

# Disability and Abuse Newsfeed

Week of December 28, 2019 to January 3, 2020

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Articles are listed in alphabetical order by state within each category, so you can easily scan through the articles for those within your state or other states in which you have an interest. *International* articles are near the end. The categories are: *Abuse and Neglect, Guardianship, Laws & Legislation, Studies & Statistics, Improved Supports, International, and Miscellaneous.*

Check the categories below for a guide to types of abuse. The categories are indicated by type, and the number of the article.

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Please send comments or questions to: [nora@disability-abuse.com](mailto:nora@disability-abuse.com) or [baladerian@gmail.com](mailto:baladerian@gmail.com)

**DONATIONS:** We welcome (and depend upon) your donations to the Disability and Abuse Project of Spectrum Institute that support this work.

**Type:**

**Abuse and Neglect:**

Sexual Assault: 5, 6, 11, 54

Physical Abuse: 1, 3, 8, 14, 18 (drug facilitated), 26, 28, 48

Financial abuse: 3, 4, 13, 20, 53

Kept enclosed: 3

Murder: 3

Neglected: 7, 10, 16 (16-wandered, found dead) 19 - Abandonment

Related to special education: 1, 17 (failure to protect students from lead-infected water AND handcuffing students

***WINNER of most egregious award:*** 1- OK to hit special education students in AL; 3: long term torture and murder of woman with I/DD;14: Superintendent of care center uses people with I/DD as subjects of human experimentation; 55: A new book by a disabled researcher has detailed the “horrrifying” levels of disability hate crime that take place every day on public transport across the UK. David Wilkin

**WINNER of “good job” award:** 43: ADA practices for individuals with autism employed at conferences.

**WHO DUN IT** (listed by article number):

Family: 16, 19

Neighbor/Friend of Family:11

Caregiver: 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 13, 20, 48, 53

Special education employees: 1, 17

**LOCATION:**

Nursing Home: 2, 7, 26, 48

Public school: 17

Foster care: 18

Day Program: 28

**CATEGORY:**

Hospital Superintendent: 53

Men: 5, 6, 11, 14, 26

Women: 3, 8, 13, 19, 20, 28, 48, 53

Teams: 2, 3

**Good News:** 44: Government promises action to increase mental health programs, decrease stigma for people with mental illness; 59: Employer guide developed to improve working conditions for workers with disabilities.

**Bad News:** 9: GA estimates that approximately half of elders in residential care are vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and death; 12: Adults with developmental disabilities wait 7 or more years for independent living programs; 14: Iowa program superintendent uses patients as human guinea pigs for experimentation; 15: FDA misses its own deadline to ban electric shocking of students with disabilities at Judge Rotenberg Center; 23: significant pay discrepancy found for same services at the same schools between general and special education teachers; 24: abuse by psychiatrists illuminates problem of discovery and consequences of abusing patients; 41: Sexual abuse of air travelers with disabilities is increasing.

## **ABUSE & NEGLECT**

1. “Neighbor States Stop Paddling Disabled Students, Alabama Schools Still Swinging Away” - Paddling in schools is a stalwart tradition in some parts of Alabama along with Arkansas and Mississippi, the three states that hit the most students nationwide. Yet this year, those other two states outlawed corporal punishment for students with disabilities. Meanwhile in Alabama, hitting special needs kids with a board remains a non-issue, according to Rep. Terri Collins, R-Decatur, who chairs the education policy committee in the Alabama House. – AL.COM – December 17, 2019 – (Alabama) - <https://is.gd/6AakYQ>
2. “Phoenix Hacienda HealthCare Victim's Attorney Files Civil Suit Against State, Doctors” - It has been a year since an incapacitated woman at Hacienda HealthCare gave birth to a baby boy. The shocking delivery of her baby stunned the community. A month later, police arrested her alleged rapist, who was also her caregiver. Now, the woman’s attorney has filed a lawsuit against the state and the two doctors who were treating her during that time. The lawsuit was filed on Christmas Eve. The defendants are the state of Arizona, and the two doctors who were treating the young woman leading up to the birth of her baby. Both doctors failed to notice her pregnancy, despite, a hardened mass in her abdomen, weight gain and other

signs; she was instead treated for constipation, according to the notice of claim that was filed by the woman's attorney in May. – KJZZ – January 2, 2020 – (Arizona) - <https://is.gd/jZjKfI>

3. “Seaside Woman Who Imprisoned, Starved and Killed Special Needs Woman Gets Life in Prison” - Courtney Ann Turney, 33, had been starved, beaten and imprisoned nearly a decade in a Seaside apartment when she died, weighing just 54 pounds, in 2017. Her autopsy showed that she had a fractured skull, recent and healed rib fractures, pressure ulcers, as well as bruising and swelling consistent with blunt force trauma, prosecutors said. – The Californian- December 13, 2019 – (California) - <https://is.gd/7k7US0>
  
