



What Happens Next

An After-Abuse Guide
for Missourians with Disabilities

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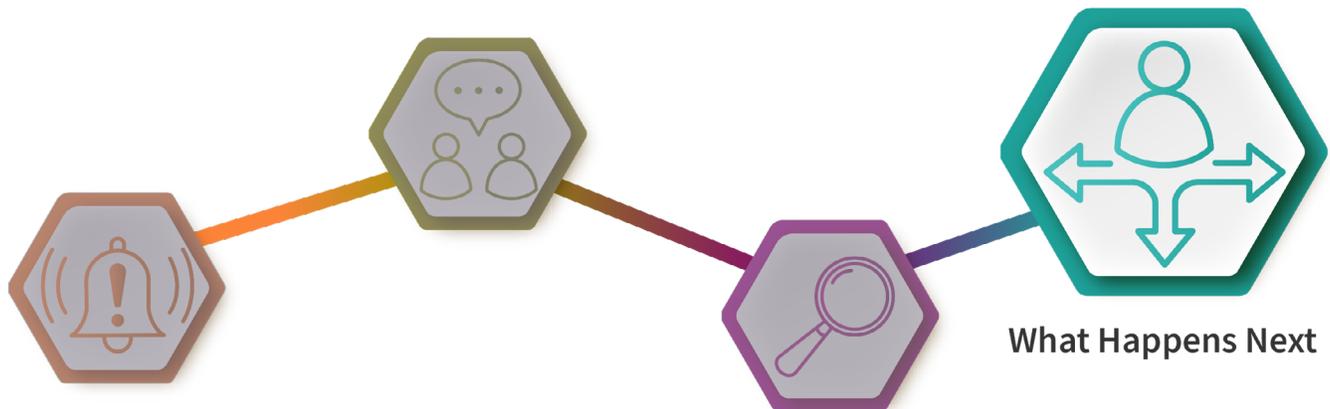


Welcome to After Abuse: Resources for Missourians with Disabilities

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 4: What Happens Next

To find the other guides or to access the info videos and Easy Readers, visit www.afterabuseMOguide.com.



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

What Happens Next

These toolkits include:

- 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.

- 1. Abuse Happened:** This toolkit helps you know when you have been abused and 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.

What Happens Next

In Phases 1, 2 and 3, you learned about the abuse reporting process. You learned how to recognize abuse, how to tell someone about abuse and how information is gathered to make a case.

Some cases will end after information is gathered. This means enough information was found to make a decision about what happens next.

Some cases will go to court before they are done. This means that the abuse was a crime and the person who did it may be in trouble with the law.

In this guide, **What Happens Next**, you will learn about the different paths your case may take. You will learn what to expect if your case goes to court. Finally, you will learn ways to advocate for yourself as an abuse survivor.

Possible Results of Your Case

After all the information is gathered, some decisions will be made about your case. That decision will help you know what happens next. Here are some possible results for your case:

A facility or agency could get in trouble.

- This could happen if the abuser worked at a facility or agency.
- Facilities and agencies must report abuse and handle the cases carefully.
- The facility or agency may have to pay fines or may even close.

The abuser could get fired or moved to work with someone else.

- This can happen if the abuser was a staff person at a facility or agency.
- To keep you safe, the facility or agency may move them to work with someone else.
- To keep everyone safe, the staff person may be fired.

The abuser could be charged with a crime.

- This could happen when there is a police report.
- It means the abuser will be arrested and could go to jail while they wait for their court date.
- The abuser might have a jury trial or choose to have the judge decide what happens.

What Happens Next

The abuser could go to jail or pay fines.

- This could happen if the abuser is found guilty in court.
- You have the right to know when your abuser goes to jail.
- You have the right to know when they are let out of jail.

The abuse may not be substantiated (or proven).

- This can happen when an agency gathers information about the abuse.
- This does not mean the abuse did not happen.
- It means they could not prove you were abused with the information that was gathered.

The abuser may not be charged with a crime.

- This could happen when there is a police report.
- This could happen if the prosecutor didn't think they could win in court.
- This could happen when they can't find enough information to prove the abuse happened.

The abuser may be found not guilty.

- This could happen when the abuse case goes to court.
- This does not mean the abuse did not happen.
- It means that there was not enough information to prove it happened.

Words to Know

Acquittal:

- A finding of not guilty. This does not mean that the abuse didn't happen. It means there was not enough evidence to prove it in court.

Bench Trial:

- The judge listens to the facts and evidence to decide whether a person you say hurt you is innocent or guilty. This takes the place of a jury trial.

Charges:

- A formal statement saying that someone is accused of committing a crime. It means that the police and the prosecutor believe that abuse happened and are ready to try to prove it in court.

What Happens Next

Conviction:

- A finding of guilt in a criminal court case. It means the judge or jury believes there was enough evidence to show the abuser committed a crime.

Deposition:

- An interview that happens before a trial. An attorney asks a lot of questions of a witness or victim. The questions are about what happened with the abuse. This helps the defense or prosecutor gather details to get ready for a trial.

Evidence:

- Information and other things that prove your story of what happened.

Safety Plan:

- Ideas for you to stay safe from abuse. It can also be a plan for what to do if you don't feel safe. (See the Easy Reader **What Happens Next: Safety Planning** for more information.)

