

If an adult with IDD frequently displays aggression or engages in self-harm, it may be recommended by a physician to either talk with a therapist, take medication, or do both on a routine basis. Results usually do not happen overnight, so only start a treatment if it makes sense to you and stick with it for an extended period of time.

HOW CAN THERAPY HELP?

- Explains what is anxiety or fear
- Encourages thoughts and feelings
- Explores possible triggers
- Teaches how to face things
- Reframes the way you think
- Establishes grounding techniques
- Tracks how you are doing



WHAT GROUNDING TECHNIQUES MAY A THERAPIST HAVE YOU TRY?

- Picture someone you love
- Visualize your favorite place
- Touch something comforting
- Listen to relaxing music
- Savor a taste or scent

References:

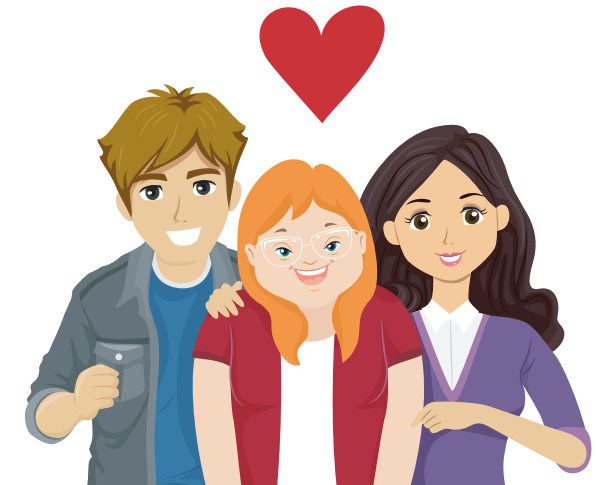
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UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING AGGRESSION IN ADULTS WITH IDD

Information for Caregivers



Building Bridges

To Improve Health Care of Persons with Developmental Disabilities

Adults with IDD demonstrate aggressive behaviors more frequently than those without IDD. Difficulties coping to challenges in life causes them to be particularly vulnerable to stress. This can take on many forms such as physical, verbal, sexual misconduct, self-harm, or property destruction.

HOW SHOULD WE VIEW AGGRESSION?

- Mechanism of communication
- Expression of frustration
- Way of controlling situation
- Avoidance of unwanted event
- Attempt to get person's attention
- Symptom of an illness or pain

WHAT ARE PHYSICAL SIGNS OF ANGER?

- Reddening Face
- Furrowed Brows
- Fist clenching
- Shaky hands
- Sweating
- Stuttering
- Clenched Jaw
- Teeth Grinding
- Rapid Breathing
- Pounding Heart
- Tense Shoulders



WHAT POSSIBLY TRIGGERS AGGRESSION?

- Anxiety and fear
- Pain and discomfort
- Sensory overload
- Unfamiliar faces
- Change in routine
- Communication barrier
- Lack of structure
- Perception of disrespect

HOW CAN ANGER BE MANAGED?

- Meeting the basic needs
- Addressing pain and discomfort
- Open and honest communication
- Planning ahead and adding structure
- Providing safety and security
- Spending time outdoors
- Engaging in fun hobbies

HOW CAN WE BEST COMMUNICATE?

- Be aware of body language
- Speak slower, not louder
- Use simple vocabulary
- Maintain eye contact
- Avoid lengthy sentences
- Ask open-ended questions
- Avoid figurative language



WHAT SHOULD WE AVOID TO PREVENT ESCALATION?

- Instigating power struggles
- Criticizing individual
- Continuing to argue
- Invalidating feelings
- Giving unsolicited advice

Adults with IDD feel more comfortable at home, considering it is a familiar environment that has been molded to their liking. If you know your loved one tends to get anxious or fears going to the doctor's office, it is important to find ways to soothe them before those emotions lead to aggression.

HOW CAN WE ALLEVIATE AGITATION DURING A DOCTOR'S VISIT?

- Urge companion to accompany
- Leave door slightly open
- Avoid blocking the exit
- Be mindful of sensory sensitivities
- Build rapport with patient
- Explain what is to be expected
- Monitor for mood changes
- Find suitable distractions
- Slow down pace of visit
- Encourage deep breathing
- Adjust medical procedures
- Accommodate agenda if needed



Our goal is to make you and your loved one feel comfortable sharing healthcare needs with a doctor. Please let us know what form of communication is preferred and if there are any procedures that may be triggering. This ensures the medical care being provided is informed, individualized, and effective.