

**Results from Survey on the
Division of Mental Retardation/Developmental Disability
Name Change**

Prepared by:

People First
← of Missouri

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What is People First of Missouri?

People First of Missouri is statewide self-advocacy organization that promotes equality for people with disabilities so they can live the life they want in the community. People First of Missouri represents 45 chapters with over 1500 members, all of which have a disability.

The purpose of People First of Missouri is:

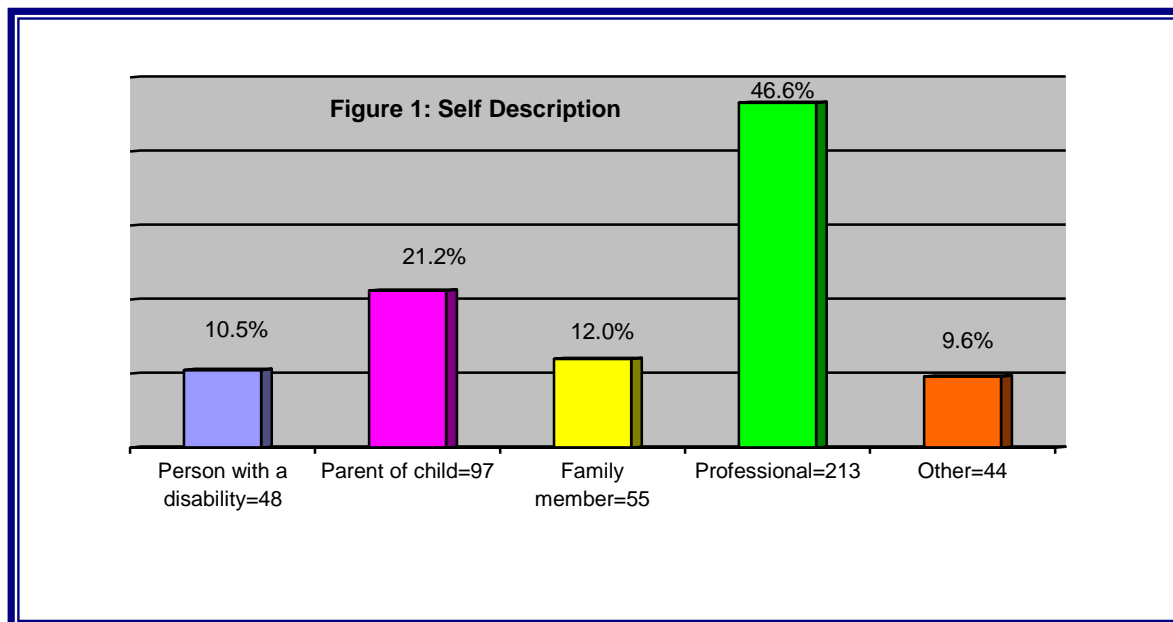
- Teach and empower people to understand their rights and responsibilities and to speak up for themselves (self-advocacy)
- Stand up for one another to help people live the life they want with the supports they need (advocacy for one another)
- Advocate for community services that allow people to have choices and control over their supports and lives (advocacy at the systems level)
- Create change in communities to ensure opportunity and full, meaningful participation for all people (advocacy within the community)

Description of Survey

People First of Missouri emailed out a survey using the Survey Monkey Professional package. The purpose of this survey is to provide information when People First of Missouri is talking to others about what the term "mental retardation" means to people with disabilities, families and professionals. Respondents had the opportunity to provide their name and/or county in Missouri.

