



THE R-WORD—

IT'S NOT JUST HURTFUL,
IT'S HATE SPEECH!

You may have heard someone say, “You’re a retard.” People use this phrase to insult and denigrate another person. Because the word is used in those ways, it’s easy to understand why a person with an intellectual disability does not want to be labeled in this way.

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.

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).

PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL AND INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES ARE DISENFRANCHISED FROM JUSTICE.

Abuse often occurs as part of name calling, bullying, hazing, or other targeted attacks based on disability status. THIS IS A HATE CRIME.

IT IS NOT ABOUT BEING POLITICALLY CORRECT—THE R-WORD CONVEYS HATE.

“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.



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