

Healthy Outcomes

Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month

Central PA
Health Care Quality Unit
Monthly Newsletter
September 2024

[WEBSITE](#)



Suicide Prevention for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

By Texas Health and Human Services

It is a common misperception that having an intellectual or developmental disability (IDD) protects a person from thinking about suicide or making a suicide attempt.

According to the Scientific World Journal, people with intellectual disabilities have thoughts of suicide at a rate similar to the general population without intellectual disabilities. Lancet Psychiatry (2014) reported people with

WHAT'S NEW

Suicide Prevention for
Individuals with IDD
988 Suicide and Crisis Line
Sepsis Awareness Month
DSP Recognition Week
HCQU Learning
Opportunities
HRST Gatekeepers and
Updating HRSTs
StationMD
Country Apple Dumplings
Identity Theft

autism spectrum disorder (ASD) experience thoughts of suicide at a rate nine times that of the general population.

These findings indicate IDD does not serve as a buffer to thoughts of suicide. Professionals, caregivers and loved ones need to be aware of risk factors associated with thoughts of suicide for individuals with IDD.

General Suicide Risk Factors Associated with People with IDD

A risk factor is a characteristic or condition that increases the chance that a person may think about, attempt, or die by suicide. Although limited, research indicates some risk factors are associated with both the general population and people with IDD:

- Family instability
- Overall lack of social support
- Diagnosis of depression
- Diagnosis of anxiety
- Comorbid physical disability
- History of trauma
- Poor self-esteem

Suicide Risk Factors Specific to People with IDD	Warning Signs Associated with People with IDD
<p>The following risk factors are specific to people with IDD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research in Developmental Disabilities reported thoughts of suicide and suicide attempts are common among people with mild or moderate intellectual disability, but rare in people with severe or profound intellectual disability.	<p>Warning signs are indicators that a person may be in acute danger of making a suicide attempt or dying by suicide and needs help urgently. The following are warning signs associated with people with IDD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sudden withdrawal from family or loss of interest in enjoyable activities• Decreased response to reinforcers• Change in appetite or refusing to eat• Current traumatic event• Persistent crying or sadness or increased agitation or irritability

• Camouflaging or masking is a strategy used by people with ASD to hide their differences from peers and family according to research published in Lancet Psychiatry. People with ASD may try to look and act like others by concealing their autistic traits, causing them to lose their sense of self and feel unsupported as a person. Constantly working to hide themselves may lead to a profound sense of loneliness and not belonging.

- Regression in skills of daily living or showing an uncharacteristic inability to learn new skills as expected
- Perseveration or rumination on suicide or talk about death
- Making plans for suicide or seeking means for suicide
- Making statements about having no reasons for living or wishing to not be alive or “not here”
- Hopelessness
- Making negative self-statements such as being a “bad person,” expecting punishment, self-blame, or excessively seeking reassurance of worth

How to Ask a Person with IDD about Suicide

When talking to anyone about suicide, it is important to ask about suicide clearly and directly. This is especially important when talking to a person with an intellectual or developmental disability. Many people with IDD think and communicate concretely and literally. Ask, “Are you thinking about suicide?” or “Are you thinking about killing yourself?”

For Additional Communication Tips and Crisis Information-

Full [Suicide Prevention Brochure](#)



9888

SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE



CONTACT THE [HCQU](#) FOR A SEPSIS TRAINING

Save a Life by Learning the Signs of Sepsis

At the HCQU, Sepsis Awareness Month is every month!!

Sepsis, the body's overwhelming, and toxic response to infection, kills over 350,000 adults in the U.S. every year. Through public education, we can raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of sepsis so people in our communities know when to seek emergency care. Together, we can help *save lives and limbs from sepsis.*

Learn more at SepsisAwarenessMonth.org.



