

Fact sheet

Nearly **one in five Victorian girls and women have a disability**, with higher numbers in rural and regional areas. ¹

Women with disabilities experience significant disadvantage and discrimination:

- ❖ Women with disabilities are twice as likely as women without disabilities to experience violence throughout their lives. ²
- ❖ Over one-third of women with disabilities experience some form of intimate partner violence. ³
- ❖ In mental health inpatient services, 45 per cent of women experienced sexual assault and more than 80 per cent lived in fear of being abused, while 67 per cent of women reported harassment during admission. ⁴
- ❖ 90% women with an intellectual disability have been subjected to sexual abuse. More than two-thirds (68%) have been sexually abused by the age of 18.
- ❖ Isolation can be compounded for women living rurally or remotely, women who are culturally isolated and for older women (sometimes called Elder Abuse) ⁵
- ❖ Women with disabilities have reduced access to health information, screening, prevention, and care services. They have minimal or no access to sexual and reproductive health programs, often because they are not seen in the community or health system as sexual beings.
- ❖ Women with disabilities face layers of discrimination that restricts inclusion and participation and experience high levels of unemployment, homelessness and economic hardship.

¹ Women with Disabilities Victoria 2014, *Fact Sheet 1: About Women with Disabilities Victoria*

<http://www.wdv.org.au/documents/Fact%20Sheet%201%20WDV%20-%20replacedOct2015.pdf>

² WWDA, UNSW & PWD, '[Stop the Violence: Improving Service Delivery for Women and Girls with disabilities.](#)' 2013

³ Ibid

⁴ Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council (VMIA) '[Zero Tolerance for Sexual Assault: A safe admission for women](#)', 2013.

⁵ Healey, Lucy. '[Voices Against Violence: Paper 2: Current Issues in Understanding and Responding to Violence Against Women with Disabilities.](#)' Women with Disabilities Victoria, Office of the Public Advocate, Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria, 2013.



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Women's Health Goulburn North East
Phone: (03) 5722 3009
Email: whealth@whealth.com.au
www.whealth.com.au

