



Words Matter

Facts About People with Intellectual Disabilities

- Did you know that up to three percent of the world’s population have intellectual disabilities...that’s 200 million people around the world. It’s the largest disability population in the world....perhaps you know someone?
- Did you know that many people with intellectual disabilities go to school, graduate college, compete in sports, live and work on their own...maybe alongside you?
- Did you know using the word “retard” to describe people with intellectual disabilities is harmful and demeaning?

Be a fan of Dignity — Don’t use the ‘R-word’



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THE R-WORD ISN'T JUST HURTFUL, IT'S HATE SPEECH.

What Is Hate Speech?

Hate speech occurs when a majority group freely makes jokes about a minority group including negative stereotypes and negative images, not just language. It is commonly seen as harmless by the majority, but it sets the stage for more severe outlets for prejudice, harm and abuse.

People With Developmental And Intellectual Disabilities Are At Greater Risk Of Violence.

- 1 in 3 children with disabilities are victims of some form of abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect. (Sullivan & Knutson, 2000).
- Individuals with developmental disabilities are 4 to 10 more times more likely to be victims of a crime than people without disabilities (Sobsey, et al., 1995).
- Children with developmental disabilities are at twice the risk of physical and sexual abuse compared to children without disabilities (Crosse et. al., 1993).

People With Developmental And Intellectual Disabilities Are Disenfranchised From Justice.

- Many people with intellectual disabilities have difficulty describing the abuse done to them.
- Many victims with intellectual disabilities are not perceived as credible witnesses.
- Abuse often occurs as part of name calling, bullying, hazing, or other targeted attacks based on disability status. THIS IS A HATE CRIME.

Ending The Use Of The R-Word Is More Than A “Politically Correct” Notion.

- “Retard”, “retarded”, “idiot”, “imbecile”, and “moron” are derogatory and dehumanizing terms—on par with the N-word when used to describe African Americans, and various hateful terms used to describe members of the Jewish, gay and lesbian and other minority communities.
- Self-advocates with intellectual disability have clearly stated that negative language leads to harmful action, discrimination, abuse, negative stereotypes, disenfranchisement, and violence.

Shouldn't People With Intellectual Disabilities Just Lighten Up? It's A Joke!

- NO! People with intellectual disabilities have a history of institutionalization, genocide, forced sterilization, segregation, and being regarded as ‘less than human.’
- More than any other group, they experience record unemployment, significant physical, mental and sexual abuse, and limited rights.
- This discrimination and victimization continues, in large part, due to antiquated, discriminatory portrayals in the media and pervasive prejudice.

WHAT'S FUNNY ABOUT THAT? For more information



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