

I Protect Myself

Simple language booklet to educate children with and without disabilities about prevention against sexual abuse

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Purpose

Support families at home and teachers in inclusive schools to educate children with and without disabilities about sex abuse and violence in general, and how to prevent it.

- 120 million girls under 20 (about 1 in 10) have been raped or sexually abused. Boys are also at risk. Almost half of adolescent girls who go through sexual abuse do not tell anyone, and 7 out of 10 never seek help.

- Children with disabilities are almost 4 times more likely to become victims of violence than children without disabilities, and nearly 3 times more likely to be subjected to sexual violence, with girls at the greatest risk.

- Among people with disabilities, especially those with intellectual disabilities, sexuality is treated, almost always, as taboo by their relatives, caregivers and educators. Often, in an attempt to protect their children, parents and family members simply ignore the subject, treating individuals with disabilities like angels or eternal children. This makes them even more vulnerable to violence.

- 181 that ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) should ensure an inclusive education system at all levels.

Description

Process:

- Analyze data and bibliography.
- Consult and collaborate with specialists and targeted population - children, parents and educators.
- Based on Easy Read and Universal Design for Learning strategies, build and validate easy to understand, free and practical to use materials.
- Carefully choose text and illustrations that do not offend family values.

Create a website with the following contents:

- Free downloadable and visually attractive materials - booklet (with audiobook version), songs, puppets.
- List of reasons why to educate for prevention, comparing beliefs to reality.
- Explain how and when to talk to the children.
- Good practice and report channels.

Conclusions

- Theme chosen very welcomed in the disability and wider community.
- Booklet and website well received in child protection networks and press.
- Versions in Portuguese, Spanish, English and Brazilian Sign Language.
- Received Neide Castanha Award 2020, for promotion of children's and adolescent's human rights in Brazil.

Next steps

- Work with Education Authorities to include content in pre-schools and schools.
- Develop theater play I Protect Myself to tour schools.
- Create online free course to prepare educators and parents to use the material.
- Translate booklet and website to other languages.
- Promote nationally and international in academic area, mainstream and social media.

References

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"I hope 'I Protect Myself' can reach as many people as possible, so that families get encouraged to educate their children and that all children may be prepared to own their own bodies and prevent any form of harm from others when they are younger and later on in life."

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