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THINK BIG 2017

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Disability Overview

Intellectual Disability

A disability characterized by significant limitations in both **intellectual functioning** and in **adaptive behavior**, which covers many everyday social and practical skills. This disability originates before the age of 18.

Intellectual Functioning

Intellectual functioning—also called intelligence—refers to general mental capacity, such as learning, reasoning, problem solving, and so on.

One way 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.

Adaptive Behavior

Adaptive behavior is the collection of conceptual, social, and practical skills that are learned and performed by people in their everyday lives.

- Conceptual skills—language and literacy; money, time, and number concepts; and self-direction.
- 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.
- Practical skills—activities of daily living (personal care), occupational skills, healthcare, travel/

transportation, schedules/routines, safety, use of money, use of the telephone. Standardized tests can also determine limitations in adaptive behavior.

Persons with intellectual disabilities often struggle with:

- Recalling information
- Speech
- Understanding social norms
- Challenges with problem-solving and logical thinking
- Behavioral problems like extreme temper tantrums
- understanding the implications of their actions

Vocational Challenges

1. Learning work skills
2. Self-Direction
4. Communication
5. Interpersonal skills
6. Work tolerance
7. Mobility
8. Self Care
9. Transportation
10. Problems reading basic information
11. Emotional Regulation
12. Trouble with decision making
13. Co-occurring sensory

and physical impairment may hamper vocational endeavors

14. May need constant supervision

Considerations for Successfully Working Together

- Minimize distractions.
- Relax, take some extra time and build rapport
- Keep it simple. Use short sentences, and avoid jargon and abstract concepts. Raise only one topic at a time. Ask only one question at a time
- Clearly signpost changes in the topic to avoid confusion
- Allow more time than usual for a response
- Your client is likely to have a poor concentration span. During interviews, allow for the possibility that they may need short breaks to rejuvenate.
- Your client with intellectual disability is likely to have very limited reading skills and difficulty understanding what they can read. Speak with the client wherever possible. A simple letter using everyday language in dot point form can be useful to reinforce information already given to your client verbally. If possible send important information to another person who can help your client understand and remember.
- Move the focus from parents of people with intellectual disability, to the person itself. By focusing on parents, people with intellectual disabilities are placed in secondary position and deprived of their own individuality.
- Give opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities to talk about their everyday needs,

Resources

Colorado Intellectual Disability Council

1120 Lincoln, Suite 706
Denver, CO 80203
720-941-0176

Division of Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/hcpf/division-intellectual-and-developmental-disabilities->

Peak Parent Center

611 North Weber St
Suite 200
Colorado Springs, CO
80903
1-800-284-0251

PEAK Parent Center is a nonprofit that works every day to ensure that all people with disabilities are fully included in their neighborhood schools, communities,

The ARC of Colorado

1580 Logan Street, Suite 730
Denver, CO 80203
[303.864.9334](tel:303.864.9334)

The Arc of Colorado is a private not-for-profit 501 (c) (3) statewide volunteer organization dedicated to support and advocacy for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities