

Success Story:

Kansas DHP Leads *Inclusion* Journal Special Issue

Summary

Greater inclusion and community participation can improve the health of people with intellectual disability (ID). Conversely, improved health supports greater inclusion and community participation. However, little is known about interventions to improve health for people with ID, and data that compares their health outcomes to those without ID is lacking. Jean P. Hall, Director of the Kansas Disability and Health Program (DHP), responded to these needs by helping to organize a special issue of *Inclusion*, a publication of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD). The special issue brings together the work of researchers at the Kansas and Massachusetts Disability and Health Programs.

Challenge

Historically, health care was delivered to people with ID in an institutional context, and generally, people with disabilities were excluded from conversations affecting health policy and their personal health care. The shift to a paradigm of community inclusion and self-determination comes with a need for greater awareness of the health disparities people with ID face and the interventions that can mitigate those disparities, which can include poorer oral health, poorer nutrition, poorer mental health, and less frequent physical activity. However, the literature that informs health care delivery to people with ID lacks data comparing them to people without ID, and public health systems lack information about evidence-based interventions designed for people with ID.

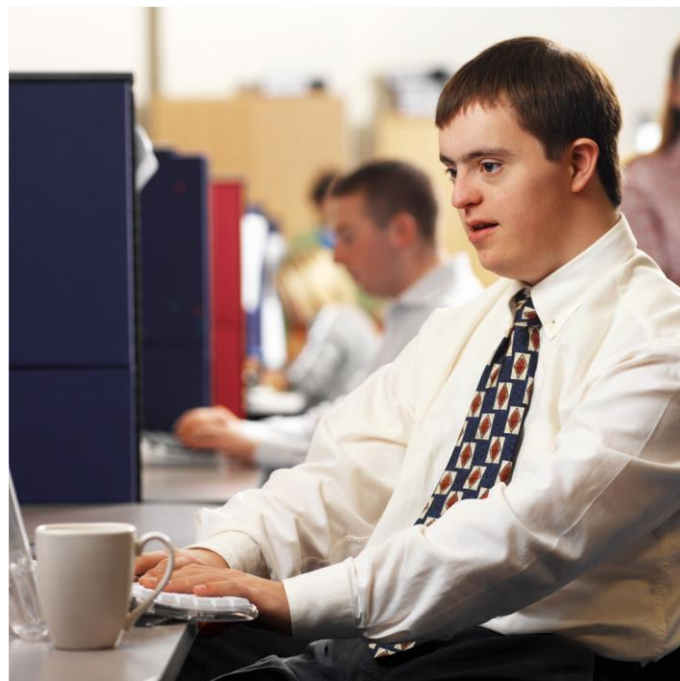


Disability and Health Program

kansans with disabilities can be healthy

Solution

Researchers from the Kansas DHP organized a special issue of the journal *Inclusion*, a publication of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD). The special issue presented national survey data and described oral health and nutrition/exercise interventions. It also included research from the Massachusetts Disability and Health Program, which contributed to the body of available data on mental health disparities among people with ID.



Improved health contributes to greater community participation, and vice versa.

Results

The special issue of *Inclusion* addresses the needs for more data about health disparities for people with ID and more community-based health interventions for this population. The issue includes an article by Hall and Noelle Kurth titled “A Comparison of Health Disparities Among Americans With Intellectual Disability and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder and Americans With Other Disabilities,” which draws upon national survey data to find marked health disparities not only between people with disabilities and non-disabled people, but also between people with ID and their peers with other disabilities. In using survey data, this article also does the important work of giving a voice to people with ID in the conversation about their health care.

“Contributions of Mental and Behavioral Health Conditions to Health Service Utilization Among People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in Massachusetts,” by researchers at the Massachusetts DHP, uses state Medicaid data to explain greater emergency room utilization rates for people with ID and the need for community-based interventions and services to reduce this utilization and improve mental health outcomes.

Other articles in the special issue describe interventions that promote various types of health for people with ID. An article by Dot Nary and Kim Bruns, “Development and Evaluation of the *Stoptlight Healthy Living* Program,” described an intervention designed to help participants make healthy food choices and increase their physical activity. “*Feeling Good About Your Smile: Implementation and Evaluation of an Oral Health Intervention for People with Intellectual Disability*,” by Kurth and Hall, documents results of this intervention that supports healthy eating habits and improved oral health.

Read the special issue at
www.aaidjournals.org/toc/incl/7/3

Sustaining Success

The special *Inclusion* issue addresses the need for more data about the health disparities people with ID experience and the need for greater awareness of interventions that can promote their health. The special issue sustains success by advancing the conversation about health disparities and health services for people with ID, by sharing the preliminary results of two interventions, and by beginning the conversation about ways to improve specific approaches to improved oral health, mental health, diet, and exercise for people with ID.



Stoptlight Healthy Living is a nutrition and exercise intervention described in the special issue of *Inclusion*.

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