

Disaster and Individuals with Intellectual Disability

Allison Cowan, MD

Wright State Psychiatry

Disclosures: None

- Montgomery County Board of Developmental Disabilities Services
- Access Ohio Mental Health Center, Ohio's Telepsychiatry Project
- Coleman Professional Services in conjunction with the Allen County Board of Developmental Disabilities Services
- Wright State University, Department of Psychiatry

Don

Little "T" Trauma



Big "T" Trauma



Some numbers

- 2005, “Is PTSD a helpful concept for adults with ID?” (Craig and Clegg)
- Turk suggests that PTSD may be missed frequently (Turk et al, 2005)

Some info

- Hastings et al (2004) found that
 - 15.5% of people had moved
 - 9% serious illness of close relative or friend
 - 8.8% serious problem with a close friend, neighbor or relative
 - 8.5% serious illness or injury to self
 - 8.3% death of close family friend or other relative
 - 46% had experienced one or more, and 17% had experienced two or more.

TSA

- “Dear TSA agent,
[My patient] has intellectual disability/mental retardation. He also carries his medications. Please make instructions to him simple and clear. He may need you to repeat them.”

Trauma-informed care

- Safety
- Trustworthiness and transparency
- Peer-support and mutual self-help
- Collaboration and mutuality
- Empowerment, voice, and choice
- Cultural, historical, and gender issues

Level of functioning

- Profound ID—typically cannot speak and dependent on others for daily care
- Severe ID—spoken language typically significantly limited and requires support for daily care

Level of Functioning

- Moderate ID—spoken language is primary communication and has more self-care abilities
- Mild ID—communication (typically spoken language) is more immature than expected for age but may function age-appropriately in personal care. May need some support in complex daily living tasks. Still concrete.

Autism

- Individuals with autism can have any IQ—some need more supports than others
- Impairment of social functioning, need for sameness

Some tips

- Use clear language
 - Avoid metaphors and other abstract ideas
- Understand that it's more likely they have a trauma history (Big T and little t-trauma)

Some tips (con't)

- Vastly different levels of family involvement
- Use clear language (it may take a couple of repetitions)
- Medication, assistive communication devices,

More tips

- Remember that it's scarier when you don't understand what's happening
- Familiar people, familiar settings are helpful
- Quiet place (or out with everyone else)
- Re-establishment of routine as quickly as possible