

Faust, H., & Scior, K. (2008). Mental Health Problems in Young People with Intellectual Disabilities: The Impact on Parents. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*. 21:414-424

Increasing evidence suggests that young people with intellectual disability may also experience mental disorders during the transition to adolescence (40%). Further research also indicates that about 64% of young people with intellectual disabilities who have transitioned to adulthood and have had an established childhood mental disorder or behavior problem, received no specialist mental health professional input. Finally, families who have children with ID and a child psychopathology often experience more stress and it impacts parental abilities. The aim of this study examined the experiences of parents who have an adolescent child with a dual diagnosis. The study used in-depth interviews with 13 parents and one adult sibling of 11 young people with dual diagnosis.

Results:

1 Impact on parents: 4 themes

- **The struggle to understand:** all parents found a strong sense of confusion when behaviors and mood changes occurred for the adolescent.
- **More pain:** parents found that the behavior and mood change brought upon them a new sense of pain; all parents described significant suffering as a result of the adolescent's mental health problems, including feelings of depression, anxiety and anger, increased physical illnesses and poor sleep.
- **Trying to get by:** almost all parents described a sense of helplessness
- **The battle for help:** parents felt alone and isolated in trying to manage services for the adolescent's mental health; all parents felt fears of stigma and shame which prevented them from telling others about the additional mental health difficulties. Most parents noted a lack of opportunity to be provided services as well as being listened to about their experiences.

The importance of the study indicates a need for improvements in support for these families such that they may be able to detect mental disorder symptoms as well as seek treatment and rehabilitation for the children.