

NEVER GIVE UP!

Using Your Passion to Change the
World...One Person at a Time

James Meadours
*National Disability Rights and
Sexual Assault Advocate*

Leigh Ann Davis
*Senior Director of The Arc's National Center on Criminal
Justice and Disability*



*National Center on
Criminal Justice & Disability*

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**“TO ACCOMPLISH GREAT THINGS,
WE MUST NOT ONLY ACT, BUT
ALSO DREAM; NOT ONLY PLAN,
BUT ALSO BELIEVE.” -ANATOLE FRANCE**



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***What is one thing you want to change in the world
or in your state or in your own community?***

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Steps to Creating Your Own Path

1. Know your **WHY** – What motivates you?

2. Know the **TRUTH or the research**

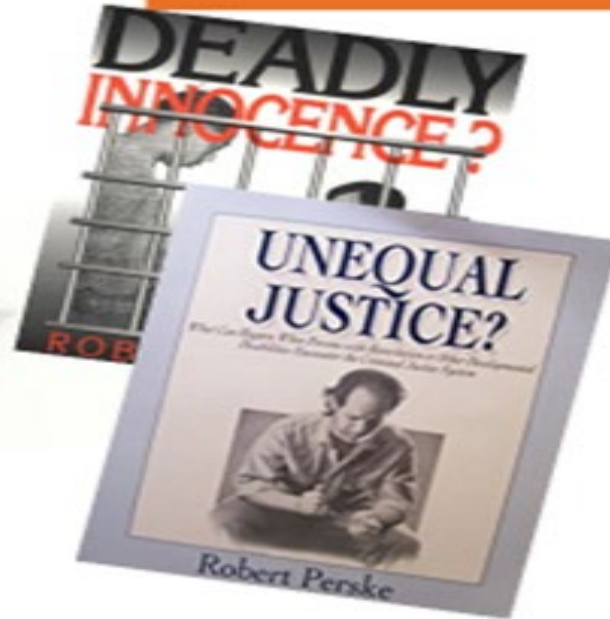
3. Share the **STORIES of others**

3. Learn how to **ADVOCATE in many ways**

Step 1

Know Your Why What Motivates You?

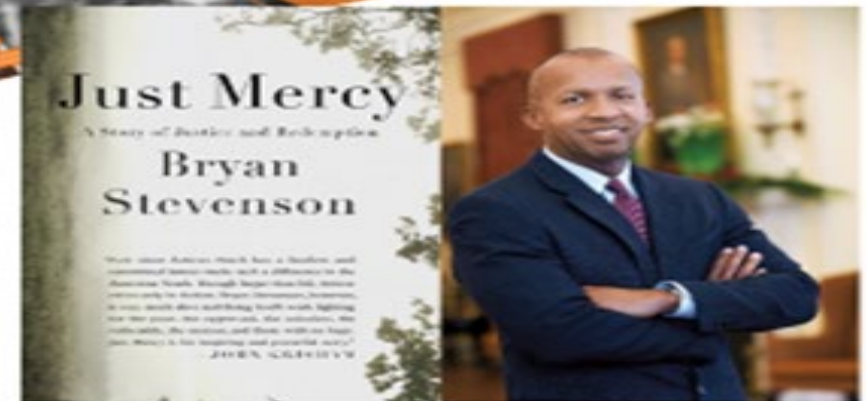
Changemakers that Changed Me



Joan Petersilia



James Meadours



National Center on Criminal Justice and Disability



Training and technical assistance

- For criminal justice professionals



Information and referral

- For people with disabilities and their families as well as criminal justice professionals
- <https://thearc.org/our-initiatives/criminal-justice/>



Resource collection and creation

- Policy briefs, fact sheets, other publications
<https://thearc.org/find-resources/>



Education

- Social media, webinars, and conferences



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Meet James Meadours

“Don’t ever, ever, ever quit!”

- How I found my path to live out my passion
- Nationally known advocate, survivor and speaker on victim’s issues
- Active on the national, state, local level
- Superman of sexual assault prevention
- Will be appointed to the President’s Committee on Persons with Intellectual Disability on October 27



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Create Your Own Path!

