

HOW CAN POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER BE RECOGNISED IN INDIVIDUALS WITH SEVERE OR MODERATE INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES?

EEMHART



Individuals with severe or moderate intellectual disabilities (ID) relatively often experience stressful or traumatic events. After such events, it is normal to experience stress or anxiety. Sometimes these symptoms persist and daily functioning becomes disrupted. This may indicate posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

TIMELY RECOGNITION = TIMELY AND APPROPRIATE SUPPORT AND TREATMENT

Individuals with severe or moderate ID may have difficulty talking about what they experience. It is therefore important to pay attention to behavioural changes.

SIGNS OF PTSD INCLUDE:



RE-EXPERIENCING

- Nightmares or screaming during sleep
- Distress when something happens that resembles the event
- Being preoccupied with what happened, for example frequently talking about it or re-enacting the event



AVOIDANCE

- Avoiding places, people, or situations
- Resistance in situations that are reminiscent of the event, such as pushing people away or refusing help



CHANGES IN MOOD

- Being more fearful, angry, or sad
- Reduced pleasure or interest
- Increased withdrawal

INCREASED AROUSAL

- Increased restlessness or alertness
- More irritability or aggression; having a "short fuse"
- Sleeping difficulties
- (Increased) self-injurious behaviour
- Being easily startled



DO YOU SUSPECT THAT SOMEONE MAY HAVE PTSD?

Discuss your concerns with those involved, such as relatives or support staff.

A trained professional with diagnostic qualifications, such as a psychologist, can administer the DITS-SID to someone who knows the individual with ID well, for example a relative and/or professional caregiver.



The DITS-SID provides a clear overview of traumatic and other stressful events, as well as the symptoms resulting from them. Understanding the trauma history can help explain behaviour and improve support. The DITS-SID helps determine whether PTSD is present and whether trauma treatment is needed.

Research shows that EMDR therapy can help individuals with severe or moderate ID and PTSD.

The DITS-SID is available free of charge

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OR SCAN THE QR CODE →

