

Many people contact Disability Rights Tennessee (DRT) with safety concerns. DRT can explain people's rights, address abuse and neglect, and provide resources and training to keep everyone safe.

### Here are some steps YOU can take to stay safe:

**BELIEVE IN YOURSELF:** You are a key and equal part of your care team. You deserve fair treatment and can speak up!

**KNOW YOUR RIGHTS:** You have equal rights. Learn about them and ask how to file a complaint if needed.

**BE PREPARED:** Before sharing your concerns, plan what you will say. You can write it down and ask questions in person, by phone, or online. Bring support if needed.

**BE EFFECTIVE ON THE PHONE:** Stay calm and polite. Keep messages short and include your name and number. Keep track of who you spoke to and when they will get back to you.

**GET IT IN WRITING:** Write down all communications and incidents. If someone says something is law or policy, ask for it in writing.

**USE THE CHAIN OF COMMAND:** If you don't get clear answers, ask to speak to someone else who can help. Follow the organization's chain of command.

**FOLLOW UP AND SAY THANK YOU:** Keep track of deadlines and follow up. Remember to thank people who help you.

**ASK FOR HELP:** If you need more assistance, contact Disability Rights Tennessee or another advocacy group.

## How can I get help from DRT?

### EMAIL OR CALL:

GetHelp@DisabilityRightsTN.org

1-800-342-1660

OR 615-916-4437

### I KNOW, SUPPORT, OR LOVE SOMEONE WHO NEEDS HELP. CAN I STILL CONTACT DRT?

Yes! Contact us using the information listed above.



DRT uses interpreters to speak with you in your language, including ASL.

All services offered by DRT are **FREE** of charge.

### HOW CAN I SUPPORT DISABILITY RIGHTS TENNESSEE?

You or your company can help DRT. Just visit the "Donate" page of our website or call us directly to give a one-time or recurring gift. **THANK YOU!**

DRT's work is guided by the experience and needs of people living with disabilities and/or mental illness in Tennessee.

We value your opinion! Send comments to [Feedback@DisabilityRightsTN.org](mailto:Feedback@DisabilityRightsTN.org).



[www.DisabilityRightsTN.org](http://www.DisabilityRightsTN.org)

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Disability Rights Tennessee (DRT) is the designated Protection & Advocacy (P&A) system in Tennessee, proudly serving people living with disabilities and/or mental illness across all 95 counties.

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## How Can DRT Keep You Safe?

DRT is a non-profit agency that **assists, advocates for, and protects the rights of Tennesseans living with disabilities and/or mental illness.**

### GET HELP FROM DISABILITY RIGHTS TENNESSEE:

Email: [GetHelp@DisabilityRightsTN.org](mailto:GetHelp@DisabilityRightsTN.org)

Phone: 1-800-342-1660 OR 615-916-4437

Website: [www.DisabilityRightsTN.org](http://www.DisabilityRightsTN.org)

### WHAT HAPPENS AFTER DRT IS CONTACTED?

After careful review, DRT will help you by:

- Directly helping you, or
- Trying to find someone who may help you.

## ► How DRT Can Help .....

DRT works to protect people living with disabilities and/or mental illness from abuse and neglect in the places where they live, work, learn, or receive other services.

### SOME EXAMPLES OF THIS INCLUDE:

- Make sure that you receive appropriate medical and mental health treatment.
- Protect you from having your money taken away.
- Make sure that you are safe.
- Teach you about your rights.

### MONITORING

DRT checks facilities and programs to see if you are safe and to provide you with information about DRT. During a visit, trained DRT staff may:

- ✓ Inspect, view, and photograph all areas that people with disabilities and mental health issues can access.
- ✓ Provide resources to people with disabilities, staff, and others.
- ✓ Speak privately with individuals, even if they have conservators or guardians.

### INVESTIGATION

DRT investigates claims of abuse or neglect in facilities and programs. During an investigation, trained DRT staff may:

- ✓ Go to places in the facility where people with disabilities and mental health issues can go.
- ✓ Speak with an individual or staff member who might know about the incident.

## PROTECTION & ADVOCACY (P&A) AUTHORITY

### WHAT IS ACCESS AUTHORITY?

As the Protection & Advocacy (P&A) agency in Tennessee, Disability Rights Tennessee (DRT) is granted, by the federal government, “**reasonable unaccompanied access**” to facilities or programs providing services to people with disabilities and mental health issues.

This means DRT can visit places where people living with disabilities and mental illness can go to check for abuse or neglect, offer training, and ensure your rights and safety are respected and protected.

### WHERE DOES P&A AUTHORITY APPLY?

Access Authority means that DRT can visit public or private places that help people with disabilities and mental health issues. This includes places that provide support, services, care, treatment, or any other kind of help.

- Nursing and Group Homes
- Board & Care Homes
- Hospitals
- Day Programs
- Juvenile Detention Facilities;
- Homeless Shelters
- Public and Private Schools
- Jails and Prisons