“I arrived in Hollywood at the age of 22, a time where the odds were against me standing here tonight 53 years later.

Back then, no route was established for where I was hoping to go, no pathway for me to trace, no custom for me to follow.”

*Sydney Poitier receiving honorary Oscar in 2002
(paraphrased)*

My Path: Challenges & Successes

- Sometimes you need to take a break:
 - Shift focus from community to state or national work
 - Shift focus from one topic to another
- Six years ago I decided to devote my life to sexual assault prevention and advocacy work
- Since the NPR story, it helped me open so many doors I never imagined!

After 23 Years of Advocacy Work...



*James accepts
The Arc's
Catalyst Award
November 9, 2018
in Nashville, TN*

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Step 2

Know the Truth...

What does the Research Say?

Know the Numbers or Data

- Learn as much as you can about your topic
- Make a tip sheet about the facts, data or research
- Use images or pictures to help you remember the data or numbers
- Consider co-authoring research articles with experts in the field or working on research projects

Victims



*Cognitive disabilities include Down syndrome, autism, dementia, learning disabilities, intellectual disability, and traumatic brain injury.

Barriers



to Justice

- Reports of victimization are not believed
- Cases may go unprosecuted, especially if there are communication challenges
- Inaccessible services and supports

NPR's Abused & Betrayed Series

The rate of rape and sexual assault against people with intellectual disabilities is more than seven times the rate against people without disabilities.

Photo available at:

<https://www.npr.org/series/575502633/abused-and-betrayed>

Image: Three pictures of people with disabilities whose stories were shared in NPR's Abused and Betrayed series.



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National Research Conference

- Self-advocates lead discussion about research goals at the conference
- People with disabilities sat in a circle to talk honestly about victim's issues while others sat outside the circle to listen
- People with disabilities co-authored articles in these journals



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Step 3

Share Your Own Story and the Stories of Others



The Arc®

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Telling Your Story – How to Prepare

- Make sure you are ready before speaking out on a topic, give yourself time to get ready!
- Peer support is a great option
- Use accommodations or other support that help you get your message across
- Practice, practice, practice! Practice telling your story to friends or family members until you feel ready to share with others



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- At least 1 in 6 men have been sexually assaulted
- The 1in6 organization created a PSA about it
- It was their first time to include man with disabilities (James)

Image: Picture of man (James Meadours) shaking hands with woman who just read his story about surviving sexual assault for the first time. Both are sitting on stools and smiling.



