

# Fempower

Magazine published by the European Info Centre Against Violence / WAVE Office – supported by Vienna Municipal Department for Women's Affairs

## FOCUS

**Violence against Women with Disabilities**

## INTERNATIONAL

**Networks in Europe**

## CONFERENCE

**First International Congress on Women and Disability**

## NGO ACTIVITIES

**Does Disability Provoke Violence?**

## READING SUGGESTIONS



## FOCUS

**Violence against Women with Disabilities:**

**An Overview**

By Petra Ziegler

### *Introduction*

It would appear that women with disabilities incur a greater risk of being abused the greater the degree of their disability and hence of their dependence on others. Disabled women are on average subjected to violence for a longer period of time. Above all mentally disabled women frequently go unheard when they report occurrences of violence or sexual abuse.

Many disabled women are intimidated by their husbands or partners with the threat of not seeing their children and being put into state institutions if they leave. They are faced with the prospect of losing the little that they have, heavily dependent as they are on their partners.



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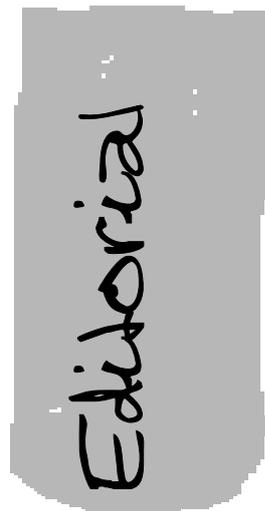
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The European Union declared 2003 to be the European Year of People with Disabilities. This was without doubt a positive and laudable undertaking. It is only in the last few decades that a noticeable change has occurred in attitudes to people who have special needs on account of illness or genetically transmitted disabilities. It would seem, though, that there is a delay before a gender-specific perception of social issues makes itself felt. Our research has shown that women with disabilities have to contend with additional obstacles. The present issue of Fempower is devoted to the topic of violence as it affects disabled women.

The EU Commission's funding for the publication of Fempower expired at the end of 2003. The European Information Centre against Violence is currently being funded exclusively by the Vienna Municipal Department for Women's Affairs. Since no other funding is available, Fempower can only be published in limited form.

Marinela Vecerik

The Editors

## ***Structural violence in institutions***

Given that non-disabled "experts" regularly make decisions affecting the life of disabled people on the assumption that they know best, there is a particularly marked tendency towards structural violence in institutions. Disabled women who live in institutions are generally deprived of the chance to make their own decisions as to when to wake up in the mornings and go to sleep at night, when to eat or who will help them in such everyday matters as personal hygiene. It is, for instance, seldom possible to request female help – notably for washing. The institutions generally plead shortage of staff as an explanation.

A further factor in the structural violence in institutions is the strong dependence of disabled women on the staff. In the event that a disabled woman is abused by an employee, she cannot be sure that the other employees will believe her. If victims of violence protest, they risk being kept waiting to have their basic needs attended to, being improperly treated or being put under pressure. Experience shows that reports by victims of violence are often dismissed in order not to damage the reputation of the institution concerned. Very rarely are charges brought against an employee. Instead, attempts are made to induce the victim to keep quiet or to relocate her in another institution.<sup>i</sup>

## ***Sexual abuse***

Disabled women have to contend with twofold discrimination: on account of their gender and of their disability. They are frequently regarded as being neuter and, as supposedly asexual beings, are not attributed with the capacity for living out their sexuality. This means that many are given no sex education and know next to nothing about their bodies. Many disabled women find themselves left naked in the presence of nursing and medical staff and are sometimes filmed or photographed for medical journals with being asked their prior consent. Many women sustain serious psychic damage from suffering external control over their lives in this way. They may well not easily recognise sexual violence or harassment for what it is, because such experiences can easily be part of a sequence of violations of different kinds. The situation is significantly aggravated by the problem of low self-esteem and negative attitudes to their own bodies.<sup>ii</sup>

## ***Enforced sterilisation and***

## ***contraception***

In October 1992 the European Parliament approved a recommendation that mentally disabled people may undergo (enforced) sterilisation provided that this is covered by two medical expertises and a court ruling. However, some women with physical rather than mental disabilities also have to fight for their right to bear children. In many cases the slightest irregularity is taken as an occasion to "persuade" women to have their wombs removed. This also happens to be "practical", because the women then no longer menstruate. When caesarean sections or abortions are carried out on disabled women, they are usually also sterilised at the same time. In many cases the woman did not give her prior consent.

