# Facts on violence against women with disabilities

## Why are we focusing on women with disabilities?

### Violence against women is a serious, widespread problem in Australia

* Approximately 1 in 4 women has experienced violence by an intimate partner (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017).
* Intimate partner violence is a leading contributor to illness, disability and premature death for women aged 18-44 years (Ayre et al., 2016).
* On average, one woman a week in Australia is killed by an intimate partner (Cussen, and Bryant, 2015).

### Women with disabilities experience higher rates of violence

* Women with disabilities are more likely to experience violence than those without disabilities (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017).
* Women with disabilities experience higher rates of violence over longer periods of time, in more settings, and by more perpetrators (Women With Disabilities Australia et al., 2013).
* Over one-third of women with disabilities experience some form of intimate partner violence (Krnjacki et al., 2016).
* More than 70% of women with disabilities have experienced a violent sexual encounter (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009)

### Some women with disabilities experience even higher rates of violence and discrimination

* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience higher rates of disability than non-Indigenous women (Healey, 2015). They also experience disproportionate rates of family violence compared to non-Indigenous women (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2019).
* More than half of all incarcerated women in Australian prisons have a diagnosed psychosocial disability and a history of sexual victimisation (Human Rights Law Centre, 2014).
* Women with disabilities from refugee or migrant backgrounds are less likely to report acts of violence or access disability services (Dowse et al., 2013).
* LGBTQI+ people with disabilities experience higher rates of crime, violence, and discrimination (Leonard, 2018).
* Women make up 74% of all elder abuse victims, many of whom are also living with disabilities (Faye & Sellick, 2003).
* Women with disabilities in a rural setting experience a higher risk of social isolation and have less access to support services (Healey, 2013).

### Women with disabilities face unique challenges in seeking support for violence

* Women with disabilities are often exposed to other risk factors for violence, such as experience living in institutions or being dependent on informal or formal care in the home (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009).
* Women with disabilities are less likely to report violence or access support services (State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services, 2016), and their experiences of violence are more likely to be minimised, excused or not believed.
* Women with disabilities are less likely to receive support due to:
  + Inaccessible information and communication
  + Physical barriers to services
  + Not knowing their rights (Camilleri, 2008).

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