4. “Riverside Police Investigating Possible Misuse of Disabled Man's Money” - Riverside police have stepped up an investigation into whether someone stole the benefits of a seemingly mentally disabled man now that a detective has won a court battle against the Riverside County Public Guardian for the potential victim's medical records. Riverside Detective Brian Money said he believes someone with access to [30-year-old Jeremy Jennings'](#) medical-benefits debit card is guilty of financial abuse by a caretaker. The card was used at stores such as Walmart and Target at a time when Jennings was either on the streets without any possessions or hospitalized, Money said. The detective estimated the loss at about \$5,000, adding that the items purchased did not directly benefit Jennings as required by law. – The Press Enterprise – December 31, 2019 – (California) - <https://is.gd/qfYBxu>
  
5. “Newark Man Who Raped Disabled Teen Gets 10 Years in Prison” - In June 2018, Britt Bowen, 45, of Newark sexually assaulted the victim while in his care. Bowen was arrested after DNA evidence revealed him to be the father. On August 2019, Bowen pleaded guilty to Rape Second Degree. A Superior Court judge sentenced Bowen to 10 years in prison, including completion of the Transitions sex offender program, followed by 6 months of either home confinement or work release, then 3 years of probation. – First State Update – December 29, 2019 – (Delaware) - <https://is.gd/eb2hoD>

6. “Ormond Beach Man Arrested after Sexually Abusing 16-Year-Old Girl, Deputies Say” - An Ormond Beach man was arrested Wednesday after he sexually abused a 16-year-old girl, the Volusia County Sheriff’s Office said. Deputies said George Rowe, 51, is charged with sexual battery and transmission of material harmful to minors by electronic device. On New Year’s Eve, sheriff’s detectives said the 16-year-old reported Rowe had sexually abused her for the past several months, deputies said. The 16-year-old’s family told deputies she has a learning disability and may not have the same mental state as others her age, deputies said. – WFTV – January 2, 2020 – (Florida) - <https://is.gd/Or3qZF>
  
7. “Allegations of Elder Abuse and Neglect at Care Facility” - CBS46 is helping a woman look into allegations of elder abuse and neglect at a care center. “The treatment he’s receiving is totally inadequate and inappropriate,” said Ashley Jones, the daughter of a Vietnam veteran Lynval Stephenson’s Lynval Stephenson’s. Jones contacted us after visiting the 81-year-old’s skilled nursing home over the holidays. “When I entered into his room I saw that he was literally skin and bones. Literally skin and bones! Also, he had bedsores and skin tears all over his body and the sheets were bloody,” added Jones. “My dad, he’s a veteran and he served in the Vietnam war and so the care that they’re giving it’s even inadequate for an animal.” – CBS 46 – January 2, 2020 – (Georgia) - <https://is.gd/ioyFJa>
  
8. “Caregiver Charged with Abusing Two Vulnerable Adults, Warrants Allege” - According to arrest warrants, Virginia Bell stands charged with abuse of a vulnerable adult and abuse/exploitation of a vulnerable adult. The arrest warrants say Bell in the first incident shoved a man into a shower wall and struck him in the face several times. In the second incident, warrants say, Bell attempted to place a sock and a urine pad in another man's mouth to keep him quiet and struck him several times until he bled from his mouth. – WRDW – December 31, 2019 – (Georgia) - <https://is.gd/MIHxgo>
  
9. “Gaps in Georgia Laws Leave Residents with Dementia Most at Risk” - Estimates are that as many as half of all residents in senior residential care

facilities suffer from cognitive impairment. That makes them particularly vulnerable to exploitation, abuse, injury and death. But gaps in Georgia laws leave those with dementia most at risk. – AJC – December 29, 2019 – (Georgia) - <https://is.gd/JIMuzf>

10. “Boise Police Arrest Caregiver on 2016 Warrant for Suspicion of Abuse of Elderly Woman” - A caregiver who allegedly failed to properly care for an elderly adult is scheduled to appear in court Jan. 8 after Boise police arrested her last week on a warrant more than 3 years old. Kimi Myers, 52, is charged with abuse or neglect of a vulnerable adult. The charge is a felony in Idaho. Police found the victim, who was unable to care for herself, living in a “filthy environment,” Williams wrote in an email to the Idaho Press. Myers had been caring for the woman at the time. – Idaho Press – December 26, 2019 – (Idaho) - <https://is.gd/T8KgHY>

11. “Man a No-Show at his Sentencing in 2nd District Court on Sex Abuse Counts” - A Lewiston man facing a possibility of 25 years in prison and a \$25,000 fine failed to appear before Nez Perce County 2nd District Judge Jay Gaskill to receive his sentence for sexual abuse and exploitation of a vulnerable adult Thursday afternoon. Josiah A. Bauer-Devault was in a “dominant-submissive” relationship with the victim. The victim sustained a traumatic brain injury as a child that resulted in the removal of 25 percent of her brain, court records said. Her mental disability prevents her from protecting herself from exploitation and she “lacks sufficient understanding/capacity” to make decisions about herself, her funds or her property, court records said. The victim initially reported to Lewiston police that John D. Cooksey, 34, of Lewiston, had tied her to a futon frame Feb. 27 and beat and raped her. Cooksey was sentenced to three to 10 years in prison in July for the crime. – The Lewiston Tribune – January 4, 2020 – (Idaho) - <https://is.gd/7lyngL>