Apart from enforced sterilisation, the anti-baby pill and the three-month injection are the most frequent forms of contraception used. Women without a disability, incidentally, are almost never given the three-month injection because of its side-effects. It should be pointed out that none of the above forms of contraception provide any protection against AIDS.<sup>iii</sup>

## ***International documents***

It has been a slow process by which disabled women have drawn the United Nations' attention to their needs. At the first World Conference on Women, held in Mexico City in 1975, no mention of their interests was made at all. In Copenhagen in 1980 governments were called upon "to direct special attention to the needs of elderly women, women living alone and disabled women". At the third World Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985 disabled women were accorded the status of an "area of special interest", and women with physical or mental disabilities were termed "vulnerable".

The first comprehensive UN report on human rights and disability, the 1991 Despouy Report, deals with sexual violence and eugenic population control:

"Several non-governmental organizations have pointed out that forced sterilization is more often used on disabled women than men in order to prevent them from having children. Often, disabled women are sterilized for eugenic reasons or simply because they are often victims of rape. Indeed, sterilization is sometimes a prerequisite for entry into an institution."<sup>iv</sup>

While disabled women came together

V

in Nairobi on an informal basis only, they acquired a higher profile at the subsequent UN conferences. At the Beijing World Conference in 1995 they successfully lobbied for the inclusion of the interests of disabled women in the final declaration and the action plan. The Beijing conference was a landmark event for disabled women, marking their incorporation in the women's movement as a whole.

At the level of the United Nations, the Human Rights Commission passed the "Declaration on the elimination of violence against women" in 1993. This document states: "Some groups of women, such as those who belong to minority groups, refugees, and natives, (...) disabled women (...) are especially vulnerable to violence. (...) (for the governments) to guarantee the access of disabled women to information and services within the area of violence against women."<sup>iv</sup>

In 1997 the European Disability Forum passed its "Manifesto of Disabled Women in Europe", which states the following on the issue of violence against women: "...Violence against disabled girls and women is a major problem and statistics show that disabled girls and women are probably victims of violence

because of their vulnerability."<sup>v</sup>

<sup>i</sup> The Daphne Programme 2000-2001. Information Kit. Violence means death of the soul. See: [www.dpi.it/donne](http://www.dpi.it/donne)

<sup>ii</sup> Violence and Disabled Women. Ed.: M. Iglesias, G. Gil, A. Joneken, B. Mickler, J.S. Knudsen. METIS project, European Union DAPHNE initiative 1998. See: [www.independentliving.org/docs1/iglesiasetal1998.html](http://www.independentliving.org/docs1/iglesiasetal1998.html)

<sup>iii</sup> Bundesministerium für Frauenangelegenheiten. Schriftreihe der Frauenministerin: Sexuelle Ausbeutung von Mädchen und Frauen mit Behinderung (Volume 10, September 1996)

<sup>iv</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. E.92.XIV.4. See: [www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/dispaperdes2.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/dispaperdes2.htm) → S. H -175

<sup>v</sup> Report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its 37<sup>th</sup> session (Vienna 17-26 March 1993). See: [www.un.org/esa/gopher-data/esc/cn6/1986-93/e1993-27.en](http://www.un.org/esa/gopher-data/esc/cn6/1986-93/e1993-27.en)

<sup>vi</sup> Manifesto of Disabled Women in Europe. See: [www.edf-feph.org/en/publications/publi/publi.htm](http://www.edf-feph.org/en/publications/publi/publi.htm) → EOF 97/3

## FOCUS

# European Year of People with Disabilities?

By Andrea Weiss

2003 was declared the European Year of People with Disabilities. Its goal was defined as being to "drive progress towards achieving equal rights for people with disabilities". It has its own homepage ([www.eypd2003.org](http://www.eypd2003.org)).

