WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (I/DD)

WHAT IS I/DD?
I/DDs are usually diagnosed in childhood. They can affect someone’s personal, social, or academic abilities or their capacity to perform. That means that a person with I/DD may need support in one or more areas. Types of I/DD include:

- Intellectual Developmental Disorder (Intellectual Disability)
- Communication Disorders
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Motor Disorders
- Specific Learning Disorder
- Other Neurodevelopmental Disorders
  - e.g. Cerebral Palsy or Down Syndrome

USE PERSON-FIRST LANGUAGE
Putting the person first and, if needed, the disability second, is a great way to show respect for people. So “person with a disability” is preferable to “disabled person.” Some people may prefer identity-first language such as “autistic person” instead of “person with autism.”

INSTEAD OF...  
| Handicapped or disabled person | Person with a disability |
| Wheelchair bound | A wheelchair user |
| Deformed | Has a physical disability |
| Nonverbal | Does not use words to communicate |
| High/low functioning | Person who needs more/less support |
| Normal or typical | Neurotypical |
| Mentally ill person | Person with mental illness |
| Suffer from | |

CONSIDER USING...

ASSUME COMPETENCE
A strength-based approach suggests you assume competence and adjust your approach, vocabulary, and tone as you become aware of someone’s ability levels.

HUMAN RIGHTS
People with disabilities have the same rights as everyone else. Even if someone doesn’t use words to communicate, they still have the right to make choices and pursue their interests. Find out how YAI staff support Thais at home and around her neighborhood.

ABOUT YAI
YAI started as a pilot program in 1957 for seven people in Brooklyn, New York. Today, YAI has a team of more than 4,000 employees and supports over 20,000 people in the I/DD community. Operating in New York State, New Jersey, and California, YAI now offers more than 300 programs for people of all ages.

To learn more about how you can help, visit: yai.org/get-involved