12. “Why Adults with Developmental Disabilities are Waiting Seven Years, or Longer, for Programs They Need to Live on Their Own” - Aging out of the state's public special education system, Nick now stays at home, where his

mother worries he is becoming more and more isolated and losing what he has learned. She wants to get him into adult programs funded by the state that would continue his training and maybe even set him up in a group home. Susie Redfern has been waiting for a spot to open for three years. Her son is now 25. "I'm hoping he'll have activities and work every day and get the support he needs to basically have a life that's more than just me and my husband," Redfern said. "Because we're not going to be here forever." – Chicago Tribune – December 3, 2019 – (Illinois) - <https://is.gd/5GWAU>

13. "Woman Charged with Stealing Thousands of Dollars from Elderly Woman" - According to Winnebago County State's Attorney Marilyn Hite Ross, a Grand Jury returned an indictment against Kim Richerson, 52, for Financial Exploitation of an Elderly Person. Officials say Rockford Police responded to a complaint regarding the exploitation on Sept. 20. Officers met with the victim, a 72-year-old woman, who hired Richerson as a caregiver. The woman told police she found out Richerson was cashing her personal checks at a local tavern. – WREX – December 31, 2019 – (Illinois) - <https://is.gd/vGCd5z>

14. "Superintendent at Iowa Care Center Fired Amid Allegations of Human Experiments at Facility" - The top official at a state-run institution that [provides care to people with severe intellectual disabilities](#) has been fired amid allegations of uncontrolled [human subject experimentation at the facility](#). Jerry Rea, the superintendent of the Glenwood Resource Center, was notified in [a letter](#) Monday that he was being "discharged from employment" at the Iowa Department of Human Services. "This action is being taken as a result of a mounting list of disregards for policies and procedures," according to the letter, which was signed by Rick Shults, who oversees the agency's mental health and disability services division. – USA Today – December 31, 2019 – (Iowa) - <https://is.gd/JGu1uG>

15. "FDA Misses Its Deadline to Ban Shocks at Canton School for Students with Disabilities" - Federal regulatory officials missed a self-imposed deadline to ban a controversial device — only used in Massachusetts — that

administers shocks to students with disabilities to control their behavior. Jim McKinney, a spokesman for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, said this week that he could not provide an updated timeline for agency action to ban the controversial apparatus it hoped to prohibit by the end of 2019. “We estimate the best we can” when setting deadlines, he said, explaining the missed mark. The Judge Rotenberg Educational Center in Canton, a privately operated, taxpayer-funded school that serves children and adults, is the only school in the country using an electric shock system to control students’ behaviors. Many of the students struggle with profound disorders that can cause severe aggressive and self-injurious behavior, like head-banging and biting. – WGBH 89.7 – January 3, 2020 – (Massachusetts) - <https://is.gd/vJrpct>

16. “Missing 5-Year-Old Autistic Boy Found Dead in Pond by His Grandmother's House” - The body of a 5-year-old autistic boy who went missing on Christmas Day was found in a pond near where he was last seen, [Michigan State Police said](#) Thursday. Beau Belson was reported missing from his grandmother's home, where he was playing in the yard with family, in Six Lakes, Michigan, at about 2:30 p.m. Wednesday, Michigan State Police Lt. David Cope said. He was found in a pond under the ice about 50 feet away from the home shortly after noon on Thursday, Cope said. Police are not sure whether he fell in the pond or went in there on his own, Cope said. His death is under investigation but as of now there is no foul play suspected, he said. – CNN – December 26, 2019 – (Michigan) - <https://is.gd/Kw9kbL>

17. “After 3 Years, Lawsuit Over Flint Schools’ Special Needs Crisis Moving to Trial” - Fifteen families of special needs students in Flint may finally get the chance to plead their case against the school system in trial this spring. It’s been more than three years since they sued the city’s schools, the intermediate school district, and the state of Michigan. They’re arguing that their children were exposed to brain-damaging lead during the water crisis, and that may have caused or exacerbated the children's special needs. Yet they say the public schools have systematically failed to provide the special education services they need, while disproportionately suspending,

expelling, and in one case, handcuffing their children for disability-related behaviors. – Michigan Radio – NPR – December 26, 2019 – (Michigan) - <https://is.gd/BvUK6f>

18. “Riverside Montage Homes Worker Cited for Giving Money for Drugs to a Vulnerable Adult” -An investigation by the Minnesota Department of Health has found that an employee at an adult foster care facility in St. Cloud gave money to and used drugs with a vulnerable adult. The employee was also in a relationship with a family member of the resident and the two snorted meth at that person's house. The resident had a history of drug abuse, of which the employee was aware. The employee was cited for maltreatment and no longer works at Montage Homes. They have also been disqualified by the state from working with vulnerable adults. Montage Homes was not cited. – KNSI 99.3 Radio – January 2, 2020 – (Minnesota) - <https://is.gd/8UKb01>
  
19. “Woman Accused of Leaving Autistic Grandson at Kansas Rest Stop Faces Charges in Missouri” - [KVOE](https://www.kvoe.com) reports Janie Gill has been in the Phelps County Jail in Rolla since last month. She faces forgery and disturbing the peace charges. She's charged in Kansas with child endangerment and interference with law enforcement and with child neglect in Rogers County, Oklahoma. A custodian found Gill's then-17-year-old grandson last November at the Highway 400 rest stop near Beaumont in Greenwood County, Kansas. He had no identification and couldn't speak. Gill's next court appearance in Phelps County will be on January 24. Once proceedings have concluded there, cases will continue in Kansas and Oklahoma. – KAKE – December 26, 2019 – (Missouri) - <https://is.gd/8FiUBz>
  
