

# PEER SUPPORT PRESS

## P.S. Start by Believing

# Welcome to the Peer Support Press

A newsletter about  
healing after sexual  
abuse for people  
with disabilities

**Created by:**

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*Sexual Assault  
Response Unit*

*Disabled Persons  
Protection Commission*

**MARCH**  
**NEWSLETTER**

Welcome to our second newsletter, the Peer Support Press. Peer Support Leaders work at the Sexual Assault Response Unit within the Disabled Persons Protection Commission.

# What is our Peer Support Program?

We are survivors of sexual assault and we have disabilities. We are trained to help our peers recover from sexual abuse.



## We talk to our peers about:

- ❖ How to stay safe
- ❖ How to speak up
- ❖ How to keep your body healthy
- ❖ How to take care of yourself
- ❖ How to find support

## We offer you:

- ❖ Encouragement
- ❖ Inspiration
- ❖ Education
- ❖ Belief



**Our Motto is “P.S. Start by Believing”**

# About Relationships

## Healthy Relationships

A healthy relationship between partners and others should be one where everyone:

- Respects each other's boundaries
- Trusts each other
- Has good communication
- Helps each other
- Does activities together - like going to the movies

My experience with healthy relationships with my partner and others is to have good communication and trust, anger control, to be honest, and to be a friend. I talk to my partner and others to help them understand that I have been sexually assaulted. Sometimes it is very hard to talk about it. I want them to know if I don't want to be touched, then don't touch, and NO means NO. Partners and others need to ask you for your consent or permission.

Examples of RESPECT are:

- Honesty
- Individuality
- Good communication
- Trust
- Not getting mad – staying calm
- Kindness
- Commitment or keeping promises
- Empathy - the ability to understand and share the feelings of another

# Unhealthy Relationships

An unhealthy relationship is when partners and others:

- Treat you very badly
- Abuse or hurt you
- Don't respect you
- Keep you away from family and friends
- Stop you from doing activities you like
- Won't listen to what you're saying
- Won't let you have your own voice
- Control everything you do and run your life

To get out of an unhealthy relationship, YOU CAN:

- Tell someone you trust that you are having problems in your relationship
- Call 911 for help
- Call the Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC) 24 Hour Hotline at 1-800-426-9009 or 888-822-0350 TTY to report any kind of abuse. For example:
  - Physical
  - Sexual
  - Emotional
  - Verbal
  - Neglect
  - Financial Exploitation
  - Mistreatment
- **TIP:** Get your support person or someone you trust to help you report.

# How to be in a SAFE Relationship

## Partners and others should help you:

- Feel respected in the relationship
- Communicate together
- Make your own decisions
- Feel safe in your surroundings when you go out
- Feel safe and loved - this is the main thing

## My Experiences on How to Be Safe:

When I am in a relationship, I make sure I communicate with my partner and others about my abuse. I tell my partner and others to please not touch me until I get to know them well. I don't talk to strangers, and I look around when I travel to different places or take the bus, train or airplane.

## Here are some examples of how to be safe:

- Please don't talk to strangers, if you don't know the person
- You should tell someone where you are going in case you need help
- Everyone should talk about how to be safe in their home and community
- Everyone should have a safety plan to help you stay safe

## My Safety Plan is:

- Make sure I have someone I can call when I need help
- If I go out and I don't know the place:
  - I tell someone where I am going
  - I always take my cell phone
  - If I feel panicky, I take a deep breath
  - I think positive – this helps me believe I can do things to stay SAFE

## How to take care of yourself and others:

- Think positive
- Listen to music or read a book
- Talk to a Peer Support Leader from DPPC's Sexual Assault Response Unit to help
- Talk to someone you trust
- Write a journal about your thoughts

Here are some examples of what I do to take care of myself:

- Have good thoughts
- Do something that I like
- Take a walk
- Call someone
- Dance



# Leigh-Ann's Self-Care Column

## *What Self-Care Means to Me...*

*Hello my name is Leigh Ann.  
I am a Sexual Assault Survivor and  
Self-Advocate.*



Self-care means taking care of yourself when you are not feeling good or not having a good day. When you are feeling overwhelmed, take a walk or breathe and talk to someone. Stop what you are doing or ask for help. It is ok to ask for help.

Here are some ways you can take care of yourself: read, listen to music, lay on the grass and look at the sky, or take a road trip.

I have created a self-care bingo game that I play with individuals at other organizations, and it helps them come up with new ideas for self-care. For example, I play bingo at the ARC of Cape Cod once a month. If you would like to schedule a self-care bingo game at your agency, you can call me at 617-727-6465 Ext. 303.

### **How To Play Self-Care Bingo:**

- I will pull a card with an activity on it. If you have that activity on your board, put a sticky note on it. It is okay if you do not have it.
- The first person to get three in a row is winner Number One, and gets a small prize. We keep playing to give everyone a chance to win. GOOD LUCK!

Here is an example of what a self-care bingo card looks like:

 <p><b>Sing</b></p>	 <p><b>Talk To Friends</b></p>	<p>Best Friends!!</p>  <p><b>Talk To Someone You Trust</b></p>
 <p><b>Read</b></p>	<p><b>FREE SPACE</b></p>	 <p><b>Take A Nap</b></p>
 <p><b>Adult Coloring Book</b></p>	 <p><b>Listen To Music</b></p>	 <p><b>Yoga</b></p>

**Positive Self-Care Thoughts:**

SLOW DOWN	KEEP CALM	BE POSITIVE	TAKE IT EASY
UNPLUG	ENJOY LIFE	HAVE FUN	BREATHE
RELAX	GO OUTSIDE	MEDITATE	REPEAT :)



# Patty Quatieri

## *Peer Support Leader*

*Hello, my name is Patty Quatieri. I am a 59 year old woman with a developmental disability and cerebral palsy. I am a survivor of sexual assault.*



## **Ask Patty Column...**

Circle the right answer(s)...

1. If you are in a relationship that is not going well and there is some abuse, what can you do?
  - Call the Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC)
  - Talk to your staff and family
  - Call or talk to someone you trust
  - All of the above

The answer is on the last page.

*“Today it is raining but it will be sunny tomorrow.  
It will get better each day with trauma.  
You are a beautiful person.  
You will always have someone there for you.”*

## The answer to **Ask Patty Column...**

- All of the above

**Stay tuned for the next edition!**

*Positive Quotes*

*Ask Patty Column*

*And more.....*



**If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to email me. To contact Patty Quatieri, Peer Support Leader, email:**

**[Patricia.Quatieri@MassMail.state.ma.us](mailto:Patricia.Quatieri@MassMail.state.ma.us)**

If you would like support reading this Newsletter, please let me know.

To report suspected abuse or neglect against a person with a disability, please call the:

### **Disabled Persons Protection Commission**



**24 Hour Hotline:**

**1-800-426-9009**

**(TTY: 1-888-822-0350)**

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