referrals to local resources for people who have been sexually assaulted or abused. You can call the hotline at **800-656-4673** or chat online at [rainn.org](https://rainn.org).

### DeafLEAD

Has 24/7 crisis support and services for deaf or hard of hearing victims of abuse in Missouri. Go to [deaflead.com](https://deaflead.com) or talk with someone on video phone at **321-800-3323** or text **HAND** to **839863**.

### Abuse Awareness and Prevention Guide

This guide is designed to be used by a self-advocate and their ally. The purpose of the guide is to provide:

- Information on what abuse is
- The types and signs of abuse
- What to do if abuse happens
- Tools for how to stay safe prior to or after abuse
- Additional resources for seeking help and support after abuse has occurred

To read more about Abuse Awareness and Prevention, go to [lifecoursetools.com](https://lifecoursetools.com).

### Police

Call **911** if you are in danger right now or if someone broke the law.

### Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

Call **988** if you need to talk right away to a mental health counselor about how you're feeling.

[Watch this video](#) to learn about different kinds of abuse.



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Find more tools and resources at  
**[afterabuseMOguide.com](https://afterabuseMOguide.com)**

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