

# Disability and Abuse Newsfeed

Week of August 18 to August 24, 2018

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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*, *Laws & Legislation*, *Studies & Statistics*, *Improved Supports*, *International*, and sometimes *Miscellaneous*.

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

## Types of Abuse and Neglect:

Sexual Assault: 3, 15, 18, 39, 42

Physical Abuse: 1, 6, 9, 11, 13, 16, 47

Emotional abuse: 9

Human trafficking: 8 (sex work)

Neglect: 12

Murder: 7, 10, 17, 35, 41 Death: 4

Restraint: 14

Related to special education: 31, 32

**WINNER of most egregious award:** 5: Group home endangers residents;  
8: mother sells her daughter for sex to be able to buy cocaine.

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

Family: 7

Parents:

School: 1, 9

Carer: 3, 6, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

Co-Students: 9

(Note: not all articles identify gender of perpetrators.)

Men: 3, 6, 7, 9, 15, 16, 18, 47

Women: 8, 10, 11, 12, 13

**Good News:** 26: Improvement in access to dental care addressed; 29: sensory bags provided by non-profit; 51: teen finds voice through art.

**Bad News:** 2: Disney failed to provide promised accommodations to visitors with autism; 45: Airline passenger with ASD removed from flight and family; 52: No ADA access to polling places used as excuse to close them all in rural counties.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Visit our website at [www.disabilityandabuse.org](http://www.disabilityandabuse.org) While on the homepage, we invite you to “like” us at the bottom of the page, making it easier to keep up with our activities! Prior weekly newsfeeds are archived at: <http://disabilityandabuse.org/newsfeed/contents.htm>

**ABUSE & NEGLECT**

1. Long Beach district asks state to act on special education teacher accused of abusing students - The school board wants to fire Lisa Weitzman, who has been on paid suspension since late 2014. In a letter, members express frustration with the long disposition process. – Newsday – August 17, 2018 – (California) - <https://is.gd/i4EfcM>

2. Autistic visitors can proceed with lawsuits against Disney - Visitors with severe autism can move ahead with their lawsuits claiming Disney's U.S. parks didn't do enough to accommodate their need for scheduled routines and no waits on its rides, according to a federal appeals court. – Charlotte Observer – August 20, 2018 – (Florida)
  
3. Former Nursing Home Worker Austin Cook Accused of Sexually Assaulting Patient - According to a probable cause affidavit, Cook has been accused of inappropriate sexual contact with a 68-year-old man who has Alzheimer's Disease and advanced dementia. Another staff member at Columbia Healthcare told police that on July 11, she walked into a semi-private room where the victim was staying and witnessed Cook kneeling over the victim with his pants pulled down and the patient's finger in Cook's genital area. – The Legal Herald – (No date Listed for Article) – (Indiana) - <https://is.gd/e037LW>
  
4. Human remains found at the creek that was the center of the search for teenager Jake Wilson, investigators say - The four-month search for Jake Wilson included hundreds of tips from across the country. But recreational kayakers' discovery of human remains occurred in an area of Jake's hometown authorities said they had searched more than a dozen times. – Des Moines Register – August 16, 2018 – (Iowa) - <https://is.gd/cwcWbN> (No abuse identified but foul play not ruled out)
  
5. Group home license suspended after drug dealing charges - The State of Michigan has suspended the license of a Holly group home after a sheriff's

raid found cocaine, marijuana and weapons inside. – Detroit Free Press- August 20, 2018 – (Michigan) - <https://is.gd/155c3h>

6. Former adult foster home employee sentenced for assault - Connor Michael Shea, 27, pleaded guilty July 3 to the assault. Shea was initially charged with third-degree assault after his Feb. 27 arrest, but an amended criminal complaint charging him with two counts of fourth-degree assault of a vulnerable adult was filed in July. – Bemidji Pioneer – August 20, 2018 – (Minnesota) - <https://is.gd/FmlwIS>
  
