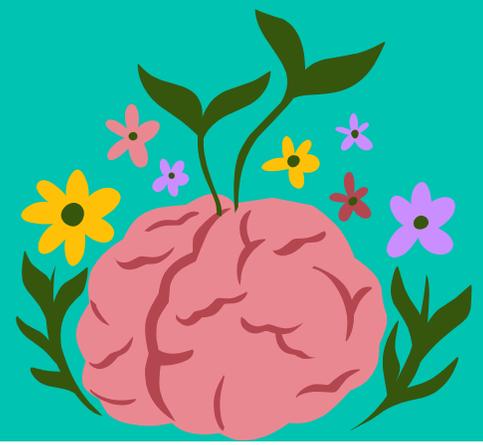


MENTAL HEALTH IDD

CREATED BY: MARINE NIPIOSYAN , OTD STUDENT



OVERVIEW, TRENDS AND PREVALENCE

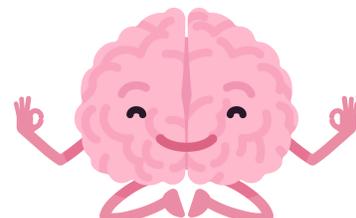
- Adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) experience high rates of co-occurring mental health conditions, such as anxiety, depression, and OCD.
- They are more vulnerable to trauma, abuse, and neglect across their lifespan, which often goes under reported and unaddressed.
- Barriers to healthcare and misdiagnosis make it difficult for this population to access appropriate services. History of trauma, differences in processing grief and loss, and systemic inequities further complicate mental health support needs.

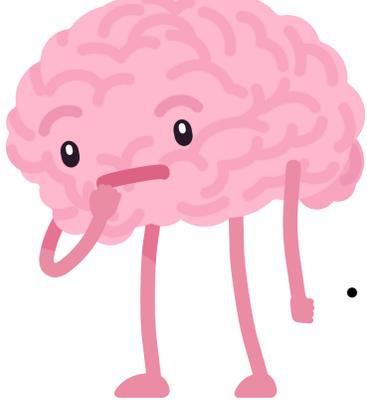
COMMON CO-OCCURRING CONDITIONS

- People with IDD frequently experience 'invisible' co-occurring conditions, including anxiety, depression, ADHD, OCD, tic disorders, and eating disorders.
- Autism spectrum disorder in particular shows high rates of anxiety and depression, often connected to sensory sensitivities and difficulties in social relationships.

IMPACT OF AGING AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

- Aging individuals with IDD often experience premature or atypical aging, which impacts both physical and mental wellness.
- Common medical conditions include dental pathologies, obesity, sensory impairments, osteoporosis, and chronic pain. These physical challenges may contribute to or exacerbate depression, anxiety, and social isolation.
- Declines in independence for ADLs and IADLs also impact mental health, as individuals lose routines and autonomy that support well-being.





RECOGNIZING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Signs of mental health struggles in individuals with IDD can include verbal expressions of sadness, fear, or hopelessness, as well as behavioral changes such as withdrawal, aggression, or defiance. Other markers may be changes in sleep, grooming, energy levels, or appetite.
- Some individuals exhibit behavioral signs like pacing, hand-flapping, or self-talk, which may reflect coping strategies or distress. Providers must be attuned to both inward and outward expressions of symptoms, especially when individuals cannot verbalize their feelings clearly.

STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE WELLNESS

- Promoting wellness involves ensuring basics such as sleep, nutrition, physical activity, and social connection are optimized.
- Interventions may include predictable routines, visual supports, and the use of technology for communication and emotional regulation.
- Providers should encourage calming strategies, creative outlets, and opportunities for meaningful activity. Collaboration among multidisciplinary teams is key, as individualized and person-centered approaches are required for effective care.



RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

- [Autism Research Institute](#)
- [National Down Syndrome Society](#)
- [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#)
- Support groups, counseling, and tailored caregiver resources further strengthen networks for individuals with IDD and their families.
- Accessing these services requires advocacy and awareness from both professionals and caregivers.

REFERENCES

Marsack-Topolewski, C. (2025, April 22). Mental Health In Aging Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: Insights and Strategies. Occupationaltherapy.com