



Your Life, Your Rights: Safety Rights
Matthew Pierce, 2021 Leadership Series Class, Advocates in Action
Johanna Mercado, Division of Developmental Disabilities
Amethys Nieves, Division of Developmental Disabilities



Rhode Island
Department of Behavioral
Healthcare, Developmental
Disabilities & Hospitals
(BHDDH)

Title: “Your Life, Your Rights: Safety Rights.”

Image: a group of people with different races and genders holding up puzzle pieces.

Talking points: Presenters are:

Matthew Pierce, 2017 Leadership Series Class, Advocates in Action

Johanna Mercado, Division of Developmental Disabilities

Amethys Nieves, Division of Developmental Disabilities

In this session we are going to talk about your rights to have a safe life. You have the right to live a life free from abuse.

Rights are privileges everyone in our country has. They are not things that only certain people have that makes them better or more powerful than others. Rights come from laws.

Your life matters. It is important for you to know what your rights are so you can protect them.

Class rules

Here are some **helpful virtual class rules:**

- Be prepared and ready to learn
- Respect everyone in the group
- Speak up and participate
- Stay focused
- Take care of yourself
- Have fun and be yourself!



Title: Class Rules

Image: a person taking an online class, raising their hand

Talking points: Here are some helpful virtual class rules:

1. **Be prepared and ready to learn:** Have your materials nearby. Make sure your device is charged. Find a quiet place where you can focus.
2. **Respect everyone in the group:** Listen when someone is speaking. Be kind and patient with others. Use polite words and gestures. This also means protecting one another's privacy. If are sharing a story, try not say any names. If someone else is sharing, try not to repeat it outside of this class.
3. **Speak up and participate:** Share your thoughts in a way that works for you—talking, typing in the chat, or using reactions. Ask questions when you need help. It's okay to take your time to answer! You don't have to share if you don't want to. If you do want to share, please know that this session is being recorded. Please be careful about what you share and try not to share personal details.
4. **Stay focused and on-task:** Try to avoid distractions. Keep phones and other devices off unless they're needed. Follow along with the lesson and activities. Stay muted when you're not speaking to help keep background noise low.
5. **Take care of yourself:** If you need a break, let us know. Use headphones or closed captions if you need to. Feel free to use a fidget tool or move around as needed.
6. **Have fun and be yourself!** Virtual learning should be **engaging and comfortable** for everyone. Be yourself, share ideas, and enjoy learning with others!

Welcome ice breaker!

Share 3 fun facts
about yourself



Title: Welcome! Ice Breaker!

Image: a group of people getting to know one another.

Talking points: Share 3 fun facts about yourself

What you will learn today



All about your safety rights:

- What they are
- Why they matter
- How to stand up for your rights
- Where to learn more

Title: What You Will Learn Today

Image: 3 friends smiling together

Talking points: There are a few things we hope you will learn today.

We are going to start by telling you what your safety rights are and why they matter.

Then, we are going to play a fun game to help you learn more about your rights. The game will teach you some ways you can stand up for your rights.

The last thing we will share with you is where you can learn more about your rights.

Safety rights on personal space and boundaries



Take breaks when needed to relax.

Decide when you need help and from who.

You have safe places you can go.

You have people you trust to talk to.

Title: Safety rights on personal space and boundaries

Image: a person sitting on a chair in a room with plants and a cat. The person has headphones on and is on a laptop. The person looks relaxed with a smile on their face.

Talking points: the first group of rights we will tell you about is around your safety rights on personal space and boundaries.

1. **You have the right to take breaks when needed to relax.** For example, let's say you are working with someone from your support team. You are working together to grow your public speaking skills. You have been practicing for 15 minutes but feel stuck and maybe a little tired. You have the right to say you need a break. Maybe all you need is a short water break or want to stop early for the day. The choice is yours.
2. **You have the right to decide when you need help and from who.** Have you ever gone through something complicated or challenging? At some point, we all have, right? Sometimes, we might like the challenge and want to figure it out alone. For example, when we are playing a game or sport it can be fun to find a solution.

Other times you might need and want help from another person. Have you ever felt like this? Maybe it is just advice to help you make a choice or maybe you need someone to do a certain thing that you can't do, like reach for a book at the library from a high shelf. You get to decide what you want help with.

