

# Friendship Companion Training

## Description of Disabilities

**Developmental Disability:**

*"Developmental disabilities" is an umbrella term that includes intellectual disability but also includes other disabilities that occurs during the developmental years of someone's life that affects their ability to learn, usually before age 18.*

*Mental illness is not a developmental disability, however a person with a developmental disability may have a dual diagnosis that includes mental illness.*

**Developmental Disability:**

*Developmental disabilities are severe chronic disabilities that can be cognitive or physical or both. Some developmental disabilities are largely physical issues, such as cerebral palsy or epilepsy.*

*Some individuals may have a condition that includes both physical and intellectual disabilities, such Down Syndrome.*

**Intellectual Disability:**

*Intellectual disability is a disability characterized by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning (reasoning, learning, problem solving) and in adaptive behavior, which covers many everyday social and practical skills.*

- *Approximately 1% of our population is born with an intellectual disability*
- *Intellectual and other developmental disabilities often co-occur*

**Intellectual Disability:**

*Adaptive behavior is the collection of conceptual, social, and practical skills that are learned and performed by people in their everyday lives.*

- *Conceptual skills—language and literacy, spiritualality, money, time, number concepts, and self-direction.*

**Intellectual Disability:**

- *Social skills—interpersonal skills, social responsibility, self-esteem, gullibility, naïveté (i.e., wariness), social problem solving, and the ability to follow rules/obey laws and to avoid being victimized.*
- *Practical skills—activities of daily living (personal care), occupational skills, healthcare, travel/transportation, schedules/routines, safety, use of money, use of the telephone.*

**Intellectual Disability:**

*One way to measure intellectual functioning is with a non-verbal Intelligence Quotient (IQ) test. Generally, an IQ test score below 70 or even 75 indicates a limitation in intellectual functioning.*

*Intellectual disability is one of several developmental disabilities when there is evidence of the disability during the developmental period.*

**Intellectual Disability:**

*This Friendship group will focus on adults with intellectual disabilities. However, intellectual and other developmental disabilities often co-occur, we will most likely work with people who have both types of disability.*

*Friendship group lesson material will be designed for adults with intellectual disabilities.*



**Intellectual Disability:**

***Causes include;***

- *Genetic conditions*
  - *Phenylketonuria (PKU) – a genetic disorder caused by a missing or defective enzyme*
  - *Down syndrome – a chromosomal disorder*
  - *Fragile X syndrome – a gene disorder located on the X chromosome*

**Intellectual Disability:**

***Causes include;***

- *Pregnancy Issues*
  - *Malnutrition*
  - *Environmental toxins (i.e. mercury, lead)*
  - *Infections in the mother*

**Intellectual Disability:**

***Causes include;***

- *Issues during birth – premature birth, low birth weight, oxygen deprivation or other injuries*
- *Problems after birth – childhood diseases, injuries like a head injury or near drowning*
- *Poverty and cultural factors – children who live in poverty have a much higher risk of exposure to environmental toxins, diseases and experiencing malnutrition.*

## **Common Cause of Intellectual Disability**

*Down syndrome is a genetic disorder caused by extra genetic material from chromosome 21.*

- *Affects people of all ages, races, and economic situations*
- *Varies in severity, causing lifelong intellectual disability and developmental delays, and health problems*
- *Occurs in 1 in every 700 babies and accounts for 15-20% of intellectual disabilities*

## *Common Cause of Intellectual Disability*

### *Typical symptoms for Down Syndrome*

- *Short in stature*
- *Decreased muscle tone and tendency towards obesity*
- *Flattened facial profile and nose with upward slanting eyes*
- *Short, broad hands*

## **Common Cause of Intellectual Disability**

### **Typical symptoms for Down Syndrome**

- *Difficulty with speech (thick tongue)*
- *Varied degree of intellectual disability*
- *People with Down syndrome are at increased risk for a range of other health conditions, including autism spectrum disorders, problems with hormones and glands, hearing loss, vision problems, and heart abnormalities*

**Disabilities that may accompany an Intellectual Disability:**

***Autism and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)***

*ASD and autism are general terms for a group of complex disorders of brain development. These disorders are characterized, in varying degrees, by difficulties in social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication and repetitive behaviors.*

**Disabilities that may Accompany an Intellectual Disability:**

*ASD may be associated with intellectual disability, but not always.*

- *Statistics range from 40% -75 of individuals with ASD also have an intellectual disability.*
- *The incidence rate of ASD and an intellectual disability has improved; probably due to better diagnosis and treatment*
- *Females with ASD are more likely to also have an intellectual disability.*



**Disabilities that may Accompany an Intellectual Disability:**

*Individuals with ASD may have difficulties with motor coordination, attention, and physical health issues such as sleep and gastrointestinal disturbances. Some persons with ASD excel in visual skills, music, math and art.*

- *1 in 68 – 156 births in U.S. (depending on source) have autism and ASD.*
- *Four to five times more common among boys than girls.*

**Disabilities that may Accompany an Intellectual Disability:**

*The cause(s) for autism and ASD is undetermined, but research is finding a combination of autism risk genes and environmental factors influencing early brain development.*

**Disabilities that may Accompany an Intellectual Disability:**

***Typical Symptoms for Autism***

- *Abnormal ways of relating to others (may be nonverbal or say random words)*
- *Peculiar activity or play habits – Attached to objects*
- *Unusually high or low activity levels (may get agitated in groups resulting in unusual gestures)*
- *Insists that routine remains unchanged (may get frustrated)*

**Disabilities that may Accompany an Intellectual Disability:**

***Typical Symptoms for Autism***

- *Sensitive to sound*
- *Touch avoidance*
- *Low regard or unaware of need for personal safety*
- *Inappropriate emotions; loud sounds or inappropriate behaviors*
- *Easily agitated*
- *Detached or aloof*

**Disabilities that may Accompany an Intellectual Disability:**

***Cerebral Palsy (CP)***

- *Cerebral refers to the brain. Palsy refers to lack of muscle control.*
- *CP is the result of brain damage caused by injury or abnormal development of the brain before birth, during birth, immediately after birth, or during the development years.*
- *CP occurs in 2-3 births for every 1,000 babies born; about 10,000 per year in U.S.*

**Disabilities that may Accompany an Intellectual Disability:**

***Cerebral Palsy (CP)***

- *Cerebral Palsy affects body movement, muscle control, muscle coordination, muscle tone, reflex, posture and balance*
- *May or may not impact intelligence – about 40% of children with CP have an intellectual disability, 7% have autism*
- *May have vision, hearing, and/or speech difficulties*

**Diagnoses that are not Intellectual Disabilities:**

- *Mental Illness, although some individuals will have a dual diagnosis for mental illness*
- *Learning disabilities refers to the issues or problems that the child encounters in the process of learning*
- *Epilepsy may also have a dual diagnosis with an intellectual disability*

**Diagnoses that are not Intellectual Disabilities:**

- *Multiple sclerosis (MS), exhibits many symptoms that can be mistaken for CP*
- *Muscular dystrophy, common symptoms include muscle weakness and difficulty with balance and walking*