September 08, 2024 - September 14, 2024

Direct Support Professional Recognition Week 2024

Direct support professionals (DSPs) are not just caregivers; they are life changers and life savers in our communities. It's time to give them the recognition and support they deserve! From the entire HCQU team to DSPs everywhere, we thank you for your compassion, service, and for empowering people with I/DD to reach their fullest potential and live their best lives. **Happy DSP Recognition Week!**



Learning Opportunities



Take advantage of the HCQU's free virtual trainings and online learning system. The HCQU can help your agency and the individuals you support. We offer a wide variety of training topics concerning the physical and behavioral health care of people

with IDD. Check out our [training calendar](#) and [online courses](#).

TOPICS: [FATAL 5](#), [INTERNET SAFETY](#), [DEMENTIA FRIENDS FOR IDD](#), [WEIS MARKET VIRTUAL COOK ALONG](#), [COLD WEATHER SAFETY](#)

An **additional HRST gatekeeper** has been added to the Central PA HCQU. The gatekeeper's role consists of communicating with support staff from IntellectAbility to have HRST users or Raters added to the [HRST User Request Spreadsheet](#).

(Please email all three gatekeepers with requests.)

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How often should the HRST be updated?



The HRST should be updated at a minimum once per year. Think of it as an annual check-up. An ideal time to complete an annual update of the HRST is when preparing to renew the person's annual plan. However, it is vital that the HRST be updated anytime the person experiences events that would affect scores, such as falls, injuries, seizure activity, ER visits, etc. The goal of the HRST is to track health risk movement so the team can respond appropriately. The Service Team and the HRST web-based application will assist users in ensuring everyone is receiving timely updates.



Telemedicine for Individuals with I/DD

StationMD is a game-changer for provider agencies and people with I/DD.

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their caregivers often experience multiple challenges when trying to access healthcare. Contact StationMD to learn what best practices they use to ensure healthcare delivery is tailored to meet the unique health needs of people with I/DD.

StationMD is an ODP-approved provider of the STAT waiver service in Pennsylvania.

StationMD's **I/DD-specialized telehealth** service can be used for any medical matter that requires a doctor's attention, including:



An initial assessment to determine if a trip to the ER is needed



Fever, vomiting, cough, congestion, & seasonal illness



Rashes, abrasions, & pink eye



Urinary tract infections, constipation, & diarrhea



Seizures, falls, & minor injuries



Prescription refills, general medical guidance, & more

How to Get StationMD's Service:



Enroll individuals for StationMD's telehealth service throughout the year on the ISP. The service may be added by completing a critical revision or during the annual ISP renewal process.

For more information about StationMD's telehealth service, contact the Supports Coordinator, who manages the individual's ISP.

A **how-to guide** to enrolling Pennsylvania residents with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) for StationMD's I/DD-specialized telehealth through the annual ISP process.

Country Apple Dumplings

By Allrecipes

These apple dumplings are delicious. Oh, my goodness – who knew that fresh apples, crescent roll dough, and citrus soda could make such a wonderful treat?

Ingredients

- 2 large Granny Smith apples, peeled and cored
- 2 (10 ounce) cans refrigerated crescent roll dough
- 1 cup butter
- 1 ½ cups white sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 (12 fluid ounce) can or bottle Mountain Dew

Directions: [Full recipe](#)



Identity Theft

By Michelle A. Henry/ PA Attorney General



There are several methods scammers use to steal your information. Some are sophisticated, like using mail, phone, or online scams. Others take advantage of documents left unattended in open view, like taking mail from an unsecured mailbox or going through the trash. Some scammers will 'dumpster dive' to steal personal information; others use old school tactics like pickpocketing, stealing records, or keeping a restaurant customer's credit card information. In fact, 55 percent of identity theft is perpetrated by someone the victim knows. [Read more.](#)

**** Shred materials with your personal information. A crosscut shredder is best. ****

Are your new staff on the newsletter distribution list?

[Email](#) us!

Let the Central PA HCQU help you.

Our HCQU includes registered nurses experienced in serving individuals with an Intellectual Disability (ID) and/or Autism and their support staff and families. Visit our [website](#) for their contact information and the counties they support.