Learning Disabilities Current Awareness Bulletin
July 2021

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Neurodevelopmental conditions and mental health research: it’s time to #EmbraceComplexity!
The Mental Elf; 2021.
In her debut blog, Suzi Sapiets summarises a review exploring psychological treatment of depression in young people with neurodevelopmental conditions, which finds very limited evidence to help neurodiverse individuals. She also tells us that it’s time to #EmbraceComplexity and encourages people to join the Embracing Complexity Research Network

Connecting for Change: for the future of learning disability nursing.
Royal College of Nursing (RCN); 2021.
This publication explores contemporary issues concerning the field of learning disability nursing and sets out a series of recommendations and priorities that the UK government and devolved administrations need to address. It also identifies priorities for the RCN to take forward.

Belonging and reciprocity amongst people with intellectual disabilities: A systematic methodological review.
Seventeen papers met inclusion criteria. Clear conceptualisations of belonging and reciprocity were lacking, and these concepts were rarely the focus of the research. More nuanced conceptualisations of belonging and reciprocity may be helpful in future research, to better capture the context and meaning of individual lives and relationships.

Trauma experiences of people with an intellectual disability and their implications: A scoping review.
There is a growing body of literature highlighting assessment needs and potential interventions for people with an intellectual disability who have experienced psychological trauma. Further research is needed to develop trauma-informed pathways.

Psychological Treatment of Subthreshold Depression in Children and Adolescents: A Meta-analytic Review.
Pediatrics 2021;147(5):e2020049880.
These findings indicate that CBT may significantly improve the symptoms of ASD and social-emotional problems in children or adolescents with ASD.

Title: What are the barriers and facilitators to participation in active recreation for people with learning disabilities? A scoping review

Citation: British Journal of Learning Disabilities; Jul 2021
Author(s): Haythorne, Rebecca; Gega, Lina; Knapp, Peter; Crawford, Hannah

Accessible summary: Hobbies that are active can be a way of improving physical and mental well-being for people with learning disabilities. Choice, tailoring an activity to a person’s needs and companionship between people with learning disabilities and their caregivers can facilitate participation in hobbies that are active. Disregard for a person’s physical and cognitive capabilities, and for their environmental or carer circumstances, can hinder participation in hobbies that are active.

Abstract background: Active recreation denotes engagement with meaningful and rewarding activities that can improve physical and mental well-being for everyone; however, there are specific challenges to participation in active recreation for people with learning disabilities.

Aim: To understand what hinders and what enables participation in active recreation for people with learning disabilities.
Method: Using a scoping review framework, we retrieved relevant literature by searching MEDLINE 1946 (Ovid), PsycINFO, CINAHL Complete (EBSCO), Scorpus, PubMed and Web of Science. We extracted data, charted and synthesised them using the Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2008) and the social–ecological model (Boulton, Horne & Todd, 2017).

Findings: Nineteen studies met our inclusion criteria. Key barriers identified in the studies included caregiver/coach knowledge and skill, caregiver resources, relational, environmental and individual capabilities. Key facilitators included choice, needs-based tailored activities, positive relationships, consideration of cognitive and functional ability, motivational incentives and policy and organisational factors.

Conclusions: Participation in active recreation involves a complex interaction between individuals with learning disabilities, their caregivers and their wider organisational and community networks. This relationship warrants further exploration from the perspective of people with learning disabilities and their proxies, so that we can optimise how we design and deliver active recreational pursuits for this population. (PsycInfo Database Record (c) 2021 APA, all rights reserved)  (Source: journal abstract)

Title: Assessment of dementia in a clinical sample of persons with intellectual disability

Citation: Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities; Jul 2021
Author(s): Rösner, Peggy; Berger, Justus; Tarasova, Daria; Birkner, Joana; Kaiser, Heika; Diefenbacher, Albert; Sappok, Tanja

Background: Assessment of age-associated disorders has become increasingly important.

Methods: In a clinical setting, people with intellectual disability with and without dementia were assessed retrospectively using the Neuropsychological Test Battery (NTB) and the Dementia Questionnaire for People with Learning Disabilities (DLD) at two different times to analyse neuropsychological changes and diagnostic validity. One group (n = 44) was assessed with both instruments, while the DLD was applied in 71 patients.

Results: In the NTB (n = 44), only patients with dementia (n = 26) showed a decline in the NTB total score and three subscales. Receiver operating characteristic analysis revealed a diagnostic sensitivity of .67, a specificity of .81, and an area under the curve (AUC) of .767. In the DLD group (n = 71), only those with dementia displayed a decrease in the cognitive and social scale; diagnostic sensitivity and specificity values were low (.61/.63) and the AUC was .704.