The initiators called on the public finally to take notice of people with disabilities, to discuss their specific problems and to demand that they be accorded their full rights. However, little mention is made of women with disabilities, who often have to contend with a twofold discrimination. In May 2003 we entered "women" in the homepage's search function, which came up with very few results. The scant information it provided included some details on the first international convention on women and disability, a link to the on-line magazine AnAurora, a forum entry by a Greek poetess with a disability, and the room allocation at a tennis tournament.

Fortunately, the links included one to the women's committee of the UK Disability Forum for European Affairs, which works in the field of violence against women with disabilities.

Nowhere does the above-mentioned homepage suggest that the issue of violence against women with disabilities is of importance to the initiators. It should be added, though, that we have registered some progress. A search with the key words "women" and "violence" conducted in March 2003 had produced even fewer results. By the end of the year a number of entries under "women" had been added, although there was little substantive change, and almost all the information provided consisted of links to organisations working in the field.

# Networks of disabled women in Europe

## Germany

- [www.netzwerk-behinderter-frauen-berlin.de](http://www.netzwerk-behinderter-frauen-berlin.de)  
Network of disabled women in Berlin with many contact addresses for disabled women victims of violence
- [www.autonomleben.de/frauen\\_nw.html](http://www.autonomleben.de/frauen_nw.html)  
Network of Girls and Women Lesbians with Disabilities in Hamburg
- [www.wildwasser.de](http://www.wildwasser.de)  
German network, offering counselling, prevention and services for girls and women with disabilities
- [www.netzwerk-artikel.de](http://www.netzwerk-artikel.de)  
Association for human rights, equality and self - advocacy of disabled women
- [www.netzwerk-nrw.de](http://www.netzwerk-nrw.de)  
Network of Women and Girls with Disabilities (NRW)
- [www.kassandra-ev.de](http://www.kassandra-ev.de)  
Association against sexual violence of girls and women with disabilities, offering counselling for disabled women victims of violence
- [www.frauenberatungsstelle.de](http://www.frauenberatungsstelle.de)  
Counselling centre for women with disabilities in Düsseldorf
- [www.zsl-erlangen.de](http://www.zsl-erlangen.de)  
Network of disabled feminists against sexual violence (NOSEVI)

## Denmark

[www.kvindermedhandicap.dk/summary%20english.htm](http://www.kvindermedhandicap.dk/summary%20english.htm)

Danish women with disabilities

## England

[www.glad.org.uk](http://www.glad.org.uk)

Greater London Action on Disability (GLAD) in London with topic on women and disability

<http://disabilitywestlothian.4.mg.com>

Disability West Lothian in Scotland

## Finland

[www.stakes.fi](http://www.stakes.fi)

European Network of Women with Disabilities. Provides supportive and sheltered forum, has an annual meeting and newspaper

## Norway

<http://homec2i.net.nettverk>

Network for Women with Disabilities supplying a Shelter for disabled women victims of violence and their children

## Spanien

[www.asoc-ies.org/index.html](http://www.asoc-ies.org/index.html)

The national association of Social Studies in Spain, run by and for disabled people

## Switzerland

[www.behindertenfrauen.ch](http://www.behindertenfrauen.ch)

Avanti Donne – Contact and co-ordination centre by and for disabled girls and women

[www.wheel-life.ch](http://www.wheel-life.ch)

Network of women with physical disabilities

# First International Congress on Women and Disability

By Marita Iglesias Padròn

**Marita Iglesias** is a consultant on disability affairs at Grupo INSO in Spain. She was very active in the disability movement until she decided to focus on women's issues, especially on violence against disabled women, in which field she has become a widely recognised authority in Spain. She has participated as a speaker in many major conferences on the subject of women and disability and carried out several studies on this topic ('Guide on Disabled Women and Violence', 1998). In 2000 she made an evaluation and selection of good practices carried out by women's organisations in Europe. This was done on behalf of IMSERSO (Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs) in Spain. It resulted in a publication 'Mujer y Discapacidad: Buenas Prácticas', 2001.

At present, she is working with various agencies in incorporating the gender dimension in policies and services for disabled citizens.

