Brown Bag Discussion: Preventing Violence and Improving Services

Center for Persons With Disabilities

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Violent crimes against people with disabilities are double what they are for people without disabilities. That is a disturbing statistic. An even more disturbing statistic is that the rate of abuse is 3.4 times greater among children with disabilities than for children without disabilities.

The vulnerability of this population is alarming, as many perpetrators will seek victims who are easier to assault, less likely to make a report, and whose stories are often not believed.

Marilyn Hammond, director of the Justice, Equity, and Access project, lead a lively discussion with CPD staff about what could be done to help improve this situation for people with disabilities. The IOTI funded project focuses on working with law enforcement personnel and other advocates, to make them more aware of the statistics and to help them better understand how to communicate with people with disabilities of various types who have been victims of violent crimes.

Gordon Richins, CPD Consumer Liaison, has been a consultant for the past few years on another project with the Community Abuse Prevention Services Agency (CAPSA) and other local agencies, working together to ensure that people with disabilities who experience violence are aware of and have access to comprehensive services. Gordon shared with the CPD staff a comprehensive web site that the Northern Utah Choices out of Violence initiative is developing for professionals and for people with disabilities who have been victims of violent crimes. This web site will inform people of what abuse is, how it can be reported, and what resources are available for victims.

We are proud of the work that is being done through the CPD to protect and support people with disabilities.