Conclusions: Neuropsychological assessment was sensitive to detect cognitive changes over time. Sensitivity values of both instruments suggest a reassessment at a later time point. (PsycInfo Database Record (c) 2021 APA, all rights reserved)  (Source: journal abstract)

Title: A systematic review of the knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of health and social care professionals towards people with learning disabilities and mental health problems

Citation: British Journal of Learning Disabilities; Jun 2021
Author(s): Ee, Jonathan; Stenfert Kroese, Biza; Rose, John

Accessible summary: Many people with learning disabilities need mental health services at some point in their lives. This paper looks at how health and social care professionals (e.g. doctors, nurses and psychologists) think about people with learning disabilities who also have mental health problems. The research shows that health and social care professionals who do not work in learning disability services are not comfortable working with people with learning disabilities because they do not know enough about them and have not had proper training. Health and social care professionals also have negative views of people with learning disabilities. They prefer it if a specially designed mental health service takes on the work with people with learning disabilities. Having more training can help health and social care professionals to become more confident in this work. Abstract

Background: People with learning disabilities have poorer access to mental health services. It is important for health and social care professionals to have adequate knowledge and skills combined
with positive attitudes to work with this population. This review focuses on the knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of health and social care professionals who provide mental health services to people with learning disabilities.

**Method:** A systematic literature search was carried out to identify quantitative studies published in the English language between 2006 and 2020.

**Results:** Thirteen studies were identified that met the inclusion criteria. The studies identified a lack of knowledge and competency among health and social care professionals to address the mental health needs of people with learning disabilities. Health and social care professionals in these studies viewed people with learning disabilities as more vulnerable and suggested specialist mental health services to cater to their specific mental health needs.

**Conclusions:** Health and social care professionals appear to hold negative views of people with learning disabilities, which adversely influences their willingness to work with them. It is recommended that health and social care professionals receive more training opportunities to increase their skills and develop confidence in providing services to this population. (PsycInfo Database Record (c) 2021 APA, all rights reserved) (Source: journal abstract)

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**Title:** Quality of life and its relationship to maternal experience and resilience during covid-19 lockdown in children with specific learning disabilities

**Citation:** European Journal of Special Needs Education; Jun 2021

**Author(s):** Benassi, Erika; Bello, Arianna; Camia, Michela; Scorza, Maristella

**Abstract:** Children with special needs have encountered many challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, no studies have focused on the Quality of life (QoL) of children with specific learning disabilities (SpLD). This study aimed first to examine the physical, emotional and school dimensions of QoL in a group of primary school children with SpLD. The second goal was to investigate the extent to which the experience and resilience of their mothers were related to the children's QoL. The sample included 35 children with SpLD and 85 typically developing (TD) children, and their mothers. Three standardised questionnaires were filled in by the mothers. The findings showed that, compared to TD children, those with SpLD reported worse physical health, learning processes and school-related emotional health. Relative to the TD group, the mothers of the children with SpLD experienced more negative emotions and concern towards their children's difficulties, where these closely correlated with the children's QoL. Maternal resilience appeared crucial to the emotional health of these children. Our findings were discussed in terms of the need for more inclusive teaching practices that support the learning processes and the psychological health of children with SpLD, and for supporting interventions for their mothers. (PsycInfo Database Record (c) 2021 APA, all rights reserved) (Source: journal abstract)

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**Title:** Seizures in Children.

**Citation:** Pediatrics in Review; Jul 2020; vol. 41 (no. 7); p. 321-347

**Author(s):** Fine ; Wirrell, Elaine C

**Abstract:** Epilepsy is one of the most common neurologic disorders seen in children, with the highest incidence in the first year of life. Diagnostic accuracy can be challenging because many seizure mimics must be considered. Electroencephalography and neuroimaging can be critical in determining etiology and syndrome. Genetic testing is a high-yield endeavor, particularly in early-life epilepsies. Up to one-fourth of children with epilepsy will develop drug-resistant seizures. Comorbidities are very common in children with epilepsy, including intellectual disability in 25% and learning disability and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder in a significant minority. These comorbidities must be recognized and addressed as part of the child's overall care.
Title: Water-Based Interventions for People With Neurological Disability, Autism, and Intellectual Disability: A Scoping Review.