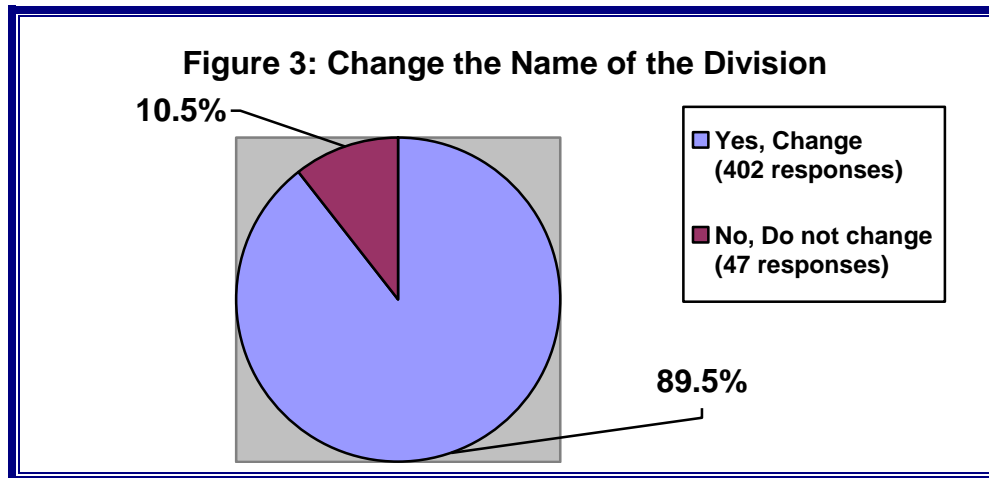
Description of Survey Participants

Survey participants were asked to mark a response that "best describes you." The chart below provides the responses.



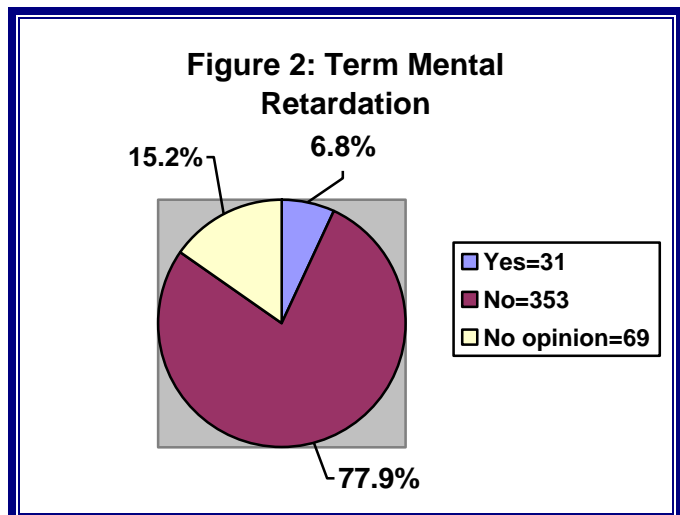
Should the Missouri Division of Mental Retardation/Developmental Disability change its name to Division of Developmental Disabilities?

An overwhelming majority (89.5%) of the individuals surveyed want to see the Division of Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities changed to Division of Developmental Disability. Figure three provides the responses in detail.



Do you like the term “mental retardation?”

A majority of survey participants did not respond positively to the term mental retardation when asked. When asked if they liked the term, 77.9% (353 respondents) replied *no* they did not like the term. Figure two provides summary responses in detail.



Summary of Written Responses

Why Respondents did not like the term “Mental Retardation”:

352 survey respondents provided reasons why they **did not like the term** “mental retardation”. A key theme running through all of the comments is that people find the term “mental retardation” to be demeaning because it is used too much in the common vernacular as a way to insult people. The section below provides these comments and others in detail.

Term is Degrading to Individuals: The terminology is very *degrading* and it is a very narrow term wrote one survey participant. Others echoed this *it is degrading and it is a word used by school children to make fun of someone*. The term lowers the self esteem for some individuals, *it is just very degrading and it makes me feel like I have low self esteem*. **(27 respondents)**

Term is Demeaning to Individuals: In addition to the degrading nature of the term mental retardation, others find that is also *demeaning*. As one survey participant stated, *it is disrespectful and demeaning to people with developmental disabilities*. This person also echoed the thought that it was a term only school children used. *It is often used as a common insult among children and adults*. Another echoed this *historically this term was used in a demeaning manner when insulting other people*. Several respondents seem to think that the term is used too much as an insult in the common vernacular to also be used as an agency or department title. **(13 respondents)**

Term is Derogatory: One participant commented *this is a derogatory term. I think it would be insulting to an individual with an intellectual disability*. Another added that *the term is not an accurate description and has a derogatory connotation*. **(15 respondents)**

“Mental Retardation” is Hurtful: The term “*mental retardation*” is hurtful for some individuals. One participant provided the example, *as a bad or mean child, we would use that term, “you are a retard” to put someone down*. It is hurtful because of this. Another added *it hurts me, and it makes me feel like I am stupid*. One person observed, *we don’t use racial slurs anymore so why is it still ok to use this one?* **(55 respondents)**

