



Praxis Care
Mental Health and Learning Disability
Research into Action

Research Article:	Dagnan, D. (2008) 'Psychological and Emotional Health and Well-Being of People with Intellectual Disabilities', <i>Learning Disability Review</i> , 13(1), pp. 3-9.
Topic of Article:	The article considers mental ill health and Intellectual Disability (ID). It explores the various intervention approaches that are available and contrasts research that is based on deficits and disadvantages with research that focuses on resilience and strength.
Summary of Research Article:	<p><i>Behavioural interventions:</i></p> <p>Behavioural interventions are used mainly for the treatment of phobias but can also be used for anxiety and depression. The approaches normally focus on desensitisation, which has also been used to treat obsessive-compulsive disorder and post-traumatic stress. There are fewer articles on how to treat people with depression and ID using behavioural interventions. The main type of intervention for ID and depression involves the use of positive praise and reinforcement.</p> <p><i>Cognitive Behavioural Interventions:</i></p> <p>A distinction has been proposed between distress caused by cognitive deficits and cognitive distortion. The deficit model assumes distress is caused by an inability to 'self-talk', deemed necessary to guide oneself through problems and thought to be important in the maintenance of good mental health. The intervention approaches used with the cognitive deficit model are frequent within ID e.g. self-monitoring and instruction. With the distortion model therapeutic, meaning-based approaches are utilised in assisting people with ID, for example, therapies developed by Beck and Ellis. Cognitive therapy literature is currently becoming more popular that attempts to develop models and means of measuring the distress of people with ID, and journals have devoted special editions to this area.</p> <p><i>Psychodynamic approaches:</i></p> <p>This approach was developed from Freudian theory and involves the person having a relationship with the therapist. The person is theorised to act in this relationship in the way that they see the world, offering the therapist valuable insight. Interest is growing in this area with reference to the theory of attachment and ID and how this can affect the relationship with carers and peers.</p>
Conclusions:	<p><i>Moving from Mental Ill-Health to Emotional Well-Being</i></p> <p>New models have been developed that recognise the stigmatisation and negative life consequences of mental ill-health. These models suggest that when people have experienced negative or different treatment from society it negatively affects their self-image and self-evaluation. This in turn leads toward negative social comparison and it coupled with negative self-evaluation has been evidenced to relate to depression in people with ID.</p> <p>The article argues that all of the above are focused on a deficit model of mental ill-health in people with ID and that looking into people with ID who have <i>no</i> mental health issues might give a greater insight into the topic. In investigating this the application of positive psychology might be appropriate where how individuals and communities can promote positive life experiences are looked at.</p> <p>Research areas that have adopted the positive psychology model are those that focus on self-determination (that we can change what happens to us), hope and optimism.</p>

Where to find more:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinfoforall/treatments/cbt.aspx • Hollins, S and Sinason, V. (2000) 'Psychotherapy learning disabilities and trauma: new perspectives', <i>British Journal of Psychiatry</i>, 176, pp. 32-36. Available from: http://bjp.rcpsych.org/cgi/reprint/176/1/32 • Seligman, M.E.P and Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000) 'Positive Psychology: An Introduction', <i>American Psychologist</i>, 55(1), pp.5-14. Available from: http://www.usafp.org/Word_PDF_Files/Annual-Meeting-2009-Syllabus/7%20April%20Tuesday/Bermudez%20-%20Positive%20Psychology,%20An%20Intro,%20American%20Psycholog.pdf • Smiley, E. (2005) 'Epidemiology of mental health problems in adults with learning disability: an update', <i>Advances in Psychiatric Treatment</i>, 11, pp. 214-222. Available from: http://apt.rcpsych.org/cgi/reprint/11/3/214 • Xenitidis, K. et al., (2000) 'Reliability and validity of the CANDID – a needs assessment instrument for adults with learning disabilities and mental health problems', <i>British Journal of Psychiatry</i>, 176, p. 473-478. Available from: http://bjp.rcpsych.org/cgi/reprint/176/5/473
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