7. Columbus man gets life in prison for role in handicapped cousin's murder - On July 11, 2011, Derrick and three others robbed his cousin Eddie Bankhead’s Columbus home. One of the men shot and killed Eddie, who was handicapped and wheelchair-bound. The three men who were with Derrick are currently in jail awaiting trial. – WLBT 3 – August 24, 2018 – (Mississippi) - <https://is.gd/81anx7>
  
8. Columbia mom charged with sex trafficking disabled daughter - After receiving the tip, authorities went to the hotel to investigate. A witness told them of an incident where two men offered Collins cocaine to have sex with the victim. The witness said she asked the victim about the men, and the victim described the sexual activity taking place and referred to them as “just the bad men.” – Columbian Daily Tribune – August 22, 2018 – (Missouri) - <https://is.gd/n5UPeT>
  
9. Autistic student suspended for standing up to bullies, \$5M suit claims - An autistic Staten Island student got suspended for three days and was forced to miss the formal for his eighth-grade graduation — all because he

defended himself against bullies, his family says in a new lawsuit. – New York Post – August 17, 2018 – (New York) - <https://is.gd/QKHYke>

10. Family of Webster group home victim pleads for change - A former group home worker pleaded guilty Friday morning to her part in the death of Heather Roselli. Roselli died at a Webster group home last year on Father's Day. – WHEC 10 – August 24, 2018 – (New York) - <https://is.gd/JTypDk>

11. Raleigh man seen in viral police video facing multiple assault charges - The family of a Raleigh man subdued by police in a video that's now gone viral held a news conference on Sunday evening, saying they do not understand why they have not been able to see 44-year-old Frederick Hall. – WRAL – August 19, 2018 – (North Carolina) - <https://is.gd/JsamT7>

12. Cumberland County group home owner accused of defrauding residents - The Cumberland County Sheriff's Office has arrested a group home owner on suspicion of fraud. - Marquita Simpson claimed to operate some sort of transitional housing for elderly, mentally disabled and the homeless, but authorities said whatever it is, it's suspicious. – 11 ABC News – August 21, 2018 – (North Carolina) - <https://is.gd/d4ZIXQ>

13. King woman facing charges for allegedly assaulting handicapped people - Officials say Thelma Boyles, 71, of King, worked for Behavioral Service of Mount Airy to provide care for mentally handicapped people. Boyles was arrested August 13 in her home after assaulting a woman, according to a release from police, additional charges for assault were filed Thursday for incidents from September 2017. – WXII NBC 12 – August 24, 2018 – (North Carolina) - <https://is.gd/qYuOOx>

14. Legal advocates file lawsuit against Buckeye Ranch residential treatment center - "In the case of Buckeye Ranch, we had video evidence of abuse of the children in their care, which required additional investigation," Michael Kirkman, executive director of Disability Rights, said in a news release. "We call on the court to uphold our access authority so we can investigate and hold accountable those who would abuse some of Ohio's most vulnerable residents." – The Columbus Dispatch – August 17, 2018 - (Ohio)  
<https://is.gd/u5Wz8k>

15. Curwensville man accused of inappropriately touching patients at nursing home - A Curwensville man has been charged for inappropriately touching several patients at a nursing home facility in Clearfield County. Thomas Patrick, 68, of Curwensville, has been charged in connection with seven counts of indecent assault without consent. – WJAC- August 18, 2018 – (Pennsylvania) - <https://is.gd/JOfIFR>

16. Man Choked Vulnerable Adult at Columbia Care Facility, Agents Say - Columbia man charged with abuse of vulnerable adult according to the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division. – WLTX 19- August 20, 2018 – (South Carolina) - <https://is.gd/LybTjT>

17. Woman crossing street in wheelchair killed in Lake Highlands hit-and-run, Dallas police say - A woman using a motorized wheelchair to cross an intersection in Lake Highlands was killed in a hit-and-run Saturday night, Dallas police say. – Dallas News- August 19, 2018 – (Texas) - <https://is.gd/jHiwYC>

18. Man pleads guilty to raping disabled Central Texas girl - Sentencing is set for Oct. 16 for Ora Franklin Johnson, 36, of Temple, who pleaded guilty Wednesday to aggravated sexual assault of a disabled person in connection with the rape of a mentally-challenged teenage girl who was assaulted repeatedly over an 18-month period, according to an arrest warrant affidavit. – KWTX- August 23, 2018 – (Texas) – <https://is.gd/XV0urK>