Citation: Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly; Jul 2021; vol. 38 (no. 3); p. 474-493
Author(s): Naumann; Kernot, Jocelyn; Parfitt, Gaynor; Gower, Bethany; Davison, Kade

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to produce a descriptive overview of the types of water-based interventions for people with neurological disability, autism, and intellectual disability and to determine how outcomes have been evaluated. Literature was searched through MEDLINE, EMBASE, Ovid Emcare, SPORTDiscus, Google Scholar, and Google. One hundred fifty-three papers met the inclusion criteria, 115 hydrotherapy, 62 swimming, 18 SCUBA (self-contained underwater breathing apparatus), and 18 other water-based interventions. Common conditions included cerebral palsy, spinal cord injury, Parkinson's disease, and intellectual disability. Fifty-four papers explored physical outcomes, 36 psychosocial outcomes, and 24 both physical and psychosocial outcomes, with 180 different outcome measures reported. Overall, there is a lack of high-quality evidence for all intervention types. This review provides a broad picture of water-based interventions and associated research. Future research, guided by this scoping review, will allow a greater understanding of the potential benefits for people with neurological disability, autism, and intellectual disability.

Title: Trauma experiences of people with an intellectual disability and their implications: A scoping review.

Citation: Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities; Jul 2021; vol. 34 (no. 4); p. 927-949
Author(s): McNally; Taggart, Laurence; Shevlin, Mark

Background: People with an intellectual disability are more vulnerable to psychological trauma compared with the general population. The aim of this scoping review was to identify the current status of the literature on trauma that is specific to the experiences of adults with an intellectual disability, living in community settings.

Methods: A scoping review was conducted using the Arksey and O'Malley (International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 2005, 8, 19) framework. Forty-one international papers were reviewed spanning 2000–2020, and their quality assessed using the MMAT.

Findings: (1) Aggressive behaviours can be symptoms of trauma, (2) there are appropriate assessment tools for the impact of trauma, (3) evidence-based interventions for trauma may be effective, and (4) factors associated with disability can be experienced as traumatic.

Conclusion: There is a growing body of literature highlighting assessment needs and potential interventions for people with an intellectual disability who have experienced psychological trauma. Further research is needed to develop trauma-informed pathways.

Title: Psychological eHealth interventions for people with intellectual disabilities: A scoping review.

Citation: Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities; Jul 2021; vol. 34 (no. 4); p. 950-972
Author(s): Oudshoorn; Frielink, Noud; Nijs, Sara L. P.; Embregts, Petri J. C. M.

Background: The use of eHealth, which has accelerated in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, could contribute to the access to tailor-made psychological interventions for people with intellectual disabilities.

Method: A scoping review was conducted on peer-reviewed studies between 1996–2019.

Results: Thirty-three studies reported on the use of psychological eHealth interventions focused on mental health problems and/or challenging behaviour. The vast majority of these studies reported on
interventions that were delivered at the individual level. The context in which these interventions were delivered varied, primarily ranging from the home setting to residential settings, as well as day or activity centres and schools. The studies described various types of interventions: telehealth interventions, computerized cognitive behavioural therapy, and interventions focused on (social) learning principles targeting challenging behaviour.

**Conclusions:** eHealth provides new opportunities for both therapists and lay-therapists to deliver psychological interventions. Future studies should focus on the effectiveness of psychological eHealth interventions.

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**Title:** Social networks and people with intellectual disabilities: A systematic review.

**Citation:** Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities; Jul 2021; vol. 34 (no. 4); p. 973-992

**Author(s):** Harrison, Bradshaw, Jill; Forrester-Jones, Rachel; McCarthy, Michelle; Smith, Sharon

**Background:** Despite the importance of social networks for health and well-being, relatively little is known about the ways in which adults with intellectual disabilities in the U.K. experience their social networks.

**Method:** A systematic review was completed to identify research focused on the social networks of adults with intellectual disabilities. Studies published from 1990 to 2019 were identified. Studies were thematically analysed.

**Results:** Quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods studies were analysed to identify key factors influencing social networks. Experiences of people with intellectual disabilities identified themes of identity, powerlessness, inclusion, family and support. These themes are discussed with reference to theories of stigma and normalisation.

**Conclusions:** Stigma and normalisation can be used to better understand the needs, desires and dreams of people with intellectual disabilities for ordinary relationships, from which they are regularly excluded. Implications for policy and practice are discussed in relation to building and repairing often spoiled identities.

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**Title:** Employment for persons with intellectual disability in the Nordic countries: A scoping review.

