

Overview of Developmental Disabilities





What Do You Believe?

Points to consider: yes or no

People with a severe intellectual disability are best cared for in institutions.

Adults who are developmentally disabled need to work in special workshops.

Children with disabilities bring much pleasure to their families.

It is appropriate to treat an adult in a wheelchair more kindly than an adult who is able bodied.

Men & women with developmental disabilities should be given the opportunity to meet socially and express their feelings for one another.

People with developmental disabilities, can grow develop and learn throughout their lives.

New Jersey Definition of a Developmental Disability

- Attributable to a mental or physical impairment or a combination of both.
- Manifest before the age of 18.
- Likely to continue indefinitely.
- Substantial limitations in three or more of the following areas:
 - ✓ Self Care
 - ✓ Receptive or Expressive Language
 - ✓ Learning
 - ✓ Mobility
 - ✓ Self-Direction
 - ✓ Capacity for independent living
 - ✓ Economic self sufficiency



History

- Throughout the history of mankind, cultural perspectives regarding individuals with developmental disabilities have caused them to be abandoned, cast out, abused, victimized and even killed!
- Whether this mistreatment was due to fear, hate or beliefs about spiritual, evolutionary or physical inferiority, society has always fought embracing them as equals and including them in the daily norms of life.

History

- Until the 1970's it was standard accepted and encouraged medical thought that placing a developmentally disabled child in a training school would protect marriages, siblings and even communities from potential harm.



History

- Between 1900 and 1925, the number of these “schools” grew in the United States from 10 to over 80. Small training schools became large institutions where the developmentally disabled were housed “out of sight” from daily life.
- With no oversight and the prevalence of ignorant perspectives regarding the developmentally disabled, horrific abuse became rampant and unchecked as the original intention of training was abandoned almost entirely.



History

- A shift began again when, starting in the 1950's, parents began to take notice of worsening conditions.
- Working together, they demanded improved conditions and encouraged others to stop institutionalizing their disabled children.
- Appealing to the government for reform, their message took hold to change attitudes and inspire action.
- In the 1970's, significant legislative changes began to take shape providing for equal protection and opportunity under the law. The federal government began to require states to provide education and community services to families and individuals with developmental disabilities.
- In 2000, with the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, the federal government provided financial assistance to states and public and nonprofit agencies to support community-based delivery of services to persons with developmental disabilities.

AAIDD Definition of a Developmental Disability

American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

What is an intellectual or developmental disability?

- According to the new definition by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), Intellectual disability is a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior.
- This includes many everyday social and practical skills.
- This disability originates before the age of 18.
- **Intellectual functioning**—also called intelligence—refers to general mental capacity, such as learning, reasoning, problem solving, and so on.



Measurement Criteria

- One criterion to measure intellectual functioning is an IQ test. Generally, an IQ test score of around 70 or as high as 75 indicates a limitation in intellectual functioning.
- Standardized tests can also determine limitations in **adaptive behavior**, which comprises three skill types:
 - a) **Conceptual skills** —language and literacy; money, time and number concepts; and self-direction.
 - b) **Social skills** —interpersonal skills, social responsibility, self-esteem, gullibility, naïveté (i.e., wariness), social problem solving, and the ability to follow rules/obey laws and to avoid being victimized.
 - c) **Practical skills** —activities of daily living (personal care), occupational skills, healthcare, travel/transportation, schedules/routines, safety, use of money, use of the telephone. (AAIDD, 2009).



For more information: American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD): <http://www.aamr.org>



Learning Characteristics

1. Slow rate of Learning
2. Thinks in a concrete way
3. Difficulties generalizing
4. Need to be taught how to make choices
5. Need help setting goals and problem solving
6. Memory problems
7. Short attention spans
8. Lack of expressive language



Behavioral Characteristics

1. Respond best to “Errorless learning” - (teaching procedures that are designed in such a way that the learner does not have to – **and does not** – make mistakes as he or she learns new information or new procedures.)

Errorless learning has been *contrasted* with trial and error learning in which the learner attempts a task and then benefits from feedback, whether the attempt was correct or incorrect.

2. Self-confidence.
3. Tendency to persevere.
4. Impulsive actions.

Physical Characteristics

1. Limited Mobility
2. Movement quality
3. Poor or abnormal muscle tone
4. Abnormal reflexes
5. Physical anomalies
6. Sensory problems



About developmental disabilities

- When a person has a developmental disability, it means that they learn slower.
- Because they learn more slowly, they don't learn as much as other people might.
- There are over 200 known causes for developmental disabilities.
- About one-third of the time, no one knows what caused it.



Characteristics and Considerations

- A person with a developmental disability learns more slowly, but with time and patience can often learn new skills and acquire knowledge.
- The individual has a more difficult time remembering things that are learned.
For example, it may take many times before he or she remembers your name.
This does not mean you are not important to them but rather is a reflection of one aspect of their disability.



Characteristics and Considerations

- Has a more difficult time transferring what is learned from one situation to a new situation
- Thinks about things in more concrete ways
- Keeps learning and developing throughout life just like anyone else



Characteristics and Considerations

- There are different levels of intellectual disability from mild to moderate to severe; therefore individuals need different types of assistance in daily living.
- The DPD addresses these issues in the residences through physical accommodations, amount of supervision vs. independence and location of various programs.