19. Rights group, state reach settlement in competency lawsuit - The state of Washington has agreed to a plan to resolve a lawsuit filed on behalf of mentally ill people who've been warehoused in jails for weeks or months while awaiting competency services. – The Columbian – August 17, 2018- (Washington) - <https://is.gd/ySY1nK>

#### GUARDIANSHIP

20. Star Trek's Nichelle Nichols Goes to Court Over Guardianship Issues - Sci-fi icon Nichelle Nichols, who made history as Lt. Uhura in the original Star Trek, is undergoing a legal battle regarding her guardianship and estate. – The Mary Sue- August 19, 2018- (New York) - <https://is.gd/IEULBN>

#### STUDIES & STATISTICS

21. [How Robots Could Help Autistic Children Improve Their Social Skills](#) - But a new study [published](#) Wednesday in Science Robotics does seem to offer a glimpse of their potential in assisting children who have communication differences due to autism spectrum disorder (ASD).- Gizmodo – August 22, 2018 – Connecticut - <https://is.gd/monGOE>

22. New research sheds light on why suicide is more common in autistic people - People who hide their autism by 'camouflaging' to try to fit into society, or who don't receive correct support are at higher risk of suicide, according to new research. – Medical Press – August 21, 2018 – (United Kingdom) - <https://is.gd/Q8p53l>

#### IMPROVED SUPPORTS

23. Research, regular visits needed to ensure safety at adult care homes - Family members have to be advocates for their elderly loved ones and learn to navigate their care, said registered nurse Debbie Waring, the Pima Council on Aging's family caregiver support program coordinator. – Tuscon – August 19, 2018 – (Arizona) <https://is.gd/vvwfrA>

24. Where Are the Resources for Autistic Children in Southwest Florida? - [Family Initiative](#) is one of the local resources parents can turn to if they have a child on the autism spectrum. – Hello SWFL - August 24, 2018 - (Florida) - <https://is.gd/x7We57>

25. Louisiana's first tuition-free school for children with Autism welcomes first class Monday - Louisiana's first charter school for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, [The Emerge School for Autism](#), is set to welcome its first class and begin operations on Monday. – WAFB Channel 9 – August 19, 2018 – (Louisiana) - <https://is.gd/hfHYFC>

26. Johnston-Calati: People with disabilities need dental care access - Unfortunately, for people with disabilities, getting dental care is even more challenging. As the program manager for the Michigan Disability Rights

Coalition, I'm dedicated to advocating for affordable, accessible, quality health care. – Lansing State Journal – August 19, 2018 – (Michigan) - <https://is.gd/Wwlo5m>

27. Senior Citizens' Law Office provides support for seniors in central New Mexico - The Senior Citizens' Law Office, Inc. (SCLO) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide free civil legal services to seniors aged 60 and older in Central New Mexico, with a focus on low-income seniors. – KRQE- August 20, 2018 – (New Mexico) - <https://is.gd/nCuzPq>

28. Northport studies allowing drivers with handicap permits to use metered spaces - After a driver's request, village officials will review regulations that allow drivers with handicap permits to use metered spaces in downtown Huntington for free. – Newsday – August 21, 2018 – (New York) - <https://is.gd/aqNZjJ>

29. Rock Hall certified to serve those with autism, PTSD - KultureCity, a non-profit that is working to help make the world more accessible to those with sensory issues, including those with autism or PTSD, has provided the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame with training and 20 of these "sensory bags." (Courtesy of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame) – Cleveland.com – August 21, 2018 – (Ohio) - <https://is.gd/teS4Ag>

30. A journey to independence for special needs adults in Myrtle Beach - Leaders with S.O.S. Healthcare Inc., who specialize in mentoring adults with autism, taught basic skills like cooking, laundry, and how to stay safe when living alone. – ABC 15 News- August 19, 2018 – (South Carolina) - <https://is.gd/zEyVIm>