**Citation:** Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities; Jul 2021; vol. 34 (no. 4); p. 993-1007

**Author(s):** Garrels; Sigstad, Hanne Marie Høybråten

**Background:** Persons with intellectual disability remain largely excluded from the labour market in the Nordic countries. A review of the existing knowledge base may inform policymakers who try to address this challenge.

**Method:** The study uses a scoping review of 23 articles to summarize three decades of research on employment for persons with intellectual disability in the Nordic countries.

**Results:** Persons with intellectual disability value employment, but school-related factors may form barriers to labour market participation. Support at the workplace is important but variable. There is a paucity of intervention studies, and few studies focus on supports to bridge the gap between personal capacity and environmental demands.

**Conclusions:** A better coordination between the educational system and the labour market may facilitate higher levels of employment for persons with intellectual disability. Intervention studies that emphasize individualized supports and follow-up of older employees with intellectual disability are welcomed.
Title: Measurement Properties of Social Communication Assessments for Transition-Age Adolescents: A Systematic Review.

Citation: Language, Speech & Hearing Services in Schools; Jul 2021; vol. 52 (no. 3); p. 917-936

Author(s): Poll ; Maskalunas, Caitlyn; Walls, Lauren; Durbin, Samantha; Hunken, Haley; Petru, Janis

Purpose: An important role of social communication assessment is to support intervention planning as adolescents with disabilities transition to workplaces and other adult settings. Adoption of evidence-based assessment practices would align professionals with legal and ethical mandates for schools and other settings. There is, however, limited adoption of evidence-based assessment selection. The COnsensus-based Standards for the selection of health Measurement INstruments (COSMIN) provide a structured approach to identifying assessments with sufficient validity and reliability backed by strong evidence. The purpose of this review was to identify directly administered social communication assessments for adolescents and to apply the COSMIN framework to evaluate their measurement properties.

Method: A systematic search identified 13 assessments designed for 14-to 21-year-olds with developmental disabilities putting them at risk for social communication deficits. Measurement properties were extracted from included studies and rated for sufficiency. The quality of evidence supporting the findings was graded using COSMIN guidelines.

Results: Five social communication assessments were recommended as having sufficient evidence of content validity and internal consistency. Remaining assessments could be recommended as gaps in the evidence for their measurement properties are filled.

Conclusions: The application of the COSMIN standards has the potential to advance evidence-based assessment for social communication. There were important gaps in the independent replication of measurement properties and methodological shortcomings in the evaluation of reliability, measurement error, and structural validity.

Title: Challenging behaviour around challenging behaviour.

Citation: Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities; Jul 2021; vol. 34 (no. 4); p. 1166-1179

Author(s): James ; Fisher, Sue; Vincent, Sharon

Introduction: The United Kingdom's Department for Education's advice on behaviour focuses on the power of staff and the strength of the policy in challenging behaviour, via rules, sanctions and rewards. We designed a video-feedback intervention for staff teams in a special educational setting who were working with children with intellectual disability and challenging behaviour. The intervention aimed to raise reflective capacity on relational mechanisms that offer new response possibilities in everyday practices within trans-disciplinary teams.

Method: We conducted research with three teams (between five and seven participants in each). We report findings from two teams who were working with children (aged between 10 and 14) who staff identified as having behaviour that challenged. The intervention consisted of two video-feedback intervention sessions, using clips of good interactions between themselves and the child and a review. These sessions took place over three or four months. Qualitative analysis was conducted to analyse changes to the language and depictions of the children. Changes to the participants’ goals during the intervention were also analysed.

Results: The staff’s focus on the child’s challenging behaviour reduced. Children who were originally depicted as isolated became depicted in relationship with peers and staff. Participants became more curious about the child and his interactions in the school and home environment. The participant’s personal goals emerged through their understandings of what it meant to be good.

Conclusions: Working with staff teams using video feedback can change the interactions around the child and the relational conceptualisation of the child and family. Further adaptations to the intervention are needed to raise critical reflection on the concepts that circulate around ‘behaviour’ that structure policy and shape everyday practices.
Title: A breast screening film to support women with learning disabilities.

Citation: Nursing Times; Jul 2021; p. 58-60

Author(s): Fuchs; Cooper, Miranda; Radford, Caroline

Abstract: Breast screening attendance is lower in women with learning disabilities than among those in the general population. This article describes a project by Avon Breast Screening to produce a film with the aim of educating women with learning disabilities about the NHS Breast Screening Programme and increasing uptake of the programme in this population.

Title: The prevalence of mental illness and unmet needs of police custody detainees.

