




# To Protect & Serve

What Every Police Officer Should Know About  
Supporting Community Members with Disabilities

 Department of Developmental Disabilities  
North Shore Area Office  
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# Agenda

- 01 Who We Are
- 02 Who We Serve (Together)
- 03 How We Support Citizens with Disabilities
- 04 How We Can Partner During Crisis
- 05 Key Takeaways and Q&A



# Who We Are



# Your Partners



## **The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) North Shore Area Office**

- Local office of a state agency that provides a wide array of supports and services to people with developmental disabilities and their families.
- Services include case management, advocacy, and funded referrals to residential and community-based integration programs.
- We serve a diverse community of over 2,500 people with developmental disabilities in the 16 towns that comprise the North Shore Area.
- DDS primarily serves adults (22+) as other state agencies focus on children's supports.



## **Today's Presenters:**

### **Jennifer Killeen, Area Director**

- Head of DDS North Shore Area Office
- Public health and human services leader
- 25 years of experience supporting people with disabilities to live meaningful lives in their communities

### **Erica Foss, Clinical Director**

- Leads crisis response for DDS North Shore Area Office, triaging high-risk cases with forensic involvement
- 18 years of experience as a crisis clinician and public health leader
- Background in psychology and criminal justice.

Pictured: John B., citizen of the North Shore community on a police ride-along

# A Powerful Partnership with a Shared Goal

The **Beverly Police Department** is an organization comprised of professional men and women who are ethically and morally dedicated to providing the finest quality of law enforcement services to the citizens of Beverly. While maintaining **respect for individual rights, human dignity, cultural diversity and community values**, we pledge to sustain a working partnership with our community to protect life and property, and to maintain a safe and peaceful environment for all.

The **Department of Developmental Services** mission is to create, in partnership with others, innovative and genuine opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to **participate fully in their communities and meaningfully engage as valued members.**



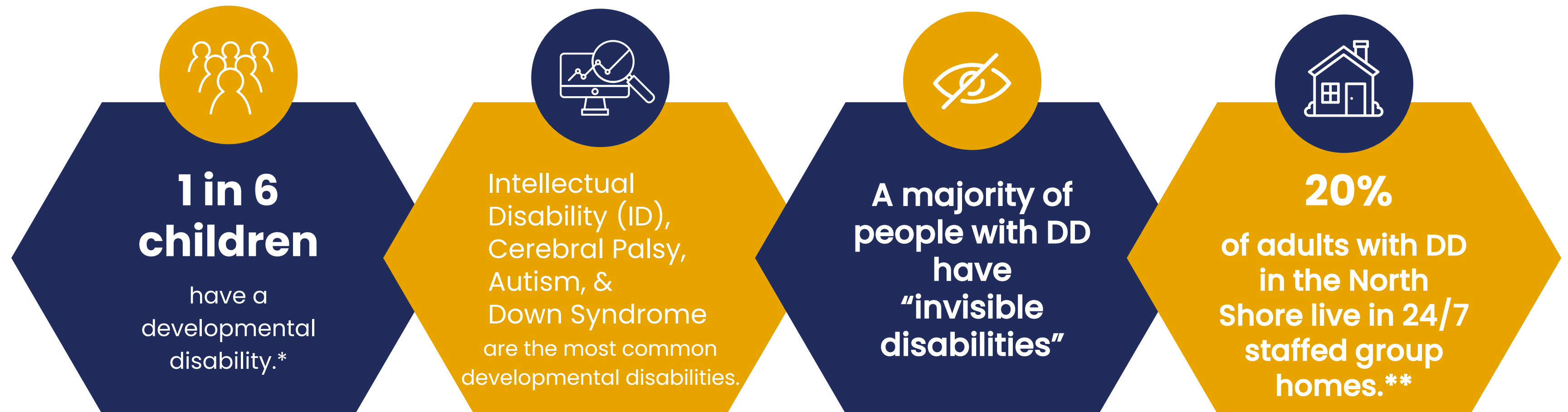
# Who We Serve (Together)



# What is a Developmental Disability (DD)?

Developmental disabilities are conditions that affect a person's physical or cognitive development, typically from birth or early childhood.

These disabilities impact people's functioning in one or more areas including: physical movement, intellectual ability, and/or communication.



\*Source: US Center's for Disease Control (CDC). Environmental Public Health Tracking (2024).

\*\*Source: DDS North Shore Analytics Reporting.

