



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

EMPOWERMENT • OPPORTUNITY • INCLUSION

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Expectations play an important role in our lives, often behind the scenes. Both anecdotal evidence and research prove that the assumptions other people have about our abilities are quite influential and have a long-lasting effect. For example, in an article entitled "The Power of the Pygmalion Effect" by the Center for American Progress, psychologists from the University of Michigan and Rutgers University found that ". . . teacher expectations in sixth and seventh grade predicted student achievement six years later."

It's no different for people with developmental disabilities. In an editorial, "The Power of Expectations," Meg Grigal, PhD and Debra Hart, MS, explain how, ". . . expectations are an extremely powerful force in determining whether a young person goes to college. And they are equally, if not more powerful, in determining if young people with an intellectual disability will go to college."

This is why raising expectations is a theme that runs through all of the Council's work as we address educational, employment, community living, and person-centered planning goals. It's also why we've decided to create a short message that we hope will spur all of us-- people with disabilities, family members, providers, educators, employers, everyday citizens-- to stop and think twice about what we think people with developmental disabilities can do.

So, here it is:

#ExpectationsMatter #ExpectAbility

These hashtags were developed by a group of people with disabilities, parents, providers, educators, and other professionals who engaged in brainstorming sessions, ultimately deciding that these words best speak to raising expectations of people with disabilities.

We know that hashtags alone won't change minds or actions, but by conveying a simple point they can raise consciousness, if only for a moment. And, it's what we attach to the hashtags-- personal stories, news articles, event announcements or resources-- that provide the deeper meaning about the power of raised expectations. These messages can make us stop and be more aware of our assumptions, our actions, and the barriers we might inadvertently construct.

We'll start using the hashtags on social media along with quotes from Council members about how expectations have made a difference to them, but we don't want it to end there. We want

this message to reach the many people who play important roles in the lives of people with disabilities.

This is where you can help. You can:

- Use this Facebook frame.



- Add **#ExpectationsMatter #ExpectAbility** to your posts that illustrate the power of high expectations.
- Use the images on our website [in](#) your presentations, or print them out and hang them in your office, classroom, or even on your refrigerator.
- Check out our growing list of articles, videos, and other resources that could serve as teaching and training tools or simply food for thought on our website.
- Send us any resources you have to share. Email kristam@md-council.org.

Don't forget: **#ExpectationsMatter #ExpectAbility**--pass it on!

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Brian Cox in black ink.

Brian Cox, Executive Director
Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

Handwritten signature of Eric Cole in black ink.

Eric Cole
Chairperson, Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council