

PSW - CoP

Aging and Developmental Disabilities

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COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE



SENIORS HEALTH RESEARCH TRANSFER NETWORK
Linking Caregivers, Researchers & Policy Makers



Who is Developmentally Disabled?

- Broad definition:
 - Range of cognitive and physical conditions
 - Occurs prior to 22 years of age
 - Will continue throughout their lifespan
 - Results in functional limitations
 - Requires supports

Historical Context

- Most individuals with any level of developmental disability lived in Provincial Institutions prior to the 1970s
- Deinstitutionalization into the community
- Aging in institutions was dramatically different than what is occurring in the community today

Historical Context

- Average age at death of persons in Canadian institutions in 1976 - 1978:
 - Males = 36.6 years
 - Females = 37.9 years

Current Trends

- This population is aging for the first time
- The increases in life span is most dramatic in the last 30 years since deinstitutionalization
- Most likely due to:
 - improvement in health care and living conditions

Current Trends

- Oldest individual at Reena is 82
- 45% of individuals are over the age of 50 yrs (currently support 300 individuals in group homes and apartments)
- Estimated in Ontario there are more than 12,000 individuals with developmental disabilities over the age of 50 years

Definition of Elderly

- Debate - literature varies on the age
- Many state between 45 - 50 years
 - related to a decline in functional living skills
- Down's syndrome and Alzheimer's disease
 - at age 40 years = 100% of physiological changes (but not necessarily functional)

Aging Differences

- Individuals with greater levels of disability (developmental and physical) are more likely to have higher mortality rates
 - usually associated with respiratory diseases and conditions caused from the congenital condition of their central nervous system

Mental Health

- Some research indicates that older adults with developmental disabilities are twice as likely to show signs of mental illness
 - high incidence of depression and bipolar disorders
- More research is needed in this area

Health Care

- Chronic health problems as in the general population
- High probability of a seizure disorder
- Prone to greater deterioration of auditory and visual senses
- Greater possibility of neurological and neuromuscular disorders

Long-Term Care Home

- Entry into the setting by:
 - Directly from an institution
 - With an elderly parent who needed a long-term care facility
 - Living at home and the family requested placement
 - Social Service agency requested placement from a group home, supported independent living (apartment), supportive housing or a retirement home
 - Hospital or Psychiatric Hospital
 - Others?

Community Support

- As individuals age either living with their family or in group homes CCAC may be involved
- Personal Care may be required and PSWs may go into family homes, group homes, apartments or retirement homes to provide this care

Elderly and Developmentally Disabled

- Similarities between the two groups:
 - What are some similarities between seniors and aging individuals with a developmental disability?

Case Example - Community

- New Assignment
- Group home supporting seniors with a developmental disability
- No experience with individuals with a developmental disability or group homes
- Enter the home – staff welcomes – introduces you to GR who is in his room – indicates that that you will be assisting with his bath

Case Example - Community

- Staff indicates – “will be with you in a minute”
- You decide to proceed
- GR is sitting in a wheelchair with a helmet on, stooped and looking downward
- As you approach GR and he sees you, he starts to scream
- You go closer and he makes the motion of trying to push you away

Case Example

- You try to speak to him but all he does is scream
- You leave the room overwhelmed and not sure what to do
- What would you do next?

Case Example – Long Term Care Home

- On your team assignment you will be supporting individuals with a developmental disability
- One of them, C – 54 yrs old, has Scoliosis, and limb deformities, very contractured and very frail
- Respiratory problems, asthma and environmental allergies

Case Example – Long Term Care Home

- She has socks on her hands to stop her from scratching herself
- Chokes easily on all meals, she has a pureed diet with thickened fluids
- She is about 3 feet tall and under 50 kg
- You have been requested to support her with am care

Case Example – Long Term Care Home

- You approach her bedside
- You see her head facing a different direction from her body
- You see the mattress has her body shape in it – made to fit her body
- You are frightened and nervous about touching her and doing any care because you are afraid of hurting her
- What do you do next?

Suggestions - Behaviour

- Tracking and Documenting the issue
- Ruling out medical/health problems
- Examining the environment
- Communication alternatives
- Looking at external supports

Suggestions - Physical

- Make physical contact
- Nonverbal does not mean that they are not aware – speak to the individual as you would to others
- Use what you have learned
- Seek information – care plan, other PSWs who have worked with this individual
- Ask specific questions that you are worried about – “Will I hurt them if”

Supports

- Family and Support Workers
- Consultants:
 - Behaviour therapists
 - Communication therapists
 - Occupational Therapists
 - Psychogeriatric Resource Consultants
 - Speech and Language Pathologists
 - Dietitians
- Psychologists and Psychiatrists
- Community Agencies
- Volunteers

Community Agencies

- Ontario Association for Community Living (OACL)
 - www.acl.on.ca
 - 416-447-4348
- Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs (OASIS)
 - www.dhagencies.on.ca
- Community Care Access Centre

SHRTN – CoP Aging and Developmental Disabilities

- If you are interested in this topic – please join!
- Upcoming Webinar – Dementia and Developmental Disabilities
 - January 14th from 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
- On-line survey on learning needs

Thank-You!

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