Citation: Criminal Behaviour & Mental Health; Apr 2021; vol. 31 (no. 2); p. 80-95

Author(s): Samele; McKinnon, Iain; Brown, Penelope; Srivastava, Samir; Arnold, Aleksandra; Hallett, Nicholas; Forrester, Andrew

Background: Internationally, there is evidence of high rates of mental disorders amongst police custody detainees but this literature is limited, and there has been little research into the unmet needs of police detainees in the UK, or elsewhere. Such research could support better focussed interventions for improving health and recidivism outcomes. Aim: To examine psychiatric and developmental morbidity amongst police detainees, and ascertain differences in need between morbidity categories.

Method: We used a cross-sectional study design and interviewed a 40% sample of people entering police custody in one South London police station over a 2-week period. A series of standardised measures was administered to screen for the presence of mental illness, general health and social care needs.

Results: A cohort of 134 people was generated, of whom nearly one-third (39, 29%) had current mental illness (major depression and/or psychosis); more had a lifetime diagnosis (54, 40%). Just under a fifth met the threshold for post-traumatic stress disorder (11, 8%). Clinically relevant alcohol or daily cannabis use affected about one quarter of the sample. Twenty-one percent (or 28) screened positive for personality disorder, 11% (or 15) for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and 4% (6) for intellectual disability. Nearly one-fifth (24, 18%) were at risk for suicide. Those with psychosis, and those deemed at risk for suicide, had the highest levels of unmet need and, indeed, overall need. The most frequent unmet need was for accommodation.

Conclusion: Our findings not only confirm high rates of mental health problems amongst police detainees but also demonstrate their high risk of suicide and high levels of unmet need, especially as regards accommodation. This underscores the need to provide mental health services in police stations, to help identify and resolve these issues at this early stage in the criminal justice system. Extending accommodation capacity to help some arrestees may help to save lives and interrupt cycling through the criminal justice system.

Title: Outcome of 10 years of ear and hearing screening in people with intellectual disability in Europe: A multicentre study

Citation: Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities; Jul 2021

Author(s): Willems, Melina; van Berlaer, Gerlant; Maes, Leen; Leyssens, Laura; Koehler, Bjoern; Marks, Luc

Background: Undetected ear and hearing problems negatively impact the quality of life of people with intellectual disability.

Methods: This multicentre retrospective study describes the outcome of 10 years of ear and hearing screening in athletes with intellectual disability in seven European countries. The screening was conducted by a trained team using a strictly standardised protocol.
Results: Of 15,363 screened athletes with intellectual disability, more than half (58.7%) needed referral for ear and/or hearing problems, ranging from 51.7% (<20 years old) to 81.4% (≥60 years old). The most commonly detected conditions were excessive/impacted earwax (40.3%), middle ear problems (30.1%) and hearing loss (27.0%), with significant differences between age groups and countries.

Discussion: This study demonstrates an increased risk of ear and hearing problems in people with intellectual disability as compared to the general population. Considering the unawareness and impact of these problems, it is highly recommended to organise systematic screening. Follow-up for diagnostic elaboration, therapeutic management and long-term guidance should be provided.

Title: The impact of covid-19 on the social inclusion of older adults with an intellectual disability during the first wave of the pandemic in ireland

Citation: Journal of Intellectual Disability Research; Jun 2021
Author(s): McCausland, Darren; Luus, Retha; McCallion, Philip; Murphy, Esther; McCarron, Mary

Background: Social restrictions and service closures from COVID-19 have negatively impacted social inclusion and well-being for some people with intellectual disabilities (IDs).

Methods: The fourth wave of a national longitudinal study on ageing in people with ID in Ireland was interrupted during the COVID-19 outbreak. Social inclusion data for pre-existing participants interviewed before COVID-19 (n = 444) were compared with data for pre-existing participants interviewed during/after lockdown (n = 62).

Results: More people interviewed after lockdown reported frequent family contact. Significantly greater numbers in the post-lockdown group reported access to and use of technology than the pre-lockdown group. Technology use was higher among those living in grouped residences supported by services compared with individuals living independently or with family.

Conclusions: During the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic in Ireland, many older adults with ID stayed connected with family and reported rates of contact higher than were reported by others before COVID-19. This connection may have been supported by a significant increase in technology use during the pandemic. However, uneven use of technology may disadvantage some including individuals living with family or independently. Given that COVID-19 restrictions are likely to continue to restrict social opportunities, increased digital support may assist more people with ID to use technology to maintain their social connections.

