

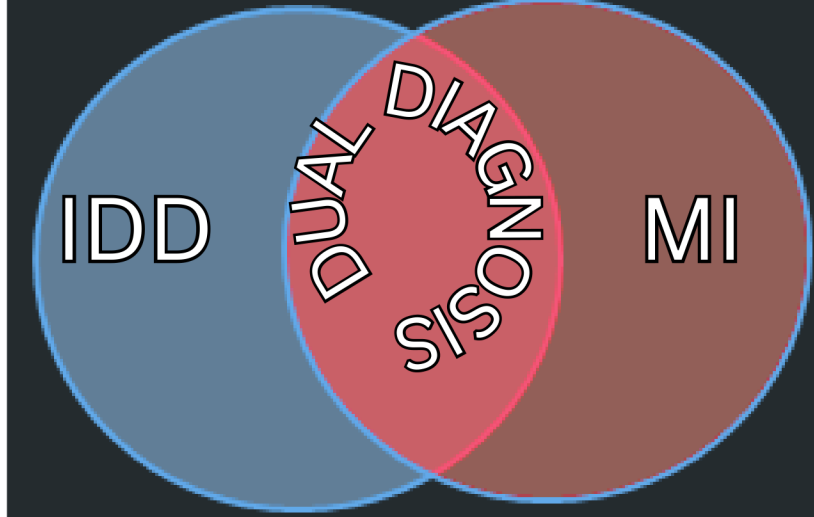


# CLASH OF THE TITANS

## DUAL DIAGNOSIS IDD AND MENTAL ILLNESS

The titans of Mental Illness and  
IDD co-occur in the lives of  
many of those we serve.

This week we are going to answer some questions about IDD/MI  
Dual Diagnosis - What is it? What does it look like? How do we  
support and help someone facing these titans?



**WHAT IS DUAL DIAGNOSIS?**  
Dual diagnosis for what we are  
talking about is when an  
individual is diagnosed with both  
some IDD and a mental illness

### HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE A DUAL DIAGNOSIS?

- About 20% of those in the USA will be effected by a mental illness in a given year.
- Those with and IDD are 2-3 times more likely to have a mental illness. Thus 40%-60% of those with an IDD likely also have a mental illness.
- Sadly many of them have their mental illness go undiagnosed.

### WHAT CHALLENGES STAND IN THE WAY IF OVERCOMING THESE TITANS?



- **Overshadowing** - Behaviors are associated solely as related to the individuals IDD to the exclusion of mental or physical health concerns and needs.
- **Communication Barriers** – Individuals with an IDD may find it difficult to communicate their thoughts and emotions.
- **Challenging Behaviors** - Behaviors are often used as a way to communicate by those that are non-verbal as well as verbal. These behaviors are often misunderstood as acting out and again associated only with IDD.
- **Diagnostic Criteria** - Mental Illnesses do not always manifest with the same symptoms in those with an IDD as they do for those without.
- **Continuity of Care** - There are very few resources and services available for individuals that have both and IDD and a mental health diagnosis. Many mental health professionals wrongly believe that persons with an IDD cannot benefit from mental health services such as talk therapy.

### What MH Diagnosis do those with an IDD have?

While an individual with an IDD can be diagnosed with any mental health condition there are some seen more than others.

Depression  
Anxiety

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)  
Schizophrenia

### What do these conditions look like?

Individual with an IDD will experience the same symptoms of a mental illness as on without an IDD, however they may not express or communicate them in the same way. Below are some of the signs and symptoms. These list are NOT all inclusive.

#### DEPRESSION

- Sad / Low Mood
- Irritability / Aggression
- Social withdrawal
- Loss of interest in activities
- Sleep Disturbance (too much or not enough)
- Weight Change (Gain / Lose)
- Thoughts / Talk of Death
- Active or passive talk of suicide

#### ANXIETY

- Feeling nervous, restless or tense
- Unable to sit or stand still
- Trembling
- Irritability / Aggression
- Social withdrawal
- Trouble Sleeping
- Increase heart and respiration rates
- Feeling tired
- Obsessive Thoughts



#### Schizophrenia

- Hallucinations - Experiencing things that other people do not.
- Delusions - False beliefs that are strange to others
- Paranoia - Believe others are trying to harm them
- Confused / Disorganized thoughts
- Appear distracted not paying attention
- Unusual movements (swatting at thin air like trying to hit something)

#### PTSD

- Recurrent memories
- Flashbacks (Reliving the event)
- Nightmares
- Trouble Sleeping
- Depression
- Relationship Difficulties
- Avoid certain places or people
- On guard and alert
- Easily Startled or frightened
- Irritable / Angry / Aggressive

### How do we recognize these titans?

- First we must remember while we are focusing on these 2 issues each individual is a WHOLE person who beyond their mental and emotional needs may also have physical health issues and do have social and relationship needs.
- We need to remember that ALL behavior has a purpose and is a form of communication. We need to be more concerned about the WHY of the behavior than the WHAT.
- Finally, observe, be aware and acknowledge if you see any of the signs or symptoms from above. Take action to intervene as soon as possible

### How do we help and support someone face these titans?

- **TEAM APPROACH** – It take a team working together (Medical MH, IDD professionals, and Family).
- **MEDICATION** – Medication address the physical root of the mental illness.
- **THERAPEUTIC SUPPORTS** – MANY persons with IDD can benefit from talk therapy.
- **HEALTH and WELLNESS** – Insure physical health needs are met and promote overall physical wellness.
- **COPING SKILLS** – Provide opportunities to learn and practice new coping skills,
- **SELF-CARE** – Encourage and provide opportunity for self-care activities.