

## Access to Mental Health Care for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

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- **Everyone should have access** to timely, effective, accessible, and culturally safe mental health care, where they can make their own choices.
- Canada agreed to follow the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (2010) and the [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (2007), which say people with disabilities, including Indigenous people, have the **right to the best possible healthcare, including mental health care**.
- 45% of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities also have mental health and/or substance use challenges, called "**dual diagnosis**".

### Key Challenges

- Doctors and primary care providers are key entry points for accessing specialized mental health services, but they often lack the **training and expertise** to help people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Not all supports need be addressed by specialized services, mainstream services should be inclusive, but there are **not enough mental health supports** for people with dual diagnosis, especially in rural and remote communities, resulting in long wait times and preventable crises.
- The [2007 Planning Guidelines for Mental Health and Addiction Services for Children, Youth, and Adults with Developmental Disabilities](#) were developed to make sure people get **fair and proper care**, but they are not always followed or known about.

### How to Make People's Lives Better

**Develop and fully fund an inclusive, fair, and culturally safe Mental Health Strategy**, with steps including:

- Make sure **mainstream mental health services become inclusive** and **invest in community-based supports** across BC so they can provide timely, appropriate, and ongoing mental health supports.
- Create a plan for **training, attracting, and recruiting generalists and specialists** with expertise in the mental health of people with dual diagnosis, improving specialized services and better meeting the needs of communities.
- Review and **update the [2007 Planning Guidelines](#)** and create a plan to put accountability measures, including regulation, into place.

### Position Statement: Access to Mental Health Care for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

[Technical Version](#)

[Plain Language Version](#)