The 1<sup>st</sup> International Women and Disability Congress held in Valencia, Spain, has been one of the key events last year in Europe. More than 1,000 participants from many countries came together to learn more about disabled women's issues for the first time in Spain. All the areas relating to disabled women were on the agenda: education, work, motherhood, social relationships, marriage, sterilisation etc. But, in my opinion, the main conclusion from the Congress was precisely that it is essential to research and describe the many problems that arise when disability is combined with another dimension of discrimination such as gender. The theme of discrimination is tabooed. For too long, disability has attracted the attention of the disability movement, while the people themselves were forgotten. The social model has not helped to see the disabled *person* as a person with a gender. The expectations that relate to men and women make the condition of being a disabled woman a double exclusion. It is practically impossible for a disabled woman to respond to the social standards of mother, wife, partner, food provider and home manager. The disability process is a form of discrimination that compounds the patriarchal sexism which is usually suffered by women.

In my opinion, large events like this Congress are not conducive to concentrated and productive deliberations. This is the reason why I believe

that the main conclusions were more the fruit of a very general vision of the situation rather than accurate assessments. Among them, I would underline:

- The over-protection of the family. For this reason it is necessary to train disabled women themselves, their parents and relatives and teachers.
- The precariousness of the job situation for disabled women and the need to specifically adapt the various training programmes with back-up measures.
- The need to improve information about health for disabled women, as well as to draw up preventive measures which are able to focus on specific pathologies.
- New technology must be accessible, affordable, appropriate, accepted, known about and used by and for women with disabilities.
- The need for programmes for women with disabilities resulting from mental disorders.
- National and international legislation formulating strategies for equal opportunities between disabled men and women.

The confluence of all these factors in disabled women, especially in those who have severe deficiencies, learning or communication difficulties, makes them a group with an

> extremely high risk of suffering some type of violence. The percentage incidence of abuse far exceeds that of non-disabled women. According to the approach presented by Dr. Rosemary B. Hughes, one of the experts taking part in the Congress, "women with disabilities are vulnerable to abuse and violence as a result of being female and having a disability. In addition to the sexual and physical abuse perpetrated against women in general, women with disabilities experience abuse associated with the withholding of essential care and/or assistive devices. Compared to women in general, women with disabilities report a greater variety of perpetrators and a longer duration of abuse."

Violence was the topic which attracted lively interest at the Congress and in the media. However, there is scarcely a passing reference to it in the final conclusions. Why? Because this issue is difficult to deal with clearly in the final papers. It is not politically correct in a political Congress.

I have to say that this major event originated through the interest taken by a small group of women ( I remember here Juana de Andrés, C. Riu, and myself) in finding a place and a moment to allow us to talk about ourselves. Expectations grew ever higher, and in the end it was the local government who led the whole process. And this happens because there is no organised disabled women's movement in Spain. Nevertheless, realize

that this Congress is also the consequence of an early task that my colleagues (G. Gil, A. Joneken, K. Findhal, etc.) and I started in 1997 in the field of violence. Some projects and publications brought across what had been happening for a long time: disabled women existed and we had very specific problems which most of the time were completely unknown.

It is difficult to forecast what is going to happen in the near future, when this year finishes, but some of us are still working to go on studying and researching what is evident to us: women with disabilities live in special circumstances, and it is worth hearing what they have to say.

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**Some bibliography published in Spain:**

Some of it can be found at: [www.asoc-ies.org](http://www.asoc-ies.org)

- "Disabled Woman and her Socio-Economic Situation in two Autonomous Communities: Andalucía and Galicia" Shunt, Conde & Iglesias – Ed. PAIDEIA A Coruña, Spain, 1998
- "Guide on Violence and Disabled Women", Iglesias, M.; Gil, G.; Joneken A. (IES), Spain, 1998
- "Report on Violence and Disabled Women", Iglesias, M.; Gil, G.; Joneken A. (IES), Spain, 1998
- "Women and Disability: Good Practices", Iglesias, M. IMSERSO (Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs) Madrid, Spain, 2000

## *Does Disability Provoke Power-based Relationships and Violence?*

An interview with Klaudia Gruber, who is in charge of co-ordination, counselling and further training for the Association "Ninlil"

