Improving the Mental Health of People with an Intellectual Disability

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Main Points

• The goal
• Mental ill health in people with an Intellectual Disability
• Barriers to access to good quality mental health care
• Improving mental health & mental health care
• Examples of recent progress and projects
• Summary
• Questions
THE HIGHEST ATTAINABLE STANDARD OF MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING FOR PEOPLE WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

• Talk to:
  – consumers
  – family carers
  – health advocates
  – disability sector

• Examine:
  – available prevalence data
  – skills and training of mental health professional
  – mental health services
  – mental health policy
How Common are Mental Health Problems?  
General Population  
• About 1 in 10 people in a month (NB survey excluded people with an ID)
How Common are Mental Health Problems?

General Population

• About 2 in 10 people in a year

2007 National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing
How Common are Mental Health Problems?
For people with ID

- About 4 or 5 out of every 10 people in a year

Cooper et. al., 2007
How Common are Mental Health Problems?
For carers

- About 3 out of every 10 people in a year

Savage and Bailey, 2004
Mental Health of People with an ID

- People with an intellectual disability experience an over-representation of mental disorders
  - Conservative estimates for adults/children with ID 2.5/3-4x
- At any one time, an estimated 20-40% of people with an ID will be experiencing a mental disorder of some kind.
- Access to mental health supports and treatments is limited
- High impact for people with ID, families and carers
- Complexity
- Multiple vulnerabilities
ID Mental Health across the Lifespan

• predisposition to mental ill health across the lifespan
  – Children: neurodevelopmental disorders
  – Younger persons: Schizophrenia over-represented 2-4 x, earlier onset in people with an ID.
  – Older persons: higher rates of dementia.
Approach

Vision

Mission

Guiding Principles

• The highest attainable standard of mental health and wellbeing for people with an intellectual or developmental disability.

• To improve mental practice and policy for people with an intellectual disability.

• Human rights
• Equity in mental health care
• Person centred approach
• Promoting independence
• Recovery-oriented practice
• Evidence based
• Innovation in health services
• Collaboration
Approach

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Access to MH Services and Supports

- Policy
- Silos
- Significant Barriers
- Conceptual
- Individual and Carer
- Workforce and skills
- Historical
Vulnerabilities to Mental Disorder

**Biological risk factors**
- Physical inactivity
- Poor diet
- Multiple health conditions
- Polypharmacy
- Epilepsy
- Head injuries
- Family history of mental disorder
- Genetic anomalies – e.g., velocardiofacial syndrome is associated with higher rates of mental disorder, particularly schizophrenia

**Social risk factors**
- Social isolation
- Social adversity
- Adverse life events
- Stigma
- Communication difficulties
- Reduced social skills
- Absence of an active social support network

**Psychological risk factors**
- Maladaptation
- Feeling of helplessness
- Stress and anxiety
- Low self-esteem
- Emotional problems
- Capacity to cope

**Various combinations of social, psychological or biological risk factors**
- Social and communication impairments, e.g., those associated with autistic disorder
- Family stress or conflict
- Interpersonal difficulties
- Chronic pain
- Atypical physical appearance
- Motor impairment
- Lower IQ
- History of trauma and abuse
- Experiences of loss, grief, or unwanted life changes
- Being easily manipulated
- Deprivation or neglect
- Below average achievement
People

Macro Strategies

• Improved pre, peri & postnatal care
• Improved access to housing, education, employment
• Strengthening community networks

Enhancing Resilience

• Early intervention in developmental lags
• Childhood disorders
• Reducing neglect and abuse
• Enhancing social skills and peer relationships
• Strengthening families
• Work place participation and interventions
• Mental and physical activity across the lifespan
• Addressing medical risk factors for mental ill health
People

• The experience of mental ill health
• The experience of mental health care
• Barriers and enablers to access for the person and their carers
• Consumer, carer and advocate perspectives on:
  – priorities for reform and service development
  – Attributes expected of the workforce
• Data
  – Epidemiology
  – Outcomes

“the person is the expert in their own experience”
Mental Health professional, disability service
Workforce

- Understanding training needs
- Access to appropriate training
- Competencies
- Professional development
- Professional bodies
- Champions

“Respectful interactions are not only mutually rewarding but assist the process of recovery.”

Mental health professional, ID mental health service
Systems

- Clinical
  - Consumer health information
  - Diagnostic tools
  - Clinical pathways
- Service Mapping
- Service Development
  - Tiered
  - Joint service planning
  - Flexible boundaries
- Outcomes
  - Measures of effectiveness

“It took many years to get the help that my son needed. He was misdiagnosed with autistic disorder when he was actually psychotic. Regrettably, it was only after he had contact with the law that he was provided with the assessment and management he needed.”

