



# **Recovery-Oriented Interventions for People with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health Challenges**

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## **WRAP® for People with Developmental Distinctions**

Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) is an evidence-based program that helps people learn how to self-manage their mental health and wellness. WRAP® for People with Developmental Distinctions is an adaptation of the flagship WRAP: specially created for adults who have their own unique way of learning and/or communicating. It uses a workbook designed to support adults with developmental distinctions through a process of creating their own plan to live a happier and healthier life. The workbook was co-authored by a WRAP Advance Level Facilitator who is the mother of a child with IDD and WRAP’s developer Dr. Mary Ellen Copeland, with input from four adults with IDDMH. The workbook includes real-life examples from these 4 adults who went through the WRAP process. It emphasizes safe, simple tools and strategies that are more cognitively accessible to people with cognitive limitations. It is also compatible with other treatment programs.

The program is designed to help participants: 1) discover their own simple, safe wellness tools; 2) develop a daily plan to help them stay as well as possible; 3) identify upsetting events or circumstances and develop action plans for responding to them; and 4) create a strategy to gain support and stay in control of their wellness during and after a crisis. The program can also be used as a plan to support a person to reach a self-identified life goal. The workbook includes real-life examples from four experts—Rachel, Nikki, Sue, and Christopher—who contributed to the program’s development and are living WRAP in their own lives as adults with developmental distinctions

The WRAP Workbook for People with Developmental Distinctions is available here: <https://www.wellnessrecoveryactionplan.com/product/wrap-for-people-with-developmental-distinctions/>. It can be used individually or in conjunction with an evidence-based WRAP group focused on adults with developmental distinctions

In addition to the manual, the Copeland Center has produced 2 webinars that introduce listeners to WRAP for People with Developmental Distinctions, describing how WRAP works, its evidence base, how it has been adapted for people with IDD-MH, and how to use the manual with people with IDD-MH.

WRAP for People with Developmental Distinctions Part 1  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2iFt7g0b23M>

WRAP for People with Developmental Distinctions Part 2  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZuepOiRsfWg>

## **Feeling Down: Looking After My Mental Health**

Feeling Down is an easy-to-read, user-friendly, interactive guide developed collaboratively by people with learning disabilities, service providers, and researchers. It is designed to help people with intellectual and developmental disabilities take care of their mental health with the support of their family, friends, and service providers. It includes psychoeducation on topics such as how to recognize signs of emotional ill-health, different types of mental health care providers, and what a diagnosis is. It covers emotional self-management strategies such as reaching out to others, taking a break, relaxation, getting adequate sleep, good nutrition, and physical activity. Structured self-management planning includes creation of a “My Staying Healthy Plan,” and ongoing monitoring of one’s mood and activating strategies for emotional wellness using “My Feelings Chart and Plan.” Finally, tools are provided to help people speak to their primary care provider about getting help with their mental health. Contents are as follows.

Part 1: What is mental health

Part 2: How to keep yourself feeling well

Part 3: What to do when you are worried about your mental health

Part 4: Planning a visit to your primary care provider (GP)

Part 5: GP Information Pack

A unique feature of this guide is creation of a “GP Packet” containing forms that can be completed by the user and given to a physician at a medical appointment. The Packet includes the person’s background information, preferred means of communication, current medications, a letter stating why they are seeking help for their mental health, and questions for the doctor.

The guide is available here:

<https://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/file/2529/download?token=497RvAE7>

The following article written by people with disabilities describes using the guide with others in a self-help setting and the history of its development.

<https://openresearch.lsbu.ac.uk/download/06e8b15bc3bc838713a64473718e4c30d6a55c1dec3f71ec1592aa23a5b00d8b/313697/Cronin%20Depresion%20AMHID%202107.pdf>

## **Autistic and OK**

The Autistic and OK program consists of a series of mental health and wellbeing group sessions led by peers with autism. It covers four topics including understanding and managing anxiety, depression, bullying, and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). Each session conveys knowledge, tools, and techniques to help people manage their mental health. Opportunities are provided for participants to share their own thoughts on mental health in a safe and non-judgmental environment, connect with others who have autism, gain exposure to role models with autism, and boost confidence and communication skills. While the program was designed for a high school-age audience, it can be adapted for use by older age groups. All materials for teaching the sessions are provided, including the facilitator guide, PowerPoint slides, resource sheets, work sheets, and list of frequently asked questions. Other materials include a Program Handbook, Introduction Video, teacher training materials, advertising posters, participant certificates, optional pre-post evaluation surveys, and information for family and other caregivers.

Session: Bullying and Mental Health - participants learn about the difference between bullying and banter, and the impact bullying can have on mental health and wellbeing

Session: Understanding and Managing Anxiety – participants learn how to look out for signs of anxiety and apply some practical tools to help manage one’s anxiety.

Session: Understanding and Managing Depression - participants learn how to spot the signs of low mood and depression and explore ways to look after one’s wellbeing.

