Assessment of Behavior Change in Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Developed & Presented by:
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Objectives

- Identify factors that contribute to behavior change
- Identify barriers to assessment in persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD)
- Recognize indicators of a possible mental health disorder
- Recognize how accurate assessment leads to effective treatment and support
Dual Diagnosis

Psychiatric Diagnosis

Intellectual and/or Developmental Disability
Recognizing Risk Factors

Mental Health

Past Experiences

Disability

Environment

Quality of Life

Expectations
Behavior Change

- Anxiety
- Trauma memory
- Discomfort
- Pain
- Lack of social skills
- Change in mood
- Ignored
- Uncertainty
- Noise
- Light crowds
- Medication side effect
- Made to wait
- Language barrier
- Negative interaction
# Observable Signs of MH Symptoms

- shaking  
- trembling  
- rapid breathing  
- clinging to people

- sweating  
- moaning  
- clenching fists  
- perseveration

- pacing  
- biting self  
- hand wringing  
- cold, sweaty palms

- crying  
- grimacing  
- rapid heartbeat  
- running away

- frowning  
- tensed face  
- loudly vocalizing  
- pushing others away

- threatening  
- loud humming  
- yelling  
- pulling hair

- hitting self  
- covering eyes  
- whining  
- gastro distress

- hitting others  
- freezing  
- hiding  
- incoherent speech

Paclawskyj, T.
Our Challenge

It can be difficult to distinguish whether a change is associated with:

- A symptom of a psychiatric disorder
- An unmet need
- A learned behavior
- A medical condition
- The environment
Naseem has been sleeping a lot, even at the movies, his favorite thing to do on weekends. He has been getting into fights with his roommate, Nick. Naseem takes Depakote to control his seizures. His team notices his increase in sleep and lack of interest and set up a consult to explore possible Depression.

Considerations

Medications

Medical and health

The environment

what else could be causing his symptoms?
Assessment Challenges in IDD/MH

- Communication
- Diagnostic Overshadowing
- Acquiescence
- Appearing Withdrawn
- Medications
- Behavioral
- Multiple Diagnoses
Presentation of Mental Health Conditions
## Depression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presentation in Someone with IDD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Measured weight changes</td>
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<td>• Increased refusals to come to table to eat</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Unusually disruptive at meal times</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Constant food seeking behaviors</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Disruptive at bed time</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Repeatedly gets up at night</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Difficulty falling asleep</td>
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<tr>
<td>• General irritability and aggression or self-injury</td>
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<td>• Refusals of most work/social activities</td>
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<td>• Statements like “I’m dumb,” etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Increased disruptive behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Decreased work output</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Requiring many steps and breaks to complete tasks</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Anxiety

Agitation and aggression
Efforts to avoid discomfort
Compulsions
Obsessions

Social-Communication & Perspective
Uncertainty, Discomfort, Trauma
Rule-based, explicit learning style
“Sticky attention” (over focused)
Executive function (poor organization, sequencing)
Limited coping skills
## Assessment Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Details</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>medical and nutritional evaluations</strong></td>
<td>• Provides information about the influence of health factors that may influence symptoms of disorders or med side effects</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Psychological evaluations</strong></td>
<td>• Can identify the type and severity of symptoms, including any suicidal risk</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• assess sleep &amp; eating patterns, typical routines, activity level, cognition, mood</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Functional behavioral assessment</strong></td>
<td>• Can be useful when problem behaviors accompany symptoms of disorders</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Identifies triggers and outcomes of behaviors</td>
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</table>
Bio-psycho-social framework

An approach to describing and explaining how biological, psychological and social factors combine and interact to influence physical and mental health.

