Speaker 1:

The Disability and Philanthropy Forum presents Leslie Templeton, board member at Women's March.

Leslie Templeton:

When we think about sexual violence, a lot of times we think about it as women experiencing sexual violence. But what we do see is that most of the people who are experiencing sexual violence are people who are in the disability community. 20% of females on college campuses report having faced sexual violence, while 30% of disabled females have experienced sexual violence on college campuses.

Leslie Templeton:

And now, when we talk about the ableism within it is that, there aren't a lot of resources for disabled people who are experiencing sexual violence. There's not even a lot of data on it. When we see a lot of the data, the data is all around very stereotypical disabilities, around intellectual disabilities. We're not talking about how disability in general impacts your experience with sexual violence, especially if you have a preexisting mental health condition, or the fact that a lot of the times after you experience sexual violence, you develop a mental health condition. Sexual violence can be the precursor to developing disability. A lot of people who experience sexual violence will come out of it with trauma, and that trauma causes disability, mental health conditions. It can cause physical health conditions. It can cause long term, even long term brain damage, just from the stress of it.

Leslie Templeton:

I think that one of the biggest issues that we face right now within the disability community and sexual violence is that, again, disability is seen as a monolith. We're seeing a lot of the research towards sexual violence with disability geared towards white, middle-class, disabled people, or people who are in institutions. We're not looking about the broad, just the broadness of disability and sexual violence. And because of that, we're not looking at how trans disabled people are impacted, black trans disabled people, and who probably, most likely, based on other data, have higher rates of experiencing sexual violence.

Leslie Templeton:

There's also the fetishization of disability that also contributes to sexual violence. We see this a lot with dwarfism, and the idea that this fetishization then permits people to own someone else's body. They feel like they can step in and control someone else's body. And this idea of control, again, is really connected to ableism, the idea that you can control someone because you are abled and you can take advantage of the fact they are disabled. And I feel like this happens a lot more than people realize.

Speaker 1:

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