

Call for Abstracts

Developmental Disabilities Network Journal (DDNJ)

Winter 2023-2024 Special Issue: Mental Health Aspects of
Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Many individuals with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities (IDD) who have mental health needs, receive ineffective services and supports. One dimension of supports that is often overlooked by both providers and researchers is wellbeing among persons with IDD. Without attending to a person's strengths and addressing gaps in basic human needs, such as enhancing social relationships and helping one achieve meaning, it is quite difficult for persons with IDD to flourish. Discrimination and trauma also play a significant role in the lives of people with IDD, which can contribute to an increase in mental health needs. While new opportunities for integrated mental health services, improvements in diagnosis and treatment, and the advent of positive psychological and strength-based practices offers significant promises, greater research and dissemination of information on best practices is needed.

Our Winter 2023-2024 special issue will be dedicated to the wellbeing and mental health aspects of persons with IDD. We are interested in all facets of this topic, with a particular focus on engagement with people with IDD, integrated wellbeing and mental health assessment and treatment approaches, inclusive research, and positive mental health.

We welcome abstracts that explore all aspects of wellbeing and mental health research within the context of the lived experience of persons with disabilities, their families, and the communities in which they live – in all states, territories, and tribal nations. This may include, but is not limited to: 1) measurement, 2) services, 3) treatments and approaches, 4) strengths-based research, 5) well-being and life satisfaction, 6) intersectionality, 7) program evaluation, 8) cohort and longitudinal studies, and 9) lived experiences. We need to know not only the problems, but also solutions moving forward. We welcome both quantitative and qualitative methods, as well as the intersection of the two through mixed methods.

We are specifically interested in seeing work on the following topics that involve persons with an IDD:

- How strengths are identified and activated
- The inclusion of persons with the lived experience of IDD in the provision of all aspects of their wellbeing, mental health treatment and support
- Effective program models
- How to engage persons with lived experience of IDD and their families in all aspects of wellbeing and mental health research
- Effective methods to improve wellbeing and mental health
- Intersectionality (e.g., race/ethnicity/spoken language) and its relationship to wellbeing and mental health
- Wellbeing and mental health in older adults
- Wellbeing and mental health in the LGBTQ+ community
- Crisis prevention and intervention services, including engagement with first responders

In general, we are looking for articles that demonstrate what works! We want to publish articles that have clear implications for enhancing engagement and partnerships, research, policy, and practice. Abstracts and final articles should reflect a commitment to research and ethics (Institutional Review Board Approval).

This special issue is a collaboration between DDNJ and the National Research Consortium on Mental Health in IDD. **Please send a plain language abstract of 250-500 words to editor.ddnj@usu.edu by July 15th, 2023.**

We will review abstracts in August and will invite articles for full submission by August 30th, 2023. Full articles will be due by **November 1st, 2023** and will be reviewed again by peer reviewers and editorial staff prior to publication in February, 2024. If you have questions or concerns please contact us at editor.ddnj@usu.edu.

A call for reviewers will be shared after we review abstracts, but if you are interested and know you will be available this winter, please email the editor with a short description of your area of expertise.

More on the National Research Consortium can be found here: <https://centerforstartservices.org/mhidd-national-research-consortium>. Promising projects, especially those that meet the Consortiums' research priorities, will be invited for a grant submission to further their research. Grants can be funded up to \$50,000 for 2 years.

We look forward to your submissions and are thankful for this opportunity to focus on these important topics.

Sincerely,

The Editors and Guest Editors