Alan, parent and carer
Policy

• Proactive approach
• Universal inclusion of people with ID in all mainstream mental health policy development
• Adequate consultation with key stakeholders

“Troy aged 45, has a mild intellectual disability and autistic disorder. He lives independently and enjoys fishing, going on holidays, and spending time with his father. He developed depression, and became isolated from his community and family. He came close to disengaging from services and was at risk of homelessness. A Memorandum of Understanding between mental health and disability services guided collaboration between service providers. Troy was provided with flexible service delivery and holistic support from staff who respected and responded to his needs. He has made significant gains in health, is engaged in decision making and is a valued member of his local community.”

Mental Health Professional, mental health service
WHO Mental Health Action Plan

Objectives

1. Strengthen effective leadership and governance for mental health
2. To provide comprehensive, integrated and responsive mental health and social care services in community-based settings
3. To implement strategies for promotion and prevention in mental health
4. To strengthen information systems, evidence and research for mental health
National Round Table in ID & Mental Health


- Key elements of reform
- Priorities for action
  - Inclusion in all mental health initiatives
  - Prevention and timely intervention
  - Equitable access and skilled treatment
  - Specialists in Id mental health
  - Collaboration between agencies
  - Workforce education and training
  - Data collection and interrogation
### Approach to People with an ID

#### Capacity Building Projects

- ADHC Funded IDMH Fellowships
- Training pathways in IDMH
- National audit of ID health content in Australian Medical and nursing schools
- NSW Mental Health Staff Survey
- IDMH Core Competencies Project
- Data linkage
- National Guide for mental health services
- IDMH e-learning
‘Accessible Mental Health Services for People with ID: A Guide for Providers’

The Goal

- To improve mental health service access for people with an intellectual disability by developing a guiding framework of action for all front line mental health service providers.
Methodology

• Core Reference Group formation
• Background research and collation
• Draft sections for CRG consultation
• Focus group consultation
• Second Draft and circulation
• Final Draft
• Publication
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<th>Key Components</th>
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<td>• Adaptation of Clinical approach</td>
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<td>• Person centred approach</td>
<td>• Access to specialised IDMH services</td>
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<td>• Identification of care pathways</td>
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<td>• Evidence based</td>
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Further enhancement
Individual + Organisation

- All mental health professionals
- Primary care
- Public mental health services
- Private mental health services
- Specialist ID health and Mental Health services
Key Issues for Health Professionals

**Health Professional**

- Competent mental health assessments.
- Appropriate management plans.
- Timely reviews.
- Regular review of psychotropic medications and monitoring any potential side-effects.
- Identification and familiarity with care pathways
- Partnerships with local or regional disability services.
- Availability of specialised ID health and mental health services.
- Referral as appropriate for a second opinion.
- Skill development in ID mental health
Key Issues for Services Include:

For the Organisation

- Recognition and promotion of the rights of people with an ID to access appropriate mental health services.
- Viewing the mental health of people with an ID as core business in mental health services.
- The development of partnerships with local or regional disability services.
- An understanding of the referral processes to disability and related services, including the development of networks and partnerships with local disability services.
- The development of staff resources outlining the availability of, and access to, local or regional specialised ID health and mental health services.
- The development of identified care pathways through typical service components.
- The development of accessible information (e.g. Plain English, modified or Easy English materials) where appropriate to consumers and their families.
- Fostering staff development of skills in ID mental health through the provision of education and access to training resources.
- Awareness and engagement with the academic sector.
- The development of joint initiatives between local disability and mental health services including:
  - priority referrals of urgent cases from disability or health sector to one another;
  - the establishment of regular meetings between designated mental health and disability staff to discuss specific cases;
  - the conduct of joint training and education initiatives;
  - the establishment of pathways for case escalation;
  - the development of long-term accommodation models for people with an ID and mental disorders, including those with offending behaviours;
- Identification of expertise in ID mental health to act as ‘ID mental health champions’
‘Accessible Mental Health Services for People with ID: A Guide for Providers’

Release

• Early 2014
Free e-learning
intellectual disability mental health

www.idhealtheducation.edu.au

- Introduction to Intellectual Disability
- Living with Intellectual Disability
- Changing Perspectives of Intellectual Disability
- Introduction to Mental Disorders in Intellectual Disability
- Communication: the basics
- Improving your Communication
- Assessment of Mental Disorders in Intellectual Disability
- Management of Mental Disorders in Intellectual Disability
Challenges

• NDIS
• People with complex disabilities
• People in contact with the criminal justice system
• State-based Disability services
• Mental health reforms
Key Points

• People with an ID:
  – Have higher rates of mental ill health
  – Experience multiple barriers to effective and high quality mental health care

• Complex reasons: person, workforce, systems and policy levels
Implications

• A complex problem requires a multilevel solution
• Guiding principles are apparent
• There are key priorities for reform
• There are individual and corporate responsibilities
• Improvement must be quantifiable (people, workforce, system, policy)
• Continued lobbying and reform is required
THE HIGHEST ATTAINABLE STANDARD
OF MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING
FOR PEOPLE WITH AN INTELLECTUAL
DISABILITY
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• Autism CRC