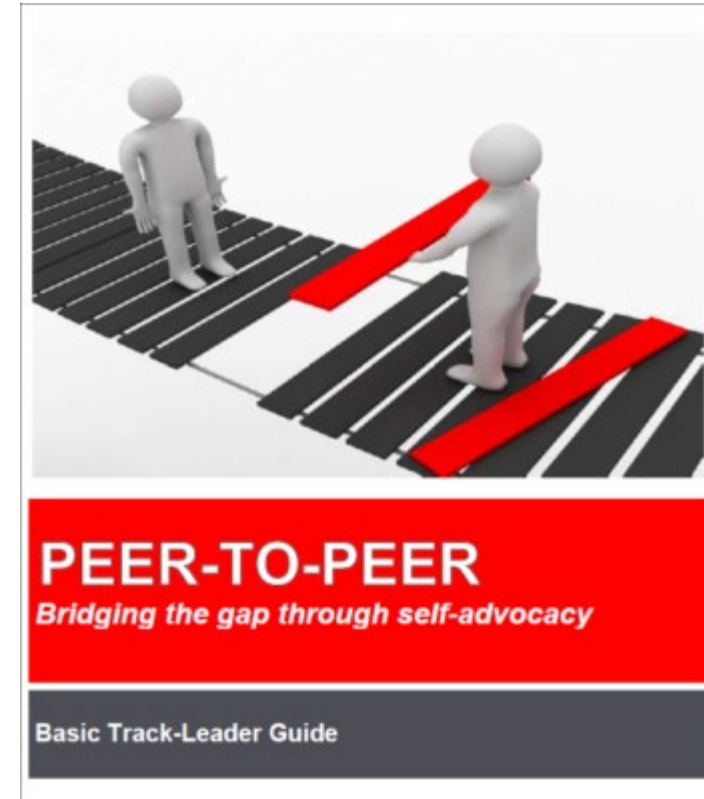
Used with permission from 1in6

Step 4

Learn How to Advocate in Many Ways

Get Involved in Projects

- Vera Institute of Justice
 - Provides guidelines on how sexual assault providers can make their services accessible
 - Training for Self-Advocates on how to become peer supporters



Become a Trainer or Co-Trainer

Example: Pathways to Justice

STEP 1:
Disability
Response
Team (DRT)

STEP 2:
Training
for Justice
Professionals

STEP 3:
Ongoing
Technical
Assistance



Pathways Principles:

- Nothing about us, without us
- Community-based
- Build strong relationships

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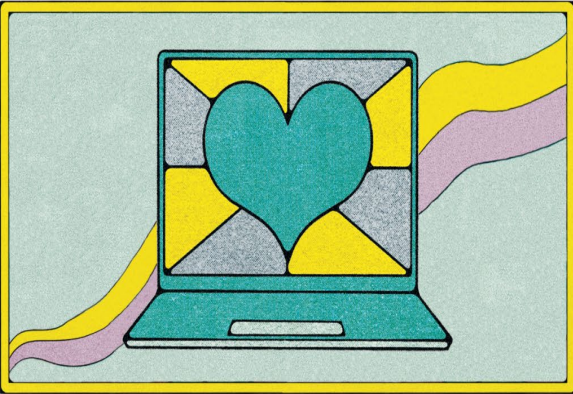
Write Blogs & Speak on Podcasts

medium.com/sexual-assault-awareness-month-2021/preventing-online-sexual-victimization-of-people-with-developmental-disabilities-caee785a2285

Sign in Get started

Preventing Online Sexual Victimization of People with Developmental Disabilities

National Sexual Violence Resource Center Follow
Apr 29 · 5 min read



By Barbara Coppens, Advocate Assistant with Disability Rights New Jersey, and Leigh Ann Davis, Director of Criminal Justice Initiatives at The Arc of the U.S.

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RESOURCE ON THE GO PODCAST

Sexual harassment, abuse, and assault are serious and widespread issues — but we can all work together to eliminate these issues and create a safer world. That's where Resource on the Go comes in. Each episode, we'll share insights on responding and preventing to sexual assault from experts who are doing this work every day. A go-to source for those working to end sexual violence, this podcast will explore topics like community-level prevention, evaluation, messaging, and more.

Resource on the Go
Working with Male Survivors: Talking to Men with Disabilities About Sexual Assault

Working with Male Survivors: Talking to Men with Disabilities About Sexual Assault 55:25

Changing the Way We Think About Childhood Adversity 19:09

Create Videos



www.talkaboutsexualviolence.org



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Advocate to Change Laws

- HB 4531
 - If someone gets sexually assaulted, the person with I/DD has a right to get a sexual assault exam
 - Even if the guardian or caregiver says they don't want the person to get the exam
 - Everyone voted YES for the bill!
 - Why this bill is so important



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Work with Allies – What Makes a Good Ally?

- An ally is a trusted friend
- Must be a GOOD listener and respect you
- Often has some of the same experiences as you, which is why you want to partner together
- Helps you brainstorm ideas
- Helps you write out your story and make slides
- Helps you find paid (and sometimes unpaid) opportunities to share your message

You Can Do This!

- Think about your own journey and changemakers who inspire you
- Learn all you can about the topic you care about the most
- Support legislation, research, policy and programs that try to make lasting change
- Don't be afraid to share your ideas – they matter!
- **Don't ever, ever, ever quit!**



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Join us...

"If you be quiet, you cannot change things. But if you have a voice, you can change the world."



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Contact Us!

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