FITZPATRICK HOUSE, POMPTON LAKES

Examples of meeting the need



GIULIANO HOUSE, OAK RIDGE

- Designed specifically for people requiring wheelchair accessibility including wide doorways, ramps, hoists and lifts to move an individual from chair to bed or bath, wheelchair van, etc.
- 24 hour supervision
- No skills for independence in the community

Examples of meeting the need



BASILE APARTMENTS, WAYNE



KELLEHER SUPERVISED APARTMENTS, BUTLER

- Condominiums – no special adaption of the premises.
- Staff are available 24 hours but not always present in the apartments. Residents are able to seek assistance when needed.
- Move independently in the community. Use buses, walk, go to the gym, etc.
- Staff provides guidance in dealing with expectations and demands of life and life skills training.

What to expect



Not everyone with developmental disabilities is alike.

One person can have mild problems while another may have severe problems.

A person with developmental disabilities may:

- have difficulty understanding what other people say or mean;
- may have difficulty saying what they mean or how they feel;
- may have difficulty understanding social cues (for example, if you turn away they may not know this means you don't want to talk to them).

What to expect

- have difficulty learning and concentrating;
- have to do things many more times than average before they learn it;
- act younger than their age;
- not understand when someone is making fun of them;
- may find it hard to read or write;
- may not understand when someone tells them to do something wrong.

Keep in Mind...

- No two people are the same -- some differences are just more noticeable.
- A disability is only one characteristic of a person. People have many facets: likes and dislikes, strengths and challenges.
- People with disabilities are like all people in that they want friends, respect and to be included.
- People can be born disabled or become disabled from an accident or illness. You can't "catch" a disability from someone else.

Normalization

- While everyone is unique, we are in many ways just as alike as we are different.
- We all have similar needs and wants. We all have the same rights.
- We all have feelings and can experience emotions such as love, loss, joy and embarrassment.
- We are all capable of learning and personal development.
- We all desire to make our own decisions for our life. We all desire to contribute.
- We all desire to be valued.

This is no less true for the individuals we support.

Normalization

- The Principle of Normalization does not emphasize how people with disabilities are different from others, but rather, stresses what people *can do*, rather than what they can't.
- It assumes that everyone *can learn* and has a need to grow.
- It places an emphasis on an individual's environment and the experiences they encounter. It understands that experiences can be planned which foster growth and learning.
- It is important to get to know the individuals you support to understand what is important to them and to assist them in living the life that they most desire.

Age Appropriate Interactions

- Age Appropriateness refers to activities and interactions that are designed specifically to suit the age of the disabled adult.
- It is important to encourage adults with developmental disabilities to participate in an environment that is suited to their chronological age.
- A disabled child is often kept busy with toys, a disabled adult, on the other hand, deserves and demands respect and a variety of activities that can interest and engage them.

Age Appropriate Interactions

- The rule of thumb, while considering an age appropriate activity for disabled adults is to ask oneself, “Is this something that an adult without a disability might do?”
- If the answer is yes, then you are on the right track.
- Remember, such activities are required to be simple, uncomplicated, engaging and above all, respectful of the age of the person.
- For example – coloring is an activity adults also enjoy and is often recommended for stress reduction. However, it is important to choose more mature themed coloring books.

Age Appropriate Interactions

- Why is age appropriateness so important?
- It helps to develop independence as an adult.
- It also helps to build a positive self-image.
- It helps to combat negative stereotypes that people with developmental disabilities are like children.
- Most importantly it helps them to find a common ground and similarity with other adults of a similar chronological age.



Activity Examples:

Community Experiences

Some of the following community experiences can assist in developing personal interests.

Shopping – budgeting, money management	Cultural events
Restaurants – ordering from menus, personal choices, paying the bill	Travel and community safety, use of public transportation
Bowling	Theater, community concerts
Library, Book clubs	Community festivals
Health fairs	Holiday celebrations
Museums	Parks, walking, picnics
Sports/fitness events	Community gardens

Facility-Based Activities

Cooking, meal preparation, food safety
Money management
Health, fitness
Current events
Telling time
Cleaning

****Developing Personal Interests Examples**

- Cards and competitive/collaborative games
- Painting, artwork, drawing, constructing models, needlecraft, jewelry design, sculpting, woodworking, scrapbooking, photography
- Theatre, film-making
- Dancing, music, playing instruments, singing
- Horticulture, gardening, terrariums
- Athletics, sports, fitness
- Reading, books, poetry
- Computer and other devices/ technology, social media experience

When is doubt...

- The director or other staff members are your resource.
- They are more than happy to assist you or offer insights into particular interests of their residents.
- You may always contact the Director of volunteers at any time with questions or concerns.

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You have a standing invitation to visit any of the programs to observe what other volunteers are doing or to observe a structured activity such as CARE, Saturdays at the Center (SATC), Fight for the Right, or the Gruenert Center.

*"Would somebody please
tell me what a person with a
developmental disability
CAN DO?"*



win a race...
cookies... be a good neighbor.....
fall in love... give a speech.. walk
in the
a taxi...
work.....learn to
party...cry at
novel... ride the



woods... vote... take
.....retire from
ski..... throw a
weddings...read a
bus..... make a



mistake...report the news...celebrate... play Chinese
checkers...create works of art... hug a friend... buy
clothes..... sing in a
homerun... volunteer...
star in a play...ride in an
a baby..... go to the
the car.....
prizewinning
paycheck.....



choir... hit a
cook linguini...
elevator... rock
movies... wash
rake leaves... grow
tomatoes... earn a
go to church.....be a friend.



Explore the possibilities!