3. **You have the right to have safe places you can go.** This may be your home, your room, a friend's house, a nice park. If you are not near these places and start to feel uncomfortable or scared, where can you go? This will look differently for each of us.
4. **You have the right to have people you trust to talk to.** Who are some people you trust to talk to?

Safety rights in the community



Ask for space when you need it.

Your personal boundaries are respected.

Have info about travelling safely.

Have info about safe places to go for help.

Title: Safety rights in the community

Image: 3 people with different abilities out in the community. One person is walking a guide dog, another is in a wheelchair, the last is standing and pointing at something.

Talking points: the second group of rights we will tell you about is around your safety rights in the community.

1. **You have the right to ask for space when you need it.** Some days you may want to spend time alone. Maybe that is for the whole day or just a few minutes out of the day. That is normal and okay. You have the right to do that. You might have to cancel a meeting you have. If you are already out, you can also go for a 5-minute water break.

2. **You have the right to have your personal boundaries respected.** What do you think personal boundaries are? Boundaries are like small rules you have about how you want to be treated by other people.

They can be not talking about certain topics. For example, if I am very afraid of clowns, I may not want to ever talk about them. Boundaries can also be about not doing certain things. For example, maybe you don't like going to the movies after 10pm or traveling on a certain street. Or they can be personal space. For example, you may be in line to buy something at the store and the person behind you in line is too close.

3. **You have the right to have info about travelling safely.** This includes having guides, maps, tips, and other information to learn about your community and traveling. For example, RIPTA travel guides.

4. **You have the right to have info about safe places to go for help.** This is knowing which places near you are marked as safe places. Maybe that is your local library, fire department, or other types of places where staff are there to help.

Safety rights on health and medical care



Make decisions about your health.

Make appointments with your doctor.

Talk to your doctor about treatment.

Go to the emergency room if you need it.

Title: Safety rights on health and medical care

Image: people of different genders, ages, and abilities meeting with a doctor

Talking points: the third group of rights we will tell you about is around your safety rights on health and medical care.

1. **You have the right to make decisions about your health.** You have the right to do things like pick your own doctor or switch to a new doctor's office. Other examples are deciding the people you want included in your doctor appointments and getting a copy of your records.
2. **You have the right to make appointments with your doctor when you need to.** You might make an appointment because you don't feel well, or because you want to talk about your health care plan options. If there is anything you don't understand when you meet with your doctor, you can ask them questions. They should give you information in a way you understand.
3. **You have the right to talk to your doctor about treatment.** You have the right to stop or start a certain treatment. People close to you might not agree with you, but they should trust and respect your choice. For example, you may or may not want to get a flu shot every year.
4. **You have the right to go to the emergency room if you need it.** A medical emergency might be a broken bone, deep cut, trouble breathing, emotional challenge, and more. Emergency rooms tend to be very busy, but they can't turn you away from treatment.

Safety rights to be free from abuse



Not be harmed physically, sexually, or verbally.

Not be taken advantage of.

Be treated with dignity and respect.

Get the right treatment needed.

Get help living a safe, healthy life.

Title: Safety rights to be free from abuse

Image: a dog with a cape flying

Talking points: The last group of rights we will tell you about is around your right to be free from abuse. This topic might be upsetting because it gives a short review of what abuse is. If you need to step away because you are uncomfortable, please do what you need to take care of yourself.

1. **You have the right to not be harmed physically.** Physical abuse may be hitting, kicking, biting, and more.
2. **You have the right to not be harmed sexually.** Sexual abuse may be unwanted touching or sexual activity.
3. **You have the right to not be harmed verbally.** Verbal abuse may be yelling, name calling, and bullying.
4. **You have the right to not be taken advantage of.** For example, someone taking your money and making you pay for things for them.
5. **You have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.** This is people treating you kind, listening to you when you need space, and more.
6. **You have the right to get the right treatment needed.** For example, if your support staff is supposed to help you take your medicine, then they must help you take your medicine.
7. **You have the right to get help living a safe, healthy life.**

Report abuse



To report abuse and serious events call the BHDDH Quality Assurance (QA) hotline at (401) 462-2629.