**Biological**
- Genetic Predisposition
- Neurochemistry
- Effect of Medications
- Immune Response
- Fight-flight response
- Physiological responses
  - HPA axis

**Psychological**
- Learning
- Emotions
- Thinking
- Attitudes
- Memory
- Perceptions
- Beliefs
- Stress Management Strategies

**Social**
- Social Support
- Family Background
- Interpersonal Relationships
- Cultural Traditions
- Socio-economic status
- Physical exercise
- Biofeedback
- Medical Care
  - Poverty
Bio-psycho-social: Integrated Model of Assessment

- Incorporates the effects of biomedical and psychological factors and how these influences interrelate.
- Identifies skills and related supports required by the individual to cope effectively with multiple bio-psycho-social influences.
- Provides for translation of multiple modalities of influence in a common model.
- Provides an integrated multimodal treatment plan.
- Recognizes that mental health consists of both the presence of personal contentment and the relative absence of psychological distress.
- Is proactive in focus.
Medical problems often underrecognized

Dental problems often underrecognized

Medical/dental problems can cause SIB

Need to identify if there is an underlying physical problem
Functional Behavior Assessment

- Problem-solving
- Team-based approach
- Examines underlying causes of behavior change
- Identifies the purpose/function of behavior (need being met)
Behavior Basics

Setting Events—Establishing Operations
What sets up the behavior?

Antecedents
What sets off the Behavior?

Behavior

Consequences
What is the outcome of the behavior?
# Elements of Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Event(s)</th>
<th>Antecedent</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Consequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List things that make the behavior more likely.</td>
<td>State what prompted/triggered the behavior.</td>
<td>What can you see and describe without bias?</td>
<td>Outcomes: everything that occurs as a result of behavior. It includes the changes to the person or setting.</td>
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Guidelines for Success

<table>
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<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Consequence</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address/meet:</td>
<td>Modify antecedent</td>
<td>Teach: communication</td>
<td>Address function by meeting needs across settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- MH needs</td>
<td></td>
<td>coping skills self skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Personal needs</td>
<td>Remove antecedent</td>
<td>social skills</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- modify environment</td>
<td>Provide non-contingent</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>reinforcement</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
## Kelly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Something sets me up (setting event)</th>
<th>Something sets me off (antecedent)</th>
<th>So I (behavior)</th>
<th>And I Get/Avoid (consequence)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dad died last summer</td>
<td>Prompted to get dressed for dinner, movies, shopping.</td>
<td>argue with staff, fight with roommates, knocks items off dinner table</td>
<td>Misses events, gets to be alone</td>
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<td>Not motivated by activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Migraines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff turnover</td>
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**Function**
- Gain attention
- Escape
- Obtain Tangible
- Sensory
Understanding Assessment

- Look for overall patterns in behavior change.
- Find links between Setting Events/Antecedents and Consequences
- How do mental health symptoms or unmet needs contribute to behavior pattern?
- What is the behavior’s purpose/function?
Signs of a Medical/Health Issue

• Changes in weight due to physical discomfort or pain
• Changes in sleep habits due to physical discomfort
• Sensitive to touch around certain parts of the body
• Discomfort around certain clothing or equipment
• Change in energy level, digestion, breathing or consciousness
• Unsteady gait, unbalanced walk, or recent falls
• Signs/symptoms occur across settings
Indicators of a Mental Health Condition

- Rapid onset, increase, or change in behavior or symptoms
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Decrease in living skills or change in appearance or hygiene
- Evidence of purposeful self-harm
- Signs of hallucination or delusion
- Co-occurring substance abuse
- Behaviors/symptoms occur across settings
Common Barriers to Assessment

- Signs and symptoms can present differently
- Presentation in clinical settings
- Observation without out documentation gets lost
- Mental health symptoms can be unnoticed
- Conditions overlooked when we use behavioral lens
- Lack of communication
Tools and Resources


- MHDD National Training Center: [https://www.mhddcenter.org/learn-now/](https://www.mhddcenter.org/learn-now/)


Thank You!

Follow-up Contact Information

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The Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities
Department of Pediatrics
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Liberty Plaza, 335 George Street
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
COVID-19 Resources on The Boggs Center Website

http://rwjms.rutgers.edu/boggscenter/links/COVID-19Resources.html

- COVID-19 National & State Resources
- Plain Language Information
- Resources in Support of Communication, Physical & Emotional, and Mental Health
References


- McGilvery, Sharon PhD and Sweetland, Darlene, PhD. Intellectual Disability and Mental Health: A Training Manual in Dual Diagnosis, 2011.