20. “Miles City Woman Sentenced in Elderly Exploitation Case” - Del Linda Frost of Miles City, who recently pleaded guilty to exploitation of an older person, received a suspended sentence and was ordered to pay more than \$94,000 in restitution to her victim's estate. Frost, 60 years old, was charged with theft of property by embezzlement and the exploitation of an older person, both felonies, on January 3, 2019. According to a news release from the Montana Department of Justice, at a change of plea hearing on October

28, Frost pleaded guilty to the exploitation charge involving the now-deceased victim, Arthur Yamada, in Custer County between March 10, 2014 and March 14, 2018. At a sentencing hearing on December 16, Judge Michael Hayworth ordered Frost to pay \$94,075 in restitution and sentenced her to 10 years in prison, with all time suspended. – KRTV – December 27, 2019 – (Montana) - <https://is.gd/RHnWfC>

21. “There is Nothing Loving About Killing Disabled People” - The underlying assumption is that disabled people are obviously better off dead. All too frequently, when a partner kills his disabled loved one, we see it as an act of kindness or mercy. It is a fundamentally paternalistic proposition to suggest that victims do not get a say in whether they live. Calling their deaths an act of love says their own desires are not valid and they cannot have a say about their own lives. Alzheimer’s may be an extreme case that robs its victims of their capacity to express their wills, but that doesn’t mean they forfeit their agency. It certainly does not give someone else the right to determine whether they should forfeit their lives. – The Washington Post – January 1, 2020 – (National) - <https://is.gd/3lbUJc>

22. “Putnam County Family Prepares to Lay to Rest 10-Year-Old after Suicide”- A Putnam County family will lay to rest a 10-year-old boy that apparently took his own life this past Saturday. Ian Austin died from an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound. Austin was a fourth grader at Cane Creek Elementary School in Cookeville. Family members say Austin had been bullied in school and had ADHD, but they never suspected he had thoughts of harming himself. – 1057 News – December 12, 2019 – (New York) - <https://is.gd/i2tPUI>

23. “Special Ed Pre-K Teachers Earn Much Less Than Their General Education Co-Teachers” - Inside classroom No. 12 at Brooklyn’s HeartShare Taranto preschool, children play side-by-side with blocks, puzzles, or at a pretend kitchen each day. Roughly half are students with disabilities, including physical impairments, autism, and speech delays. The others are typically developing children. In a quirk of the system, general education teachers at

privately-run preschools like Taranto are paid through [city-funded contracts](#), while the special education preschool teachers they work alongside are paid mostly by the state. The general education teachers recently [won massive raises](#) to close the pay gap between privately-run preschools and their public school counterparts. But no such raise was given to special education pre-K teachers. – Brooklyn Eagle – January 3, 2020 – (New York) - <https://is.gd/fkJSew>

24. “What it Took for a Fox News Psychiatrist to Finally Lose His License” - Keith Ablow was a popular fixture on the cable channel until 2017, and a high-profile therapist. He left a trail of vulnerable female patients who claim he abused them. At a cultural moment in which all kinds of relationships are policed for abuses of power imbalance, psychotherapy takes place in seclusion: two people, alone in a room, with one holding extraordinary influence over the other, just as it has been since Freud. It remains a world with murky oversight, and if you are harmed, it is not obvious what can be done. – The New York Times – December 20, 2019 – (New York) - <https://is.gd/xwaz26>

25. “Reform Disability Rights Ohio After Its Failure to Protect the State’s Most Severely Disabled” - Families of individuals with severe disabilities [objected last month](#) to a class action settlement that was being considered in federal court in Columbus. Families were concerned that the settlement directed \$100 million away from the Medicaid program they rely upon for health care and residential services for their severely disabled loved ones. Cleveland.com – January 2, 2020 – (Ohio) - <https://is.gd/wsxCOM>

26. Andrea Leech said her dad has been at the Riverside Nursing Home in McKeesport for about three years. She claims he was assaulted over an incident that involved him using the bathroom. Leech said her father has bruises by his right eye and marks on his left arm and right leg. “He literally uttered the words to me that a young guy beat him up,” said Leech. “The marks on his upper left arm are more than a grab. There’s scratch marks and nail marks.” The aid involved is a newer employee at the facility and has

been suspended without pay, pending an investigation. – KDKA 2 – January 3, 2020 – (Pennsylvania) - <https://is.gd/JXIOqR>

27. “Robbed of His American Dream, a Former U.S. Army Translator is Now a Desperate Dallas Shooting Victim” - Mahir Amiri is here, trapped in an electric wheelchair parked in a small, dingy nursing home room, but he is not. The 33-year-old spent eight years in his native Afghanistan working as a translator for the U.S. Army’s Criminal Investigation Command. Considered a traitor by the Taliban, his life in danger for a few hundred dollars in salary each week, he and his family were given Special Immigrant Visas three years ago so they could come to the U.S. When Mahir arrived in Texas, he believed a better life awaited him and his wife and their children. Now he barely has one at all. – The Dallas Morning News – January 2, 2020 – (Texas) - <https://is.gd/8vDXRD>