“Mental Retardation” is Stereotypical: While many survey participants did not like the term mental retardation because of its potential to be insulting, others did not like the term because of the negative labeling effect that it has for many. As one individual stated, *in our society, mental retardation has negative stereotypes associated with it, starting with children in the schoolyard taunting each other. Even adults still use the word retarded as an insult*. Comments about how the term is used as a negative stereotype are in the section below. **(7 respondents)**

Mental Retardation is a Negative Label: The term is disliked by many because it is a negative label for people with developmental disabilities. As one survey participant observed, *the term “retarded” is so loosely used in our society. I feel the label has a huge negative connotation*. Another added, *when negative labels are applied to people it fosters a culture of negativity towards individuals that are based on their diagnosis rather than their value as a person deserving of a quality life*. **(87 respondents)**

Term Implies a Deficit: A number of individuals did not like the term mental retardation *because it means you are broken, and it means you are no good as a person*. Others said it *puts a distorted image on individuals*, and that the term *devalues a person*. Another person wrote that *the word retardation makes me think someone is not capable*. **(9 respondents)**

Mental Retardation is Stigmatic: Others feel there is a stigma attached to the term “*mental retardation*”. As one observed, *there just seems to be too much stigma attached to term*. Another agreed, *it has a stigma attached, included that the person is not able to learn new skills*. **(17 respondents)**

Why Respondents did like the term “Mental Retardation”:

30 survey respondents provided reasons why they **did like the term** “mental retardation”. The section below provides these comments in detail. Only one of these respondents provided their name and county.

Accurate Description of Condition: Some people feel that the term “*mental retardation*” is nothing more than a description of the condition of individuals and is not in any way derogatory. As one individual stated *it is an accurate clinical term*. Another commented *I don’t feel it is offensive, it is just medical terminology*. Some feel the terminology helps provide *an accurate description of the disability*. It gives people a *reference frame*, and *is only a description of a condition that is referred to under Missouri law*.

Political Correctness not Necessary: A few individuals commented that they felt changing the terminology was not necessary because it is a waste of money and time. They also felt that political correctness must end somewhere. *I don’t necessarily like the term. It is what it is. I don’t like being called brain injured. I would much rather be called crash survivor. Where does it end?* Another added, *I do not like the whole move to be politically correct about everything*. Lastly, one survey respondent commented *it really makes me mad when people focus on a word. The fact is that changing a word will not make my sister not mentally retarded. It will however, use up money needed for research and services*.

If you have any questions or feedback for People First of Missouri related to this survey, please contact Roger Crome, Statewide President at r_crome1@msn.com or call 573-783-0031.

If you would like to know more about People First of Missouri or you want to get involved in your local area, please contact mopeoplefirst@hotmail.com or call 800-558-8652.

People First of Missouri.....self-advocates determined to be all for one and one for all.

Names and/or Counties of Respondents that responded “YES, they want to change the name of the Division of MR/DD to Division of Developmental Disabilities”

