



# WORKING WITH PERSONS WHO ARE MENTALLY RETARDED

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RETARDED

Persons who have mild  
mental retardation have the  
same basic physiological,  
social, and emotional needs  
as people who are not  
retarded!

# WORKING WITH PERSONS WHO ARE MENTALLY RETARDED

- Most mentally retarded people are capable of obtaining jobs and functioning independently in the community.
- Most are capable of functioning adequately on a number of levels in a variety of contexts. There are times, however, when they have difficulty coping with environmental demands.
- As a group they may encounter their greatest difficulties in school and in making the transition to community living.

Children who are mentally retarded usually experience delays in their physical, cognitive and social development; they exhibit behavior that is characteristic of children considerably younger in chronological age.

**NOTE: Persons with learning disabilities have average to above average intelligence but do not function up to their cognitive potential.**

# WORKING WITH PERSONS WHO ARE MENTALLY RETARDED

- The wide range of behaviors and functional abilities of people with learning impairments necessitates careful consideration of each person's abilities.
- Assumptions about the individual, based upon a categorical designation, must be avoided.

# WORKING WITH PERSONS WHO ARE MENTALLY RETARDED

- Activities should be divided into manageable parts and carefully sequenced to offer a progression of skills.
- Repetition of important tasks may also facilitate learning.
- Whenever possible, it is helpful to provide a demonstration so participants can model the desired behavior.

# WORKING WITH PERSONS WHO ARE MENTALLY RETARDED

- Use verbal instructions that are clear and easy to understand.
- Provide careful supervision of all activities especially those in which accidents or injuries are possible, but be careful not to overprotect participants.
- Explain required learning tasks in terms of concrete concepts.
- Stress real-life applications.



# WORKING WITH PERSONS WHO ARE MENTALLY RETARDED

- Plan activities that are age appropriate.
- Plan activities that require skills useful in community living, job training, etc.
- Try to ensure that the challenges of an activity correspond with the skills of the participants.
- When possible start an activity at the participant's current skill level rather than the lowest possible level.

# WORKING WITH PERSONS WHO ARE MENTALLY RETARDED

- Small group and cooperative activities may facilitate social development for those with deficiencies in adaptive behavior.
- Establish necessary rules for appropriate behavior, and use consistent consequences.

# WORKING WITH PERSONS WHO ARE MENTALLY RETARDED

Individuals who have learning disabilities

- It is especially important to reduce extraneous stimuli.
- The leader should limit the quantity of materials, directions, verbal suggestions, and so on.
- Care should be taken not to eliminate choices or limit opportunities for creativity.

# WORKING WITH PERSONS WHO ARE MENTALLY RETARDED

- Activities should involve as many of the senses as possible.
- Abstractions are often difficult for children to grasp, so visible evidence of success, such as certificates of achievement, should be used.

# WORKING WITH PERSONS WHO ARE MENTALLY RETARDED

- Mentally retarded persons are good workers, dependable and good at repetitive tasks

# HORTICULTURE PROGRAMS FOR MENTALLY RETARDED PERSONS

## Why Horticulture?

- job market for horticultural skills which a person who is mentally retarded can do
- horticultural activities provide a therapeutic milieu which is effective training for job placement in many other settings
- the horticultural training program can generate its own products and some of its own operating funds
- many people want to buy plants, giving a natural means for social interaction with clients

# HORTICULTURE PROGRAMS FOR MENTALLY RETARDED PERSONS

## Goals of Programs:

- training
- employment
- teaching other life skills in an alternative environment
- avocational interests

# HORTICULTURE PROGRAMS FOR MENTALLY RETARDED PERSONS

## Four Types of Program:

- affiliation with public schools
- training center in a public or private residential facility
- part of a work training center
- as a horticultural training center



# HORTICULTURE PROGRAMS FOR MENTALLY RETARDED PERSONS

Examples of programs:

- Public and private schools
- State schools
- Brookwood Community
- Marbridge Ranch
- Providence Farm