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Background

People with intellectual disabilities (ID) are at high risk for abuse. Unique risks include:

- Perception of being easy targets for victimization
- Communication barriers
- Difficulty identifying treatment as abusive, reporting abuse, and recognizing abuse as a crime
- Lack of education about safety from abuse

There is a need for the development and systematic evaluation of a safety program for people with ID.

Study Objectives

- To design The Safety Class, an accessible group safety program for adults with ID
- To use Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) in which disability partners and researchers work closely together in every phase of the study
- To pilot test, refine, and fully test The Safety Class with Centers for Independent Living (CILs)



The Safety Project Consortium

Community Advisory Board

- Six self-advocates from People First chapters in Montana
A. Heist, L. Howard, T. Hunt, O. Kinkaid, J. Billehus, and K. Valentine
- Meets monthly in person with research staff and CIL advisor M. Millin
- Advises on wording, content, format, and images used in The Safety Class.

National Advisory Board

- Three self-advocates each partner with a disability rights mentor
J. Meadours and L. A. Davis; E. Bailey and M. Bailey; L. Cesal and K. Arnold
- Meets quarterly by phone with research staff and consultants
- Monitors progress and provides input on all aspects of the project

Investigative Team

R. Hughes, PI; S. Robinson-Whelen, Co-PI; R. Goe, Research Associate; K. McDonald, Consultant; M. Schwartz, Consultant; K. Garner, T. Carnell, C. Simpson, T. Martel, and K. Murphy, and K. Kunkleman, Research Assistants