31. Appeals court affirms that Hamilton County Schools violated federal special education laws - For the last five years, Luka Hyde's family has argued in multiple federal courts that their 15-year-old son should have been allowed to stay in a public school classroom, despite his intellectual disability.- Times Free Press – August 20, 2018 – Tennessee - <https://is.gd/c9Ou7k>
32. Waco ISD board gets look at plan to bring special ed in compliance with state rules - But Mary Ohmad, parent of a Waco High School student with special needs, said she has little faith the corrective action plan will change special education in Waco ISD. “We’ve been here ten years and they still haven’t gotten it together,” she said. “It’s horrible.” – Waco Tribune Herald - August 18, 2018 – (Texas) - <https://is.gd/JwoyAV>
33. Texas Saved Billions Cutting Special Education. Now the Bill Comes Due - The U.S. ordered the state to remove a cap that wrongly deprived hundreds of thousands of kids. Now the question is who will pay.- Bloomberg – August 21, 2018 – (Texas) - <https://is.gd/bipn8Z> - Couldn't tell if same issue as previous Story
34. Series gave hope to women in jail -- Juliann Bliefnick - Jails and prisons were not meant to warehouse the mentally ill, abused, addicted or the poor. But that is exactly what our system is using them for, and it is creating more problems than it is solving. Thank god people are taking notice and taking action. - Wisconsin State Journal – August 17, 2018- (Wisconsin) - <https://is.gd/gWmLiY>

## INTERNATIONAL

35. Teen horror author who savagely murdered man with Asperger's syndrome "wanted to kill someone before she was 25": Report - New details have come to light about two women [who savagely tortured and killed a man with Asperger's syndrome in Australia](#), the Daily Mail reports. This past November, 26-year-old Jemma Victoria Lilley and 43-year-old Trudi Lenon were convicted of murdering 18-year-old Aaron Pajich-Sweetman. – Crime Online -August 19, 2018 – (Australia) - <https://is.gd/6onlbQ>
  
36. John Exposes Elder Abuse in Perth Nursing Homes (Audio) - This morning, Jane spoke with "John" who wanted to expose elder abuse in two Perth nursing homes. – 6PR882 News Talk – August 19, 2018 – (Australia) - <https://is.gd/Wszbjj>
  
37. In Britain, the mentally ill attacked women with a hammer - Scotland Yard announced in tracing the suspect in the crime named Joe Xuereb. It is known that he suffers from a mental disorder. – Mice Times – August 20, 2018 – (Britain) - <https://is.gd/kL3r5c>
  
38. HSBC more handicapped-friendly - Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corp has unveiled barrier-free banking at its Tsuen Wan branch, aimed at providing more convenient services to customers with accessibility needs.- The Standard – August 24, 2018- (China) - <https://is.gd/BnAiSE>
  
39. Deaf, mute Yamunanagar woman gang-raped - A 25-year-old deaf and mute woman was allegedly gang-raped by three persons in a village of the

district on Friday evening. – The Tribune – August 19, 2018 – (India) - <https://is.gd/i7ezHM>

40. Extend disabilities Act 2016 to JK: handicapped association - Jammu and Kashmir Handicapped Association (JKHA) on Monday held a protest demonstration here in Srinagar and demanded implementation of disabilities Act 2016 in the state. – Kashmir Reader – August 21, 2018 – (India) - <https://is.gd/GAPH1S>

41. Chennai: Man seeks mercy killing for son suffering seizure since birth – Unable to bear the agony of watching his nine year and seven-month-old son suffer elliptic seizure every day, a tailor has approached the Madras high court seeking his mercy killing. - Deccan Chronicle – August 21, 2018 – (India) - <https://is.gd/hFdAVr>

42. Gang rapes and kills disabled business woman from Osajai village - Police in Busia have launched a manhunt for a gang of robbers who attacked and killed a disabled business woman from Osajai village in Teso north constituency. The gang whose exact number is not yet known gang raped the victim before strangling her to death. – Daily Nation – July 22, 2018 – Kenya - <https://is.gd/DQpjUI>

