

# UNDERSTANDING INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

# Introduction

- ▣ An overview of Intellectual Developmental Disability
- Functioning Levels of Mental Retardation/Intellectual Disability
- Autism

# Introduction

Intellectual/Developmental Disability (IDD) - indicates an overall intellectual functioning well below average, with an intelligence quotient (IQ) around 70 or less (aka Mental Retardation-MR).

- ▣ Individuals with an intellectual disability or developmental disability may have an impaired ability to cope with common life demands and may struggle with the ability to easily change behavior in response to certain situations.
- ▣ IDD may interfere with learning, communication, self care, independent living, social interaction, play, work, and safety.

About 2.5 to 3% of the general population has an Intellectual Disability varying across the four levels of Mental Retardation. Intellectual Disability occurs in people of all racial, ethnic, education and economic backgrounds.



# What is the Cause

Many medical conditions have been associated with IDD including:

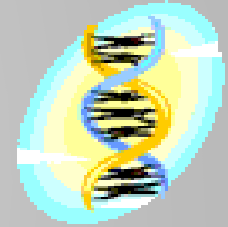
- Abnormal brain development before birth
- Infections of the pregnant mother, such as German Measles (Rubella)
- Severe oxygen deficiency at birth



# Causes (cont.)

Genetic Causes:

Chromosome abnormalities may cause:



- Down Syndrome
- Fragile X
  
- Just as an example!
  
- ❑ For most the exact cause of IDD is never found.  
Some cases of IDD have multiple causes.

# External Causes

Problems during pregnancy can cause an Intellectual Disability. These include malnutrition, a mother's use of alcohol or drugs, environmental toxins, viral infections, and/or untreated diseases.

- ▣ Other problems during birth: very low birth weight, stresses to the fetus (such as deprivation of oxygen), infectious diseases during childhood, and/or physical trauma to the brain (accidental blows to the head, near drowning, severe child abuse or exposure to toxins).



# Some Basic Info

Individuals with an Intellectual Disability will learn new things but at a slower pace!

- ▣ IDD is a disability characterized by limitations in intellectual function and adaptive behavior - social and practical daily living skills are compromised.
- ▣ This disability originates before the age of 22. A person's ability to function mentally, physically and emotionally depends on the severity of the "retardation."



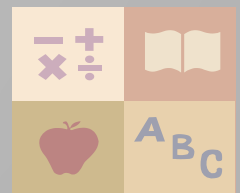
# LABEL DISCLAIMER!

To follow is a discussion of the different levels of Intellectual/Developmental Disability (aka Mental Retardation). You will see these descriptions and read about limitations in the records of the people that you will support.

- ▣ BE AWARE ☺: The people with whom you will work may not be able to speak to you as clearly as a typical person, but do not underestimate their capacity to understand! We are constantly amazed by their accomplishments!

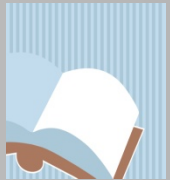
# 1<sup>st</sup> Level: Mild IDD (Mild Mental Retardation)

- Approx. IQ range: 55-70
- Learn practical skills, reading and math at a 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade level.
- Can achieve social and job skills, as well as live by themselves.
- May need guidance for times of social and economic stress.
- Support is not always needed. It is provided on an “as needed” basis and most likely required at life transitions.



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Level: Moderate IDD (Moderate Mental Retardation)

- ▣ Approx. IQ range: 40-54
- ▣ Noted delays in motor skills and speech.
- ▣ Learns simple communication, elementary health and safety habits, and simple skills.
- ▣ No functional reading and math skills.
- ▣ Completes basic tasks, travels alone in familiar places. Cannot live independent.
- ▣ Consistent support is required.



# 3<sup>rd</sup> Level: Severe IDD (Severe Mental Retardation)

Approx. IQ range 25-39

- ▣ Delays in motor development and little or no communication skills.
  - ▣ May learn basic self-help skills, such as feeding themselves and bathing.
  - ▣ Usually walks, has some understanding of speech and some response to it.
  - ▣ Needs direction and continuous supervision.
- Individuals with severe IDD Need Extensive Supports.

## 4<sup>TH</sup> Level: Profound IDD (Profound Mental Retardation)

Approx. IQ less than 25

- ▣ May have other medical problems, such as Cerebral Palsy, and may need nursing care.
- ▣ Show basic emotions and limited verbal communication.
- ▣ Require close supervision.
- ▣ May use simple speech and may walk.
- ▣ May need complete support for daily living.

# How is IDD Treated?

- There is no cure for IDD.
- Treatment focuses on educational, behavioral, and self-help skills.
- It is helpful when IDD is diagnosed early in a child's life, so that supports and services can begin as soon as possible.
- However, it is never too late to begin.

# What is Autism?

Autism is the most common condition in a group of developmental disorders known as the autism spectrum disorder (ASDs)

Autism is characterized by:

- ▣ Impaired social interactions;
- ▣ Problems with verbal and nonverbal communication;
- ▣ Unusual, repetitive, or severely limited activities and interests.



# How is Autism Diagnosed?

- ❑ Autism varies widely in its severity and symptoms.
- ❑ Doctors rely on a core group of behaviors to alert them to the possibility of a diagnosis of autism.



# Conclusion

Although the individuals you will be interacting with have developmental disabilities, each also has their own unique personality & abilities. We are all people first!

- ▣ Therefore, stress the person first and the disability second.  
**EX: you would say, John has IDD, rather than John is IDD.**
- ▣ **Regardless of what you are seeing, the individual is more like you than different. Assume they understand you and treat each person as you would like to be treated.**