

# Intellectual disability: causes and conditions



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## Assessment

Demonstrate knowledge of causes and associated conditions related to intellectual disability

### Outcome 1: Define Intellectual Disability

#### Task 1

##### 1. 1

Give 2 definitions of intellectual disability in accordance with a recognised source. Follow prescribed APA format when citing sources.

#### Definition 1:

Intellectual disability is a disability characterized by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and in adaptive behaviour which covers many everyday social and practical skills.

This disability originates before the age of 18.

Source: World Health Organization.

#### Definition 2:

Intellectual disability means a significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information and to learn and apply new skills (impaired intelligence).

Source: World Health Organization.

## 1. 2

Using a definition of intellectual disability give 2 explanations of how this impacts on the persons adaptive skills:

1. The person finds it hard to understand and follow social rules and customs and obeying laws.
2. The person finds it difficult to perform the daily activities which include feeding, bathing, dressing, occupational skills, and navigational skills.

Using a definition of intellectual disability give 2 explanations of how this impacts on the persons cognitive ability.

1. A person is not able to think, reason, and solve problems or make decision like what to say while answering the telephone or talking to another person.
2. A person is not able to concentrate, learn new things and does not have the ability to talk or write, resulting in the inability to live independently.

Reference: FAQ on Intellectual Disability, American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

Outcome 2: Describe the outcomes of intellectual Disability

## Task 2

## 2. 1

Give 2 examples of causes of intellectual disability that occur before birth and describe two [2] main characteristics of the effects.

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Example1: Fragile x Syndrome.

Source: Bray, Anne, Definitions of intellectual disability, [Donald Beasley Institute, 2003]

Main characteristics:

1. If the mother does not follow a low phenylalanine diet before birth then the infants will have a low birth weight and grow more slowly than other children.
2. The child will have heart defects or other heart problems, like abnormal small head size and behavioural problems.

Example 2: Downs Syndrome

Source: Bray, Anne, Definitions of intellectual disability, [Donald Beasley Institute, 2003]

Main characteristics:

1. It is caused by a random error in cell division and results in abnormality in physical characteristics like small chin, round face and almond eyes.
2. The baby will have shorter limbs, protruding or oversized tongue and also have obesity problems.

2. 2

Give 2 examples of causes of intellectual disability that occur during or immediately following birth and describe 2 main characteristics of the effects.

Example 1: Premature Birth.

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Source: World Health Organisation, International Classification of Disability, and Health.

Main characteristics:

1. It happens when mothers smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol or use illicit drugs which results in unresponsive reflexes and problem in breathing.
2. If the mother suffers from stressful life events, such as death of a loved one or domestic violence which results in slow heart rate or difficult feeding.

2. 3

Give 2 examples of causes of intellectual disability that occur during childhood years and describe the impact on the day to day support needs of the person.

Example 1: Malnutrition

Source: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.

Impact:

The person will have problems in doing his daily activities like going to school or understand what is happening around him or eating his food at the time and taking his medication. He won't be able to concentrate in class and will often feel depressed. He will need words of encouragement from his teachers and parents. His daily activities should be monitored and ensure to keep health appointments with the physio, social worker and therapists.

Example 2: Brain injuries.

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Source: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.

Impact:

The person will have difficulty with memory tasks like math facts or spelling words. He may not be confident in school will be easily frustrated. He may seem to remember information one day and forget it the next. He will need support in bathing, grooming, and needs reminding of personal hygiene like washing his hands after using the toilet and brushing his teeth. Help from support groups and agencies are also necessary.

Outcome 3: Describe conditions frequently associated with intellectual disability.

Task 3

Condition 1: Foetal Alcohol syndrome

Causes:

Mothers drinking during pregnancy leads to foetal alcohol syndrome. Miscarriage, stillbirth premature birth and small birth weight are all associated with it. When a pregnant women drinks alcohol, it easily passes across the placenta to the fetus which can harm the baby's development.

Main Characteristic 1:

Children with FAS have distinct facial features including small and narrow eyes, a small head, a smooth area between the nose and the lips and a thin upper lip.

## Main characteristic 2:

They also have hearing and ear problems. Their immune system are also weak due to FAS and they have issues with their height and weight.

## Description of the Support Needs of the person with the condition:

### Physical Support:

The person needs to be reminded when to take his medicines or needs assistance in taking his medication. They will need assistance in crossing the road and also with daily activities like bathing, grooming and brushing their teeth or putting on their shoes. They will also need speech therapist so that they can interact with their peers.

### Social Support:

The person will need communication and social skills training for interaction with friends, teachers and others. They will need supportive activities like group work to gain confidence and independence. Regular interaction with other children will boost their self-confidence.

### Cognitive Support:

The person will need special education teacher to teach how to talk and what words he should use while talking to someone. He will need a speech therapist to learn how to pronounce a word or say a word clearly.

## Condition 2: Autism

### Causes:

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It is not certain what causes ASD, but it's likely both genetics and environment play a role. Some studies suggest that people with ASD have abnormal levels of serotonin or other neurotransmitters in the brain.

#### Main Characteristic: 1

People with Autism will have repetitive, obsessive, and unusual behaviour. They will have difficulty in communicating with others does not speak with anyone. They will have excessive lining up of toys or objects and they also have no response to name or social responsiveness.

#### Main Characteristic: 2

They won't have eye contact while talking to another person and avoid bright lights, noises or physical contact. They won't be able to understand facial expressions or understand humour or pain, unable to establish friendships and may become isolated.

#### Description of the Support Needs of the person with the condition:

##### Physical Support:

They will need an environment which is free from noise and avoid bright lights. They will need constant supervision while doing any work or playing outside. They will need relaxation and stress management like body massage or occupational therapy.

##### Social Support:



They will need assistance in learning society rules or social behaviour using logic. They will need advice like how to interact with people and make friends. They will need opportunities for relaxation like chilling out with family and friends. Opportunities for friendships are also important for these people.

Cognitive support:

The person will need one on one session between him and the therapist. He will need assistance in things like reading a book or solving a math problem. If there is a changes which is made then he should be informed in a manner that makes sense to the person.

Reference: FAQ on Intellectual Disability, American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

### Condition 3: Epilepsy

Causes:

Epilepsy can be due to severe head injury, strokes, birth trauma, brain tumours, toxins, brain infection, brain diseases, genetic condition or drug abuse. In many cases the cause is unknown.

Main Characteristic 1:

The person affected will have recurring and spontaneous seizures . The person may be unconscious or completely unaware of what is happening.

Main characteristic 2:

Some people with epilepsy simply stare blankly for a few seconds during a seizure, while others repeatedly twist their arms or legs. Seizures may be partial affecting small part of the brain or generalised, affecting whole brain.

Description of the Support Needs of the person with condition:

Physical Support:

Making sure that the environment is safe while walking around so that they won't get injured when seizure occurs. The environment should be hazard free. He should be monitored whether he is taking his medication at the right time or is he getting any side effects which needs to be reported to the right people.

Social Support:

He should be encouraged to attend school and work and needs to be reminded constantly that he should not be ashamed of his condition. He should be encouraged to maintain contact and communication with friends and co-workers. He should not be treated differently from other co-workers only because of his condition and he should be treated with respect. His dignity should be maintained during seizure episodes.

Cognitive Support:

He could be missing learning opportunities during seizure and might need extra teaching support. Keeping an appointment diary will ensure that he is keeping up to date with his activities.

Reference: Bray, Anne, Definitions of intellectual disability. [Donald Beasley Institute, 2003]