43. Education Ministry special needs staff to strike - Ministry of Education staff including psychologists, speech language therapists and occupational therapists have voted to strike on Tuesday, the NZEI union said. – Newsie – August 17, 2018 – (New Zealand) - <https://is.gd/VCO54p>

44. Concern for those in aged care facilities without consent - A new report published by the Human Rights Commission raises concerns about the legal and human rights safeguards for an estimated 5000 elderly New Zealanders in secure dementia units and psychogeriatric facilities. – Scoop Independent News – August 20, 2018 – (New Zealand) - <https://is.gd/WHUjkV>
45. Mum claims autistic daughter, 13, was ‘kicked off Ryanair flight leaving her stranded in Portugal for hours as staff didn’t believe she was with family’- A vulnerable teen - who was with her aunts, uncles, cousins and godmother- was allegedly left hysterical after she was said to have been removed from the plane by a security guard just ten minutes from take off – The Sun – August 18, 2018 – (United kingdom) - <https://is.gd/N666Kd>
46. Sam Clark: ‘Abuse of learning disabled people won’t stop until we all matter equally’ - The head of Learning Disability England says attitudes are partly to blame for care failures – The Guardian – August 21, 2018 – (United Kingdom) - <https://is.gd/QF6a1S>
47. Bullies leave wood plank nailed to autistic boy's head, parents say- A 9-year-old autistic boy was left with a nail embedded into his skull after a group of bullies allegedly threw a wooden plank at him, his parents say. – Fox News – August 12, 2018 – (United Kingdom) - <https://is.gd/W7erb7>
48. How incy-wincy spider could show if your child is autistic - [Autism](#) can be spotted in babies as young as four months old simply by monitoring their response to games such as peek-a-boo or incy-wincy spider, a new study

suggests. – The Telegraph – August 18, 2018 – (United Kingdom) - <https://is.gd/SfNO82>

49. Call to consider the disabled in HIV programmes - “Persons with disabilities face access barriers to service. As a breastfeeding mother, I am also affected. Those who are infected with HIV are suffering in silence,” she told NewsDay Weekender. – Zimbabwe Daily – August 18, 2018 – (Zimbabwe) - <https://is.gd/fVTcor>

## MISC

50. Tapping into an underused resource - Stories of the top hackers are littered with people with Asperger syndrome, like Gary Mckinnon, who hacked into the United States military and NASA computers and deleted files from the operating system. – Colorado Springs Independent – August 21, 2018 – (Colorado) - <https://is.gd/DPXI9a>

51. Teen with special needs finds voice -- and Instagram fame -- through art - Sevy Marie Eicher is a 14-year-old artist living in Texas. She was adopted into the Eicher family when she was 12 from Bulgaria. What makes her even more special -- she's a non-verbal teen with Down syndrome. Her family said because of that, before she became a part of their family, she had a rough start to life in institutions. – Orlando.com – August 20, 2018 – (Florida) - <https://is.gd/y1ijnB>

52. The ADA is being used to disenfranchise minority voters - Officials in Randolph County, Georgia are using the American with Disabilities Act to suppress voters. A majority-black county in rural Georgia announced a plan

last week to [close seven of its nine polling places](#) ahead of the November election, claiming the polls cannot continue to operate because they are not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.— Think Progress — August 24, 2018 – (Georgia) - <https://is.gd/LO72xH>

53. DEAFinitely Dope: Handing rap music to the deaf - Matt Maxey was diagnosed with profound hearing loss at an early age but has made music his life's passion. – The Leader – August 17, 2018 – (Tennessee) - <https://is.gd/QE5t0J>

54. The Non-Verbal Autistic Boy who Can't Wait for Shabbat - Rojeh's desire for spiritual connection should be an inspiration for us all. – AISH.COM – August 18, 2018 – (Israel) - <https://is.gd/P55yce>

55. The value of emotional support animals— allowed a free pass on all housing and travel fees due to federal law — have recently sparked both local and nationwide controversy between disability rights advocates and those who say the growing ESA numbers are a sign of abuse or fraud in a flawed system.- Ocala Star Banner – August 19, 2018 – (West Virginia) - <https://is.gd/uxUvxi>