PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AS VICTIMS OF CRIMES
DELAWARE 2010

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Introduction

The Delaware Building Partnerships for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities Initiative (BPI) is a two-year project funded in 2008 by the U.S. Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) and administered by the State of Delaware Criminal Justice Council. The purpose of the grant is to replicate the Massachusetts BPI project which links law enforcement, adult protection and human services creating a multi-disciplinary approach to violence committed against persons with disabilities. One goal of the project is to implement procedures to track crimes against individuals with disabilities.

In 2007 the Bureau of Justice Statistics published the "National Crime Victimization Survey Crime Against People with Disabilities" (Michael R. Rand & Erika Harrell, Ph.D., BJS Statisticians). Survey findings indicated that approximately one third of the crimes against people with or without disabilities were serious violent crimes (rape, sexual assault, robbery, or aggravated assaults. The incidence of violent crime against individuals with disabilities was 1.5 times higher than those without disabilities. Nearly 1 in 5 violent crimes victims with disabilities believed that they became a victim because of their disability. The BPI Advisory Group undertook looking at the extent of crimes against victims with disabilities in Delaware.

Delaware's Approach

The Delaware Criminal Justice Information System (DELJIS) is a statewide, centralized data system which has 100 percent reporting from all law enforcement jurisdictions. The leadership of DELJIS takes pride in user involvement in continued development of the system through well planned incremental modifications of the data set. DELJIS has been a BPI stakeholder since the inception of the Delaware project and because of their leadership and support for BPI we have been able to identify many victims with disabilities who reported crimes starting in April 2009. All Delaware crime reports completed by the police now include a mandatory information field to identify if the victim initiating a crime report has a disability, which is defined as "a significant mental illness, intellectual impairment, or physical impairment due to disease, accident, or developmental condition." Police, as the first responders are providing us with valuable information on the nature and extent of victimization of individuals with disabilities. All of the information presented has been drawn from our DELJIS system. The Office of Management and Budget Statistical Analysis Center (OMB/SAC) of Delaware provides criminal justice agencies with technical assistance in the identification of sources, collection, analysis, interpretation of dissemination of criminal justice statistics. The OMB/SAC has provided the BPI program with on-going technical assistance for data interpretation and analysis. The tables provided for this report tell the stories of victims of crimes for persons with disabilities based on information in crime reports.

Summary of Findings from April 2009-January 31, 2010

Between April 2009 and January 2010 there were 937 police crime reports that indicated that the victim was a person with a disability. **Table 1** provides an overview of information on crime reports from victims with disabilities. It shows that 209 calls, or about 22 percent of the police contacts, are calls for assistance where no crime was involved. Examples of these types of calls include: requests for a medical transport, missing person inquiry, noise violations, traffic hazards, person down in need of assistance, and a disturbance in the community. Forgery-fraud-larceny were involved in 267 calls or 29 percent of the cases. Assault calls totaled 20 percent of the calls from victims with disabilities. Of note is that in most cases the police do not know nor cite a disabled victim's relationship with an offender (64.2 percent).

Table 1

Persons with Disabilities: Summary For Relationships and Crimes: April 2009 to January 2010

(Police Calls for Service and Criminal Complaints)

	Unknown/ Blank	Stranger	Spouse	Other Family	Child	Boy/Girl Friend	Friend/ Neighbor	Employer	Row Totals	Row Pct.
Assault	45	17	8	39	8	21	47	0	185	19.7%
Burglary/Trespass	67	5	0	9	0	2	9	0	92	9.8%
Property Damage	70	0	1	6	1	0	5	0	83	8.9%
Loitering	4	0	0	2	5	3	11	0	25	2.7%
Endanger Welfare Person with Disability	9	0	4	3	8	3	2	0	29	3.1%
Forgery/Fraud	30	6	0	7	1	0	17	6	67	7.2%
Larceny	150	8	0	14	1	4	22	1	200	21.3%
Homicide	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.1%
Kidnapping	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	3	0.3%
Rape& Other Sexual Crimes	4	0	0	1	2	1	2	0	10	1.1%
Robbery	13	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	16	1.7%
Vehicle Theft	8	2	0	1	0	0	6	0	17	1.8%
Non Offense	201	2	0	3	0	0	3	0	209	22.3%
Column Totals	602	43	13	86	26	35	125	7	937	
Column Percent	64.2%	4.6%	1.4%	9.2%	2.8%	3.7%	13.3%	0.7%		

Victim to Offender Relationships read as --- Stranger (etc.) committed a crime against a disabled victim.

Other Family includes: siblings, parents, grandparents, step-relationships, and in-laws

Child includes: child, step-children, children of boy or girlfriend, and babysitting.