Sentence:

- The punishment for someone who is found guilty of a crime. Some examples are: jail time, paying fines or probation.

Subpoena:

- A demand that someone goes to court. If you get a subpoena, you must go to court.

Substantiate:

- To verify that the abuse happened. This is done by finding evidence or facts that prove what you say is true.

Testify:

- Telling your story or what you know in court. Anyone who saw a crime happen or has been a victim of a crime may be asked to share in court what they saw or what happened to them. This gives more proof to the jury or judge to help them make a decision.

Verdict:

- A finding in a court case. The person can be found guilty or not guilty.

People To Know

Defendant:

- The person who is being accused of a crime. A defendant has been charged with a crime. This is sometimes what they will call the abuser in court.

Defense Attorney:

- A lawyer who tries to prove the person accused of a crime is not guilty. Everyone accused of a crime has the right to a lawyer to help them in court.

Judge:

- The person who is in charge of the court case. They guide what happens in court and make sure everyone follows the rules. They decide the sentence, or punishment, if the defendant is found guilty.

Jury:

- A group of 12 people chosen from the city or county where the crime happened. They listen to the facts and evidence from the prosecutor and the defense attorney. They decide if someone is guilty or not guilty in a legal case.

Plaintiff:

- The person who is the victim of the crime. They start the process by making a police report. This is sometimes what you will be called in court.

Prosecutor:

- A lawyer who tries to prove that the person accused of a crime is guilty. They decide if charges are brought against the abuser. They usually work for the city or county where the crime happened. Sometimes they are also called a prosecuting attorney or district attorney.

Victim Advocate

A **victim advocate** can help during this last phase with things like:

- **Tracking** your case. They can help you keep track of when court dates and other important things about your case are happening.
- How to apply for **Crime Victims' Compensation**. This is a fund that can pay you money to cover the cost of injuries, time lost at work and loss of things you own because of the abuse.
- How to fill out a **Victim Complaint Form** about an agency or person that didn't follow the right process for your report or violated your rights.
- How to **appeal** a decision that was made about your report that you don't agree with.
- What you can do if you feel unsafe or your abuser keeps bothering you. They can help you ask for an **Order of Protection**. An order of protection means your abuser can get in trouble with the law if they don't stay away from you.

Feelings You May Have

Even when the case is closed, you still may not feel like your problems have been solved. Some survivors have to work through feelings for many years after the abuse happened. Some survivors don't agree with or like the result that happened after reporting the abuse. Some survivors may feel confused. It is normal to feel sad even if you are happy with the result of the case. Below are some common feelings that come up during the end phase:



Scared: *“I don’t want to talk about what happened to me in front of other people.”*

Frustrated: *“I feel like I’m getting jerked around by the system.”*

Relief: *“I finally feel safe.”*

Angry: *“I can’t believe they’re just going to get away with it.”*

Sad: *“The case is closing, but I’m still hurt and dealing with the abuse.”*

Excited: *“This process is finally over!”*

Content: *“I feel ready to heal now that the investigation is over.”*

What Happens Next

For Allies

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.



Closing the Case

Supporting someone through the closing of their case can be challenging. It is important to remember that:

- Your job, as an ally, is to support and validate the feelings and experiences of the person who was abused. Review the Feelings section of this phase. Prepare for possible reactions to help you respond in a calm and supportive way. Try to keep your own feelings out of the conversation and focus on the person.
- Be familiar with the resources available to the person you’re supporting. You can help with developing a safety plan, following the case with Case.Net or connecting them with a victim advocate.
- Even more important than knowing about resources is knowing what you don’t know. Navigating case closure can be confusing, and it can feel like the rules are changing from day to day. It’s important to share only information that you know to be true. When you don’t have an answer, be honest. Make a commitment to find the answer together.

What Happens Next

RESOURCES

Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

Helps find a local victim advocate through the MOCADSV map of victim service organizations in Missouri. Click on your location on the map to find agencies near you. mocadsv.wpengine.com/how-to-get-help/

DeafLEAD

Has 24/7 crisis support and services for deaf or hard of hearing victims of abuse in Missouri. For more information, go to deaflead.com or talk with someone on video phone at **321-800-3323** or text “HAND” to **839863**.

Missouri Long-term Care Ombudsman Program

Helps residents in long-term care facilities, like nursing homes, by making sure they are treated well. Find your local Ombudsman by calling **800-309-3282**.

Missouri Protection and Advocacy Services (Mo P&A)

Offers advocacy, referral and legal services. If you believe your abuse report was mishandled or have not received a follow-up response call **800-392-8667** or visit moadvocacy.org/Abuse-Neglect.html.

SAMHSA National Helpline

Gives 24/7 referrals to local mental health services, support groups and community-based organizations. Call **800-662-HELP (4357)** or TTY: **800-487-4889** to get mental health help.

Abuse Awareness and Prevention Guide

This guide is made to be used by a self-advocate and their ally. This guide has tools for safety planning. The purpose of this 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.

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Find more tools and resources at
afterabuseMOguide.com

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Funding for this project is provided by the Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council (MODDC), Grants #1801MOBSDD Seq. No.: 2018 / 4, #1901MOSCDD-02, #2001MOSCDD-02 and as authorized by Public Law 106-402 –Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (DD Act).