

Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

Key Points for Criminal Justice Professionals

OVERVIEW

- Most common developmental disability
- Characterized by limitations in intellectual functioning
- Characterized by limitations in adaptive behavior
- Problems with language, mobility, learning, self-help
- Diagnosed by IQ test

IDENTIFICATION

- Unusual physical structure
- Poor motor coordination
- Awkwardness of movement
- Not appropriately dressed for the season
- Slow reaction to questioning
- Obvious speech defect
- Parroted responses
- Limited vocabulary
- Difficulty describing facts or details in own words
- Difficulty understanding questions
- Unable to follow complex instructions
- May have ID card or bracelet similar to medical alert bracelets-may indicate contact person.

TIPS for INTERACTIONS

- Say the person's name often
- Make eye contact
- Same eye level
- Use a calm tone and volume
- Give the person time to answer you
- Demonstrate relaxed and open body language
- Speak directly to the person with I/DD
- Treat the individual as an adult, regardless of their disability
- Be careful when asking descriptive questions. Some people with I/DD have some degree of prosopagnosia or "face blindness"
- Repeatedly check for comprehension
- Don't accept a nod as understanding
- Ask the person to repeat the information back to you in their own words
- Keep your language concrete and ask for concrete answers

RESOURCES

In My Jurisdiction: Responding to Crimes Against People with Disabilities, Deaf Individuals, and Older Adults

<http://safeplace.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Law-Enforcement-Curriculum-packaged.pdf>

YouTube Videos

Disability Awareness Training Law Enforcement

<http://videos.disabled-world.com/video/460/disability-awareness-training-law-enforcement>

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The Arc of Louisiana recognized the need for an online resource to share current and accurate information on legal and disability issues, terminology and available resources between the criminal justice and human service systems.

To learn more about the project go to www.ldlr.org.

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