

Research report

1 April 2025



This is a research report by the **National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health**.

We call it **the Centre** for short.

A **research report** is a document that explains:

- What the research is about
- What we did
- Why the research is important
- What we found out
- What needs to change



What our research is about

Our research is about **mental health conditions** and people with intellectual disability.



A mental health condition affects how a person

- thinks
- feels
- behaves.

A person with a mental health condition might:

- Feel very sad or worried or scared.
- Find it hard to think clearly or make decisions.
- Find it hard to control their emotions or actions.



Mental health conditions can make life harder.



We wanted to find out 3 things

1. How many people with intellectual disability have a mental health condition.



2. What types of mental health conditions people with intellectual disability have.



3. If people with intellectual disability experience mental health conditions differently to people without intellectual disability.

Why the research is important



Many people with intellectual disability do not get the right help for their mental health conditions.



Doctors and health services are not always **accessible**.

Accessible means that everyone can use it and understand it.



Some people with intellectual disability have other problems that make life harder.

For example

- Feeling lonely
- Not having enough money
- Not having a good place to live



We can help make doctors and health services more accessible by learning more about mental health conditions and people with intellectual disability.

What we did



We used **data sets** from New South Wales for our research.

A data set is a group of information kept on a computer.



The data sets were from

- health services like hospitals
- disability services.



The data sets included nearly 100,000 people with intellectual disability.

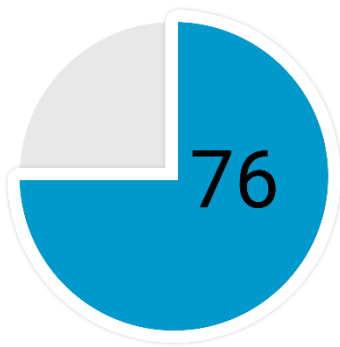


We looked to see if there were differences between people with intellectual disability, and people without intellectual disability.

What found out



We found out that people with intellectual disability are much more likely to have a mental health condition than people without intellectual disability.



76 out of 100 people with intellectual disability had a mental health condition.

People with intellectual disability are more likely to have these mental health conditions

- **Depression**



Depression is a mental health condition that makes people feel very sad for a long time



- **Anxiety**

Anxiety is a mental health condition that makes people feel very worried or scared, even when nothing is happening.



- **Psychosis**

Psychosis is a mental health condition that makes people believe things that are not real.



- **Bipolar disorder**

Bipolar disorder is a mental health condition that causes big changes in a person's mood.

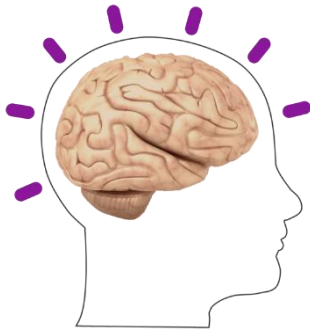
Someone with bipolar disorder might feel very happy and then suddenly feel very sad.

- **Self-harm and suicidal thoughts**



Self-harm is when a person hurts themselves on purpose.

Suicidal thoughts are when someone thinks about ending their life.



We found out that people with intellectual disability and **ADHD** are more likely to have a mental health condition.

ADHD stands for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

ADHD affects how your brain develops.



We found out that people with Down syndrome are less likely to have a mental health condition.

But people with Down syndrome are more likely to have **dementia**.

Dementia affects how a person's brain works and remembers things.

What needs to change



Lots of people with intellectual disability have mental health conditions.



People can feel better and enjoy life more if they get the right help with their mental health conditions.



Mental health services need to be more accessible for people with intellectual disability.



Everyone deserves the right to feel safe and well.