

ICLife: Tools for inclusion

How to make life on a campus for higher education more inclusive.

Tip cards for staff and students



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What we have to know about people with intellectual disability in order to make our communication and cooperation effective and without harm for PID and for us?

We should understand the importance of partnership relations with PID with acceptance of their disability.

We do not need to ignore their “special needs” and of course, we have to help them when they need it. Nevertheless, we have to understand that the person stand next to us can and want to communicate, to joke, to discuss different topics and even quarrel and make peace as well as each of us. We should not be teachers or mentors, but partners who can understand and perceive a PID as an equal person who needs help with concrete and specific issues.

We should understand that PID need to make friends and want to build a friendship.

People with intellectual disabilities, as well as each of us, have great need in communication with others. It is important to ask their opinion, even when it is connected with important issues. They all want to spend their time with other people and have “simple” kinds of entertainment. For instance, have a coffee, visit a concert, go for a walk, to dance or sing, have personal talks, etc. We should understand their needs and try to be friends with them while understanding that is a person with an intellectual disability, who cannot understand the friendship as each of us.

We should understand their attitude toward sexuality.

People with intellectual disabilities are conscious of their sex. They have the same desires as each of us. They want to have a good appearance and good relations with the person of the opposite sex. They think about relations and even about the marriage, but they cannot realize it in the same way as each of us. That is why we should:

- remember that the person we are talking with is a woman or a man;
- understand that he or she has the same desires as each of us;
- know, that people with an intellectual disability also think about the relationships and the marriage;
- not to provoke them to talk about this topic with direct questions;
- understand their desire to be heard on these issues.

We should remember their duties, general rules, and respect.

People with intellectual disabilities have to understand their responsibility for their acts and work. As well as each of us, they have to stick to general rules and duties (in the work, for instance). It means that we should explain to them their duties if they do not want to do them. We have to remember that we are talking to the adult person and they do not need a gentle and affectionate attitude, because it emphasizes their difference.

Remember that we respect their uniqueness and dignity only when we:

- perceive them as partners while understanding their disability;
- understand their experience;
- understand their need to be friends and ability to build a friendship
- understand their attitude to sexuality
- perceive them as adult people, who have the same duties and responsibility as us