Adair County, Missouri	chaz nickolaus, boone	Elaine Platz- VR Springfield south- taney	John Jamison- Greene
Adeline Steinkamp Jefferson County	Chip Johnson Jackson CO	Ethel Campbell - Greene County	johnson county Jorgi McNamara, Cooper County
Aimee Wehmeier; Boone	Christine Camene, St. Louis County	Frank Pike, Greene Co.	Julie England,Warsaw
Amanda Clark, Adair Co. Missouri	Cindy, Greene County	gary stevens ,phelps county	Karla Yeary Lent, Morgan
Amanda Sanders Ralls	Clay county Clay County	Gene Barnes, Greene County	Kate McHugh, St. Louis County
amy johnson, greene	Clay County Cole	Georgia Mueller, Jackson Co.	Kathy Emory, Pettis County
Amy Martin Cole Co.	Cole County cookie parson, stlouis city	Gigi Maha Camden County	Kathy McCormick, Christian
Anchorage, Alaska	Cooper County Craig Byrd, St.	Glenna Herod, Morgan Co.	Kathy Vanek-City of St. Louis
Andrea Buening, Newton County	Louis Craig Clark/ Adair County	Gloria Shell--New Madrid county	Kay Hucke, Franklin Co.
Andrea Tarry, Cass County	County Crawford	Greene county Greene County	Kellie Ellerbusch, Clay County
Angie McGoveran, Jefferson County	Dana Hughes Platte	Greene County Greg Swinney	Kelly Ray Saline Ken Eigenberg St. Louis Co.
Ann Kinney, Clay County, MO	David L. Zapf, Moniteau	Gretchen Meinhardt, Platte County	Kimberly Barnes/St. Louis County
Anna Zelinske, St. Louis County	Deana O'Brien, Audrain County	I live in Boone County	kit stahlberg/frederickt own Mo.
Anne Davies - Andrew Co	Deanna England- Kirksville MO	I live in Cole County	Lacey Diekmann, Jackson County
Anne Roux, St. Louis	Debbie Kleen, Christitian County	ida cobb buchannan county	Larry Opinsky - St. Louis
B Zaiger platte co Barbara Arnold, St. Louis County	Dee Boatright Jasper County	James Campbell, Scotland County, MO	Lauren, NY Linda Franke, Clay County
Becky Dickey Cole Becky Schubkegel, Jackson County	Delaine Myers Diane Henke, Phelps County	James Peppel Webster County	Linda J. Clay, Jackson County
Betsy Barnes, Pike County	Diane White, St. Francois	jamie graham adair Janet Tillmon, St. Louis County	Linda Mueller, St. Louis County
boone	Dianna Weaver- Howell	Jean Haase, St. Louis County	Liz Weintraub- Rockville, MD.
Boone County	Dixie Crider----	Jessica Pearsall ellicott city	Lori Anderson Miller
Boone County	DeKalb Co	maryland	Lori Pace, Webster
C.J. Welch; Boone	Doug Riggs, St.Louis	Joann Noll, St. Louis County	Lorinda Grauel, Clay county
Carlos Coy/Macon county	Doug, Cooper County	John Bennett, Lawrence	Marc Hill - Cass county
Carol Otts, Jasper County	dr. christine harker, adair		
Cathy Brown, Boone			
Cathy Garner, Howell County			

Margie Price. St.
Louis County
Maria DeBord-
Phelps
Marilyn Whittle
Phelps County
mark a. epstein, st.
louis
Mark Ohrenberg
Mark Satterwhite,
Boone County
Mary Barbieri
Lafayette
Mary Shippy,
Johnson County,
MO
MaryAnn
Winkelmann
Megan Schulz, St.
Louis County
Meghan Stewart,
St. Louis County
Melody Jones USA
Michael Boyd - St.
Louis County
Michelle
Hoffmeister St.
Francois
Michelle Ritz
Phelps County
Mike McCarthy;
Jackson County,
MO
mike myntti grundy

Mike Williams St.
Francois County
Molly King
Greene ,CO
Molly Scheiner,
Pettis County
Monroe County
Nancy Labette
County
Nancy Hayes Miller
County
Nancy McGuire,
STL
Olivia Apollo, 8
years old, St. Louis
County
Open-Ended
Response
Pat Dixon, St. Louis
County
Pat Gallagher
Pat Gerling -
Cooper County
Patsy Riley,
Camden
Paula Laney-
Lafayette
PEGGY
KUTCHBACK
CASS CO
penny longnecker
Stlouis cty
Pettis county
Phelph
Platte, County

Rene Powell Boone
County
rhonda fenner
st.louis missouri
Rita Campbell,
Wasilla, Alaska,
Mat Su Borough
Sarah Hayes in
Miller Co
Scott Kisner Adair
County
Sedalia, MO
Sharon Keese BHS
- Valdez, Alaska
Sheila morris-
Smith, Jackson
County
Sheila Rainey,
Cooper County
Missouri
Sheli Reynolds II
Shelly
Leininger/Grundy
st louis city
St Louis County
St. Louis city
St. Louis City
St. Louis County
Stacie Amschler -
Greene
Stacy Truitt;
Jackson County
Stefanie Wickers,
Cole County

Susan Pritchard-
Green Cole
Teri Kelley/Miller
County
Terri Hemme
Laffayette
Terry Mackey,
Audrain
Tess Redel, St.
Louis County
Thomas E.
Powderly, Boone
County
Tina Buckmaster,
Greene
Tish Thomas,
Boone County
Todd Mayfield, Cole
County
Toni Scrivner, Miller
County
Tracy Calhoun,
Clay county
Missouri
Troy Cooper Saint
Louis
Trudy Matlock,
Phelps County
Trudy Rider St.
Louis County
Vicki Hummel,
Callaway Co.
Vicky Davidson,
Cole County