

# Soft Skills Program for Caring for Patients with Intellectual Disabilities, Mental Illness, or PTSD

## Curriculum Overview

### Designed for:

- High school students
- Post-secondary courses in health care
- Certified Nursing Assistant training courses
- In-service training for nursing home facilities

### Length:

The activities in this curriculum will last approximately 5-6 hours. With supplemental materials and additional scenario review, the curriculum can be adapted to a longer block of time.

### Goal:

Research evidence indicates that there are strong positive relationships between a health care team member's communication skills and a patient's capacity to follow through with medical recommendations. Studies show that the clinician's ability to explain, listen and empathize can have a profound effect on biological and functional health outcomes as well as patient satisfaction and experience of care.

This interactive program was developed to prepare future health care professionals to care for patients with intellectual disabilities, mental illness or post-traumatic stress disorder by using effective soft skill strategies.

### Synopsis:

The purpose of this curriculum is to have students learn about intellectual disabilities, mental illness, and PTSD both from the patient and the health care worker points of view. Participants will receive a brief overview of the history of ID, MI, and PTSD and a basic definition of the terms. Participants will begin to understand how these are defined by specific characteristics. Through examples and scenarios, participants will receive instructions on how to best work with individuals with ID, MI, and PTSD generally, in care teams, and during behavioral difficulties as well as how to best support these individuals.

### Curriculum Components:

- Teacher's guide - Complete lesson, including detailed steps of activities, time and materials needed, student handouts and instructor information to teach the lesson
- Student materials
- Assessment tools
- PowerPoint presentation slides

### Learning Objectives:

#### Lesson 1: Defining Intellectual Disability

- Define intellectual disability (ID) and developmental disabilities
- Understand how they are diagnosed
- Identify the symptoms of ID
- Identify common examples of developmental disabilities
- Understand person-centered language

#### Lesson 2: Defining Mental Illness

- Define mental illness
- Identify the differences between a mental illness and an intellectual disability
- Define dual diagnosis
- Understand the diagnosis process for mental illness
- Have a general understanding of the common mental illness classifications of disorders

**Lesson 3: Strategies for Caring for Patients with Intellectual Disability**

- Understand best practices for working with individuals with ID/DD
- Understand person-centeredness
- Be able to apply practices for establishing trusting relationships
- Understand how to navigate behavioral situations
- Understand cross systems collaboration/planning

**Lesson 4: Strategies for Caring for Individuals with Mental Illness**

- Understand relationship establishing tools
- Understand best practices for communication
- Understand and apply person-centered care
- Begin to understand how to assess a person's mental state
- Understand when and how to consult with professionals
- Understand when to refer a patient for community-based services

**Lesson 5: Strategies for Caring for Patients with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**

- Define PTSD
- Identify the causes of PTSD
- Identify the symptoms of PTSD
- Understand how to care for patients with PTSD