

#StopTheShock at autisticadvocacy.org/stoptheshock

What's happening at the Judge Rotenberg Center? What can I do to stop it?

The Judge Rotenberg Center (JRC) is an institution in Massachusetts for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), mental health disabilities, and learning disabilities, including many autistic people. The people held at the JRC are disproportionately people of color. The Judge Rotenberg Center tortures some of the people living there using an electric shock device called a Gradual Electronic Decelerator (GED). Children and adults at the JRC are forced to wear the GED on their bodies. Using a remote control, someone else can use the GED to give an electric shock to the person wearing it. The JRC uses the GED as an “aversive:” they use the pain of the electric shock to punish people for doing certain things.

People with disabilities at the JRC are being shocked for things like:

- Flapping their hands
- Standing up without permission
- Swearing
- Not taking off a coat
- Involuntary noises or movements that they make because of their disability
- Screaming in pain while being shocked

The JRC says that they need to use the GED on the people who live there because they struggle with aggression and self-injury. But **the JRC is the only place in the United States that uses electric shocks to punish people with disabilities.** All across America, people with the exact same disabilities as the people at the JRC are being supported to deal with the exact same problems, without any kind of aversives. Research shows that positive supports for people with disabilities are better than aversives at helping people keep from hurting themselves or others.

Using the GED doesn't only hurt people with disabilities by shocking them. It can burn skin, or make someone unable to move. Getting shocked also makes people more likely to develop mental health disabilities because of their bad experiences with the GED. People with disabilities who were shocked by the GED have developed PTSD, depression, and anxiety disorders.

In 2013, the United Nations put out a report calling the use of the GED “torture”. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the government organization in the United States that decides what kinds of medical treatments can be used on people, even put out their own report **4 years ago** that said the GED should be banned. In 2016, the FDA finished writing a rule that would ban the GED--but they never released it.

Even though the FDA said the GED should be banned, they never put the ban into action. Today, people with disabilities at the JRC still have the GED used on them. **The FDA can stop this torture—and we need to hold them accountable until they do.**

Learn how you can help make this happen by going to
www.autisticadvocacy.org/stoptheshock.