# Our Community Members with Developmental Disabilities Face Greater Risks...

## Violent Crimes

Violent victimization against persons with developmental disabilities was almost **four times** the rate for persons without disabilities.\*

**One in three** adults with developmental disabilities (of all genders) will experience **sexual assault** during their lifetimes.\*

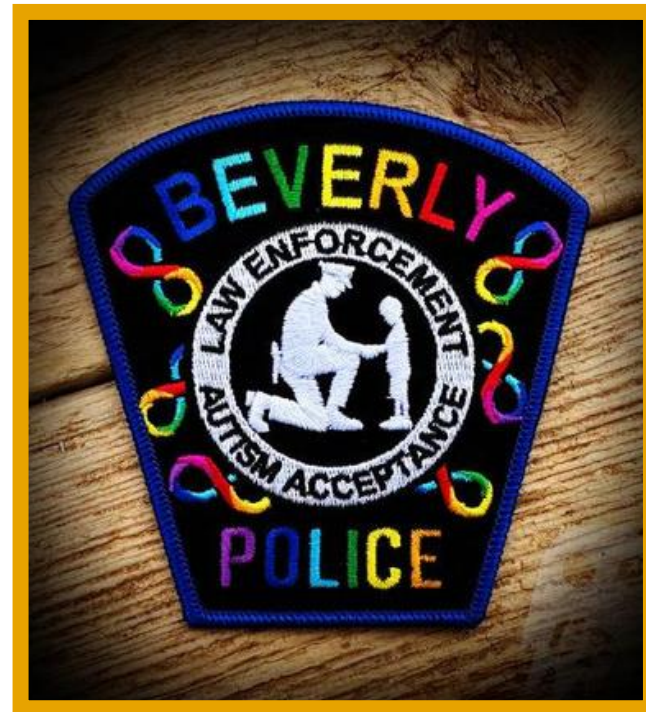
## Financial Crimes

People with developmental disabilities are **three times** as likely to be targeted by perpetrators of financial crimes including identity theft, credit card fraud, "sweetheart scams," and social security/benefits fraud.\*



\*Harrell, E. US Department of Justice. Bureau of Justice Statistics (2021)

## ...And They are also Part of the Fabric of Our North Shore Community



## People with Disabilities are...



# How We Support Citizens with Disabilities



# DDS Supports

Some of the funded supports DDS may provide include:

Service Type	Adult Supports	Community Living	Intensive Supports
Behavioral Supports and Consultation	YES	YES	YES
Family Training	YES	YES	YES
Individualized Day Supports	YES	YES	YES
Individualized Home Supports	YES	YES	YES
Peer Support	YES	YES	YES
Residential Services (inc. 24/7 group homes)	NO	NO	YES
Respite support for family caregivers	YES	YES	YES
Specialized Medical Equipment and Supplies	YES	YES	YES



## Important

DDS provides DDS-eligible citizens of Massachusetts a diverse array of supports so people with developmental disabilities can **live, work, volunteer, shop, bank, and build meaningful relationships** in their communities.

Importantly, **not every DDS-eligible person is eligible for every type** of DDS support service.

DDS **must prioritize its highest intensity services** (ex. 24/7 group home placements, fulltime community-based day supports) for the highest need/highest risk individuals.

# How Can We Best Communicate with Citizens with Developmental Disabilities?



## **Speak slowly & clearly.**

Use simple language and avoid jargon. Repeat information if necessary, making sure the person understands.



## **Use visual aides.**

Pictures, diagrams, or written instructions can help people with developmental disabilities understand information more effectively.



## **Provide positive reinforcement.**

Use encouraging words and gestures to show that you are listening and that you value the person's input.



## **Be patient.**

Give the person time to process information and respond. Avoid interrupting or rushing the conversation.

# Communication: Quick Tips



## One-Step Instructions

Break down complex tasks into simple, one-step instructions. This makes it easier for the person to understand and follow along.



## Repeat Using Their Words

Ask the person to repeat the instructions back to you in their own words. This helps confirm their understanding so you can adjust.



## Limit Distractions

Minimize sensory distractions to enhance their comprehension. These might include loud noises, bright lights, or too many people.



## Be Mindful of Sudden Moves

Pay attention to your own body movement and position. This helps prevent startling or confusing the person.

# How We Can Partner During Crises



# Crisis Scenario: Something Seems “Off”

A neighbor calls in a wellness check for the Smith family who live across the park. They know an elderly single mother Tina lives there with her adult daughter Ellie and the neighbor hasn't seen them in over a week.

You arrive and the elderly mother lets you inside reluctantly. She looks frail and you can see her adult daughter, who uses a wheelchair, and may have a developmental disability. Ellie does not use words to communicate and vocalizes, sounding pained. She is covered in urine.

Tina asks you to please leave and says her daughter gets nervous around strangers.

