

## The Criminal Justice System Will Help You

Victims of crime have important rights, including the right to:

- Have the court make orders that protect you.
- Ask for money (restitution) to pay for your losses.
- Get services to help you recover.
- Tell the court about the crime's impact on your life, including before sentencing and parole.
- Get reasonable accommodations so you can go to the court hearings. (For help with this, contact the ADA Office at the Department of Justice: 1-800-514-0301.)

To learn more about your rights and programs that can support you, read our brochure: *Victims' Rights in California: Marsy's Law*, or contact us:

**Call:** 1-800-VICTIMS (842-8467)

**Visit:** [www.1800VICTIMS.org](http://www.1800VICTIMS.org)

## About Us

The Victims of Crime Resource Center is located on the Pacific McGeorge School of Law campus in Sacramento, California. We educate victims and their families, victim service providers and other victim advocates on:

- Victims' legal rights,
- Victims compensation,
- Restitution,
- Civil suits, and
- Additional rights of domestic violence and abuse victims (including elders, children, and people with disabilities).

We also offer:

- Technical assistance and legal research to victim service providers, and
- Free "Know Your Rights" presentations to community groups.

We operate **1-800-VICTIMS** – the statewide, toll-free hotline that gives confidential information and referrals to victims, their families, victim service providers, and victim advocates. The hotline is staffed by McGeorge law students and supervised by lawyers.

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1-800-VICTIMS (842-8467)  
[www.1800victims.org](http://www.1800victims.org)

Plain Language

UNIVERSITY OF THE  
**PACIFIC**  
McGeorge School of Law

## Help for Crime Victims with Disabilities



**Victims of Crime Resource Center**  
**1-800-VICTIMS (1-800-842-8467)**  
**[www.1800VICTIMS.org](http://www.1800VICTIMS.org)**

**If you or someone else is in danger right now...**

- Call 911, or
- Contact the local police.

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## Crime Victims with Disabilities

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**Anyone** can be a victim of crime, but people with disabilities are especially vulnerable to crimes of abuse. It may be harder for people with disabilities to communicate or move away from danger. They may depend on caregivers, whose jobs may give them access to their home and body. Or they may be afraid of not being believed or of losing services they need to survive if they report abuse.

The abuse may be:

- **Physical:** To hurt or threaten to hurt someone.
- **Sexual:** Inappropriate touching during toilet routines or sexual assault.
- **Financial:** Stealing, withholding, or misusing someone's money.
- **Neglect:** Not providing for basic needs, such as proper food, medicine, or a safe, clean place to live.

## Take Steps to Protect Yourself

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Abuse happens more often to people with mental and physical disabilities. But there are things you can do to help prevent abuse and protect yourself.

If you or someone you know has a disability, read this brochure to learn about:

- Prevention
- Ongoing safety
- Education
- Reporting abuse
- Support for crime victims in California

## Prevention

- **Make a safety plan.** Think about what you could do in a dangerous situation. Practice your safety plan. This can help you get out of a bad situation if you need to.
- **Screen your providers.** Always do a background check *before* you work with providers or a guardian. Also talk to several personal and professional references about their work ethic and job performance.
- **Warn your providers and guardian** that you will report *any* abuse to the authorities, including physical, emotional, and financial.

## Ongoing Safety

- **Stay connected.** Ask people you trust to visit or contact you at unscheduled times. Invite them to drop by, call, video chat, or contact you in other ways. You can ask your family, friends, church, neighbors, and other contacts.
- **Schedule safety checks.** Ask someone you trust to check on you regularly to make sure you are safe. You can ask a relative, social worker from Adult Protective Services, health care worker, advocate, or someone from your place of worship.
- **Keep your communication tools handy** (phones, computer, hearing aids, etc.)

## Education

Learn about sexual violence, personal boundaries, personal safety, and community resources. You can get information from your local community center, organizations serving people with disabilities, or our office.

Learn how to protect your money and assets:

- Talk to a lawyer about ways to protect your assets.
- Go to a class or free clinic that shows you how to protect your assets.
- Don't let just one person have access to your assets. Having 2 or more people, such as a service provider *and* a friend or relative, means each will know what the other does.

## Report abuse

To stop abuse, it must be reported. When abuse *is* reported, the authorities can bring the offenders to justice. And victims can get the services and programs they need. When abuse is *not* reported, offenders continue abusing.

## Signs of Abuse

Sometimes it is not easy to see abuse. But a victim may:

- Seem depressed, confused, or agitated.
- Look or act differently.
- Have sores or rashes.
- Seem cut off from contact with others and from social activities.

People who are more likely to see abuse include: caregivers, service providers, health care professionals, neighbors, and friends.

## How to Report

If the victim lives in the community (a home, day program, or school), contact your county's APS (Adult Protective Services).

If the victim is in a nursing or residential care home, call your county's Long-Term Care Ombudsman.

Or call us and we can explain how to report the crime: **1-800-VICTIMS**.