Recognizing Anxiety and Depression Symptoms

In Utah, about **50% of adults with IDD report experiencing symptoms of anxiety or depression** (Institute for Disability Research, Policy & Practice, 2023). National research similarly shows that adults with IDD are significantly more likely to be diagnosed with anxiety and depression than the general population (Osuna et al., 2026).



Symptoms May Look Different:

People with IDD may not always express with words when they are feeling anxious or depressed. Instead, mental health concerns may appear as changes in behavior, communication, sleep, appetite, or daily routines (Aggarwal et al., 2013; Hsieh et al., 2020). **Be sure to always compare behavioral changes to the individual's baseline.**

Look Beyond the Behavior:

Behavior change does not always mean a mental health condition. Consider possible:

Medical Causes	Environmental Causes	Mental Health Causes
Generalized body pain Illness or infection Fever Constipation Medication side effects	Noise / overstimulation Changes in routine Social isolation Lack of activities Communication barriers	Depression Anxiety Mania Psychosis

Note. Adapted from Aggarwal et al., 2013.

Key Takeaway

Sudden changes in behavior should prompt consideration of medical and environmental causes, as well as mental health concerns, rather than being attributed solely to their disability (Aggarwal et al., 2013).

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MENTAL HEALTH
& INTELLECTUAL/DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

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