28. “Woman Indicted on Charge of Injuring Disabled Male” - A Brownwood woman who is on probation for the theft of 10 school laptop computers was arrested Thursday on an indictment for injury to a disabled person, authorities said. The December session of the Brown County Grand Jury returned the indictment against Gladys Bryant, 57, court documents state. Early police arrested Bryant, who is free on \$10,000 bond, Brown County Jail records state. Information was corroborated indicating an employee did use physical force on multiple occasions as a way to discipline or punish the residents, police said. The force used and manner in which it was done was not consistent with discipline and not condoned by Daybreak management. Bryant is accused by indictment of injuring a disabled male by “striking him with a spoon, putting hot sauce on his hands, hitting him in the hit or hitting him with a belt or a shoe,” court documents state. – Brownwood Bulletin – January 3, 2020 – (Texas) - <https://is.gd/aoJWgt>

## **GUARDIANSHIP**

29. “Watchdog: New Florida Legislation Aims to Toughen Guardianship Laws” - After months of promising change to the state's troubled guardianship program, Florida's lawmakers appear to be taking action. A new bill that

would create stricter laws is making its way through House and Senate committees. The seven-page companion bills ([HB 709](#) and [SB 994](#)) drafted by state lawmakers aim to increase protections for seniors under guardianship. That bill unanimously passed in a House subcommittee early this month. – Bay News 9- December 31, 2019 – (Florida) - <https://is.gd/OtyXsp>

30. “Guardianship and Conservatorship Laws Help Families Care for Loved Ones” -What family members may not know is that the Minnesota law provides quick and often effective mechanisms to protect a loved one before harm has been done. By statute, one can petition the court to appoint a guardian to make personal decisions for a loved one, including decisions regarding living arrangements and medical care. A petitioner can also ask a court for the appointment of a conservator to manage a loved one’s finances, make financial decisions and even undo some financial decisions impacted by the impairment. Through the petition, a petitioner can self-nominate or can nominate a friend, family member, advisor or professional fiduciary. If appointed, the guardian and/or conservator will work with the family to determine the care and financial measures that best serve the loved one’s interests. – Lexology – January 1, 2020 – (Minnesota) - <https://is.gd/fC27XF>
  
31. “Nevada Guardianship Office Protects Seniors from Fraud, Abuse” - “1-833-421-7711, that’s the number to call regarding any matter dealing with abuse or fraud involving a guardian,” urged Kate McCloskey, manager of Nevada’s Guardianship Compliance Office. The office, under the jurisdiction of the Nevada Supreme Court, was created more than two years ago after some of the most contemptible episodes of elderly abuse had surfaced in the state, resulting in national headlines. They involved individuals, known as guardians, who gained access to the care of elderly people in need of assistance and monopolized their assets and income by circumventing a weak guardianship law that existed at the time. – Las Vegas Review Journal – December 4, 2019 – (Nevada) - <https://is.gd/xxFaiO>

## **LAWS & LEGISLATION**

32. “New Laws Add Stiffer Penalties to Those Charged with Elderly Abuse” - Tennessee is cracking down on people who abuse some of our state's most vulnerable: the elderly. A new law will strengthen the penalties for those charged with elder abuse. Lawmakers passed the Elderly and Vulnerable Adult Protection Act of 2019 last year, which went into effect on January 1st. This law increases penalties for the most dangerous crimes involving elder abuse as well as expands the availability of orders of protection for elderly and vulnerable adults. – News Channel 5 – January 3, 2020 – (Tennessee) - <https://is.gd/pjGxKh>

## **STUDIES & STATISTICS**

33. “Guest Column: Elder Abuse on the Rise: Learn How To Fight Back” - A U.S. Administration on Aging study estimates that up to 1 million elderly are physically abused, neglected or financially exploited each year. Officials acknowledge that it is under reported, unrecognized and difficult to gauge the scope of its prevalence. National studies show that for every one case of abuse reported, another four or more go unreported Many factors affect reporting such as the victims fear of retaliation, apprehension to prosecute family members, or lack of capacity to describe the crime or perpetrator. – The Chronicle – January 1, 2020 – (Massachusetts) - <https://is.gd/vMJz7u>
34. “People are not often homeless by choice” - You reported recently that there were approximately 700 people in Jackson County who are currently homeless. What percentage of that population are homeless due to mental illness, alcohol/drug addiction, unfortunate circumstances or by choice? Staff asked unsheltered people to report the underlying issues that led to their lack of shelter. Of those, 62% reported one or more disabling conditions. Among the 202 people who reported at least one disability, 358 disabilities were reported. Mental disabilities showed up with greatest frequency in those reports, with physical disability a close second. Only 70 people identified chronic drug abuse as a disabling condition. – Mail Tribune – December 28, 2019 – (Oregon) - <https://is.gd/Df9y0D>