Title: The experiences and perceived health benefits of individuals with a disability participating in sport: A systematic review and narrative synthesis

Citation: Disability and Health Journal; Jun 2021
Author(s): Aitchison, Beth; Rushton, Alison B.; Martin, Paul; Barr, Marc; Soundy, Andrew; Heneghan, Nicola R.

Background: Sports participation has many physical and mental health benefits for individuals with a disability including improved functionality and reduced anxiety, yet a large proportion of individuals with a disability are inactive.

Objective: To investigate the experiences and perceived health benefits of sport participation across four disability populations: children and adolescents, adults, elite athletes and veterans with a disability.

Methods: A mixed-methods systematic review was conducted. Eligible studies had participants who were children, adults, elite athletes or veterans with a physical, visual or intellectual disability. Data were extracted using the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) tool and quality assessment involved the Quality Assessment Tool for Studies with Diverse Designs (QATSDD). Content, thematic and
narrative synthesis techniques were used. Confidence in cumulative evidence was determined using GRADE-CERQual and Classes of Evidence.

**Results:** Several positive aspects of sport participation were highlighted across all four populations, including socialisation opportunities, pure enjoyment, a sense of freedom and providing an arena to challenge stereotypes. The paucity of research within the ‘veterans with a disability’ group limited analysis of experiences and benefits of sport in this population.

**Conclusions:** This systematic review was the first to explore this phenomena, finding that overall sport is a beneficial experience for individuals with a disability. The positive aspects should be promoted when encouraging sport participation for children, adolescents, adults and elite athletes. More research is needed to explore these phenomena in veterans and to compare perceived benefits between populations to enable tailored promotion of sport. (PsycInfo Database Record (c) 2021 APA, all rights reserved)  (Source: journal abstract)

**Title:** Improvement of group climate in a residential setting for juveniles with mild intellectual disability through training of staff in non-violent resistance

**Citation:** Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities; Jul 2021

**Author(s):** Visser, Katharina M.; Popma, Arne; Jansen, Lucre M. C.; Kasius, Marianne C.; Vermeiren, Robert R. J. M.

**Background:** An open group climate is essential in successful residential care for juveniles with mild intellectual disability (MID). This study examined whether non-violent resistance, adapted for MID (NVR-MID), stimulates an open group climate in time.

**Method:** NVR-MID was implemented in three residential settings in The Netherlands, in a quasi-experimental stepped wedge design. In total, 124 clients with MID (Mage = 16.39 [SD = 4.95], 49.9% male) participated. Group climate was assessed seven times with the Group Climate Inventory for Children or the Group Climate Inventory-Revisited (GCI-R), during a total of 20 months.

**Results:** Open group climate scores increased in all three institutions; effect size was medium. Clients with lower IQs experienced group climate as more positive compared to clients with higher IQs. Effects were similar for both groups.

**Conclusions:** As NVR-MID appeared to contribute to a positive experienced group climate, it might be advisable to implement NVR-MID on larger scale. (PsycInfo Database Record (c) 2021 APA, all rights reserved)  (Source: journal abstract)

**Title:** Social anxiety symptoms in autism spectrum disorder and social anxiety disorder: Considering the reliability of self-report instruments in adult cohorts

**Citation:** Autism Research; Jul 2021

**Author(s):** Boulton, Kelsie A.; Guastella, Adam J.

**Abstract:** Adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are at elevated risk for social anxiety disorder (SAD). Limited information exists on the reliability of social anxiety instruments with these adults and their performance when compared to individuals with SAD without ASD. This study examines psychometric properties of self-report social anxiety instruments in autistic adults without intellectual disability, compared to adults with SAD. Additionally, we compared instrument scores between a subgroup of autistic adults with a dual diagnosis of SAD (ASD + SAD) and adults with SAD only. Adults diagnosed with SAD (N = 316) or ASD (N = 102) were recruited from the Brain and Mind Centre in New South Wales, Australia. Sixty autistic participants also received a diagnosis of SAD (ASD + SAD). Participants completed the Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale–self-report, the Social Interaction Anxiety Scale, the Social Phobia Scale, and the Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale. All instruments showed excellent internal consistency in autistic adults. The instruments showed evidence of convergent validity, and the strength of relationships between measures were equivalent between ASD and SAD groups. For all instruments, performance of these instruments in autistic...
adults with a SAD diagnosis was very similar to performance in adults diagnosed with SAD but without ASD. Findings support the use of these instruments for identifying social anxiety symptoms in autistic adults without intellectual disability and have utility for mental health clinical services.

