



September 28, 2012

Dear AAIDD Member;

This is my first letter to the membership as President of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) Board of Directors. I am truly honored to have the privilege to serve as President for 2012-2013. We have a great group of board members, a dedicated staff and a very dynamic executive director/CEO. Despite these difficult economic times, our Association is in good financial health. Another exciting characteristic of our Association that strikes me as indicative of the strength of our membership and leadership are the products that we continue to develop and deliver to the field. The credit for all this is a shared one. It is shared among our Board members, our ED/CEO, the staff in the national office, and especially you! All of our key products [e.g., the terminology & classification manual and user's guide, *Positive Behavior Supports Training Curriculum*, *Supports Intensity Scale*, Annual Meeting (yes, I include this as one of our key products), *Good Blood, Bad Blood*, online courses, and webinars] are largely the result of the hard work and brain power of our members.

Since assuming my leadership responsibilities in AAIDD 3 years ago, first as Vice-President, then as President-Elect and now as President, I've been struck by your willingness to volunteer time, energy, and ideas for our Association. Every time I have had to email one of you to ask if you would agree to serve on the conference planning committee, be a reviewer for proposals submitted for the conference, chair or be a member of a committee or taskforce, moderate a session during the conference, or provide feedback on an Association matter - few of you have turned me down and none have disappointed. Our Association is not only in good financial health but more importantly it is rich in intellectual capital. For that, we have you to thank. Thank you for choosing to be part of AAIDD, the oldest interdisciplinary professionals association committed to persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

I recently had the pleasure of seeing many of you in Charlotte, NC during the 136th AAIDD Annual Meeting. The theme of the 2012 conference was *Research-Practice-Policy*. Although striking a balance between research, practice, and policy is never an easy mission, I want to thank all of you who played a role in making our meeting a success. Our 137th Annual Meeting will be held June 3 - 6, 2013 in Pittsburgh, PA. You should expect to receive the "Call for Proposals" from Jim Thompson, President-Elect, in the coming weeks. We hope you will consider submitting a proposal and come to network and share your great work with your colleagues. If you are not planning on presenting, be sure to come to network and hear about the cutting-edge work being done in our field.

In this first letter to the membership, I wanted to share with you my number one priority for this year. This priority is to make certain that we educate and guide the American Psychiatric

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Association as they continue their work in crafting the 5th edition of their *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM5). Of particular concern to our Association should be their revisions to the terminology and diagnostic criteria of the condition formerly called "Mental Retardation," which currently includes the renaming of the condition as "*Intellectual Developmental Disorder*." As you know, there is a national consensus in the United States, including federal legislation, to adopt the terminology "intellectual disability." The adoption of a different terminology and diagnostic criteria in the DSM5 is fraught with potential harm for people with intellectual disability and their families. I want to draw your attention to this important matter and encourage you to familiarize yourself with the [AAIDD position](#) which we previously shared with the DSM5 co-chairs and leadership of the American Psychiatric Association. The AAIDD position was also endorsed by several other national and international associations in intellectual and developmental disabilities. We are all extremely concerned with the current direction being taken by the DSM5.

On a brighter note, I want to close this letter by sharing with you a few of our exciting products and events this coming year. Be on the look-out for the following:

- publication of a refreshed version of the *Supports Intensity Scale* to be called the *SIS-A*;
- arrival of the highly anticipated *Diagnostic Adaptive Behavior Scale*;
- launch of *Inclusion*, the new AAIDD peer-reviewed online journal;
- publication of books on intellectual disability and the death penalty, the history of the Willowbrook school, individualized supports, and more;
- release of new online courses and webinars; and
- AAIDD 137th Annual Meeting, June 3 - 6, 2013 in Pittsburgh, PA.

Again, thank you for choosing to be a member of AAIDD. Do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions, concerns, suggestions and ideas how we can further advance the mission of our Association and let me know how you can become involved in strengthening AAIDD!

Cordially,



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