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Pittsburgh Mercy colleague, Tara Stephens, discusses the DLA-20 with Mosanine, one of the individuals served in our IDD programs.

New tool is supporting optimal wellness for our IDD clients

For those with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), daily living activities can be challenging. For their clinicians and providers, it's not always easy to identify areas of strength and areas needing work in order to build an appropriate treatment plan.

Enter the DLA-20, a measurement tool that's bringing new insight toPittsburgh Mercy's Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities. Widely used to assess those with mental/behavioral health issues, the DLA-20 is relatively new to the area of intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

How the DLA-20 works

The DLA-20 assesses daily living activities (DLAs) such as health practices, nutrition, safety, managing time, managing money, family relationships, household stability, communication, and problem solving that may be impacted by disability.

The tool has two parts designed to be used in tandem:

- The ***DLA-20 Adult Self Report*** asks the individual to rate themselves in the 20 areas of functioning over the last 30 days. If unable to complete the report independently, a clinician can assist in reading and recording their score.
- The ***Clinician-Administered DLA-20*** records the clinician's assessment of the individual in the same 20 areas over the same period of time.

Scoring is on a scale of 1 to 7 based on the level of functionality for each DLA, ranging from 'extremely severe impairment' to 'optimal functioning', when compared to the general population. By focusing on the last 30 days, the tool gives a snapshot of the 20 domains and a summary of strengths and needs at a specific

point in time related to whole health. The initial assessment then becomes a baseline against which to compare future scores and measure progress.

Used in conjunction, the two parts—clinical observation and individual self-report—provide a complete and valid assessment while highlighting areas of alignment or misalignment in scores. The data then lends itself to important clinical discussions about needs, goals, and treatment planning.

Selected Pittsburgh Mercy IDD staff were trained in the DLA-20 from April through June of this year and we expect to have all staff training completed by September.

“The DLA-20 is a great evidence-based tool that aligns with our mission and philosophy,” said **Stacy Fitzgerald,** Senior Manager, IDD Services. “Because it focuses on objective clinical observations over the last month, it cross-cuts symptoms, diagnoses, cultures, and IQ.”

“We’re finding the tool really increases the individual’s engagement in the treatment process,” continued **Gail Quigley Smith**, Senior Manager, IDD Services. “In completing the self-report, the individual really focuses on their current strengths and challenges, which helps us understand their perspective and compare it to our observations. Perhaps most importantly, the data allows for earlier intervention when needed.”

Each year, Pittsburgh Mercy serves more than 800 adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families/caregivers in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Our 58 Community Living Arrangements (CLAs) include licensed, unlicensed, and supported living programs, which together serve 93 individuals across Allegheny County. Our Lifesharing program serves 17 individuals in 11 homes. Other services include community participation support, in-home and companion services, mileage reimbursement, and Pittsburgh Regional Transit passes.

Visit our website to learn more about Pittsburgh Mercy’s IDD services.

#ONEDAY Success!

A huge ***thank you*** to all the generous supporters who made the recent **#ONEDAY** campaign a resounding success. On August 1, donations to Pittsburgh Mercy's Operation Safety net totaled **$10,733.** With a prorated match from The Pittsburgh Foundation, that funding will allow us to continue and expand Street Medicine services for our area's most vulnerable individuals.

Any questions, contact development@pittsburghmercy.org.

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