Non Offense: A call for assistance where no crime was involved. Draft DelSAC Feb. 2010

Table 2 shows the situation where the relationships with offenders are known. Here, probably because of the nature of the crime, assault leads. with 42 percent of the cases. In many situations the person with a disability knows who hurt them. Intimacy of the relationship seems to help, as it appears to be the more distant relationships "other family" and neighbors and friends are the persons more likely to hurt or steal from an individual with a disability. The BJS National Crime Victimization Survey reports that one fifth of violent crime victims with disabilities believed that they were victimized because of their disability. We can understand victims' rationale for believing that having a disability heightens their risk.

Table 2

Persons with Disabilities: Known Offender to Victim Relationship Summary: (April 2009 to January 2010)
(Police Calls for Service and Criminal Complaints)

	Spouse	Other Family	Child	Boy/Girl Friend	Friend/ Neighbor	Employer	Row Totals	Row Percent
Assault	8	39	8	21	47	0	123	42.1%
Burglary/Trespass	0	9	0	2	9	0	20	6.8%
Property Damage	1	6	1	0	5	0	13	4.5%
Loitering	0	2	5	3	11	0	21	7.2%
Endanger Welfare of Person with Disability	4	3	8	3	2	0	20	6.8%
Forgery/Fraud	0	7	1	0	17	6	31	10.6%
Larceny	0	14	1	4	22	1	42	14.4%
Homicide	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Kidnapping	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	0.7%
Rape & Other Sexual Crimes	0	1	2	1	2	0	6	2.1%
Robbery	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.3%
Vehicle Theft	0	1	0	0	6	0	7	2.4%
Non Offense	0	3	0	0	3	0	6	2.1%
Column Totals	13	86	26	35	125	7	292	
Column Percent	4.5%	29.5%	8.9%	12.0%	42.8%	2.4%		

292 out of the 937 (31.1 percent) relationship events have known relationships

Draft DelSAC Feb. 2010

Table 3 shows the residual counts and percentages for the unknown and stranger relationships. In a lot of cases, the disabled may not know the alleged perpetrator. Not knowing the offender appears to be less common in assault cases and more likely in property crime cases.

Table 3

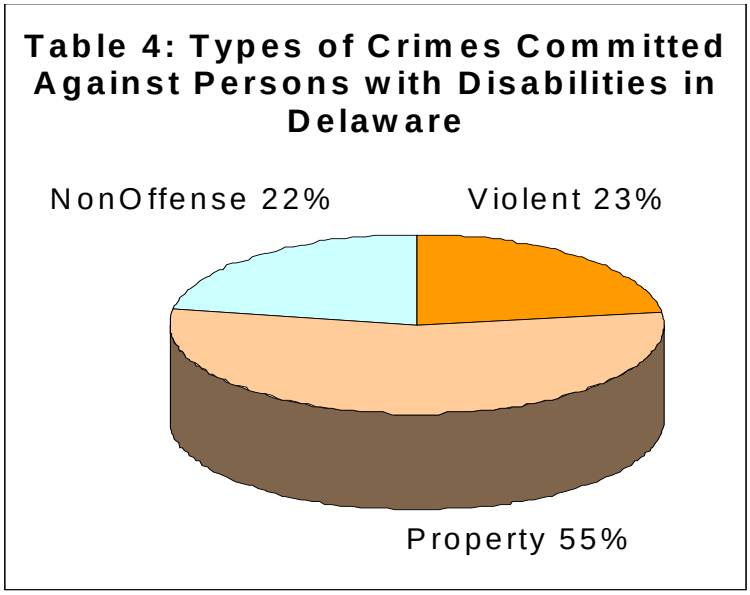
Persons with Disabilities: Unknown & Stanger Relationship Summary: (April 2009 to January 2010)
(Police Calls for Service and Criminal Complaints)

	Unknown/ Blank	Stranger	Row Totals	Row Percent
Assault	45	17	62	9.6%
Burglary/Trespass	67	5	72	11.2%
Property Damage	70	0	70	10.9%
Loitering	4	0	4	0.6%
Endanger Welfare Person with Disability	9	0	9	1.4%
Forgery/Fraud	30	6	36	5.6%
Larceny	150	8	158	24.5%
Homicide	1	0	1	0.2%
Kidnapping	0	1	1	0.2%
Rape& Other Sexual Crimes	4	0	4	0.6%
Robbery	13	2	15	2.3%
Vehicle Theft	8	2	10	1.6%
Non Offense	201	2	203	31.5%
Column Totals	602	43	645	
Column Percent	93.3%	6.7%		