Session: Understanding and Managing OCD - participants learn to separate the myths from the facts about obsessive compulsive disorder, and hear about the varied experiences of young autistic people living with OCD

The Autistic and OK Toolkit can be downloaded here

<https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/what-we-do/connecting-young-people/youth-led-toolkits/autistic-and-ok>

A video with information about the program is available here

<https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/what-we-do/connecting-young-people/youth-led-toolkits/autistic-and-ok>

## **Seeking Safety for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**

The Seeking Safety intervention is an evidence-based, present-focused counseling model to help people attain safety from trauma and/or addiction. It can be delivered in group or individual sessions. It directly addresses trauma, but without requiring participants to delve into the trauma narrative. It covers 25 coping skills, including: Setting Boundaries in Relationships; Honesty; Compassion; Healing from Anger; and Recovery Thinking. The main aim of skill acquisition is to help participants achieve safety in their relationships, thinking, behavior, and emotions. Sessions have a common agenda: 1) Check-In, during which participants practice labeling their current mood; 2) Quote, which is used to engage participants emotionally and to provide inspiration for discussion; 3) Discussion, which is intended to support participants in relating the material to problems in their lives; and (4) Check-Out, during which people name one thing they learned from the session, identify one commitment for the following week, and identify community resource(s) to help with following through on the commitment.

Seeking Safety has been adapted for use with people who have IDD and MH issues. Descriptions of the changes in content and intervention delivery have been summarized by two groups: 1) Dr. Mayra Mendez, program coordinator for intellectual and developmental disabilities and mental health services at Providence Saint John's Child and Family Development Center in Santa Monica; and 2) a group of clinicians from the USC UCEDD and Children's Hospital Los Angeles Division of Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine (see below). One adaptation strategy involves selection of topics according to the needs and developmental level of the group. Another adaptation strategy is altering quotes to be concrete, developmentally appropriate, and utilize easily understandable language. Yet another adaptation strategy is to present information simply, in small segments, without ambiguity, and with checks for understanding.

A version of the Seeking Safety manual (which is copyrighted) can be viewed here:

[https://www.tamucc.edu/education/departments/cnep/texchip/files/seekingsafety\\_handouts\\_allrightsreserved\\_2020.pdf](https://www.tamucc.edu/education/departments/cnep/texchip/files/seekingsafety_handouts_allrightsreserved_2020.pdf)

And is available from the publisher here:

<https://www.treatment-innovations.org/seeking-safety.html>

A PowerPoint presentation on Seeking Safety:

<https://www.slideserve.com/lynne/seeking-safety>

An article describing adaptations to Seeking Safety for use with adolescents and young adults with IDD and mental health diagnoses is available here:

[https://www.aucd.org/docs/AUCD360\\_2018/Social%20Skills%20Groups%20Adapted%20from%20Seeking%20Safety%20Model%20for%20Adolescents%20and%20Young%20adults%20with%20Developmental%20Disabilities%20and%20Mental%20Health%20Diagnoses.pdf](https://www.aucd.org/docs/AUCD360_2018/Social%20Skills%20Groups%20Adapted%20from%20Seeking%20Safety%20Model%20for%20Adolescents%20and%20Young%20adults%20with%20Developmental%20Disabilities%20and%20Mental%20Health%20Diagnoses.pdf)

## **Exploring Mental Health Together Peer Mentoring Program**

This peer mentoring program was developed in collaboration with and specifically for young adults with IDD and co-occurring mental health conditions. In this program, a young adult with IDD and a co-occurring mental health condition mentors another young adult to support identification and independent use of strategies to cope with mental health symptoms. Peer mentors and participants meet weekly over 16 weeks for 60–90-minute sessions, depending on the planned content and activities. Each weekly session builds on content from the previous session to support skill development, including identification and use of 2-3 coping strategies in multiple contexts to decrease mental health symptoms.

Mentors use scripts to deliver psychoeducation and facilitate activities to enhance self-awareness (i.e., self-monitoring) and identify, practice, and utilize coping strategies. Activities and worksheets include a “card sort” depicting types of coping strategies, a body scan exercise, worksheets to support self-reflection, and use of tools to resolve barriers to engaging in coping strategies. Sessions include the mentor and mentee practicing coping strategies and discussing how they can be used in participants’ everyday lives. In addition to 20 hours of training, mentors met weekly with a mentor supporter (e.g., graduate-level student in the health professions, mental health clinician) individually or in small groups to tailor each session’s mentoring script and engage in role plays. Weekly meetings also allow time for supervision, and the mentor supporter is “on call” during mentoring sessions, as needed. Training materials (available from the lead author, for use with permission) include the following:

1. Scripts, worksheets, and activities
2. Session outlines
3. Peer mentor training materials
4. Peer mentor qualifications and required resources

Information about the program is available here:

<https://www.mghihp.edu/peer-mentoring-0>

A podcast featuring the peer mentors and researchers is available here:

[https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/healthmatters/e39-meet-bus-peer-mentoring-r\\_xHdTJAN5/](https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/healthmatters/e39-meet-bus-peer-mentoring-r_xHdTJAN5/)

A PowerPoint presentation about the program can be accessed here::

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=ZlsuSLihjCk&feature=youtu.be>

An article describing the program and results of a feasibility assessment can be requested here:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351996514\\_Feasibility\\_of\\_a\\_peer\\_mentoring\\_program\\_for\\_young\\_adults\\_with\\_intellectual\\_and\\_developmental\\_disabilities\\_and\\_co-occurring\\_mental\\_health\\_conditions](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351996514_Feasibility_of_a_peer_mentoring_program_for_young_adults_with_intellectual_and_developmental_disabilities_and_co-occurring_mental_health_conditions)