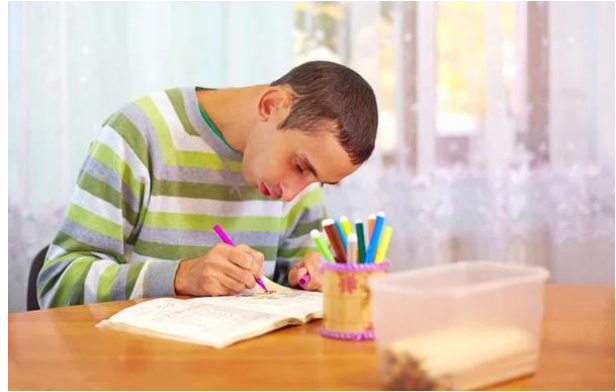


ADULT DAYCARE AND BOARDING: WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS WITH MENTAL DISABILITIES SAFELY

INTRODUCTION

Whether because of the aging process or other medical or mental conditions, some adults will attend daycare or live at boarding facilities. Some of these individuals at these facilities may be living with mental disabilities that could lead to the individual self-harming or harming staff. In this lesson we will cover the different types of mental disabilities that an individual may have, some of the challenging behaviors that may be displayed, and safe practices for working with these individuals.



TYPES OF MENTAL DISABILITIES

Types of mental disabilities that you may encounter can include, but are not limited to:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Dementia
- Alzheimer's
- Down-syndrome
- Traumatic brain injuries



CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

When working with or transporting individuals who have a mental disability, there may be times when you witness some challenging behavior. These behaviors can include, but may not be limited to:

- Aggression
 - Biting, kicking, or otherwise hurting other people
- Self-injury
 - Pulling out hair, picking at wounds to prevent healing, punching holes in walls, hitting their head against stationary objects, etc.
- Property Destruction
- Pica
 - An eating disorder where an individual eats non-food items such as:
 - Clay
 - Dirt
 - Rocks
 - Paper
 - Ice
 - Crayons
 - Hair
 - Paint chips
 - Feces (i.e., poop)
- Elopement
 - Wandering or running away from a caregiver



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SAFE PRACTICES TO WORK WITH AN INDIVIDUAL WHEN THEY ARE SHOWING CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

How a caregiver works safely with or transports an individual who is showing challenging behaviors will depend on the behavior and if the individual is harming themselves or injuring another person.

Some safe practices that a caregiver or a transporter can use to help stay safe while working with an individual with challenging behaviors include:

- Reporting early signs of challenging behavior to your supervisors and during team meetings.
- Wearing loose or baggy clothing that is easy to slip out of if it is grabbed or pulled.
 - Whenever possible, wear long sleeves and pants to help protect yourself from bites or scratches.
- Avoiding wearing items such as necklaces, ties, rings, dangling or hoop earrings, etc., that could be used to cause you injury if they are pulled, tightened, or pushed towards you.
- Wearing closed-toed shoes that are slip-resistant.
- If the individual has a behavior support plan (BSPs), wearing protective gear such as bite guards, shin guards, padded jackets, etc., when it is mentioned in the plan.
 - Plans should be reviewed as often as necessary to address any challenges behaviors that individual begins to display or continues to display.
- Wearing personal protective equipment such as safety glasses and face shields when working with an individual who is known to throw objects or spit.
- If you are working with an individual whose challenging behavior involves frequent or loud vocalizations, wearing ear plugs or earmuffs to help minimize the chances of developing hearing loss or injury.
- Tying back long hair or wearing a ball cap or knitted hat to help prevent hair pulling.
 - Please note that ponytails can be grabbed, so you may want to avoid ponytails when wearing a baseball cap.
- Becoming knowledgeable about your company's bloodborne pathogens exposure control plan.
- Practicing good housekeeping.
- Limiting access to throwable items.
- Storing potentially dangerous items in accordance with your company's policies and procedures.
- Following all of your company's intervention instructions when the individual is escalating.
- Calling for help as needed.
- Removing other individuals to a safer area.
- Following an individual's prescribed intervention if they are self-harming, attempting to eat non-edible items, or have a tendency for elopement.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, some individuals who attend adult daycare or boarding facilities may be living with a mental disability. These individuals may sometimes display challenging behaviors which could endanger themselves or others. To help minimize injuries when working with an individual with challenging behaviors, you should work with your team and review the individual's behavior plan as often as necessary. You should also follow your company's policies and procedures when an individual's challenging behavior are displayed. If you have questions about your company's policies and procedures, please speak with your supervisor.

