

Women with Intellectual/Learning Disability

Looking at Abuse in Aotearoa

- Overseas research consistently finds much higher rates than general population
- Face particular risks of sexual assault and exploitation



Risk / Vulnerabilities

- Have a physical and emotional dependence on care –givers
- To be easily influenced to say or do something(wanting to please, acquiescence)
- Lack of sexual knowledge
- To have multiple care givers
- Unable to read people , recognise what is safe , what is right , what is appropriate

Rates in New Zealand

- No reliable accessible data base
- Little research
- Barriers associated with communication and disclosure
- Diagnostic overshadowing
- Under reporting

The background of the slide features two vibrant pink lotus flowers in full bloom, each resting on a large, green lily pad. The flowers have numerous petals and prominent yellow stamens. The lily pads are detailed with veins and some water droplets. In the center of the composition, there is a large, white heart-shaped cutout that reveals the plain white background behind it. The title 'Clinical Effects' is centered at the top, partially overlapping the top of the heart cutout.

Clinical Effects

- Same for all women
- Vary in intensity and range
- Behavioural difficulties, this includes anger management issues, self harm
- Substance abuse
- Mental Health Dis-orders

Barriers to Disclosure

- May feel disempowered
- May have little contact outside their immediate care situation
- Symptoms of abuse may be attributed to the women's disability
- May have a communication barrier, expressive language may not be clear/no words for what has happened
- Capacity of carers, help agencies and the justice system may be limited

Results of a Small NZ Case Study

- Sexual abuse as described
- 25% of women in service had experienced sexual abuse
- 50% had not returned to the same level of independence as before up to 4 years on

Healing

- Takes time ,trust, effort and commitment
- Requires supportive predictable care
- Includes therapeutic interventions



Education

- Educating families, teachers and carers
- On going and across the life span
- Appropriate to the audience
- Repetitive using the everyday as a time to learn
- Staying Safe , Keeping Safe Programme

Research

- Asking if this is what people want to find out
- Looking at what is already known
- Recording case studies by region
- What will happen with information
- Will it provide a benefit
- Narratives from care