**Lay summary:** Autistic adults often experience social anxiety. We examined the use of four social anxiety questionnaires in autistic adults, compared to adults with SAD. We found similar results between autistic adults and adults with SAD, suggesting that these questionnaires can be useful for measuring social anxiety symptoms in autistic adults. These findings have implications for clinical services, as they show that these instruments are reliable when used with autistic adults. (PsycInfo Database Record (c) 2021 APA, all rights reserved) (Source: journal abstract)

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**Covid 19: People with learning disabilities are highly vulnerable.**

**Citation:** BMJ (Clinical research ed.); Jul 2021; vol. 374 ; p. n1701

**Author(s):** Courtenay, Ken; Cooper, Vivien

**Title:** Risks of covid-19 hospital admission and death for people with learning disability: population based cohort study using the OpenSAFELY platform.

**Citation:** BMJ (Clinical research ed.); Jul 2021; vol. 374 ; p. n1592

**Author(s):** Williamson, Elizabeth J; McDonald, Helen I; Bhaskaran, Krishnan; Walker, Alex J; Bacon, Sebastian; Davy, Simon; Schultze, Anna; Tomlinson, Laurie; Bates, Chris; Ramsay, Mary; Curtis, Helen J; Forbes, Harriet; Wing, Kevin; Minassian, Caroline; Tazare, John; Morton, Caroline E; Nightingale, Emily; Mehrkar, Amir; Evans, Dave; Inglesby, Peter; MacKenna, Brian; Cockburn, Jonathan; Rentsch, Christopher T; Mathur, Rohini; Wong, Angel Y S; Eggo, Rosalind M; Hulme, William; Croker, Richard; Parry, John; Hester, Frank; Harper, Sam; Douglas, Ian J; Evans, Stephen J W; Smeth, Liam; Goldacre, Ben; Kuper, Hannah

**Objective:** To assess the association between learning disability and risk of hospital admission and death from covid-19 in England among adults and children.

**Design:** Population based cohort study on behalf of NHS England using the OpenSAFELY platform.

**Setting:** Patient level data were obtained for more than 17 million people registered with a general practice in England that uses TPP software. Electronic health records were linked with death data from the Office for National Statistics and hospital admission data from NHS Secondary Uses Service.

**Participants:** Adults (aged 16-105 years) and children (<16 years) from two cohorts: wave 1 (registered with a TPP practice as of 1 March 2020 and followed until 31 August 2020); and wave 2 (registered 1 September 2020 and followed until 8 February 2021). The main exposure group consisted of people on a general practice learning disability register; a subgroup was defined as those having profound or severe learning disability. People with Down's syndrome and cerebral palsy were identified (whether or not they were on the learning disability register).

**Main outcome measure:** Covid-19 related hospital admission and covid-19 related death. Non-covid-19 deaths were also explored.

**Results:** For wave 1, 14 312 023 adults aged ≥16 years were included, and 90 307 (0.63%) were on the learning disability register. Among adults on the register, 538 (0.6%) had a covid-19 related hospital admission; there were 222 (0.25%) covid-19 related deaths and 602 (0.7%) non-covid deaths. Among adults not on the register, 29 781 (0.2%) had a covid-19 related hospital admission; there were 13 737 (0.1%) covid-19 related deaths and 69 837 (0.5%) non-covid deaths. Wave 1 hazard ratios for adults on the learning disability register (adjusted for age, sex, ethnicity, and geographical location) were 5.3 (95% confidence interval 4.9 to 5.8) for covid-19 related hospital admission and 8.2 (7.2 to 9.4) for covid-19 related death. Wave 2 produced similar estimates. Associations were stronger among those classified as having severe to profound learning disability, and among those in residential care. For both waves, Down's syndrome and cerebral palsy were associated with increased hazards for both events; Down's syndrome to a greater extent. Hazard ratios for non-covid deaths followed similar patterns with weaker associations. Similar patterns of
increased relative risk were seen for children, but covid-19 related deaths and hospital admissions were rare, reflecting low event rates among children.

**Conclusions:** People with learning disability have markedly increased risks of hospital admission and death from covid-19, over and above the risks observed for non-covid causes of death. Prompt access to covid-19 testing and healthcare is warranted for this vulnerable group, and prioritisation for covid-19 vaccination and other targeted preventive measures should be considered.

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**Title:** Systematic Review of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy in Individuals with Neurodevelopmental Disorders, Caregivers, and Staff.

