

Access to Mental Health Care for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

- **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](#)