

WHAT IS A DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY (DD)?

- Different people call developmental disabilities by different names
- Some common names are: Mental Retardation, Intellectual Disabilities or Learning Disabilities
- In Canada, we use the term Developmental Disability to describe a person who has a disability that first occurred in childhood and has a lifelong effect
- This disability interferes with the person's ability to live independently when they become adults

"People with developmental disabilities can still participate in their communities. They can be great athletes, artists, workers, advocates, neighbours and friends. They are an important part of the community and contribute to the strength of our province" – DSO



Developmental disabilities are often described in terms of *Intelligence Quotient (IQ)* and *adaptive functioning* (how well a person deals with daily life demands)

A person who scores <70 IQ is considered to have a developmental disability

Developmental Disability	Adaptive Skills	Communication
Mild IQ 55-70	Able to do basic tasks	Uses words to communicate Understands simple conversation Able to use phone Reads and writes simple words
Moderate IQ 40-50	Requires support to perform activities of daily living (hygiene, food preparation etc.) Requires a supportive work environment	Uses simple sentences Asks and responds to simple questions Might not understand all conversation
Severe IQ 25-35	Requires supervision for all daily activities May require assistance with personal care	May use one or two words Can follow one step commands
Profound IQ – 20-25	Requires assistance with all personal care	May be non-verbal May follow familiar routines May not understand new information

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

[BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION]

HEALTH AND
DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES

- People with DD want and deserve to be treated with *respect* and *dignity*
- It is important that their unique needs are met with *patience* and *kindness*
- Taking the time to get to know the individual will allow for the best possible plan of care

Working with individuals with DD can be very rewarding experience

DEVELOP A PLAN

- It is important to have a care plan in place
- This starts with gathering information
- Everyone who is involved with the person with the developmental disability should contribute information that will be used to develop the plan
- The plan should include information about *adaptive functioning, communication* and *behaviour*
- May involve a crisis plan in instances of challenging behaviour
- It might take time to get to know the person and develop a plan but, once the plan is working, life can become very routine

**EVERYONE SHOULD FOLLOW
THE PLAN**

HELPFUL TIPS

- Keep your voice and body language conversational (not bossy)
- Allow the individual to take time to respond. This may take a little longer.
- Ensure directions are clear with few steps
- When giving instructions, say what the person *should* do, not what they shouldn't do
- It is important to praise positive behaviour (be specific about the behaviour you are praising), ignore negative
- Give choices whenever possible rather than yes/no questions
- Often individuals with DD (like many others) prefer to live in a predictable environment and become accustomed to routine.
- Setting a predictable routine will enable the person to become adjusted to the new environment more quickly

UNDERSTANDING DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

- Common causes of developmental disabilities include:
 - *Genetics*
 - *Infections*
 - *Trauma*
 - *Fetal Alcohol Syndrome*
- Some disabilities have no known cause
- Knowing the cause of a disability can help you understand the person and their possible health concerns
- *There are guidelines and health watch tables available for many different types of DD

***Resource: "Tools for the Primary Care of People with Developmental Disabilities"**

***See for guidelines and health watch tables**