The hotline is open 24-hours a day, seven days per week, 365 days per year.

Title: Report abuse

Image: an attention sign, which is a triangle with an exclamation point

Talking points: To report abuse and serious events call the BHDDH Quality Assurance (QA) hotline at (401) 462-2629. The hotline is open 24-hours a day, seven days per week, 365 days per year.

Why do your safety rights matter?

You have the right to be treated well and feel safe.



Title: Why do your safety service rights matter?

Image: a person smiling as other people clap and give them thumbs up

Talking points: Your safety rights matter because you have the right to be treated well and feel safe.

Let's play a game



Level 1:

We will share an example of someone sticking up for their own safety.



Level 2:

We will then share a list of 3 safety rights.



Level 3:

You chose which safety right the person is supporting.

Title: Let's play a game

Talking points: Now we are going to play a game. There are 3 steps to the game:

1. The game will start with us sharing an example of someone sticking up for their own safety. The image for this level is: a person smiling with their hands on their heart showing themselves self-love.
2. We will share a list of 3 safety rights. The image for this level is: 3 loops connected by arrows.
3. We will ask you to choose which safety right the person is supporting. The image for this level is: a person sitting down smiling using their cell phone. They are picking between a few choices.

Round 1

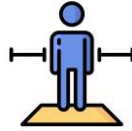
Example:

Today was a busy day. I'm going to tell my friend I don't want to go with them to the store. Instead, I am going home to rest.

Answer Choices:



Safety in the
community



Personal space
and boundaries



Health and
medical care

RHODE
ISLAND

Title: Round 1

Talking points:

The example is: Today was a busy day. I'm going to tell my friend I don't want to go with them to the store. Instead, I am going home to rest.

The 3 answer choices are:

1. Safety in the community, which is shown by an icon of a community of people.
2. Personal space and boundaries, which is shown by an icon of a person with open space around them.
3. Health and medical care, which is shown by an icon of a first aid kit with band-aids and other supplies.

What safety right do you think the person is supporting?

You're right! The right is about personal space and boundaries. But the right can cover a few of the other right categories at the same time, like health safety. There are many correct answers.

Round 2

Example:

I want to go to the park today. My support worker usually goes with me but can't today. I asked them to share the directions with me so I can go alone.

Answer Choices:



RHODE ISLAND

Title: Round 2

Talking points:

The example is: I want to go to the park today. My support worker usually goes with me but can't today. I asked them to share the directions with me so I can go alone.

The 3 answer choices are:

1. Safety in the community, which is shown by an icon of a community of people.
2. Health and medical care, which is shown by an icon of a first aid kit with band-aids and other supplies.
3. Freedom from abuse, which is shown by an icon of a person in front of a mirror with a heart above their head.

What safety right do you think the person is supporting?

You're right! The right is about safety in the community. But the right can cover a few of the other right categories at the same time, like health safety. There are many correct answers.

Round 3

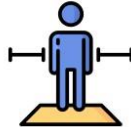
Example:

My doctor thinks I should try a new medicine. The medicine is not life-saving and will not hurt me if you don't take it. I tell my doctor "no."

Answer Choices:



Freedom from
Abuse



Personal space
and boundaries



Health and
medical care

RHODE
ISLAND

Title: Round 3

Talking points:

The example is: My doctor thinks I should try a new medicine. The medicine is not lifesaving and will not hurt me if you don't take it. I tell my doctor "no."

The answer choices are:

1. Freedom from abuse, which is shown by an icon of a person in front of a mirror with a heart above their head.
2. Personal space and boundaries, which is shown by an icon of a person with open space around them.
3. Health and medical care, which is shown by an icon of a first aid kit with band-aids and other supplies.

What safety right do you think the person is supporting?

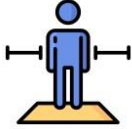
You're right! The right is about health and medical care. But the right can cover a few of the other right categories at the same time, like boundaries. There are many correct answers.

Round 4

Example:

While having lunch, my friend started to call me names. I told them I deserve respect and will not let myself be bullied. I left them behind in the lunchroom.

