

HOW TO HELP AND INCLUDE KIDS AND ADULTS WITH EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE

While each person's disability is unique, here are some general guidelines that may apply:

1. Communicate closely with family members to understand the person's strengths, needs and what works for them.
2. Plan well, but allow flexibility.
3. Remember that people with mental illness do not have lower intelligence.
4. Be aware that people with more severe mental illnesses may have difficulty processing or expressing emotions.
5. Be sensitive to the fact that some people with mental illness may overreact to emotionally-charged topics or conversations.
6. Be aware that a person with mental illness, although very capable, may have uneven performance.
7. If appropriate, learn more about the nature of the person's diagnosed mental illness.

For children...

1. Give child choices with acceptable options.
2. Try to use activities that are of high interest.
3. Recognize and praise the child's positive behaviors.
4. Model the behavior you want the child to have.
5. Pick your battles.
6. Set limits and enforce consistent reasonable consequences.
7. Measure progress based on individual improvement not against some absolute standard.