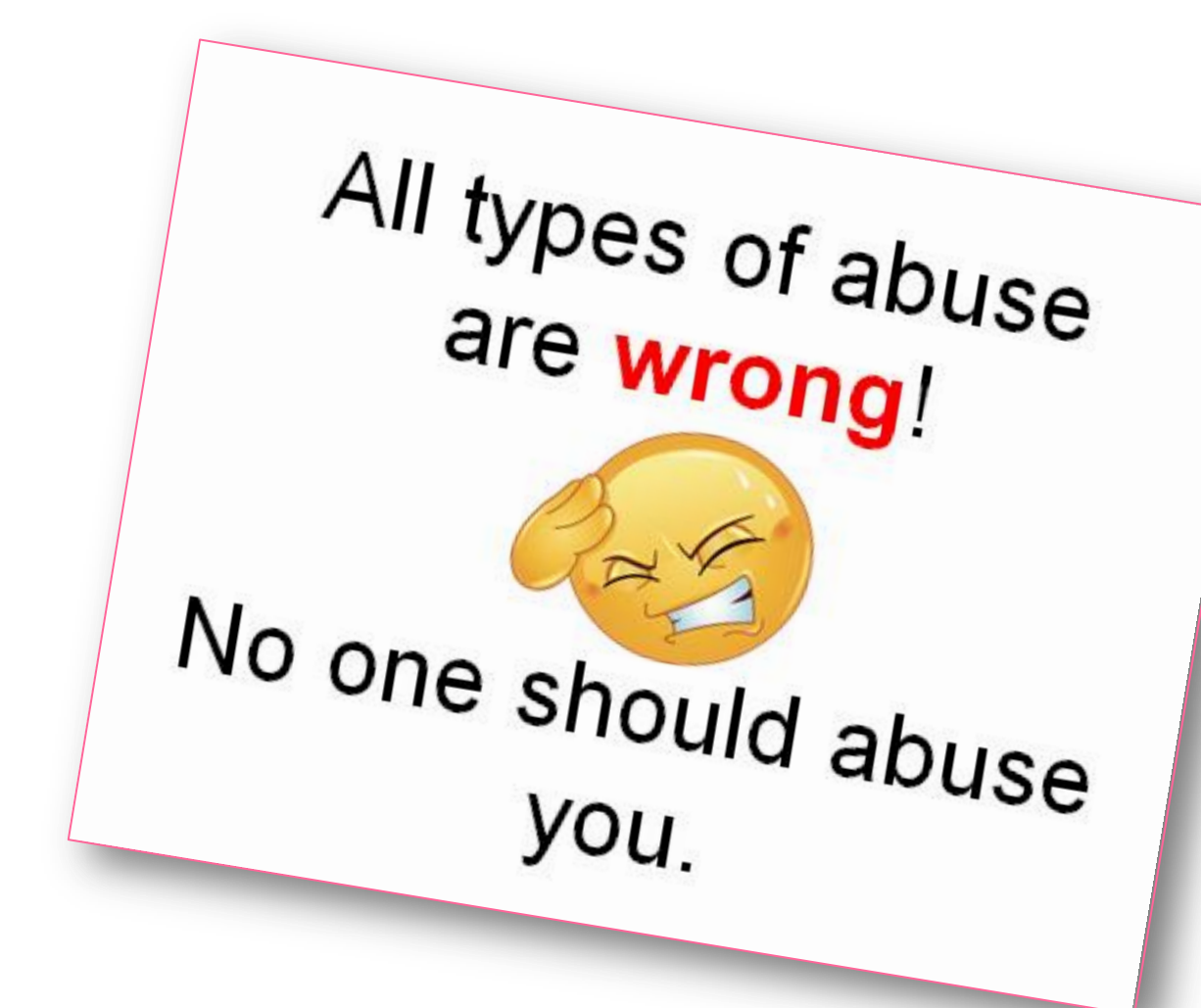


Description of The Safety Class

The 8-week Safety Class helps people with ID learn about safety in relationships.

Topics

- Communication Skills
- Healthy Boundaries
- Nature and Types of Abuse
- Relaxation Training
- Respect in Relationships
- Warning Signs of Abuse
- Safety in Relationships
- Safety Planning
- Coping with Trauma
- Help Seeking
- Disability Rights



Facilitating The Safety Class

Facilitator Training Program

CIL staff facilitators attend a two-day training program and weekly phone consultation. Topics in the training program include:

- Recruitment and enrollment procedures
- Confidentiality; mandatory reporting
- Class content and process
- Group management



Facilitator Manual

The scripted 388-page manual is written in plain language, formatted in large print and text, compiled by the project staff, and mailed to the 12 CILs with other class materials.

Evaluating The Safety Class

- We are testing The Safety Class in a randomized, controlled study with 12 CILs across the nation.
- Participants (N=188) are randomly assigned to either The Safety Class or the regular services of their CIL. We expect class participants to show greater improvements on safety-related measures than the other participants.
- We are using a within- and between groups pre-post and three month follow-up design.
- We will complete the trial by May 2016!



Creating The Safety Class

The Safety Class is an adaptation of A Safety Awareness Program for Women (ASAP) with diverse disabilities.

The ASAP Study

- 213 participants were enrolled by 10 CILs
- Overall results were highly positive with one exception
 - Women with ID/cognitive disabilities had fewer gains over time in safety self-efficacy and lower levels of self-efficacy than women without ID/cognitive disabilities
- Findings suggested the need for a program designed to enhance safety self-efficacy among people with ID

Changes to ASAP

- Adapted pacing for people with ID
- Used plain language
- Reduced words per page
- Included more images
- Added reinstruction
- Included more practice and role-playing
- Modified and abbreviated the content



Refining The Safety Class

Pilot Study

- We conducted a pilot study of the Safety Class.
- Four women and two men with ID participated
 - They were between 20 to 50 years of age
 - Most had some high school education
 - None were married
 - Most lived alone
 - All required supports
 - Most had experienced lifetime abuse

"The class gets people to understand abuse. Some people don't know they are being abused."
--quote from a participant

Changes to The Safety Class

- Restructured activities to improve accessibility
- Shifted material to equalize the length of sessions
- Abbreviated role plays
- Assured plain language



The CBPR Design



Funding

National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research Award #133G130219