



Illinois Imagines Chicago is part of a statewide collaborative focusing on changing Illinois systems to better serve women with disabilities who experience sexual violence. The project brings together self-advocates, disability service agencies, rape crisis centers, state agencies and others to implement change, improve policy and practice and enhance outreach to survivors with disabilities.



### Illinois Imagines Chicago

- Access Living
- Anixter Center Chicago Hearing Society
- Catholic Charities, Adult Protective Services
- Department of Rehabilitation Services
- Metropolitan Family Services
- Neumann Family Services
- Rape Victim Advocates
- Riveredge Hospital
- Schwab/Sinai Domestic Violence Program
- UCP Seguin
- UIC Developmental Disabilities Family Clinics
- YWCA Metropolitan Chicago



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## Illinois Imagines Chicago

### Working to End Sexual Violence Against People with Disabilities



**Chicago Rape Crisis Hotline:  
(888) 293-2080**

## Illinois Imagines Chicago

Illinois Imagines vision:

*All women with disabilities will be guaranteed an environment free from sexual violence, where they are empowered to speak and act for themselves. Survivors of sexual violence will be assured a proactive, individualized, compassionate response to their experience.*



**Chicago Rape  
Crisis Hotline:  
(888) 293-2080**



OUR RIGHTS  
**RIGHT NOW!**



### FACTS about sexual violence and women with disabilities:

- Women with disabilities experience higher rates of sexual violence than women without disabilities.
- Women with disabilities experience increased severity of violence and experience violence over longer periods of time than women without disabilities.
- Women with disabilities experience multiple forms of violence, including disability-targeted violence.

### RESPONDING to DISCLOSURE of sexual violence:

#### How to respond:

- Provide privacy
- Explain options
- Support choices
- Ensure safety

#### What you should do::

- Say “I believe you.”
- Offer support “How can I help you?”
- Respect choices “What would make you feel safe right now?”

Illinois Imagines is committed to reducing barriers for women with disabilities who have experienced sexual violence.

- **Fear**—Perpetrators of abuse towards women with disabilities are often caregivers. A survivor may fear being punished for speaking out. A survivor may also fear losing resources if she reports the caregiver.
- **Stigma and Prejudice**— The stigma associated with having a disability may greatly decrease the perceived credibility of the survivor. Women with disabilities are often patronized and not taken seriously.
- **Isolation**—Women with disabilities are often segregated from the general population in education, employment and housing. They may not be aware of or have access to community services and resources.
- **Lack of awareness Among Responders**— A lack of awareness, education and training about women with disabilities among law enforcement, medical staff and others too often results in inappropriate or inadequate services.

