Intellectual Disability
and Mental Health Initiatives

NSW GOVERNMENT | Health

The development of the *Intellectual Disability Mental Health Core Competencies Framework: A Manual for Mental Health Professionals* forms an important part of the NSW Government Mental Health Reform in developing a more responsive system. The Framework is understood to be the first of its kind in the world and was developed in consultation with consumers and carers.

The Framework aligns with the *NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines* that aim to ensure mainstream services provided by the NSW public sector are accessible and inclusive of people with a disability.

The Framework aims to improve the quality of mental health service delivery to people with an intellectual disability and outlines what is important from the point of view of people with intellectual disability and their carers. It provides a framework for mental health services to develop professional competence in the area by describing the specific skills and attributes required by mental health professionals and by outlining the necessary approaches to clinical practice when working with people with an intellectual disability.

This new resource, which was created by the Department of Developmental Disability Neuropsychiatry (3DN) at UNSW Australia, with funding from NSW Health, can be freely downloaded from the 3DN website at http://3dn.unsw.edu.au/idmh-core-competency-framework

To accompany the Framework and assist mental health professionals to achieve the skills identified, a practical Toolkit has been developed and will be released shortly. The IDMH Toolkit is a resource for mental health professionals to improve access to mental health services for people with an intellectual disability and co-occurring mental health problems by building mental health workforce capacity in intellectual disability mental health.

People with intellectual disability represent a particularly vulnerable population, with poorer health outcomes compared to the general population. NSW Health is funding the development of a new resource that will help guide clinicians to proactively monitor physical health risk factors, such as obesity and physical inactivity, and provide evidence-based interventions as necessary.

Additionally, the University of NSW Mental Health Intellectual Disability Chair has been contracted for a further five years and is developing Guidelines for the Inclusion of the Mental Health Care Needs of People with Intellectual Disability in Models of Care.

To learn more about mental health care reform in NSW visit
www.health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/reform