Mental Wellness in People with Down Syndrome and IDD during Covid-19

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Disclosures

• No financial disclosures
  – This is an important issue as related to clinical trials
Pandemic Associated Stressors

• Health risk (entire family)
• Sheltering associated tensions and family/staff dysfunction (including abuse)
• Risk of placement/respite breakdown
• Economic pressures from lay-offs/furloughs
• Change from usual routine
• Reduced activity level (and increased weight)
• Separation from friends and extended family
• Separation from work and/or day program
• Increased medical problems (reduced access)
Potential Mental Health Issues

- Anxiety (health, separation, compulsive, other)
- Depression and/or irritability
- Increased behavioral problems and/or regression in cognitive or self-care skills
- Increased sleep problems
- Non-compliance with safety-related behaviors leading to increased conflict
  - masks, hand-washing, social distancing, drooling
Potential Approaches - 1

- Identify individual profile of risk and resilience
- Consistent and repetitive positive reassurance and role-modeling
- Increase preparation for daily activity/routine changes (multi-sensory)
- Create daily activity schedule
- Activity/exercise
- Enhance practice/repetition of self-care skills
- Create opportunities for social interaction
Potential Approaches - 2

• Differential attention
• Behavioral intervention (by telemedicine)
• Family therapy (by telemedicine)
• Medication (usually not first-line)
• Advocate for access to health resources (e.g., metabolic, sleep)
DSM Disorders – What do the Scientific Data Say?

Neural Pathways

“Diagnosis”

Risk Factor A
Risk Factor B
Risk Factor C
Risk Factor D
Risk Factor E
Risk Factor F
Risk Factor G
Risk Factor H
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Thanks!