

Thursday Thoughts

on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD)

Issue 4



Let's Talk **Data**:

People with an intellectual disability are significantly more likely to experience adverse life events, abuse, and trauma in childhood compared with others in the general population. They are also more vulnerable to traumatic experiences.

People with developmental disabilities are:

- 3 times more likely to experience rape, sexual assault, aggravated assault, and robbery;
- 3 times more likely to be sexually abused in childhood; and
- 6 times more likely to experience abuse or neglect in childhood.

Signs of Trauma:



Many signs of trauma are similar for people with or without I/DD. They can include:

- Aggression;
- Irritability;
- Withdrawal from others;
- Stomach aches, headaches;
- Changes in appetite;
- Nightmares or sleep problems; and/or
- Memory problems or difficulties learning new skills.

What **We** Know:



Trauma-focused cognitive behavior therapy (TF-CBT) and eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) are evidence-based interventions for individuals who have experienced trauma.

Trauma work with individuals with I/DD - **Adaptations**

Trauma Focused CBT:

- Simplify concepts, minimize figurative language
- Use language that is understandable to that person
- Teach concrete skills
- Increase modeling to teach skills
- Overlearn skills with extra practice and feedback
- Shorten session length to accommodate attention

EMDR:

- Bilateral stimulation
- Auditory bilateral stimulation
- Visualization/mental movie
- Pictures/graphics
- Breathing exercises
- Use of metaphor

- ⇒ **More time may be needed in the preparation stage to develop rapport and other skills.**
- ⇒ **More attention may be needed to educate and support family/staff.**
- ⇒ **More directive intervention may be needed during processing of painful events.**
- ⇒ **Use of numeric scale or physical gestures or concrete visual representation of magnitude using facial images.**
- ⇒ **Target selection may be limited to here-&-now experiences.**