Answer Choices:



Personal space
and boundaries



Freedom from
Abuse



Safety in the
community

RHODE
ISLAND

Title: Round 4

Talking points:

The example is: while having lunch, my friend started to call me names. I told them I deserve respect and will not let myself be bullied. I left them behind in the lunchroom.

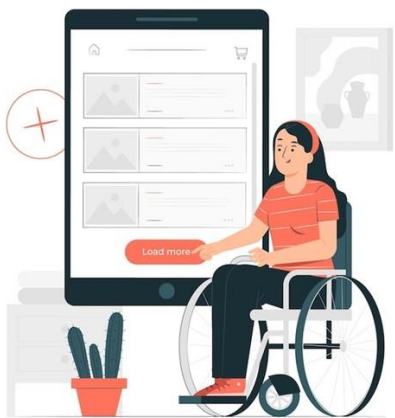
The answer choices are:

1. Personal space and boundaries, which is shown by an icon of a person with open space around them.
2. Freedom from abuse, which is shown by an icon of a person in front of a mirror with a heart above their head.
3. Safety in the community, which is shown by an icon of a community of people.

What safety right do you think the person is supporting?

You're right! The right is about freedom from abuse. But the right can cover a few of the other right categories at the same time, like boundaries. There are many correct answers.

Where to learn more



Visit the [Division's website](#).

[Sign-up for the Division's newsletter](#).

Learn from other people by talking to them or going on a podcast, like [Noticeably Invisible](#).

Visit local agencies and advocacy groups, [Day One](#), [Helpline RI](#), or [BVAC](#).

Title: Where to learn more

Image: a person in a wheelchair clicking a "learn more" button on their tablet.

Talking points: to wrap up this session we are going to tell you where you can go to learn more about your rights.

You can visit the [Division's website](#). We have a webpage that has flyers and guidebooks for the Your Life, Your Rights program.

Another resource is the [Division newsletter](#). You can sign up for the newsletter online. The newsletter is sent in an email every month.

You can learn from other people by talking to them or going on a podcast, like [Noticeably Invisible](#). One good episode is from April 7th and the title is "Growing from our Past with Matt Pierce." In this episode Matt shares a personal story about a tough situation he had and what he learned from it. This helped him learn more about his right to choose.

You can also visit local agencies and advocacy groups. There are many in Rhode Island that focus on safety. Some examples are:

1. [Day One](#) is an agency that focuses on helping survivors of sexual assault. They help treat, teach, and advocate for safety. They also have a 24/7 hotline you can call for help.
2. [Helpline RI](#) is an agency that offers support to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, hate crimes and more. They have the same 24/7 hotline as Day One.
3. [Blackstone Valley Advocacy Center \(BVAC\)](#) is an agency that works with Day One and Helpline RI to support survivors of violence. They have a different 24/7 hotline number.

Hotlines you can call any time, day or night

BHDDH QA (report)	401-462-2629
Day One & Helpline RI (help)	1-800-494-8100
BVAC (help)	401-723-3057

In emergencies call 911

Title: Hotlines you can call any time, day or night

Talking points: we have 4 numbers to share with you that you can call any time, day or night, if you need help staying safe.

1. [BHDDH QA](#) 401-462-2629. This number is to report abuse.
2. [Day One](#) and [Helpline RI](#) 1-800-494-8100. This number is for help.
3. [Blackstone Valley Advocacy Center \(BVAC\)](#) 401-723-3057. This number is for help.
4. In emergencies call 911.

Let's learn from you



1. What are some ways you protected your safety rights?
2. What would you tell someone else about their safety rights?
3. Who are some people in your life you can go to for help staying safe?
4. Where can you go to learn more?

Title: Let's learn from you

Image: 3 people with different abilities smiling together while on a laptop.

Talking points: To close the day, we want to take a few minutes to learn from you. Here are some questions we want to ask you:

1. What are some ways you protected your safety rights?
2. What would you tell someone else about their safety rights?
3. Who are some people in your life you can go to for help staying safe?
4. Where can you go to learn more?

The End



Title: The end

Image: a person holding a thank you note with flowers on it.

Talking points: thank everyone for joining us today. We are happy to take questions if you have any. If not, you can sign-off. We hope you enjoy the rest of your day.