

# Assessment and Management of Intellectual Disability and Co-occurring Mental Health Conditions

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# How do mental health conditions present in children and young people with intellectual disability?

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Prevalence of mental health disorders

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Helpful approaches to diagnostic classification

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Links between behaviours of concern, health and development

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The use of rating scales and structured observations

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The importance of comprehensive **biopsychosocial assessment**

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Bringing together the diagnostic **formulation and treatment plan**



# Prevalence of mental health conditions

Consistent epidemiological evidence of increased prevalence over the past 50 years

Up to **50% of children** with I.D. may experience clinically significant mental health problems

Higher rates of underlying neurodevelopmental disorders and genetic syndromes lead to increased risk

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# Diagnostic classification



Limited research into how conditions manifest differently



Diagnostic overshadowing and misattribution of symptoms is a problem



Understanding **clinically significant symptoms** is more helpful than rigid application of formal diagnostic categories



Identifying clusters of emotional and behavioural symptoms will allow more tailored management options

# Behaviour, health and development

- The concept of challenging behaviour has its origins in behavioural analysis
- It may represent a range of underlying unmet health or developmental needs
- We need to better understand the behavioural manifestations of mental health conditions and the broader links between behaviour and persistent mental health symptoms



# Rating scales and structured observations



Specialist checklists and rating scales are helpful, and there are new measures being developed



Standard measures can be used with revision



Interaction with the child and observation in a range of settings is invaluable



# Biopsychosocial assessment

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- Developmental trajectory
- Developmental disorders
- Physical health and development
- Genetic conditions and behavioural phenotypes
  
- Family life and social factors
- Abuse and neglect
- Trauma and adversity
- Community and cultural exclusion

# Formulation

- Ensures the child's needs are understood
- Describes baseline functioning and any changes, along with associated risk or distress
- Integrative understanding of behaviour and health
- Specific conditions and / or relevant symptoms
- Ongoing assessment
- Should create a shared narrative and goals



# Key take-away messages

