

# IMPACT:Ability

Empowering People with Disabilities and Communities to Prevent Abuse



**Abuse is not inevitable. We all have the ability to stop it.**

## The Need.

People with disabilities are more likely than those without disabilities to experience physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

**Triangle's IMPACT:Ability program asks two important questions: *Why are people with disabilities disproportionately abused? More importantly, what can we do to change that?***

Abuse is a silent epidemic, often perpetrated in private by someone that a person with a disability knows and trusts. Additionally, some common practices in disability services may put people at greater risk. As disability rights advocate David Hingsberger explains, "How can a person with a disability say 'no' to sexual abuse when she lives in a group home where she isn't permitted to say 'no' to having peas for dinner?"

## The Program.

IMPACT:Ability empowers people with disabilities by teaching them self-defense and assertive communication skills. IMPACT:Ability changes the culture and policies of disability services and special education. People with disabilities are less vulnerable when they develop healthy sexuality and have control over their bodies while receiving personal care assistance. Organizations that support people with disabilities are safer when staff have the knowledge, skills and institutional support to challenge individuals whose actions are abusive or potentially abusive.

### IMPACT:Ability Partners

Boston Public Schools, Healing Abuse Working for Change, Institute for Community Health, Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong, Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services, Massachusetts Disabled Persons Protection Commission, The Meeting Point, The Parent Coach, Soul Touchin' Experiences

### Funding Partners

Carl and Ruth Shapiro Family Foundation, Adelaide Breed Bayrd Foundation, City of Malden, Howard C. Connor Charitable Trust, Danversbank Charitable Trust at People's United Bank, Klarman Family Foundation, State Street Corporation Global Inclusion Initiative, Verizon Foundation

## Our Success

- 1 588 people with disabilities have learned self-defense and self-advocacy skills
- 2 520 special education teachers and disability service providers trained to recognize and prevent abuse. Of those, 6 have gone on to become trainers.
- 3 The Commissioner of Massachusetts' largest state agency that provides disability services has partnered with IMPACT:Ability to make abuse prevention a priority for all 198 community organizations that serve people with intellectual disabilities.
- 4 The video *Everyone's Responsibility: Preventing Abuse Against People With Disabilities* has over 2,000 views on YouTube and is a required educational video for state disability service provider certification.
- 5 Evaluation results show that IMPACT:Ability increases knowledge, self-efficacy, and sense of safety among low-income urban teens.

*With the support of local funders, Triangle received a four-year \$500,000 matching grant from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Local Funding Partnerships. This program joins the resources of a national foundation with local grant makers to support ambitious new community initiatives that meet people where health starts—where they live, learn, work and play.*

**IMPACT:Ability**  
is a program of **triangle**

420 Pearl Street, Malden, MA 02148

781.321.3900

[PeopleWithAbility.org](http://PeopleWithAbility.org)