



History of the Project

Spectrum Institute turned its attention to issues involving disability and abuse in the mid-1990s when it initiated a Disability, Abuse, and Personal Rights Project (DAPR). DAPR convened a “[think tank](#)” conference on disability and abuse in 1997. The conference brought together advocates and government agency representatives to develop ideas to address this important topic.

When Spectrum Institute initiated a major project dealing with the rights of single people in 1999, it was decided that DAPR would be better served by having The Arc of Riverside become the project’s fiscal manager. DAPR operated under the auspices of The Arc from 2000 to 2011.

The name of the endeavor was changed to the Disability and Abuse Project in 2011 when it moved back to Spectrum Institute. The project operated under the direction of a three-member executive committee – Nora Baladerian, Ph.D., Thomas F. Coleman, J.D., and Jim Stream. Nora was the project’s executive director, Tom was its legal director and website editor, and Jim was its principal consultant. In addition to this volunteer work for the project, Jim was the executive director of The Arc of Riverside.

The project operated a listserv for advocates, educators, and services providers who worked on disability and abuse issues. It also operated a newsfeed which gathered, summarized, and gave links to news articles from around the nation on matters relevant to disability and abuse. In 2012, the project conducted a major national survey on disability and abuse. More than 7,200 people

responded, including more than 2,500 people with disabilities. A [report](#) analyzing the responses of victims of abuse was released in 2013.

Information about more recent activities of the project are found in its annual report for [2018](#) and its annual report for [2019](#). The project was discontinued in 2020.

After the dissolution for the formal project, Spectrum Institute nonetheless continued to focus attention on issues involving disability and abuse, particularly with respect to access to mental health services for adults who have been victims of abuse.

Spectrum Institute promotes the [legal right](#) of people with developmental disabilities, including those who are victims of abuse, to have equal access to a full range of mental health therapies. (See: bibliography-[books](#); bibliography-[articles](#))

As part of its Mental Health Project, an outgrowth of the abuse project, Spectrum Institute released a [report](#) on the adverse consequences of delayed or denied access to mental health therapy – including and especially for adults with developmental disabilities who have been victims of abuse.



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