By Marinela Vecerik

The declared goal of the Association „Ninlil“ is to “combat sexual violence against women who have been classified as suffering from mental or multiple disabilities”. It is the only prevention agency in Austria whose work focuses on the above group of women and girls. The name “Ninlil” derives from a Sumerian legend in which the goddess Ninlil defies the sexual desires of the god Enlil. “Ninlil” dates back to 1992, when a number of women working in the fields of social care and counselling set up a working group. The Association itself was established in 1996. Its personnel comprises two staff members and five active board members from the areas of disabled care, social work and psychology who handle the entire range of service and the Association’s public relations.

**Klaudia, what work does “Ninlil” do and what are the most important services you provide?**

Our target group comprises women who have been classified as suffering from mental or multiple disabilities, along with their dependants and everybody who works with them. We provide individual counselling, either face-to-face or by telephone, for women who have been subjected to violence, and co-operative counselling with other organisations combating violence. The difference between our Association and an agency providing only counselling is that we see our job as being to act as a co-ordination point with the focus on preventing violence. That entails full-time networking with organisations working in the field of combating violence against girls and women, and co-ordinating, assembling and publishing material on the subject. The services we provide also include the running of seminars and further training courses.

**You clearly uphold certain principles in your work. What are these principles?**

One principle is partiality, which in our case means solidarity with the women concerned. We include a political dimension in our perception of the circumstances and relationships in a person’s life. More specifically, that means that women are still required to adjust to social power structures that are forced on them rather than being chosen by them. Another key aspect of our work is that it is resource-oriented: we focus not on the disability or the special needs of the women concerned but on their individual personalities and capabilities. Finally, the main principle of our work is promoting empowerment.

**What exactly do you understand by that?**

The term “empowerment” comes from the theory of community psychology in America. Its aim is to encourage women with disabilities to discover, enlarge and implement the scope for leading active lives. It was to realise this principle that the “Women First Group” was set up.

**On the subject of terminology: the expression “women who have been classified as suffering from mental or multiple disabilities” has a distinct bureaucratic ring to it. Is there an alternative to this term?**

Our designation is intended to make it clear that we regard the word “disability” as a social construct. One alternative is the term – currently in use as a self-designation – “women who are educationally challenged”, which derives from the terminology policy evolved by the People First Movement in Germany. Some people have misgivings about this term because they feel that omitting the word “disability” entails the risk that the interests of people with disabilities will be forgotten. Incidentally, the term is also open to misconstruction: it can be understood as implying simply the need for extra tuition, for example. I myself am not very happy

> with the designation “people with special needs” – don’t we all have needs? To my mind, terminology could – and should – vary according to the context. I think there are certain parallels here to the current debate on anti-racist terminology: there’s no one solution.

**You mentioned the Women First Group as being one of the activities of “Ninlil”. Tell us more about it.**

It’s a pilot project that originated within the People First Movement and was instigated by “Ninlil”. We wanted to incorporate a gender dimension in the People First Movement’s discussion process. It currently constitutes a discussion forum exclusively for educationally challenged women. The group is working on the issue of self-determination and is led by my colleague Michaela Neubauer.

**Women with disabilities tend to be exposed to twofold discrimination. The few studies that have been carried out show that sexual violence frequently occurs in a care context. How do you see this?**

I haven’t come across any recent literature on the subject of sexual violence in care institutions<sup>1</sup>, but there are several studies<sup>2</sup> showing that women with disabilities are more frequently subjected to sexual violence than those without. Carrying out research in care institutions is a complex undertaking, and there are numerous factors that need to be taken into account. One is the fear and dependence of those who require care and the openings for misunderstanding their wishes. Another is the shortage of resources in care institutions, the low salaries of the staff and the lack of respect in society for their work – this latter factor can result in violence prompted by the excessive pressure of work with which the staff have to contend. The above amounts to massive structural violence which may lead to other manifestations of violence – including sexual violence. I feel, though, that sexual violence committed against people requiring care has the same background as sexual violence in other contexts.

