

Consultation tips for health professionals caring for people with intellectual disability

What is intellectual disability?

People with intellectual disability have a wide range of skills, interests, strengths, and capabilities. Each person is unique and getting to know each patient is fundamental to person-centred care. Intellectual disability begins during the developmental period from birth to 18 years old. Intellectual disability may affect a person's ability to learn, communicate, retain information and their adaptive functioning (e.g. self-care, shopping, cooking, etc). Refer to the [Agency for Clinical Innovation Intellectual Disability: Information for health professionals](#) for more information.

What is the current health situation for people with intellectual disability?

Compared with the general population, people with intellectual disability experience:

- more than twice the rate of avoidable deaths
- twice the rate of emergency department and hospital admissions
- much higher rates of physical and mental health conditions
- significantly lower rates of preventive health care services.

How to support consultations

Health care for people with intellectual disability can be improved through basic considerations within the consultation with primary health care providers.

1. Find out more about [Good Appointments, Better Health](#) with the Council for Intellectual Disability:
 - communication
 - safety
 - scheduling
 - referrals.
2. Learn more about [intellectual disability and communication](#) with The Communication Hub:
 - be respectful
 - focus on the person
 - provide information in a way that is easy to understand
 - give the person time to understand what you are saying.

The Better health care for people with intellectual disability – Primary Care Enhancement Program (PCEP) is funded by the Australian Government

Primary Health Tasmania Limited
1300 653 169
providersupport@primaryhealthtas.com.au
www.primaryhealthtas.com.au
ABN 47 082 572 629