## What do you do?



# **Crisis Scenario: Something Seems “Off”**

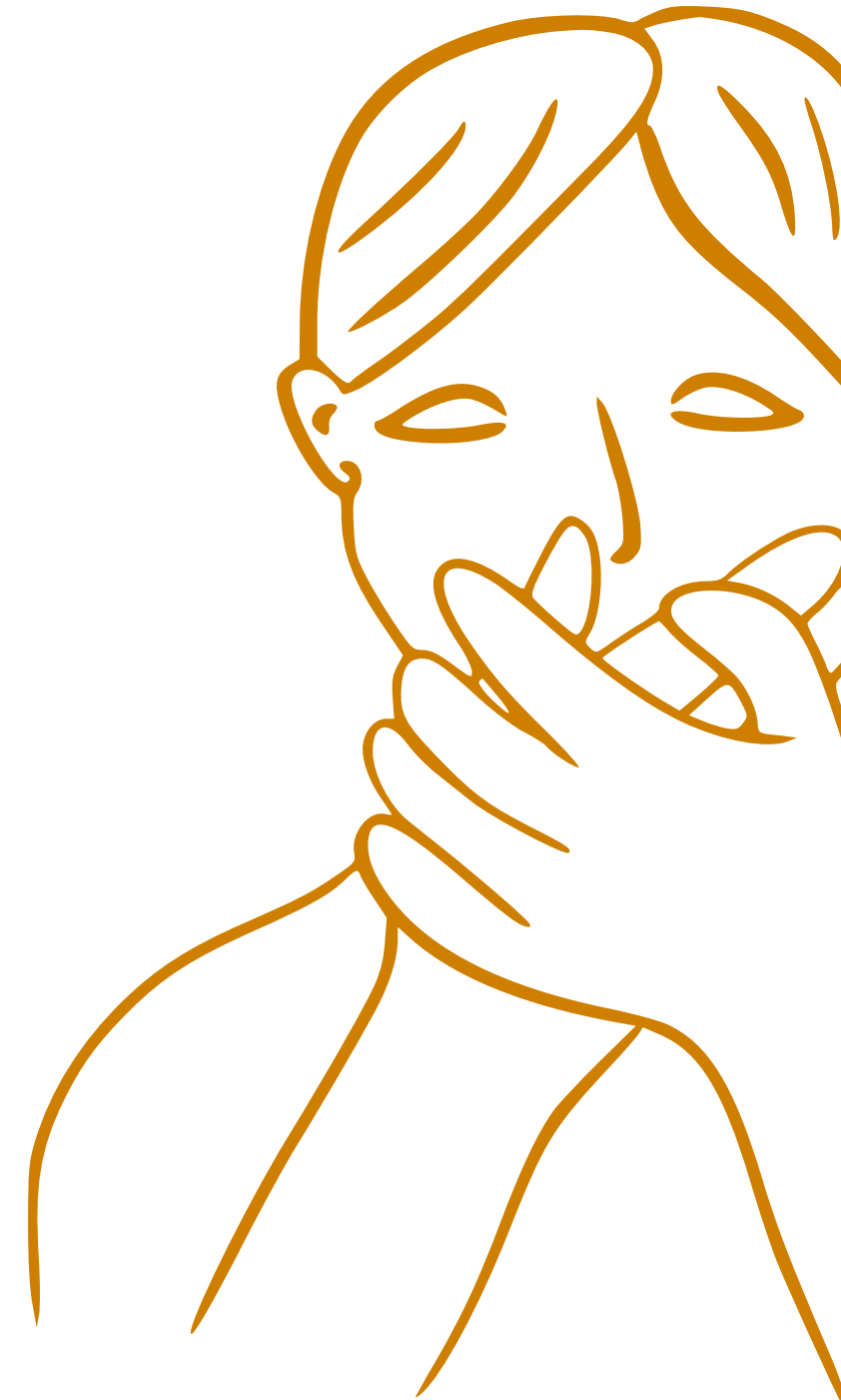
## **Resources available to First Responding Officers**

Call DDS North Shore to see if Ellie has existing DDS eligibility and existing supports

Contact DPPC as a mandated reporter

After hours, call START Crisis Team On Call (339-440-1751)

If you suspect sexual abuse, contact SARU



# Crisis Scenario: Disturbing the Peace

You're called into a local department store because a customer named Chuck appears to have intentionally knocked over a display. The caller thought it was an accident until Chuck dropped to the floor and began shouting angrily, "I want to go to the blue house!" over and over again.

You arrive, greeted by store manager, who demands that Chuck either pay for the damaged items or be arrested. Your partner speaks with the store manager and attempts to get her report as you walk towards Chuck. He's still loudly repeating the phrase about the blue house and rocking back into another display case.

There's a man standing over Chuck, attempting to calm him down. He identifies himself as Chuck's "staff."

## What do you do?



# **Crisis Scenario: Disturbing the Peace**

**Resources available to First Responding Officers**



# Never Again: The Story of Ethan Saylor



# Protect & Serve: Key Takeaways

Beverly Police Department and DDS North Shore can partner together to make our community safer for people of all abilities.

01

## Tap us in.

Call or email DDS North Shore to inquire if a community member is supported by DDS and how we might support them.

02

## Remain vigilant.

A majority of people with developmental disabilities will interact with police, usually as victims of crimes.

03

## Practice patience and understanding.

Many people with disabilities have “invisible disabilities” and you may be unable to tell by looking at the person. Please be patient in your interactions with someone if they seem “off.”

04

## They (and we) thank you.

Many of the people with developmental disabilities we support love police officers and support the helping work you do for our community.

DDS thanks you, too. And we’re here to make your jobs easier and safer.



# Questions?

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