



Inclusion Ireland
The National Association for People
with an Intellectual Disability.

Inclusion Ireland Media and Rights Working Group:

Easy to Read Code of Practice for Journalists and People Working in the Media



Introduction to our Media and Human Rights Project



In 2022 Inclusion Ireland got funding from the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission to do a project about media and human rights.



The media includes the ways in which we communicate information in a public way like

Newspapers

Radio

Television

Video

Websites



Social media like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok LinkedIn and other social media applications



When we talk about human rights for this project, we mean all the rights and things people are entitled to under the United Nations Convention on the Rights Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

Ireland signed up to UNCRPD in 2018.

For this project we have a working group including:



Tamara Byrne



Paddy Clancy



Emma Costello



Josephine Mc Mahon



Margaret Turley

Inclusion Ireland Media and Rights Working Group: Code of Practice for Journalists and People Working in the Media

This is a Code of Practice developed by the Inclusion Ireland Media and Rights Working Group in 2022, supported by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.

We want more people with intellectual disabilities to be spokespeople in the media.

This Code of Practice is for journalists to use so they can be more inclusive of people with intellectual disabilities and carry out interviews in a respectful and thoughtful way.

What language to use

Language and the words we use are important.

They can shape how people understand or do not understand.

Language can also show our respect for each other.

Sometimes when we are talking about difficult things, it can be hard to know what to say.

When you are interviewing someone try to use our tips on language below.

- Talk to the person about what words or terms they like to use to describe themselves.
- Use human language. The language used in the UNCRPD (United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability) is **Person with a disability**
 - Some people might prefer the term **Disabled Person**
 - Some people might prefer the term **Self-Advocate**
 - Some people **don't want to mention their disability** at all
- Always use respectful language.

Never use outdated or upsetting language like:

- 'Handicapped'
- 'Retarded'
- 'Mental Disability'
- 'Slow'
- 'Stupid'

- Remember that a person's disability doesn't define them.
- Some people don't like to be labelled by their disability.

- Avoid highlighting an intellectual disability where possible.

- For example, avoid 'Mary is from Dublin. Mary has an intellectual disability'
- You could describe the supports Mary needs without highlighting the disability, like 'Mary is from Dublin, and has a support-person to support her in some activities'



General Guidelines for Journalists



- Don't judge people with intellectual disabilities.



- There needs to be more media training and coaching for people with intellectual disabilities



- People should listen to the ideas of people with intellectual disabilities and they should be asked on to big TV programmes like Primetime or the Late Late Show.



- When you are talking about intellectual disability, ask people with intellectual disabilities themselves to be part of interviews instead of supporters or family members.



- When you are planning an interview or media event, the place where the event happens should always be fully accessible.



- When you are reporting about intellectual disability you should include the voice of people with lived experience. They are the real experts.

Preparing to interview a person with an intellectual disability



- Don't assume you can think better than someone or say things in a better way, people can speak and think for themselves.



- Find out more about where the person is coming from.

Try to get to know the person to make them feel more comfortable.



- Find out how the person communicates and if they need any support communicating during the interview.



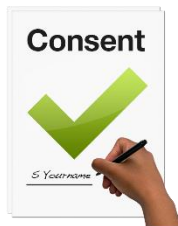
- Learn about different ways to communicate like:

- Easy-To-Read documents like this one
- Technology like computers, phones, and tablets
- Pictures and images
- Sign Language
- Braille
- Communication boards
- Any other communication supports

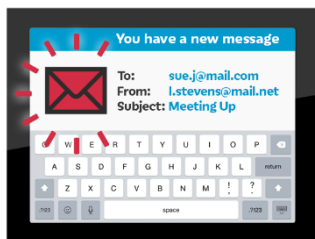




- Tell the person a bit about yourself so they feel more comfortable with you.



- Ask the person for consent for everything like taking photos and videos.



- Give people examples of the questions you're going to ask them before the interview so they can prepare. This will give people more confidence in what they are saying. Even a general idea of the topic.



- Tell the person in advance they can have someone they are familiar with in the room when they are being interviewed if they want.

A friend or support person might help them feel more comfortable. But remember to always speak directly to the person.



- It is important to tell the person in advance where the place is and how to get there so they can plan the journey.

Give them the details a week or more before the interview.



- Make sure to ask the person if they need any other supports like having someone there to guide them or transport.



Decision

- Let the person tell you what supports they need or don't need.

During the interview



- Be patient and calm.

Give people a chance to take their time and think if they need to. The person you are interviewing might be very nervous.



- Easy-to-read materials should always be available and you should always speak in plain English.

- If someone is not answering the questions try and make the questions easier to understand.



- When you are interviewing someone with an intellectual disability, speak slowly, clearly, make eye contact, and listen carefully to what they are saying.



- Take time to understand each person's own experience with their disability.
- Everyone has a different experience.



- Give people the opportunity to speak.
- Don't talk over them or ask lots of questions at once.

When publishing the interview or piece

This section is for when you are writing up the interview or putting it on a website or newspaper.



- Don't make up stories about people with disabilities that are not true.



- Talk or write in a positive way about people.



- Make sure to put everything in an Easy-To-Read format, or have an Easy-to-Read version of any piece available where possible.



Inclusion Ireland would like to thank some people for their support with this project.

We would like to thank:

The members of the Media and Human Rights Working Group



**Coimisiún na hÉireann um Chearta
an Duine agus Comhionannas**
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

IHREC



MediaTrust UK

We have used their resource "Media Interview for Disabled Interviewees" to support our work. You can find their resource on the MediaTrust website at the link below.

<https://mediatrust.org/resource-hub/media-interview-for-disabled-interviewees/>

The self-advocates and people with intellectual disabilities who attended events and gave us really important feedback.

The journalists and people who work in the media who already include people with an intellectual disability and the issues that are important to them in their work.



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