**How does intervention in institutions for disabled people work?**

In many cases of sexual violence, institutions unfortunately deal with the matter themselves, especially if the perpetrator is a staff member. There is also a strong tendency to protect disabled perpetrators. In fact, you could say that

the perpetrators are better protected than the victims in this field – that violence is reduced to a matter of course.

**Why do you think so little research is done in this field?**

To be a woman and to have a disability means to belong to a group with very few rights, a group to which the predominant majority in our society attaches little significance. To date women who are educationally challenged have had no opportunity to voice their needs in public. Researchers are primarily interested in symptoms and diagnoses, also in pedagogic matters – these are the topics which professionals working with disabled people consider to be suitable. The issue of sexual violence against women with disabilities does not even feature in the syllabi of the special and therapeutic teaching colleges, although the professionals are constantly confronted with acute cases or the long-term after-effects of sexual violence – if they can or want to notice these.

**The plight of disabled women subjected to violence is very similar to that of migrant women. Treating them as a “separate group” surely entails the risk of isolating them. What would you recommend?**

All of us are called upon to develop multiple competences rather than setting up specialised areas which are bound to reinforce the ghetto effect. However, at the NGO level we need both. We have to have organisations catering to the relevant “special needs”. But at the same time people with disabilities – and here I’m thinking specifically of people who are educationally challenged – must be given access to all the civil society institutions, including the existing victim protection agencies. One step in the right direction is the proposal to co-ordinate joint programmes with other women’s support services, providing assistance, an accompanying person, sign-language interpreting and so on. But there are aspects which haven’t been finalised yet, and plenty remains to be clarified.

**How does the situation in Austria compare with that in other European countries?**

In Scotland, for instance, there is a franker public debate on the issue of violence against women with disabilities. The Scottish women’s refuges have compiled and distributed a resource pack.<sup>3</sup> In Germany more and more anti-violence hotlines for women with disabilities are being made available.



Finally, what preventive action does your experience suggest would be most effective or desirable? I'll again refer to women who have been classified as mentally disabled, because they constitute a social group who have to date seldom articulated their interests in public. Anything which enables these women to act with greater collective strength and a greater degree of self-determination also helps to prevent violence. Sex education, the right to self-determination in terms of one's own body, knowledge of one's limits, and the encouragement of resistance to abuse are all steps towards reducing the danger of sexual exploitation. At the same time we need to continue to reflect on the way our social policy deals with the "mentally disabled". And – over and above the provision of basic welfare to which our society has committed itself in the wake of the national socialist era – where the right place is in which people with alternative cognitive capabilities can achieve social significance.

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*i Violence in care institutions:*

Report on the Symposium "Ich liebe dich Gewalt-ig. Der Mensch in der Pflege. Schafft Abhängigkeit Gewalt?" autumn 2001, Graz

published in the newsletter of the "Plattform gegen Gewalt in der Familie", 1/2002

*ii Studies on sexual violence against women with disabilities:*

„Weil alles weh tut mit Gewalt – sexuelle Ausbeutung von Frauen und Mädchen mit Behinderungen“

Ahia Zemp/Erika Pircher, Schriftenreihe der Frauenministerin Vol. 10, Vienna 1996

„Sexuelle Gewalt gegen Menschen mit geistiger Behinderung. Eine verleugnerte Realität“

Noack C./Schmidt H.J., Stuttgart 1984

„Gegen jedes Recht. Sexueller Missbrauch und geistige Behinderung“, Senn Y.C., Berlin 1993

*iii Scottish Resource Pack:*

“Breaking Down the Barriers. A Resource Pack on Disability for Scottish Women's Aid”

Kate Munro & Susan Steward, 2002

available from: Scottish Women's Aid

Norton Park, 57 Albion Road, Edinburgh EH7 5QY

swa@swa-l.demon.co.uk; [www.scottishwomensaid.co.uk](http://www.scottishwomensaid.co.uk)



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URL: [www.service4u.at/ninlil](http://www.service4u.at/ninlil)



# Because it all hurts so much with violence

## The sexual exploitation of girls and women

A study by Aiha Zemp and Erika Pirchner

This publication remains one of the few studies world-wide on sexual violence against disabled girls and women. The study was conducted over a period of twelve months and made use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches in order to accommodate the complexity of the issue. The results were derived from the evaluation of 130 questionnaires.

