Communicating and Interviewing People with Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities: Strategies for Advocates, Mental Health Professionals, & Law Enforcement, Part 2

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Key Sources for Workshop Content

Ecological Model

(CDC, 2004; Chamberlain, 2008; Fitzsimons, 2009; Hollomotz, 2009; McMahon, 2000)
Requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- State and Local Government Services Required to comply under Title II
  - Entities must ensure that their services, programs or activities are readily accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities

- Public accommodations and commercial facilities Required to Comply under Title III
  - Places of public accommodation must be operated in accordance with the full range of title III requirements, such as nondiscriminatory eligibility criteria; reasonable modifications in policies, practices, and procedures; provision of auxiliary aids; and removal of barriers in existing facilities

- Go to www.ada.gov

Resource

- Disability Responsiveness Assessment Tool, Illinois Images Project, Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Reasons a Person Might Not Understand You

- English is not his or her first language
- Cultural differences
- Limited vocabulary
- Limited experience
- You are using complicated sentences/unfamiliar words/professional jargon
- Person is:
  - Deaf or hard of hearing
  - Has a brain injury
  - Has a cognitive disability
    - Dementia, Alzheimer’s disease, Intellectual Disability
  - Has a mental health condition
  - Experiencing seizure or effects from a seizure
- Person is experiencing psychological distress

(The Institute on Disabilities, 2002)
Reasons a Person’s Speech or Words Might Not Make Sense to You

- Cultural differences, experiences
- A limited understanding of English
- Person
  - Has a brain injury
  - Has a cognitive disability
    - Dementia, Alzheimer’s disease, Intellectual disability
    - Experiencing effects from a stroke
  - Experiencing effects from a seizure
  - Has a mental health condition
- Side effects of medication
- Intoxication or drug use
- Person is experiencing psychological distress

(The Institute on Disabilities, 2002)
Reasons a Person May Have Difficulty Remembering

- Stress
- Brain injury
- Side effect of medication
- Intoxication/drug use
- Cognitive Disability
  - Dementia, Alzheimer’s disease, Intellectual Disability
- Effects from a seizure
- Mental health condition
- Effects of psychological distress

(The Institute on Disabilities, 2002)
Refer to Handout - Defining *Developmental Disability*: Federal Definition

A severe, chronic disability of an individual 5 years of age or older that:

A. Is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination [of the two];
B. Manifested before the age of 22;
C. Likely to continue indefinitely;
D. Results in substantial functional limitations in three or more major life activities (self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, self-direction, capacity for independent learning, economic self-sufficiency); and
E. Reflects need for lifelong individualized supports and services

Source: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/opa/fact_sheets/add_factsheet.html
American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) definition:

• “Intellectual disability is a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior, which covers many everyday social and practical skills. This disability originates before the age of 18.”

• Intellectual functioning – “refers to general mental capacity, such as learning, reasoning, problem solving, and so on.”

Source: http://www.aaidd.org
Characteristics of People with ID/DD

Can ...

• Remember core detail of significant/important life events

• Distinguish truth from a lie
Characteristics of People with ID/DD (Baladerian 1997; Baladerian, 1998; Fitzsimons, 2009; Sobsey, 1994)

May...
• have limited vocabulary
• offer repetitive answers/responses
• pretend to understand
• want to please you
• be anxious in new situations or with new people
• have more difficulty organizing their thoughts
• have difficulty sequencing events
• become easily distracted or confused
• interpret information literally
• show poor judgment
• be easily taken advantage of by others
Augmentative & Alternative Communication

• What are other ways than speech that are used to send a message from one person to another?
Purpose of the Contact/Interview (OVC, April 2011; Razza & Tomasulo, 2005)

**Forensic**
- Obtain reliable and accurate information about a crime
- Fact-Finding Focus

**Mental Health**
- Assess psychological issues (mental health disorder, coping, defenses, self-efficacy), preliminary diagnostic assessment, treatment planning, and provide treatment
- Therapeutic Focus

**Advocate**
- Provide emotional support, explain rights, help get medical care, link to other services
- Support & Empowerment Focus
Pre-Contact or Pre-Interview: Know Your Purpose

1. Personal Preparation
2. Person knowledge
3. Methods of communication
4. Meeting/Interview

Site and Time Schedule

(OVC, April 2011; Razzo & Tomasulo, 2005)
Personal Preparation: How Do You Prepare?

(OVC, April 2011; Razzo & Tomasulo, 2005)
Assessing Person's Knowledge & Communication, and Determining Accommodation Needs (OVC, April 2011; Razzo & Tomasulo, 2005)

• Learn about person.
  • Observe
  • Read personal records and charts
  • Talk to family members, care providers, social network
  • Determine life stressors
  • Determine anxiety level
  • Characteristics of disability

• Using a Helper for Communication  
  • Should be someone with whom the person feels comfortable, knows the person’s communication well, and chosen by the person.

• Using Person’s Augmentative or Alternative Communication  
  • Learn about the person’s system  
  • Arrange for “system”

• Using Symbols  
  • Determine if person uses or has used symbols/pictures in communication.
Supporting Person’s Communication: Victim/Survivor Sexual Assault  

- What happened?
- Who perpetrated the assault?
- How did it happen?
- When did it occur?
- Where did it occur?
- Who saw, heard, or overheard the alleged incident?
- After assault

Meeting Interview Site & Time (OVC, April 2011; Razzo & Tomasulo, 2005)

Factors to consider

• Site impact person
• Confidentiality
• Safety
• Privacy
• Audiotape/videotape
• Transportation
• Interview physical space
• Allocated time
• Medication
• Person’s schedule/routine
• Lack of distractions
The Interview Process (OVC, April 2011; Razza & Tomasulo, 2005)

1. Preparing the Interview Site
2. Introducing Yourself
3. Providing for the Person’s Needs
4. Developing Rapport
5. Language
6. Person’s Personality Traits
7. Interview Patience and Demeanor
8. Signals and Control
My Contact Information

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