

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY : CHALLENGES AND REMEDIES IN POSTCOVID-19 ERA

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ABSTRACT

Persons with intellectual disabilities are considered as the exceptional ones. They are different from the normal persons. They have some unique needs that can be met by systematic teaching. For this professionals as well as family members have to come together to fulfill their needs. Therefore, through this article the researcher suggests some tips that help both the professional as well as parents to sort out the challenges they had faced due to pandemic of Corona Virus (COVID-19) to handle PWID's.

Keywords: Intellectual Disability, Exceptional, PWID's

INTRODUCTION

Today we all are living in the world of differences means every individual is somehow different from the other. Like some individuals are physically smart while others are mentally smart, some are good speakers whereas some are good listeners etc. When we talk about the mental ability, we observe some individuals are genius, average and below average. Among these individuals genius and average come under mainstream domain whereas below average are considered in marginalized domain. For these marginalized persons or below average persons intellectual disability term has been used.

AREAS TO IDENTIFY INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

The term intellectual disability is not new to us but we know very well about it. As many schemes, policies, institutions, schools etc. have been started by government as well as non-government organisations to mainstream them. Intellectual disability is mainly consist of two words i.e. one intellectual which means ability to think in a logical way, and the other one is disability which means the condition of being unable to do things in the normal way. As per American Association in Intellectual disability and developmental disabilities (AAIDD) given in the year 2007, "Intellectual disability is a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social and practical adaptive skills. This disability originates before the age of 18."

Currently AAIDD recognises adaptive behaviour as a collection of three skill areas explained below, and a significantly subaverage functioning in the following three areas is necessary to identify intellectual disability :

Conceptual skills – language and literacy; money, time and number concepts; and self-direction.

Social skills – interpersonal skills, social responsibility, self-esteem, gullibility, naivete (i.e. wariness), social problem solving, and the ability to follow rules/obey laws and to avoid being victimized.

Practical skills – activities of daily living (personal care), occupational skills, healthcare, travel/transportation, schedules/routines, safety, use of money, use of the telephone.

This definition clearly indicates that children with intellectual disability have limitations not only intellectually or mentally but also socially. Due to these limitations the needs of PWID becomes different from that of normal one's. As PWID's not only require physical, social supports and different types of therapies, in their academic related activities but also to fulfill their activities of daily routine like brushing, dressing, toileting, eating, running, walking etc. In order to ensure an independent life for an intellectual disabled person, a collaborative efforts of multidisciplinary team is required from the day of his identification. The nature or type of help or support needed by a PWID is totally depends upon its condition and severity of disability, as every PWID is different from the other.

But as we know at present, the whole world is facing a huge problem of pandemic COVID-19. Due to this the life of whole world gets struck off. Even the powerful and developed countries like USA, Russia can't be spare of this pandemic. This pandemic arises the conditions, where all the countries have to shut down their all activities, a state of complete lockdown has been observed in the whole world. All the educational institutions, schools, colleges, offices, factories, industries, markets, etc. get affected by this. All the people get confined to their houses, all types of their social interactions get affected. The only mean left is online. As Corona virus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered corona virus. This virus is mainly transmitted through droplets generated when an infected person coughs, sneezes or exhales. These droplets are too heavy to hang in the air, and quickly fall on floors on surfaces. One can be infected by breathing in the virus, due to close proximity of someone who has COVID-19, or by touching contaminated surface and their eyes, nose or mouth.

MAIN CHALLENGES & REMEDIES

It shows evidently that when the life of a normal individual becomes so challenging by remembering so many things like washing hands continuously, keeping social distancing, keeping himself hygienic and clean to combat COVID-19 then it is very much challenging for the intellectual disabled to adopt new things in their life. As due to their limitations in mental, social, physical, emotional and other areas they require continuously physical assistance, attention and support to fulfill their daily routine activities. So, according to researcher the main challenges and remedies related to intellectual disabilities during post COVID-19 era will be given as follows:

- (1) Need to set a routine is very important to maintain the well being of PWID. For this visual aids related to the routine of the child can be prepared.
- (2) need to use visual aids not only related to daily routine with pictures and bold letters but also use to explain the pandemic, lockdown etc. to the PWID.
- (3) Need to prepare other volunteers from within the family to take care of PWID in absence of parents.
- (4) Need to observe the cues of PWID to understand what activities they enjoy the most and which one's not.
- (5) Need to be friendly with the PWID in order to engage them in different activities by giving instructions and guidance.
- (6) Need to reduce demands expecting from the PWID. No doubts all the activities of daily routine are important but try to use different formats instead of just demanding to do.

- (7) Need to set weekly goals with the help of experts or therapist to continue the learning of PWID. But these goals needs to be very realistic and related to the daily routine activities.
- (8) Need to set realistic academic goals in order to improve PWID's motivation don't try to expect anything which is beyond PWID's ability.
- (9) Need to contact members of multidisciplinary team regularly like occupational therapist, speech therapist, physiotherapist, psychologist etc. to ensure that one programme of PWID will remain in track inspite of pandemic and lockdown.
- (10) Need to guide PWID's about the wholesome habits required to make ourself secure and safe during COVID-19. For this the help of siblings or other family member's can be taken.
- (11) Need to provide conducive and healthy environment to make PWID's feel emotionally secure during COVID-19.
- (12) Need to engage PWID's in different sports, exercise and yoga therapy to make them physically fit.
- (13) Need to provide more multisensorial exposures to PWID's in order to increase their level of interest, attention and concentration. For this efforts can be taken to make PWID's technology friendly.
- (14) Need to use home as a laboratory workshop to make PWID's independent in their daily routine activities.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that no doubt COVID-19 brought a greater challenge and barrier before the families and professionals to achieve their goals of PWID's but with patience, insight and determination they must overcome all the barriers.

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