



Tell Someone

An After-Abuse Guide
for Missourians with Disabilities

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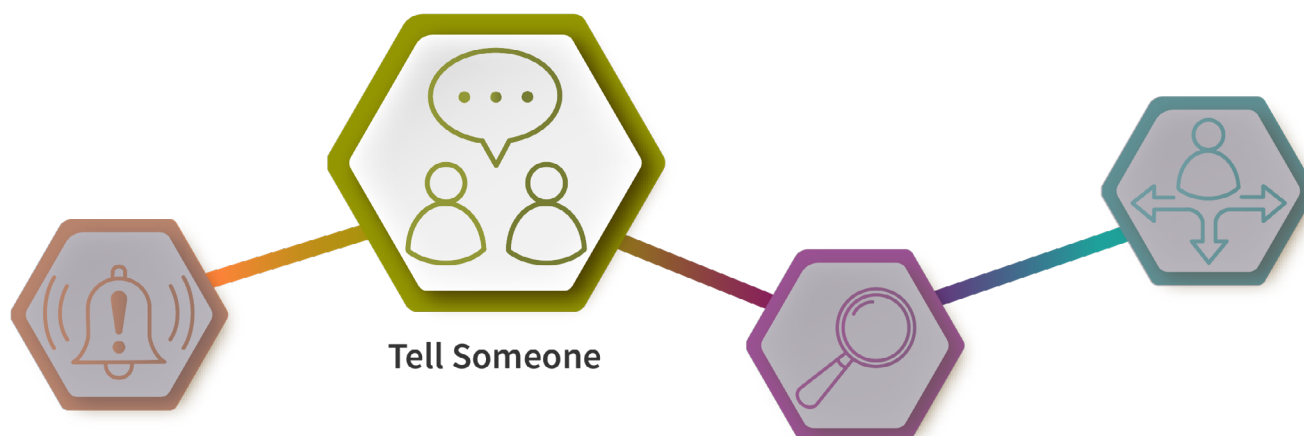


Welcome to After Abuse: Resources for Missourians with Disabilities

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 2: Tell Someone

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 professionals in the field of victim advocacy and services, in collaboration with the disability community.

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.

Tell Someone

After you've been abused, you may feel a little lost. You might think, "What do I do now?", or "Who am I supposed to tell?" Many survivors say that after abuse, they feel out of control, but you get to decide what happens next.

It is brave to tell someone about abuse. Telling someone can help keep you and others safe from being hurt again. **Phase 2: Tell Someone** will help you make a choice about who to tell. This phase will also help you know if someone has responded in a helpful way when you tell them.

Disclosure and Mandated Reporter

If you have been abused, you can decide to tell someone what happened. Telling someone about abuse is called **disclosure**. It can feel scary to tell someone about abuse, so it is important to tell someone you trust. You get to choose who you tell.

The person you tell might have to make a report about the abuse. That person is called a **mandated reporter**. Even if you ask them not to, they still must report the abuse. If a mandated reporter does not report, they can lose their job or even get in trouble with the law.

Decision Point: Who Do I Tell?

When you have been abused and have decided to tell someone, you have some options. You can pick one, more than one or all of these options. To learn more about each of these options, see the Easy Reader: Tell Someone.

- You can tell a person you trust.
- You can tell a victim advocate.
- You can call the Missouri Adult Abuse and Neglect Hotline.
- You can tell the police.
- You can go to the hospital and tell them what happened.

People to Know About

Someone you trust:

- A family member
- A friend
- A faith leader
- A support worker
- Your case manager or service coordinator
- A therapist

Victim Advocate:

- A victim advocate is someone who can help you. It is their job to advocate or stand up for your rights when you have been hurt.

Missouri Adult Abuse & Neglect Hotline Worker:

- This is someone who works for the Missouri Adult Abuse & Neglect Hotline. It is their job to keep you safe. The Missouri Abuse and Neglect Hotline is a free number to call when someone abuses a person with a disability or someone who is older. When you have been hurt, they want to know about it. They can help protect you from being hurt again.

Police Officer:

- A police officer's job is to deal with crimes. They gather proof when people commit crimes.

Medical Professional:

- A medical professional's job is to help you heal when you are hurt. They may also gather proof of crimes to give to police officers. Some examples of medical professionals are doctors and nurses.

Helpful and Not Helpful Responses to Disclosure

No matter who you decide to tell, they should respond to you in a helpful way. If you tell someone and they don't respond in a helpful way, you can find a different person to tell. No one should make you feel like what happened was your fault or that you aren't telling the truth.



When you tell someone what happened to you, you should expect them to be understanding and kind. Some examples of **HELPFUL** ways to respond to you are:

- "I'm so sorry that happened to you."
- "This is not your fault."
- "I'm so glad you told me about this."
- "How can I help you feel safer?"
- "That sounds like it was really hard."
- "What happened to you was not okay."



When you tell someone what happened to you, they should not make you feel like you are to blame or that it was no big deal. Some examples of **NOT HELPFUL** responses to you are:

- "You're lying."
- "They would never do something like that."
- "Why didn't you stop it from happening?"
- "What did you do to them to make them act that way?"
- "Are you sure that's what really happened?"

Feelings You May Have

Telling someone about abuse can bring up a lot of different feelings. There is no one way that you are supposed to feel. 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 about telling someone:



Scared: *“What if they don’t believe me or think it’s my fault?”*

Relieved: *“I don’t have to face this alone anymore.”*

Uncomfortable: *“I don’t really want to talk about this. It’s so awkward.”*

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

Ashamed: *“I should have stopped the abuse. What will people think of me?”*

Content: *“Now that I’ve told, I can start to feel safe again.”*

Angry: *“I wanted the abuse to be private, but the person I told made a report.”*

It is important to remember that abuse is never your fault. Even if someone feels ashamed or guilty, they are not to blame. These are common feelings for abuse survivors. Talking about your feelings can help.

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.



If someone tells you about abuse, it is important to respond in an appropriate way. Some good phrases to use when someone has told you are:

- “I’m so sorry that happened to you.”
- “This is not your fault.”
- “I’m so glad you told me about this.”
- “How can I help you feel safer?”
- “That sounds like it was really hard.”
- “What happened to you was not okay.”

It is important that the person telling you about the abuse feels listened to, believed and supported.



Here are some tips for how to be an ally:

- Be honest about your responsibility as a mandated reporter.
- Support the person to be involved in making the report if they want to be.
- Keep an eye out for changes, such as shifting moods, loss of interest in preferred activities, aggression, or any significant difference to the person's regular behavior.
- Use this guidebook to access information about resources that may support the person such as books, counseling or victim advocacy services.
- Much of what comes after reporting abuse is out of the person's control, so be sure to provide options where possible and emphasize their decision-making power.

During this step, consider using the emotions glossary to help facilitate conversation and give the person you're supporting vocabulary to describe their experience.

RESOURCES

Missouri 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/.

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.

National Domestic Violence Hotline

Has 24/7 crisis support and referrals to resources for people who have been abused by someone they are in a relationship with like a boyfriend, girlfriend or spouse. You can call the hotline at **800-799-7233**, chat online at thehotline.org or text **"START" to 88788**.

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, maintain and improve their quality of life by helping ensure their rights are preserved and respected. Call **800-309-3282**.

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/

Victim Connect

Gives information and support to victims of crime. They can tell you your rights and options based on your story. They will also help you find local services and resources. You can call or text the helpline at **855-484-2846** or chat online at victimconnect.org/.

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.

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Find more tools and resources at
afterabuseMOguide.com

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