Language is a powerful tool. Words can completely change someone’s attitude in an instant. Have you considered the effects of your words lately?

Spread the Word to End the Word is a campaign to encourage people to stop using the r-word—“retard(ed)”—and instead choose people first language that respects the individual.

People living with things like Down Syndrome, autism, and many other intellectual or developmental disorders are just that—people dealing with life just like you. Using the r-word is hurtful and offensive for a lot of reasons:

- The r-word is exclusive. It separates the person from the group.
- The r-word ignores the individual. Nobody likes to be known by a label. Using the r-word ignores the uniqueness of the individual.
- The r-word has become synonymous with dumb or stupid. In the next few days, listen for the r-word in conversation. Think about the words that could be inserted in its place. Are those words that you would like to be associated with you?
- The r-word is associated with people who have disabilities. Although the origin of the word is strictly clinical, today the word has become an adjective to describe something that is flawed or disliked. There is nothing that people with different abilities did to earn a label like the r-word, but there is a lot we can do to help to combat its effects.

What can you do to help?

TAKE THE PLEDGE!

Visit www.r-word.org for more information and to pledge online.