

# WORDS MATTER!

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**As communicators of ideas and proponents of change, members of the media, comedians, politicians, and public figures all play influential roles in our society.**

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Words must be carefully used by all communications professionals because they have a significant cultural impact on people living with intellectual disabilities.

Words matter. They are a reflection of what people really think. They can expose personal biases and change public perception of a group or a cause.

Intellectual disability is not a condition or a disease; it is a state of being.

People are not suffering from it, nor are they afflicted by it.

They *have* an intellectual disability or they are living with it. The disability does not define the person. They are so much more than “intellectually disabled”. They might have a disability but they are, above all else, people. They have names, desires, dreams, and feelings.

## INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY IS NOT A MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE

It is also important not to confuse intellectual disabilities with mental health issue. They are two different things but they can sometimes coexist in certain individuals. Like anyone else, people with intellectual disabilities can also live with psychological disorders, including emotional, behavioral, anxiety or personality disorders. That being said, that coexistence is not systematic.

## INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY AND AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

Intellectual disabilities can coexist with other conditions. People who have intellectual disabilities can also live with autism spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy, attention deficit disorder, epilepsy, and others.



QUEBEC INTELLECTUAL  
DISABILITY SOCIETY

WORDS AND  
EXPRESSIONS  
YOU SHOULD  
**REMOVE**  
FROM YOUR  
VOCABULARY

- A person who **IS AFFLICTED WITH** an intellectual disability
- A person who **SUFFERS FROM** an intellectual disability
- Mentally retarded
- Retarded person
- Intellectually or mentally disabled person
- Moronic person
- Intellectually or mentally handicapped person

WORDS AND  
EXPRESSIONS  
YOU SHOULD  
**PRIORITIZE**

- + Person **WITH** an intellectual disability
- + Person **WHO HAS** an intellectual disability

**CAN ALSO BE USED:**

- + Person **LIVING WITH** an intellectual disability



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