Women incapable of verbal communication as a result of mental or physiological disabilities were deliberately included in the survey population. It was agreed in advance which signs would denote "Yes" and "No", while anatomical dolls were used for explanatory purposes. Before the interviews commenced, the women concerned were asked if they were willing to talk about violence they had suffered, so that they made a conscious decision whether or not to participate in the survey. Consequently, the number of women who broke off the interviews was negligible.

Aiha Zemp / Erika Pirchner

Weil das alles weh tut mit Gewalt. Sexuelle Ausbeutung von Mädchen und Frauen

Published by the Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs

(Volume 10, September 1996)

ISBN 9011-9224-3

## Combating sexual violence against girls and women with disabilities

### A Manual for prevention and counselling

The book is a résumé of a 2-year Project "Partisan work to combat sexual violence against girls and young women with a physical disability" carried out by the Wildwasser Association in Freiburg. The subject matter of this model project included awareness raising and networking, regular counselling, integration and the empowerment of affected girls and women, as also the development of new prevention and protection resources.

The co-authors, treating the problem of sexual violence against disabled girls and women as a deficit and taboo issue, provide an extensive and detailed survey that combines feminist and peer-support approaches. The topics covered are wide-ranging and extend from the fundamental definition of terms such as "disability" and "sexual violence" to prevention, counselling and intervention work.

The publication aims to serve as a manual for practical work with girls and women with disabilities and to offer guidelines for further integration projects as well.

Gegen sexuelle Gewalt an Mädchen und Frauen mit Körperbehinderung  
Ein Handbuch für Prävention und Beratung, August 2002

The Manual can be ordered at:  
Wildwasser e. V. (Counselling Centre against sexual violence on girls)  
Erbprinzenstr. 4, 79098 Freiburg, Germany  
E-mail: [wildwasser-freiburg@gmx.de](mailto:wildwasser-freiburg@gmx.de)

# Violence against women with a disability

## Handicapped women, victims of violence: what can we do?

On this neglected issue there is a new English-language publication by the Persephone organisation in Belgium, which recently published a study on violence against women with a disability or a chronic and disabling disease.

It focuses on the problem of women with disabilities as “frequent” and “not investigated” victims of violence. Besides documenting the women’s own experiences and detailing activities and initiatives, the publication covers issues relating to research, legislation, prevention and specific assistance, references to studies, statistics and international documentation.

By dealing with this difficult topic, the authors wish to bring the issue into the open and to break down the taboo which still exists.

For ordering the publication and contact:

Persephone npo  
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## Web Tips:

- [www.dpi.org/en/resources/topics/topics-women.htm](http://www.dpi.org/en/resources/topics/topics-women.htm)  
Numerous links and documents relating to women with disabilities on the site of DPI, Disabled People’s International, the world union of associations set up by people with disabilities
- [www.dpi.org/en/events/womens\\_comm/resource\\_kit.htm](http://www.dpi.org/en/events/womens_comm/resource_kit.htm)  
„Disabled Women’s Resource Kit” by DPI International
- [www.edf-feph.org/en/policy/women/women\\_news.htm](http://www.edf-feph.org/en/policy/women/women_news.htm)  
The special area of the European Disability Forum site devoted to women
- [www.edf-feph.org/en/publications/publi/publi.htm](http://www.edf-feph.org/en/publications/publi/publi.htm)  
Publications list compiled by the European Disability Forum, including:  
EDF 00/11 (Bejing+5: Priority Concerns for disabled women 2000)  
EDF 97/3 (Manifesto by disabled women in Europe)
- [www.dpi.it/donne/testoVe.htm](http://www.dpi.it/donne/testoVe.htm)  
Daphne-Project „Disabled Girls and Women Victims of Violence Awareness Raising Campaign and Call for Action”; also Kit for download
- [www.worldenable.net/women/](http://www.worldenable.net/women/)  
Artikels und Links about women with disabilities and United Nations
- [www.disabledwomen.net](http://www.disabledwomen.net)  
Numerous links relating to the theme “Women with disabilities”