



## Mental Health Literacy and Direct Support Professionals: Why Does it Matter?

### What is mental health literacy?

Mental health literacy is a combination of 3 skills that allow you to support our own mental health along with the people we serve.



### Why is mental health literacy important for direct support professionals?

Direct support professionals often work with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Research shows that people with IDD

are more likely to have mental health concerns (Nguyen et al., 2025). It is also important for direct support professionals to be able to address their own mental health. Doing so can reduce burnout enhancing work and life activities.

Using the 3 main skills: identifying concerns, locating evidence-based resources, and being able to properly respond, will allow you to be effective in your role.

### What is your role as a direct support professional?

As a direct support professional, it is not your job to diagnose mental health concerns, and you should not feel responsible to do that. Instead, your role includes:

- Identifying mental health concerns.
- Following your agency's procedures of documentation.
- Advocating for the individuals you support.
- Share your observations with the right people.



## References

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