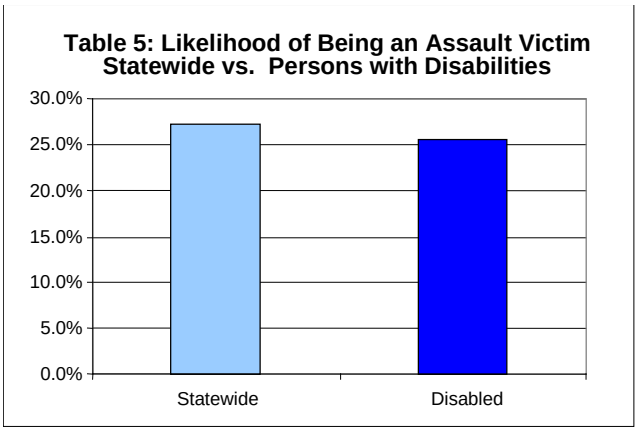
Draft DelSAC Feb. 2010

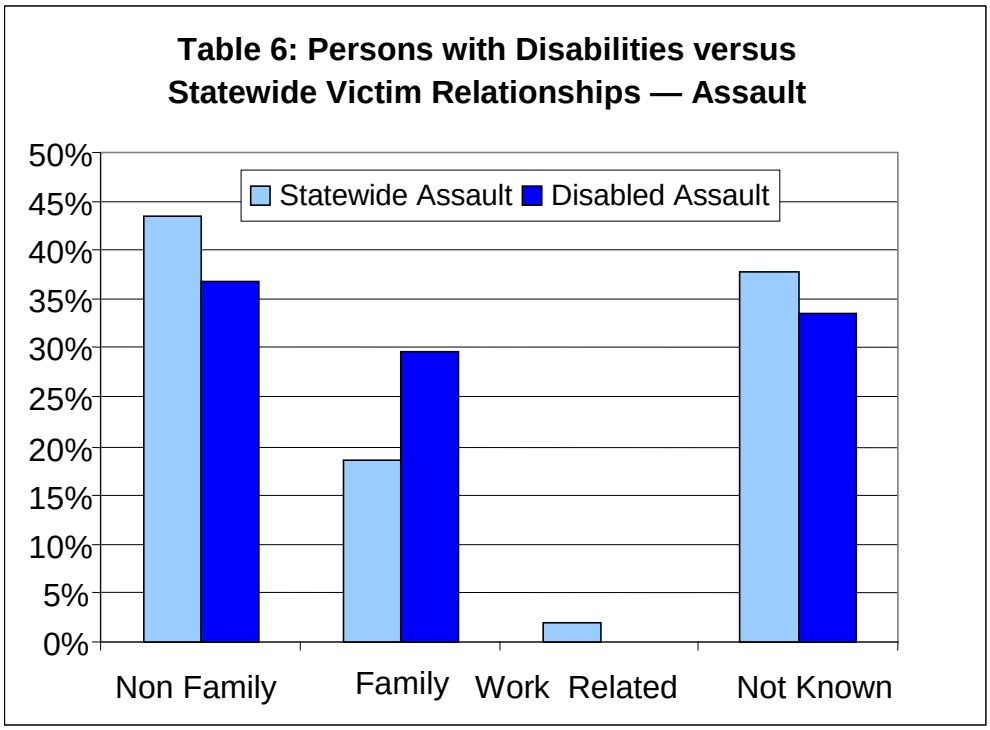
Table 4: Types of Crimes Committed Against Persons with Disabilities in Delaware

In this table homicide, kidnapping, robbery, rape and assault are collapsed into a violent category. All other crimes are collapsed into a property crime category. Non Offenses are the police calls for service where no crime was committed. This table not only highlights the types of crime against persons with disabilities, it also indicates the volume of cases where the police help a disabled person in need where a crime was not committed.



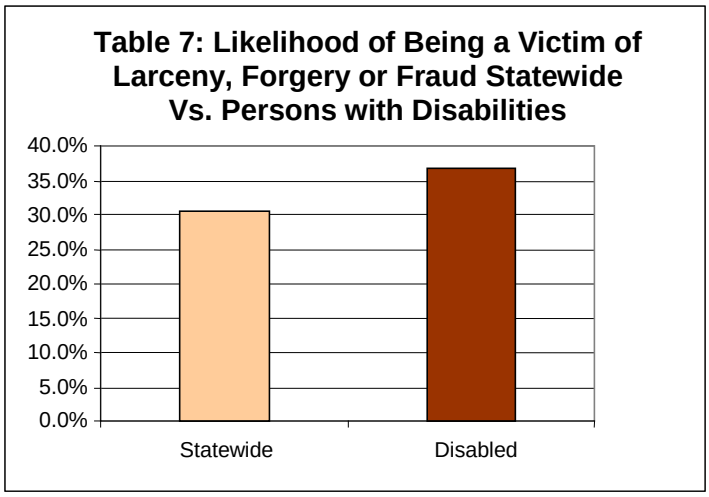
Tables 5 and 6 highlight some of the most serious crimes and the second most likely crime to be committed against a person with a disability– assault. Table 5 shows that when the full array of victimization is considered, persons with disabilities are only slightly less likely be assaulted that any other victim in Delaware (Statewide = 27.2 percent: Disabled = 25.4 percent). Table 6 shows that the victim with a disability is a little more likely to know the offender. While a non-family member is the most likely offender in disabled assault cases, a disabled person is almost twice as likely to be assaulted by a family member when compared to overall victimization.

