



Enhancing health support for people with intellectual disabilities: A pilot evaluation of the TRAIN-ID programme

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People with ID



Face greater health risks



Often have health problems that go unnoticed



Rely on early recognition to stay healthier

Support workers who provide daily assistance in care contexts



Are the eyes of care



Are the first to notice change



Are the key to better health

However...



Support workers' initial education focuses on social care, daily living support, and participation



Prepares them insufficiently for health-related responsibilities supporting clients with their (complex) health needs



Additional training is necessary to equip support workers with the required knowledge and skills



train ID

Training focus per day

1. Understanding and observing health of individuals with intellectual disabilities
2. Collaborating and shared decision making
3. Promoting healthy living



• **Study objective**

To evaluate the TRAIN-ID training by exploring support workers' experiences with the programme and assessing how they perceive its impact on providing health support.

Methodology

- TRAIN-ID was pilot tested with two groups of support workers (12–15 participants) working in ID care facilities in The Netherlands.
- The Kirkpatrick model was used for evaluation:
 1. How participants feel about the training
 2. What they learn
 3. How their behaviour changes
 4. What results this has in practice
- Data were collected through written reflection during training, focus group discussions immediately post-training, and individual telephone interviews three months later.
- Template analysis applied the Kirkpatrick model to guide coding.

Results - Kirkpatrick Level 1: Reaction

- They particularly appreciated the variety of learning activities, the practical relevance to their daily work, the enthusiasm of the trainer and experts-by-experience.
- The interactive format, the exchange of experiences, was also appreciated.
- Suggestions for improvement for full-day sessions and for the content of the training, including a preference for more practical exercises and a preference for the training content.
- Participants who rate the training as highly relevant also rate the training as highly motivating and that certain topics, such as motivational interviewing, are highly relevant.



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Results - Kirkpatrick Level 2: Learning

- Learning concentrated on six topics:
 - Health problems of people with intellectual disabilities
 - Health signals
 - Health assessment
 - Lifestyle
 - Communication
 - Support workers' professional role

Example

- Understanding common health problems in people with intellectual disabilities, their causes, and how these problems may present was reported as an important learning outcome

Results - Kirkpatrick Level 3: Behaviour

- Behavioural change was described across four topics:
 - Discussing health with people with intellectual disabilities
 - Following up on health concerns
 - Interacting with healthcare professionals
 - Applying training information and tools

Example:

- Participants intended to use communication techniques from the training to better acknowledge clients' experiences and to create a sense of their being heard during conversations about health.

Results - Kirkpatrick Level 4: Results

- Changes in participants' actions following the training focused on
 - Care situation of client
 - Clients' behaviour
 - Interdisciplinary health support
- Contextual factors that limited perceived outcomes
 - High workload, staffing shortages, time pressure
 - Unclear responsibilities within care teams
- The following examples illustrate pathways whereby the levels interconnect, illustrating how insights gained from the training (Level 2) were applied in daily practice (Level 3) and how these behaviours were perceived to impact health support (Level 4).



Care situation of client

I learned that people with ID have more physical health problems, but they are easily seen as behavioural issues. For example, when a client suddenly started going to bed much earlier for two or three days in a row, that is not normal behaviour. Then the client becomes incontinent, and it turned out to be a urinary tract infection. Now I pay more attention to that, which leads to timelier recognition of health problems.

Level 2: learning

Level 3: behaviour

Level 4: results



Interdisciplinary health support

There are actually two things. One is confidence: knowing that I am important for the client and that I need to listen to my gut feeling. The other is being better able to act on it and to put it into words when communicating with healthcare professionals. The speech therapist suggested major changes for a client, but because I asked questions we chose a more cautious approach. The client is now doing very well.

Level 2: learning

Level 3: behaviour

Level 4: results



Contextual factors

I am observing more consciously than before, with increased contact with the medical service. I am more aware of this. However, the workload is higher, and then it's easier sometimes to dismiss a pain and just give paracetamol, when in fact you know you should look further. The training did provide me with tools, but I am not able to put them into practice. At the end of the day, you are just glad you made it through.

Level 2: learning

Level 3: behaviour

Level 4: results

Discussion & conclusion

- Training outcomes depend not only on what support workers learn, but also on how support workers can implement what they have learnt
- Outcomes can be used to adapt and enhance the TRAIN-ID training programme
- TRAIN-ID holds promise to enhance support workers' capacity to identify health signals, act promptly, and collaborate effectively across disciplines



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Day	Training focus	Learning objectives
1	Understanding and observing health of individuals with intellectual disabilities	The participant: • knows the essential health characteristics of people with intellectual disabilities. • understands the importance of getting to know the client to promote that client's health. • knows how to observe and identify health problems. • can assess the quality of their observations. • can observe their client's behaviour and health situation and identify changes. • can tailor the care plan to the client's needs and act accordingly.
<i>Two-week interval with practical assignment</i>		
2	Collaborating and shared decision making	The participant: • can engage in dialogue with the client and significant others to determine where the client needs support in making health-related choices and where they can manage independently. • is aware of whom to collaborate with to promote the client's health. • knows who can be involved in carrying out actions outlined in the client's care plan.
<i>Two-week interval with practical assignment</i>		
3	Promoting healthy living	The participant: • is aware of how to promote a healthy lifestyle to prevent health problems. • knows what a healthy lifestyle entails.