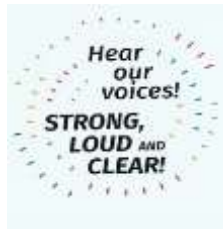




Committee
For the Protection
Of Persons
With Intellectual
Disability



Hear our Voices 2025

Organised by: Committee for the Protection of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

Topic: The right to love and to have a family – the freedom to choose our relationships

Date and Place: 15 October 2025, Nicosia and 16 October 2025 Limassol

Speakers: Representatives of Self-Advocacy groups from all over Cyprus

Short description of the event:

The Committee for the Protection of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities, organized two meetings in a format of Workshops, with representatives of Self-Advocacy Groups for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities operating all over Cyprus.

During the meetings, self-advocates were divided into small groups (4-5 persons in each group) and given a part of the topic to discuss:

1. the right to love,
2. the right to start a family and
3. the right to choose our relationships.

Each group discussed how this specific right can be implemented, under what conditions, if they have obstacles and how they can overcome them.

At the end they shared their thoughts with all the participants. All groups had the opportunity to discuss all three subjects.

How many people attended?

People with intellectual disabilities:

- 16 self-advocates from 3 Organizations in Nicosia and
- 14 self-advocates from 6 Organizations from Limassol and Paphos

Professionals:

- 4 coordinators of self-advocacy groups at Nicosia
- 7 coordinators of self-advocacy groups at Limassol and Paphos

Others:

- 4 staff members from the Committee in Nicosia
- 3 staff members from the Committee in Limassol

Main messages

The right to love

1. Persons with intellectual disability have the right to love and to be loved
2. Love means giving hugs, kisses, to give presents, being happy, listening to music
3. Love also means to show kindness, trust, understanding and respect
4. Society and people prevent us from expressing our love
5. Our families prevent us to have a relationship and to express our love
6. Parents often violate our right to love
7. Some parents, out of fear that we might have a relationship, tell us that we are still too young
8. We have the right to be loved as we are, without anyone trying to change us
9. We have the right to decide when we are ready to have our own child
10. Some parents tell us that we are not old enough to have a relationship
11. We have the right to have relationships with people who accept us as we are, with our disability, and who do not try to change us

12. We have the right to decide who we love, without others forcing us, saying “no” or telling us that it is wrong or not right
13. Love is the feeling between all people – of all genders and sexualities.

The right to start a family

1. Persons with intellectual disabilities have the right to create their own family
2. Family means having your own children, marrying your partner and living together
3. Creating a family is something beautiful but also very difficult
4. We need support to be able to have our family
5. We have the right to have our children
6. Having a family is a huge responsibility: you need to have a job, your own money, your own house
7. My disability prevents me from having my own family
8. My family does not allow me to start my own family
9. I am afraid to have my own children, because my child might have also disability or the same syndrome as me
10. We need someone to teach us how to make our own family
11. We need support to raise our children
12. I'm worried that social welfare services might take my child away.
13. Because of my disability, my partner thinks I'm not smart enough to start a family
14. We must prepare our children to become independent, to not be afraid of relationships, and to not be ashamed of who they are
15. Both gay and straight people have the right to create a family.

The freedom to choose our relationships

1. We have the right to choose our relationships
2. Relationships may be friendly, romantic or sexual.
3. Relationship means to choose your partner, giving hugs and kisses, going for a walk or for food and travelling together

4. We have the right to walk around with our partner without people commenting on us.
5. Sometimes our family prevent us from having a relationship
6. My family only allows me to have friendly relationships, not romantic ones.
7. Sometimes I am afraid to choose my relationship, I might make a mistake
8. Disability can be an obstacle to having a relationship