35. Adolescent anxiety predicts later psychiatric diagnoses in autistic people - Anxiety in adolescents with autism is a strong predictor of suicidal ideation, bipolar disorder, depression and other psychiatric conditions in early adulthood, according to a large new study in Sweden. People with autism are known to be at increased odds of having other psychiatric conditions, such as anxiety and depression. And a second new study confirmed this trend in a group of autistic people in Minnesota. – Spectrum News – January 2, 2020 – (Sweden) - <https://is.gd/yK97rP>

## **IMPROVED SUPPORTS**

36. “Elmhurst Public Library Adds Social Services for Community Members” - The Elmhurst Public Library has begun offering social services to community members by employing a professional social worker, officials said. The full-time library employee spends about 14 hours a week helping community members with needs outside the normal scope of library services. Social services specialist Tracey Orick splits her time between regular library reference work and helping community members with challenges they are facing, including food insecurity, substance abuse, housing needs, and assistance for seniors looking for work. Library Director Mary Beth Harper said services are generally referrals to outside agencies, but Orick also offers some direct assistance. – Chicago Tribune – December 30, 2019 – (Illinois) - <https://is.gd/9R4MkT>
37. “Mom Opens Special Kneads Bakery to Employ Her Son with Cerebral Palsy” - When Margaret Cortes opened the Special Kneads Bakery, it was a means to an end. She wanted to make sure her son Frankie has a job when he graduates from high school. He has cerebral palsy. “He’s got a lot of diagnosis against him,” Cortes said. “It was important for me that he didn’t end up just working in a factory or working where he wasn’t getting that exposure to other people.” – WVLT – December 24, 2019 – (Illinois) - <https://is.gd/xE5WPM>

38. “Helping Autistic Youth Move into Adulthood” - The transition from adolescence to adulthood is never easy, and for young adults with [autism](#) spectrum disorder and their caregivers, it can seem especially daunting. Tasks such as opening a bank account, purchasing a car, and managing health insurance can be especially challenging for individuals with developmental disabilities. – Psych Central – December 29, 2019 – (Missouri) - <https://is.gd/Q6qH1A>
39. “Schools Turn Far Too Quickly to 'Restraint and Seclusion' of Children” - In her article, Hardiman asked why such seemingly antiquated procedures are being used in the first place. Use of restraint and seclusion embodies larger systemic issues in public schools, including the sheer number of students with social, emotional, and behavioral challenges and the ways in which educators are often being trained to handle our most complex, difficult, and vulnerable children. Training on the use of restraint and seclusion is standard for many classroom teachers, especially those working with children with social, emotional, and behavioral challenges. For a long time, training in such procedures was also the norm in inpatient psychiatry units, residential facilities, and prisons, until many such treatment facilities made a concerted and successful effort to reduce their use. – Washington Examiner – January 3, 2019 – (National) - <https://is.gd/QOb5oj>
40. “Labor Dept says IEP Meetings Qualify for Family and Medical Leave” - IEP meetings, or Individualized Education Plan meetings, are normally held once a year to determine the course of special education services a student will receive through the school system. Those services often include therapy prescribed by a doctor like speech, occupational or physical therapy. Since family doctor visits fall under FMLA, it’s logical that IEP meetings should as well. But employers [haven’t always interpreted the law that way](#). – Parents- Together – December 19, 2019 – (National) - <https://is.gd/325WiP>
41. “How a Disabled Traveler Can Prevent a Sexual Assault on a Plane” - Flight attendants call it “#MeToo in the Air,” the incidents of sexual assault and harassment that occur at 30,000 feet. Law enforcement calls it a growing

problem, as increasing numbers of passengers come forward to report these crimes. As a person with a disability, I worry about how I would defend and protect myself. I consider my reality: I use a wheelchair for mobility, so once seated on the plane, I can't easily maneuver out of harm's way. Such crimes are trending, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which has jurisdiction over in-flight crimes. In 2017, the FBI opened 63 investigations involving sexual assaults on aircraft; that increased to 84 in 2018. For the 2019 year ending Sept. 30, that number jumped to 119. – Los Angeles Times – December 30, 2019 – (California) - <https://is.gd/BZbsS5>

42. “ASD Nest Program Builds SEL for Autistic Students, Peers” - The [ASD Nest Program](#) in New York City places students with autism spectrum disorders in classrooms alongside "neurotypical" students while under the guidance of specially trained teachers, [The Atlantic](#) reports. Stephen Shore, a special education professor at Adelphi University who has autism, told the publication the program is effective because it focuses on the students' strengths and not their weaknesses. – Education Dive – January 3, 2020 – (New York) - <https://is.gd/Ze0sLf>
43. “4 Autism-Friendly Event Strategies that will Benefit Everyone at your Next Conference” - Since my diagnosis with Adult Autism Spectrum Disorder four and half years ago, I've developed strategies for coping with situations where crowds, noises, and last-minute changes are unavoidable. At the same time, I've become more open about discussing my status as an autistic person, which has led me to feel more comfortable asking for accommodations that will ease the impact of these conditions. This openness has inspired conversations with event-goers who share that they too would benefit from these accommodations, and many of them are people who are not on the Autism Spectrum or differently-abled in any way. – Technical.ly – January 2, 2020 – (Pennsylvania) - <https://is.gd/cxTNR0>
44. “Governor Wolf Promises Action on Mental Health, but Doesn't Say How it will be Funded” - The governor's office says the plan is "aimed at expanding resources" as well as fighting stigma, but said it's too early to talk

funding or structure. Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf says his administration will work to improve mental health care in the commonwealth and remove the stigma experienced by many people struggling with mental illness. Wolf said the “all-agency effort,” called “Reach Out PA: Your Mental Health Matters,” is patterned after his administration’s fight to prevent opioid addiction and help people recover. – January 2, 2020 – (Pennsylvania) - <https://is.gd/8oR0nI>