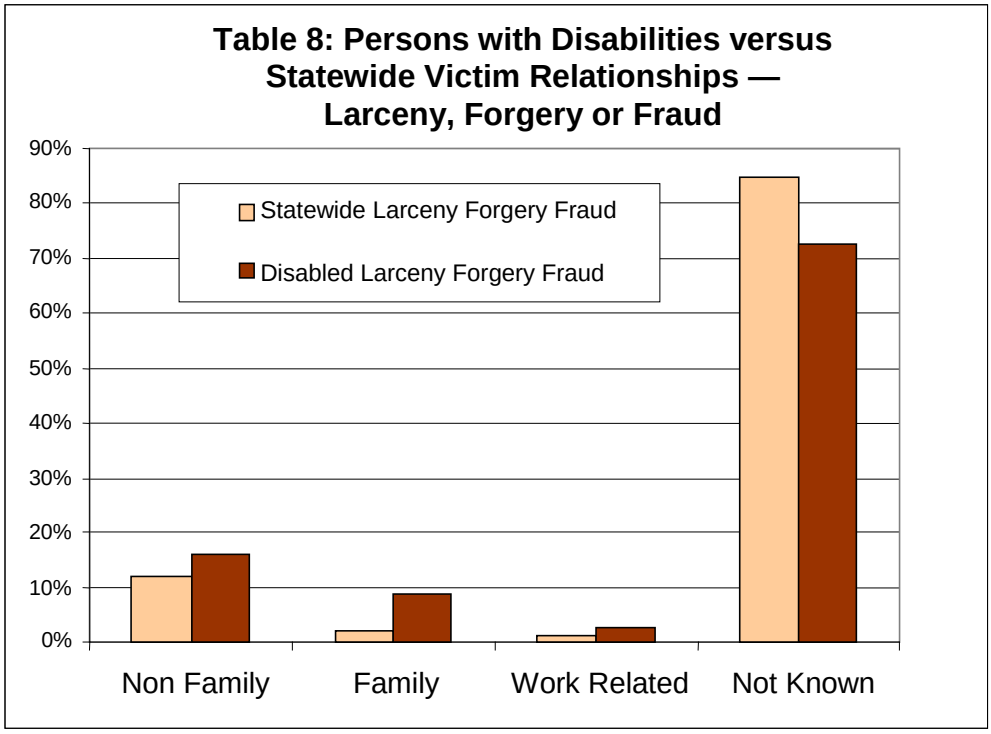




Notes: These tables have been adjusted by removing the non offender cases from the disabled victim counts, therefore the percentages are a little higher than the tables above, but they are more comparable to the statewide victimization counts. The Statewide victimization information comes from OMB/SAC Crime in Delaware 2003 through 2008 (draft 2010 p. 31).

The crimes most likely to be committed against a person with a disability are property crimes. This analysis uses the sum of larceny, forgery and fraud as the measure of property crimes. **Table 7** shows that when compared to the state as a whole, persons with disabilities are more likely to be victims of property crimes (disability = 36.7 percent: statewide = 30.5 percent). **Table 8** shows that disabled persons are significantly more likely to know the offenders. Family and friends, boy friend, girl friend and neighbors (non family relations) and family member are more likely to be known perpetrators than in overall victimization counts.





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Continued Needs Assessment

We are just beginning to learn about victimization of individuals with disabilities. Delaware is fortunate to have incremental capacity with the DELJIS system with responsive leadership and we have the capability within the state to analyze and interpret DELJIS data. Additional data collection for victims of crime with disabilities by gender, age, type of disability and relationship could provide enhanced understanding of the dimensions of victimization.

References

Cahill, Julia and O'Connell, John, "Crime in Delaware 2003 to 2008" Delaware Statistical Analysis Center, draft March 2010.

Rand, Michael and Harrell, Ph.D., Erica, "National Crime Against People with Disabilities, 2007" Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report.