A joint initiative of
The Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
and The Office of Developmental Programs

Target Symptoms of Mental Health
Challenges Versus Challenging Behavior

Dual Diagnosis Direct Support Curriculum
Joint initiative: Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse (OHMSAS) and Office of Developmental Programs (ODP)

- Address needs of people with Dual Diagnosis - intellectual disability (ID) and mental health (MH) challenges
- Provide information to help you understand:
  - Complexity of dual diagnosis
  - Factors to consider to best support people
• The information presented to you today is to increase your awareness. It is not intended to replace medical advice.

• If you believe you or someone you support have these conditions or concerns, please seek the advice of a physician.
Objectives

By the end of this training, the learner will:

• Define challenging behavior
• Understand the importance of ruling out medical and environmental concerns
• Define target symptoms of mental health challenges
• Recognize physical and environmental factors that can be confused with target symptoms of mental health challenges
• Identify the roles of team members in the treatment process
Dual Diagnosis

- Intellectual disability
- Mental health challenge

Diagnostic Overshadowing
- Physical health
- Communication
- Mental illness
- Intellectual disability
What is a Symptom?

Any change in the body and/or mind that indicates there may be a disease or illness.
What is Behavior?

Behavior is:

• Anything that a person does
• Actions that people can observe directly
• Not always bad
What is Challenging Behavior?

• For the person: challenge to meet needs

• For direct supporters or family: pressure to have the person behave in a non-disruptive, non-dangerous manner

• For agency: challenge to maintain safe homes
Causes of Behaviors

We cannot always observe what is causing a behavior

• Thoughts
• Feelings
• Memories
Challenging Behaviors can be an attempt to:

- Communicate
- Cope with stress
- Alleviate anxiety
Challenging Behaviors can be an attempt to:

- Avoid unpleasant tasks
- Gain attention
- Respond to physical pain/discomfort
Why Use Challenging Behaviors?

- Life dissatisfaction
- Retaliation
- Protection of self and trauma history
Why Use Challenging Behaviors?

- Acquire tangibles
- Syndrome-related issues
- Neurological disorders
Behavioral Phenotypes: Possible behavioral presentations of genetic syndromes

- Cornelia De Lange
- Fragile X
- Prader-Willi
- Retts Disorder
- Tourette’s Disorder
- Williams Syndrome
- Turner’s Syndrome

Genetic syndromes → personality characteristics → increased probability of challenging behaviors

Examples of these characteristics are:

- Hyperactivity
- Hypersensitivity
- Anxiety
- Panic
- Agitation
- Emotional lability
- Proneness to strong reactions to ordinary stimuli
- Proneness to affective over-arousal
- Prolonged reactions to transient stressors

Challenging Behaviors and Neurological Disorders

Neurological disorders characteristics \(\rightarrow\) personality increased probability of aggression

Characteristics:

- Transient personality changes
- Confusion
- Disorientation
- Dementia
- Panic

What are Challenging Behaviors All About?

- Challenging behaviors can be:
  - From internal or external sources
  - Related to the individual or to the environment

- **FIRST**: Physical health assessment to rule out medical issues
- Genetic evaluation/testing to rule out syndromes and other causes
- Neurological/physical testing to rule out physical causes of challenging behaviors
Challenging behavior is **NOT** a natural feature of Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities
Al’s Story

• What similarities did you think of between Al’s life and the lives of people you support?

• What are some possible environmental or medical reasons for Al’s challenging behaviors?
What is a Target Symptom of a Mental Health Challenge?

Evidence of mental disturbance related to a particular psychiatric diagnosis which is provided by a qualified medical professional.

Several target symptoms must be present and observed to provide an accurate psychiatric diagnosis.
Examples of Possible Target Symptoms of a Mental Health Challenge

- Auditory hallucinations
- Visual hallucinations
- Being sad and withdrawn over very long periods of time
- Excessive oversleeping or insomnia not related to any medical or environmental concerns
- AND MANY MORE........
Possible Target Symptoms of Mental Health Challenges

- Irritability
- Psychomotor agitation
- Mood lability
- Pressured speech
- Hypersexuality
- Increases/decreases in sleep
- Increased/decreased appetite
- AND MANY MORE......
Irritability

- Excessive response to stimuli
- Overreaction
- Low frustration threshold
Medical Reasons for Irritability

- Low blood sugar
- Gastro esophageal reflux disease (GERD)
- Seizure activity
- Lack of sleep
- Over-medication
- Urinary tract infection (UTI)
- Ear/sinus infection
- Chronic dermatitis
- Chronic unrelieved pain
- Dental problems

- Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
- Gall bladder problems
- Sickle cell disease
- Exposure to an irritating allergen such as poison ivy
- Anal fissures
- Migraines/headaches
- Menstrual issues
- Constipation
- Side effect of medications
- Hyper/ hypothyroidism
• Lack of structure
• Intensive staffing
• Ignored
• Bored
• Frustrated, overwhelmed
• Chaotic environment
• Poor roommate matches
• Poor staff matches
• Unable to find desired items
• Having a routine that may be overwhelming
Psychomotor Agitation

Inability or difficulty sitting still

- Walking or swaying, performed with “speed” or “drive”
- Pacing
- Fidgeting
- Excessive rocking
Medical Reasons for Psychomotor Agitation

- Restless Leg Syndrome
- Pain
- GERD
- Parkinson's disease
- Alzheimer's disease
- Delirium
- Asthma inhalers
- Nebulizer treatments
- Low sodium levels (hyponatremia)
- Infections
- Menstrual issues
- Constipation
- Side effect of medications
- Hyper/hypothyroidism
Environmental Reasons for Psychomotor Agitation

