

Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities

People with intellectual or developmental disabilities may find it hard to do many things most of us take for granted.

These disabilities can mildly or profoundly limit their ability to learn, socialize and take care of their everyday needs.

You may not be able to know that someone has this disability unless you are told, or you notice the way they act, ask questions or use body language.

Using words	
Don't say	Say
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• mentally retarded• idiot• simple• retarded• feeble-minded• imbecile• mongoloid• mongolism• Downs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• a person with an intellectual disability• a person with a developmental disability• a person with Down Syndrome

Tips on how to interact with people who have an intellectual or developmental disability

- Don't assume what a person can or cannot do.
- Use plain language and speak in short sentences.
- Make sure the person understands what you've said.
- If you can't understand what's being said, don't pretend. Just ask again.
- Provide one piece of information at a time.
- Be supportive and patient.
- Speak directly to the person, not to their companion or attendant.