45. “New Grant to Help Those with Disabilities Gain Employment” - Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) is continuing to improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities through a new grant award. Tennessee is one of 13 Capacity Building States identified for Visionary Opportunities to Increase Competitive Employment (VOICE) program through U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy. The grant represents technical assistance, which will flow to community behavioral health providers who use the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment model to connect people with severe mental illness to competitive integrated – Overton County News – December 31, 2019 – (Tennessee) - <https://is.gd/SwUKeE>

46. “Texas Mom Introduces App for Autism Help” - The app will feature visual supports from picture schedules and a 360-degree location view she said, to other tools like reminders, games and even rewards. But before it can become official and go out, she’s looking for support from others to prove this is something the special needs community needs. “Just to show that this is something important and that way whenever I am done with this face, I can go to my investors and say look this is what is needed,” she said. Because families like theirs are just trying to create their new normal. – WAVY 10 – December 30, 2019 – (Texas) - <https://is.gd/I4CZKA>

47. “In Wisconsin People with Disabilities can Direct their own Medical Funding – They Live Fuller Lives” - Then, in the fall of 2010, a social worker told Sabby-Lemke of a new state program that could change

everything. It was called IRIS and it was designed to give people like Dustin power over their lives. For the first time, the family would control their own medical budget. Equipment and services that once seemed unattainable — such as a wheelchair-accessible bathroom and a working van — suddenly were within reach. – Star Tribune – December 29, 2019 – (Wisconsin) - <https://is.gd/7iRDtB>

## **INTERNATIONAL**

48. “Nursing Home Worker is Accused of Tying a Resident to a Chair at a Sydney Aged Care Centre” - An aged care worker has been stood down after allegedly tying a 73-year-old woman to a chair at a Sydney nursing home. The resident told police a plastic bag was allegedly used to tie her leg to a chair when she was being showered. – Infosurhoy – December 28, 2019 – (Australia) - <https://is.gd/raOgVw>
  
49. “UAE Launches New Policy to Protect Disabled from Abuse” - The UAE Cabinet approved a new policy to protect those with disabilities from abuse. The initiative is intended to empower people of determination by giving them a platform to report cases of ill-treatment. With inclusion at its heart, the policy will enable them to “participate effectively within a safe community environment” that guarantees their “right to a dignified life”, state news agency Wam reported. – The National – January 1, 2020 – (Dubai) - <https://is.gd/uXLZPw>
  
50. “Nursing Home Under Criminal Investigation Put in Special Measures” - The home provides care for up to 40 residents – though there were 27 at the time of inspection – including older people, people living with dementia and those receiving end-of-life care. Alison Murray, the CQC’s head of adult social care inspection in London said: “The standard of care at Garside House Nursing Home is very poor and there have been allegations of abuse that the police are investigating. – Nursing Times – January 2, 2020 – (England) - <https://is.gd/jucTu8>

51. “Need Separate Data on Violence Against Women with Disabilities” - In Newz Hook’s final guest column for 2019, disability rights activist Shampa Sengupta makes a powerful case for maintaining separate national data on sexual violence against disabled women. Shampa is the founder of the advocacy group Sruti Disability Rights Centre and is the Joint Secretary of National Platform for Rights of the Disabled. -Newz Hook – December 2019 – (India) - <https://is.gd/rjGmbZ>
52. “Social Justice Ministry Initiated Legislation on Transgenders, Measures for Disabled in 2019” - According to official sources, besides continuing the ongoing schemes for the disabled welfare during 2019, the department of empowerment of persons with disabilities also worked on accessible India campaign in rail, air and road sectors (for easy accessibility for disabled) and in information and communication technology (websites and TV viewing). The department also took note of the increasing disability burden of psycho-social, intellectual and learning disabilities. "The department will set up early intervention centers in all its national institutes and composite regional centers to reduce the disability burden," a source said. – Outlook India – December 28, 2019 – (India) - <https://is.gd/JeITpR>
53. “Caregiver Accused of Stealing Over \$170,000 from Holocaust Survivor” - A 47-year-old woman from Ashkelon was indicted Sunday in the Beersheba Magistrate's Court for allegedly stealing 600,000 shekels (over \$170,000) from an elderly [Holocaust survivor](#). According to the indictment, Anat Dayan was employed as a caregiver for an 83-year-old resident of the city who had lost his sight. She is suspected of making personal purchases using the man's [credit card](#), which he gave her to do his grocery shopping. – Israel Hayom – December 29, 2019 – (Israel) - <https://is.gd/rvxadI>
54. “Groping and Street Harassment are an Ongoing Concern for Disabled Women” - Amy explains that people are either aggressive or sexually abusive to her about twice a month while she navigates the streets of London. ‘They rely on the fact that I can't get away easily, that I won't be believed because I can't identify them,’ she says, adding that the police have

been ‘rubbish’ - ‘I have been told that I am confused, that it's just homeless people.’ Amy’s experiences of non-consensual touching have left her feeling ‘so anxious’, she’s now taking medication. She has also had to modify her behaviour while out and about in London. ‘I have to be a shark, always moving,’ she adds. ‘The moment I stop, people descend on me.’ – Grazia Daily – January 2, 2020 – (United Kingdom) - <https://is.gd/SdXlmh>

