



National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA)

## Disability Advisory Group

*To Empower and Include People with Disabilities in APS*

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### **Why the Disability Advisory Group is Important:** *Patty's Story*

In 1985, Patty was sexually assaulted by someone she knew. At that time, victims of sexual violence lacked access to trauma-informed Adult Protective Services (APS). Survivors did not receive proper treatment and resources, such as therapy, self-defense classes, and sexuality education. Due to the absence of these critical services, Patty endured severe depression, loneliness, and low self-worth for many years, facing a difficult journey toward healing. In 1993, Patty finally began receiving therapy services, marking the start of her true healing process. Despite the limited services available to survivors, Patty continued to fight and advocate for change.

In 2017, Patty partnered with the Disabled Persons Protection Commission in Massachusetts to develop a statewide service model aimed at breaking down barriers to trauma-informed services for survivors. Their collaborative efforts led to the establishment of a multidisciplinary approach within the APS field, enhancing support for survivors. As a result of these efforts, survivors across the Commonwealth now have access to impactful resources that empower them and provide a safe space for healing.

Patty's personal experience has made her a pioneer in advocacy, ensuring others receive the support they need to thrive. Today, she continues to succeed, thanks to the services that finally became available to her. Now she is leading these efforts at the national level and channeling her passion to teach others about this topic through this group.