**Citation:** Behavior modification; Jun 2021 ; p. 1454455211027301

**Author(s):** Garcia, Yors; Keller-Collins, Anastasia; Andrews, Meredith; Kurumiya, Yukie; Imlay, Kaleiya; Umphrey, Brandon; Foster, Elizabeth

**Abstract:** The purpose of this review was to quantitatively synthesize studies using acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) with individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders (NNDs), their parents, and staff members that support them. Thirty studies published in peer-reviewed journals between 2006 and 2020 met inclusion criteria. They were reviewed and coded on variables associated with participants’ characteristics, settings, dropouts, design type, ACT procedures and measures, social validity, treatment integrity, and main findings. The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), the revised Cochrane risk-of-bias tool for randomized trials (RoB2) and the Risk of Bias in Nonrandomized Studies of Interventions (ROBINS-I) were applied to evaluate the quality of the studies. Results indicated that 20 studies used group designs and 10 studies used single-case designs. Participants with NNDs consisted predominantly of those with autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and learning disabilities. Group studies reported process and outcome measures exclusively; whereas, single-case studies also incorporated behavioral/direct measures. Overall, results showed mixed improvements across studies using indirect and direct measures. Lastly, quality assessment for group studies presented moderate or serious risk of bias and two single-case studies did not meet WWC evidence of effectiveness. Directions for future research and practice are discussed.

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**Title:** Assistive technology for persons with profound intellectual disability: a european survey on attitudes and beliefs.

**Citation:** Disability & Rehabilitation: Assistive Technology; Jul 2021; vol. 16 (no. 5); p. 497-504

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**Abstract:** Persons with profound intellectual disability (PID) are mostly not able to use assistive technology (AT) independently. Caregivers play an important mediating role in implementing AT in the daily life of persons with PID. Both first-order barriers, extrinsic to caregivers, and second-order barriers, intrinsic to caregivers, influence the attitudes and behaviors of caregivers with regard to AT-use. It could be asked if increased knowledge on and experience with AT may impact the effect of first- and second-order barriers. This study investigated how knowledge and experience influence the professional caregivers' beliefs about which factors may impact the AT use in persons with PID and their intentions to use AT for persons with PID. A questionnaire on the experienced limitations and successes in using AT was developed. The questionnaire was send to professionals working with or responsible for persons with PID in various countries in Europe. In total the answers of 195 respondents were included in this study. This study's results demonstrate that AT is used for various reasons in persons with PID, mostly to support communication and interaction or for fun or relaxation. Based on the answers of the respondents can be concluded that both experience and knowledge of caregivers seem to influence first- and second-order barriers. Besides, a possibility to overcome the second-order barriers is to provide professionals with possibilities to increase their knowledge and experience. AT for persons with PID is mostly used for communication and interaction or for fun and relaxation. Professional caregivers belief that AT-use may positively influence various aspects in the life of persons with PID, especially communication and interaction, active engagement and
participation in activities, and self-esteem of the person. Caregivers need to have sufficient experience in order to rate the barriers of AT-use as less limited in the group of persons with PID. In order to overcome the barriers experienced in implementing AT in persons with PID, knowledge of caregivers is essential.

**Title:** Use of behaviour change techniques by direct support professionals to support healthy lifestyle behaviour for people with moderate to profound intellectual disabilities.

**Citation:** Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities; Jul 2021; vol. 34 (no. 4); p. 1048-1056

**Author(s):** Overwijk ; Putten, Annette A. J.; Schans, Cees P.; Willems, Mariël; Hilgenkamp, Thessa I. M.; Waninge, Aly

**Background:** Behaviour change techniques (BCTs) can be employed to support a healthy lifestyle for people with intellectual disabilities. The aim of this study is to determine whether and which BCTs are used by direct support professionals (DSPs) for supporting healthy lifestyle behaviour of people with moderate to profound intellectual disabilities.

**Method:** Direct support professionals (n = 18) were observed in their daily work using audio-visual recordings. To code BCTs, the Coventry Aberdeen London Refined (CALO-RE-NL) taxonomy was employed.

**Results:** Direct support professionals used 33 BCTs out of 42. The most used BCTs were as follows: 'feedback on performance', 'instructions on how to perform the behaviour', 'doing together', 'rewards on successful behaviour', 'reward effort towards behaviour', 'DSP changes environment', 'graded tasks', 'prompt practice' and 'model/demonstrate behaviour'.

**Conclusions:** Although a variety of BCTs is used by DSPs in their support of people with moderate to profound intellectual disabilities when facilitating healthy lifestyle behaviour, they rely on nine of them.

**Sources Used:**

The following databases are used in the creation of this bulletin: BNI, CINAHL, Medline, PsycINFO & KnowledgeShare.

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