

# TALKING ABOUT INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY - MODULE 3

## INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

A diagnostic term. The most widely accepted term to describe reduced intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviours that are present before the age of 18.

## INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENTAL DISORDER

The new term introduced into the DSM-5 to describe intellectual disability. The meaning is the same as 'intellectual disability'. The addition of 'developmental' is to make clear that the reduced intellectual functioning begins in the developmental period.

## A PERSON WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

This is the most appropriate term to use, rather than, for example “an intellectually disabled person”. The term recognises that the individual is first and foremost a person, rather than defining the person in terms of level of ability

## DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY

A diagnostic term denoting a specific disability (functional impairment) which is permanent and usually occurs early in life, but can occur any time before 18 years of age. All intellectual disabilities are developmental disabilities, but not all developmental disabilities are associated with an ID. For example cerebral palsy is a developmental disability which may or may not be associated with ID.

## LEARNING DISABILITY

The preferred term in the UK and therefore may be found in some of the literature you read. However it is important to know that there are specific learning disabilities – i.e. disabilities that affect learning in a specific domain, such as mathematics or reading, etc, but not other cognitive functioning. When the term is used in this way, having a learning disability does not imply having an ID.

## DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY

When a young child has not met specific developmental milestones within the age period considered to be typical, it is referred to as having a developmental delay. Having a developmental delay does not mean the child has or will develop an ID.

## INTELLECTUAL HANDICAP

“Handicap” refers to reduced ability to complete a specific task. “Disability” refers to a broader impairment of ability to complete a category of tasks. Therefore “Intellectual Disability” is preferable to “intellectual handicap”.

## MENTAL RETARDATION

A term historically used to describe the characteristics associated with ID, but has come to be used in a negative way in everyday language. It is still used in some academic and health contexts in the USA.

