

Human and Civil Rights

Everyone has human rights and civil rights. This includes people with IDD.

ISSUE

Nobody should be treated unfairly. People with IDD are often denied their rights. People with IDD are just as diverse as all other people. There are people with IDD of every age, gender identity and expression, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, culture, language, religion, and so on. People with IDD and other identities are even more the targets of discrimination.

Human Rights

The United Nations' (UN) Universal Declaration of Human Rights says that human rights are for everyone. It also says that every country should have laws to protect human rights. This Declaration and other documents passed by the UN talk more about what rights all humans have. These include:

- Freedom from discrimination because of disability.
- Freedom from torture.
- Right for everyone to take charge of their own lives.
- Right to education.

Civil Rights

The U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights, and other laws guarantee civil rights. These laws make it illegal to discriminate because of someone's sex, gender, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, political affiliation, social class, religion, or disability status. These laws have not done enough to protect people with disabilities and other marginalized groups.

Advocates filed many lawsuits to try to protect people's rights. Congress has passed laws to protect the civil rights of people with disabilities. These include:

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Parts of the Affordable Care Act

However, there are still barriers to people with IDD having their human and civil rights respected. Barriers include:

- Discrimination in education, employment, housing, and voting
- Beliefs that people with IDD are not as valuable as everyone else
- Over-protective urges that deny freedoms
- Restraint, seclusion, and aversives such as shock devices
- Putting people in institutions instead of supporting them in community living
- Unfair treatment in the healthcare system
- Voting Restrictions

POSITION

All people have human and civil rights.

People with IDD have the same rights as everyone else.

People with IDD have the right to accommodations and support to protect their civil and human rights.

Governments must enforce all human and civil rights.

Professionals must be educated about the rights of people with IDD. This can include teachers, police officers, doctors, and direct support professionals.

Anyone in a position of power who harms someone with IDD or violates their rights must be held accountable. Harm can be caused by cruelty or lack of concern. One example is the use of restraint or seclusion.

Policymakers must improve laws to ensure all human rights are protected.

DEFINITIONS OF WORDS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

ADVOCACY: Ways to work alone or with others to fix an issue, get services or supports, or make changes in what the government, businesses, or groups do or say.

CIVIL RIGHTS: Rights we have in the United States of America.

DISCRIMINATION: When someone treats you unfairly because of who you are or how you express yourself.

DIVERSE or DIVERSITY: Seeking out and valuing different perspectives. People have different perspectives related to their lived experiences with things like their race, age, gender, faith, culture, sexuality, and disability.

HUMAN RIGHTS: Rights we all have because we are human.

MARGINALIZED: When a group has less power or influence than others and is treated poorly or ignored.