

Supporting the mental health assessment process

A checklist tool for disability professionals

AUTHORS

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Description of resource

This tool outlines key considerations and actions to take to support a person with intellectual disability during the mental health assessment process. It is designed for disability professionals to use as a checklist and planning tool.

See the [Role of Disability Services](#) section on the [Intellectual Disability Mental Health Connect](#) website for more details.



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Arrange the appointment

Items	Notes	Completed	N/A
<p>Consider the most appropriate environment for the assessment (e.g. at home, day centre, or clinic). An appropriate environment is one where the person is most calm, happy, comfortable, and able to engage with others</p> <p>If necessary, arrange for the assessment to be conducted in an environment the person is familiar with</p>			
<p>Consider the time of day for the assessment and what would best suit the person and their routine</p>			
<p>Discuss with the mental health professional how communication supports can be provided for the duration of the assessment</p>			
<p>Support the person to arrange an appointment if a referral is made to another service (see p.1 for things to consider when arranging an appointment)</p>			



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Prepare the person

Items	Notes	Completed	N/A
<p>Let the person know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the time of the appointment • the place of the appointment • who they will see and what their role is • what will happen • what their rights are during an assessment 			
<p>Offer reassurance and let the person know you are available to talk if they have any worries or questions about the mental health assessment</p>			
<p>Help the person to think of and write down any questions they may have. For example, they may want to ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how long the assessment will take • what will happen during the assessment • what will happen after the assessment <p>You can find more examples of questions they may want to ask here.</p> <p>Encourage the person to take this list to the appointment</p>			
<p>Discuss whether the person would like a support person or family member to accompany them to the appointment. You may want to discuss with the person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether they are OK with others knowing about their mental health concerns • what they might need from others to fully engage in the assessment (e.g. communication supports) • specific people who they might want to accompany them • specific people who they do not want to accompany them <p>If they would like someone to accompany them, arrange a support person or family member</p>			
<p>Be aware of the person's previous contact with mental health services and other services, and any negative experiences they may have had (e.g. unwanted injections; mental health professionals ignoring the person)</p> <p>Discuss with the person what they would like to happen if they have a similar negative experience</p>			

Prepare materials

Items	Notes	Completed	N/A
<p>Update information records to ensure that recorded information about behaviours (usual behaviours and changes to behaviours) are up to date and accessible</p>			
<p>Gather any health records, results or reports that the person needs to bring. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • past medical reports and assessments • copies of current and past behaviour support plan or equivalent • list of current and past medications • past blood test or investigation results 			
<p>Prepare communication resources for the appointment</p>			
<p>Collect consent from the person's guardian if this is necessary</p>			



During the assessment

Items	Notes	Completed	N/A
Bring along any communication tools that will assist the person to engage in the assessment			
Provide information (if requested) about changes to the person's behaviours or wellbeing			
Provide contact details of relevant contacts and the person's guardian (if applicable)			
Ask the mental health professional how you can assist the person in the meantime			
Ask the mental health professional how they will communicate any formal reports or results, and to whom			
Obtain any details if the person is referred to a specialist mental health professional or service			

After the assessment

Items	Notes	Completed	N/A
<p>Communicate the outcome of the assessment to others involved in the person's support</p> <p>Make others who provide support to the person aware of any factors that are negatively affecting the person's mental health</p>			