55. “Book Exposes ‘Horrible’ Levels of Abuse Faced by Disabled People on Public Transport” - A new book by a disabled researcher has detailed the “horrible” levels of disability hate crime that take place every day on public transport across the UK. David Wilkin says the results of his research are “sometimes startling and almost always distressing” and illustrate the “ongoing hostility faced by disabled people using public transport in the UK”. He concludes that abuse and humiliation are “everyday occurrences” and range from “name-calling to psychological and physical violence, serious assault and serious sexual assault”. In his book\*, [Disability Hate Crime: Experiences of Everyday Hostility on Public Transport](#), Wilkin writes about how, as an autistic child, he avoided school for almost five years because of the bullying and hostility he faced in getting there via public transport and at school. – Disability News Service – January 2, 2020 – (United Kingdom) - <https://is.gd/X6zaVh>

56. “Disabled Man Left Scared to Leave His Home after Hate Crime Abuse at the Bridges in Sunderland” - A disabled man says he was abused and threatened after he accidentally bumped into another shopper while at The Bridges Shopping Centre on Boxing Day. I’m scared to leave the house and go out by myself in case I bump into him again.” Shaken by the event, Kenneth was taken to a secure room by a member of staff who works for the Shopping Centre and the police were called. – Sunderland Echo – January 2, 2020 – (United Kingdom) - <https://is.gd/227wmz>

57. “Surge in Families Seeking Help for Children with Special Needs, Figures Show” - The number of families seeking help for children with [special needs](#) from their [local councils](#) has surged by 11 per cent in the past year,

figures show, as cuts to early-help services and reduced funding for schools cause a growing number of parents to feel this is their only option. Data obtained by PA through freedom of information requests to England's councils shows that initial requests for a child to be assessed for an education, health and care plan (EHCP) – which identify a child's needs and set out the level of support they should receive – increased from 53,307 to 58,950 between the 2017-18 and 2018-19 academic years. – Independent – December 28, 2019 – (United Kingdom) - <https://is.gd/jI3YFD>

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

58. “Autistic Alex Grievous Publishes Autism Book” - Grievous is autistic. But cleverly he found a way to communicate with his fellow classmates. He wrote a children's book titled, “Ausomely Aaron.” His mother Chioko Grievous said the book is “loosely based” on Alex's life. “Ausomely Aaron” is colorfully illustrated by Alex Grievous' uncle, Dylan Grievous. “The book is about Aaron, a boy with autism spectrum disorder who knows that he is different from other kids but those same differences are what makes Aaron unique,” Chioko Grievous said. “Through Aaron's daily activities, he realizes that his differences are his super powers.” – Sacramento Observer – December 27, 2019 - (California) - <https://is.gd/rrplgX>
59. “Employer Guide to Workers with Disabilities” - Diego Demaya spends most of his day answering questions about the federal Americans with Disabilities Act from the other side of a toll-free information and technical assistance telephone line. Many of his calls are from employers hoping to learn more about how to comply with the law during the hiring process. As a nonpracticing attorney, Demaya serves as the Southwest ADA Center's human resources adviser, specializing in labor, education and health care issues for a five-state region that includes New Mexico. “The world is ripe with inappropriate inquiries,” and especially in employment, Demaya said in a recent webinar on the disability law. – Santa Fe New Mexican – December 28, 2019 – (New Mexico) - <https://is.gd/ILcyu8>

60. “People Should Kill You, if it Becomes Too Much” - This weekend, the New York Times ran a [long piece](#) about a 79-year-old man named Richard Shaver who murdered his 80-year-old wife, Alma, who suffered from Alzheimer’s disease, and then killed himself. In a storytelling decision that has infuriated disability-rights activists, the piece was written not as a violent-crime story, but as a poignant romance. As the story’s writer, Corina Knoll, tweeted: “A man shot his wife with Alzheimer’s, then killed himself. I wanted to understand their story. Turns out, it was one of love.” – The Cut – December 31, 2019 – (New York) - <https://is.gd/VY9dAJ>

61. “Autism Diagnosis: 'I Want 40 Years of My Life Back'” - For most of his life, Barney Angliss struggled to fit in. At the age of 49, he finally had a diagnosis that helped him understand why. As a child, he remembers his family not allowing him to go to a new school. "They thought I would be bullied to death". Although he was good with words he had few friends and - by his own admission - he lacked empathy and social skills. Finally, prompted by his wife, Barney saw a clinical psychologist - and was diagnosed with Asperger's. He says suddenly his lack of social skills, his bluntness and constant search for order made sense. "It explains all of my failures." - BBC News – December 30, 2019 – (United Kingdom) - <https://www.bbc.com/news/health-50380411>