



Your next call involves a person with a developmental disability :

Are you prepared?



Dispatch/call center



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Why Should You Care?



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Possible 9-1-1 Calls


- Missing person
- Victim of a crime
- Criminal Activity
 - Alleged perpetrator
 - Witness
- Driving Incidents
- Domestic Disturbance
- Medical emergency
- Write your name on page four



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Spectrum of Supports Needed


Traditional Model



- More impacted by characteristics
- May need more supports

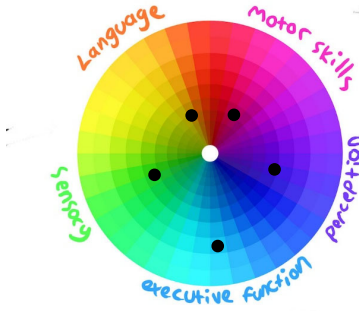
- Mild characteristics
- May need fewer supports

Presume intellect
More supports ≠ low intelligence




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Spectrum of Supports Looks More Like This





Spectrum design by Rebecca Burgess



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Prevalence Statistics

- About **1 in 36** children has been identified with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) according to estimates from the CDC.
 - **1 in 23** boys
 - 1 in 88 girls
 - **1 in 43** children in Maryland
 - **1 in 27** boys in Maryland
 - 1 in 116 girls

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Prevalence Statistics (from CDC)

- **1 in 6** of children age 3-17 have a developmental disability
- 1 in 83 have an intellectual disability
- 1 in 345 have Cerebral Palsy
- 1 in 700 have Down Syndrome
- 1 in 162 have Tourette Syndrome



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Exercise Time



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Communication/Language Processing Disorder

- May communicate with or without words
- May use alternative mode of communication – iPad or other assistive technology, gestures, sign language, PECS
- May be verbal, but unable to sustain a conversation
- May only cite scripts or use echolalia
- May use repetitive or idiosyncratic language (ASD and Tourettes)
- Articulation difficulties (ID/Down syndrome and Cerebral Palsy)



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Communication/Language Processing Disorder

- May only understand direct language
 - May be able to speak but answers may seem blunt or tactless
 - May be unable to understand sarcasm, metaphors or euphemisms



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Communication/Language Processing Disorder



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Communication/Language Processing Disorder

- May appear deaf and may not respond to verbal cues
- Receptive and Expressive Language may require additional processing time




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Communication/Language Processing Disorder

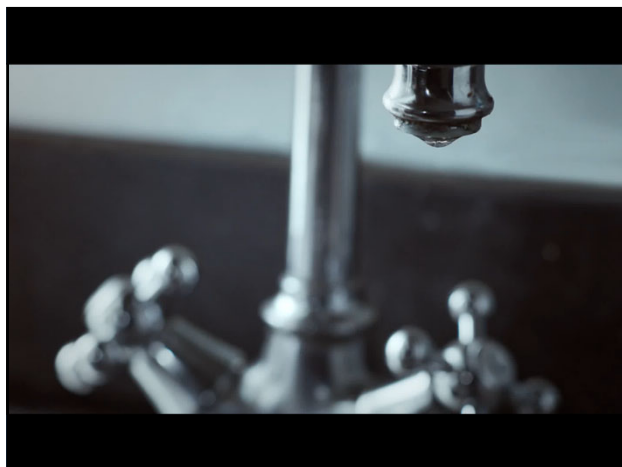


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When Interacting with a Person with a Developmental Disability . . .



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Sensory Processing

- sensitivity to sound, light and touch
- easily over-stimulated
- under-stimulated
- difficulty with body awareness and balance



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Social Interaction

- May not make eye contact
- May not pick up on social cues or body language
- May not understand personal space
- May be huggers or kissers
- Down syndrome – may be overly social and not recognize the seriousness of situation



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Social Interaction

- May lack social or emotional reciprocity
- May not respond “appropriately” – may laugh or giggle at inappropriate times
- Cerebral Palsy – may not be able to show signs of emotion
- May not develop peer relationships



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Behavioral Effects

- May have obsessive tendencies (passions)
- May act impulsively
- Anxiety creates repetition
- Medication effects



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“Bad Behaviors”

- All “behaviors” should be seen as communication
- People may engage in “acting out” or “aggressive behavior” because of:
 - The inability to communicate ideas, pain or mental health experience in ways that are effective, reliable and universally understandable*
 - Difficulty adjusting to new routine or situation

*From William Stillman, “Presuming Intellect”



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Dispatch Considerations

- Individuals with a developmental disability MAY –**
- Not want their disability to be recognized (and try to cover it up)
 - Pretend to understand their rights when they don’t
 - Seem less credible as a result of behaviors
 - Say what they think you want to hear



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Dispatch Considerations

Individuals with a developmental disability MAY –

- Not react well in emergency situations or recognize real danger (may re-enter burning building, touch downed power lines, etc.)
- Appear to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs



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Dispatch Considerations

Individuals with a developmental disability MAY –

- Be overwhelmed by police presence
- Not recognize a uniform as a sign of authority or of someone who can help
- Not know what to do or how to seek help
- Be confused about who is responsible for the crime



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Dispatch Considerations

Individuals with a developmental disability MAY –

- Repeat words of the dispatcher
- Have difficulty describing facts or details
- Answer “no” or “why” to all questions



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Dispatch Considerations

- Consider staying on the phone with the individual or the caregiver until first responders arrive (regardless of the type of call)
- Don't assume group home or facility staff have the adequate training or knowledge on the topic of I/DD, or even on the person



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When Talking with a Person with a Developmental Disability . . .

Be Patient



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When Talking with a Person with a Developmental Disability . . .

- Use simple sentences
- Avoid metaphors and sarcasm
- Ask questions/give instructions one at a time
- Give plenty of time for the person to process the information and respond
- Use the person's name at the start of each sentence so they know you are addressing them



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When Talking with a Person with a Developmental Disability . . .

- Ask open-ended questions, such as, “What is happening?” or “How can I help you?”
- Avoid questions requiring abstract thinking such as, “How old you do you think he was?”
- Do not pretend to understand a response
- Be alert to signs of increased frustration
- Tell the person what actions you are taking



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Elopement and Wandering

- **26.7%** of all children with I/DD elope
- **49%** of children with ASD elope
- **1/3** (more than) cannot communicate their name, address or phone
- **71%** of deaths related to wandering caused by drowning

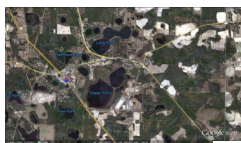


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When Talking to a Caregiver. . .

About a missing person –

- Push caregivers about the amount of time a person has been missing
 - Let them know they aren't in trouble
 - Changes the parameter of search
- Ask about bodies of water, but also GOOGLE MAP BODIES OF WATER



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Are responders really looking at the bottom?



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When Talking to a Caregiver. . .

About a missing person –

- Ask about triggers, fears and passions
 - Include specific resources used by search team – K9s, helicopter, police, police cars, etc.
- Ask if the person will respond to their name
- Ask if they've gone missing before. Where did they go?



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When Talking to a Caregiver. . .

About a missing person –

- Ask if the person has identification
 - QR Code (IfNeedHelp.org), Safety Tat, State ID, shoe tag
- Ask if the family is enrolled in Project Lifesaver (dependent on the county) or uses a tracking device
- Don't forget the basic information questions



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When Talking to a Caregiver. . .

Ask about –

- Triggers, fears and passions
- Sensory issues – tolerance for lights, sounds, touch
- Communication methods



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FOR MORE INFORMATION



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