- Excitement of waiting for someone or something
- Pacing while thinking in order to gather thoughts
- Feeling stuck in one place in which the person does not want to be
- Upset with what is occurring around them
- Afraid due to the behaviors of others
- Attempting to avoid intensive staffing
Mood Lability

Rapid changes between mood states

- Quick change from content to angry, or angry to happy, or crying to laughing/smiling
Medical Reasons for Mood Lability

- Pain due to body or dental issues
- Infections
- Allergies
- Sleeplessness
- GERD
- High or low blood sugar
- Gradual, undiagnosed hearing loss
- Menstrual issues
- Constipation
- Side effect of medications
- Hyper/hypothyroidism
Environmental Reasons for Mood Lability

- Overhearing something that evokes emotions
- Reacting to something that others did not notice
- Sudden disappointments
- Trauma
Questions to consider:

- Do they enjoy their home, their job or day program?
- Do they like their roommates, co-workers, staff?
- Are they happy?
- Do they get the opportunity to do things they enjoy?
Pressured Speech

• Increase in rate, volume, or quantity of speech or vocalizations

• Rate - fast

• Quantity - “chatty”, “motor mouth”

• Non Verbal - excessive humming, singing, yelling or screaming
Can be due to a host of physical/medical issues such as:

- Medication side effect
- Paradoxical medication reaction
- Pain
- Hyper/hypothyroidism
- Illegal drug use
People with intellectual disabilities may:

- Speak quickly out of fear of forgetting what they want to say
- Speak quickly because they are upset
Hypersexuality

Excess of sexual energy or drive
Medical Reasons for Hypersexuality

- Adverse reaction to medication
- Illegal drug use
- Physical discomfort/pain
- Chronic constipation
- Hemorrhoids
- Incomplete emptying of bladder
- Cystitis
- Infections
- Menstrual issues
- Hormonal imbalances
• Access to sexualized films/pornography
• Awakening of sexuality and sexual gratification
• Reactive response to sexual trauma

Increased/Decreased Sleep

- Sleep patterns that show:
  - difficulty falling asleep
  - interrupted sleep
  - early morning awakening
- Sleeping less than 5-6 hours or more than 8-9 hours per night
Possible Medical Reasons For Increases/ Decreases in Sleep

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypersomnia (Sleeping too much)</th>
<th>Insomnia (Sleeping too little or not at all)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Anemia</td>
<td>• GERD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Seizure medication</td>
<td>• Chronic pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sleep apnea</td>
<td>Hyper/hypothyroidism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Obesity</td>
<td>Dental issues (impacted wisdom teeth, cavities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fibromyalgia</td>
<td>Any pain, illness or discomfort that makes the person uncomfortable and unable to rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Kleine Levin Syndrome</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hyper/hypothyroidism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lupus</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Chronic fatigue syndrome</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Narcolepsy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Side effect of medications</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Environmental Causes for Increases/Decreases in Sleep

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increased Sleep</th>
<th>Decreased Sleep</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of time</td>
<td>• Noise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exhaustion</td>
<td>• Roommates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Boredom</td>
<td>• Afraid of the dark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• History of trauma</td>
<td>• History of trauma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Overwhelming anticipation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Boredom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[www.dpw.state.pa.us](http://www.dpw.state.pa.us)
Increased/Decreased Appetite

- Any change in eating pattern from a person’s baseline eating habits
### Medical Issues Related to Increases/Decreases in Appetite

**Increased Appetite**
- Hyperthyroidism
- Reaction to medications
- Undiagnosed type 1 diabetes
- High or low blood sugar

**Decreased Appetite**
- GERD
- High or low blood sugar
- Constipation
- Infection
- Sore throat
- Dysphagia
- Digestive tract problems
- Medications that can alter the taste of food,
- Hypothyroidism
- Gall bladder problems
- Dental issues
Environmental Causes for Increase/Decrease in Appetite

- Aversion to certain textures, consistencies
- Change in diet (served unfamiliar foods)
- Different atmosphere in the home at mealtime
- Dislike of certain foods
Remember

There are many physical and environmental reasons for the same type of observable behavior that is considered a symptom of a mental health challenge.

It is extremely important that all medical and non-medical/environmental causes of a behavior be explored and investigated prior to making a formal mental health diagnosis.
• If not caused by medical conditions
• If not caused by environmental conditions

POSSIBLE TARGET SYMPTOM OF A MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGE
Symptom Analysis

• When and how did the symptom start?
• What factors may cause the symptom to occur?
• What are the characteristics of the symptom?
• Since its onset, has it changed?

Tracking the target symptoms of a mental health challenge is vital!!!
Roles of Team Members

• The Person him/herself!!
• Family
• Direct Support Professionals
• Supports Coordinator
• Anyone involved in the persons life
Roles of Team Members

- Agency nurse and other medical professionals
- Psychiatrist
- Behavior Specialist
- Team
When there is an ACTUAL Mental Health Diagnosis:

- Diagnosis made by psychiatrist
- Target symptoms identified
- Plan for care identified
  - Medication?
  - Support plan?
  - Therapy?
  - Certified Peer Specialist?
- Target symptoms tracked
What can happen with a person’s quality of life if we don’t do these things?
In Conclusion

- Function of behaviors needs to be questioned
- Ruling out medical and environmental causes needs to be pursued
- Psychiatric concerns need to be addressed
- Recovery can happen
Thank You!
• Please complete and hand in your Post-test.

• Please complete and hand in your Training Evaluation Survey.

