

Considerations for Survivors with Intellectual Disabilities

- Adults with intellectual and cognitive disabilities are not children. They are adults and deserve to be treated as such.
- Intellectual and cognitive disabilities are not always visible. Go over any handouts and pamphlets verbally to check for understanding. Make it comfortable to say “no”, by asking “Am I making sense?” and asking the survivor if they can repeat back what you have read in their own words to check for understanding.
- Be aware that intellectual and developmental disabilities are not synonymous with cognitive disabilities.
- Cognitive disability refers to cognitive/intellectual abilities that are on the lower levels of functioning. Generally, those with an I.Q. of 75-70 or below.
- Developmental disability refers to any disability that was caused by differences in fetal development that result in impaired functioning of some type. Developmental disabilities can also refer to mobility disabilities such as cerebral palsy.

(obtained, in part, from CALCASA: Supporting Survivors of Sexual Assault with Disabilities, 2010)