

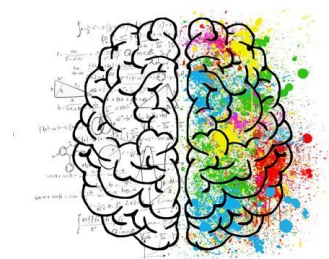
UNDERSTANDING COMPLEX & DIFFICULT BEHAVIORS

How disabilities contribute to justice system involvement

Difficulty learning or lack effective opportunity to learn

Individuals with disabilities may require specialized teaching to learn what others understand easily. Examples include:

- Understanding the offending behavior is against the law
- Learning other ways to communicate or get their needs met
- Understanding accepted rules of social engagement
- May not automatically learn from past experiences without assistance



It is important to understand that people with developmental disabilities can and do learn but may require individualized teaching and support to be successful.

Misinterpreting cues

May find themselves in trouble because of the struggle to understand verbal and non-verbal cues.

- May interpret friendliness as something more and respond inappropriately
- May display unwelcome advances or displays of affection
- May display frustration when advances are unwelcome
- May not understand the difference in boundaries related to children
- May misinterpret actions or instructions of the police or authority figures
- As a result, may attempt to flee or defend themselves
- May result in new charges of resisting arrest or assaulting a peace officer



Difficulty reading and writing



- Lack of literacy impacts a person's ability to read and comprehend information that provides guidance on expectations, rules and laws.
- May be embarrassed and not communicate when they do not comprehend or agree to a document they cannot fully understand.

Difficulty understanding cause and effect

May not anticipate the result of their actions on others

- Trying to get out of a crowd by pushing may cause harm to others
- Using threats to make people hear or understand may cause others to be afraid



Difficulty weighing options and making choices



- May be caught up in a situation without intentionally choosing
- May struggle to recognize illegal and dangerous situations

Difficulty understanding questions

- May agree even if they do not fully understand
- If being interviewed by the police, may not have understood their rights or the questions being asked without skilled support
- May not see the relevance of information, leaving out details
- May not share important information with caregivers



Difficulty planning ahead



- May struggle to plan out steps for unfamiliar expectations

Anxiety and poor impulse control

- May result in an over-reaction to situations that make them feel threatened but are not perceived as threatening by others
- More likely to act instinctively and less likely to use restraint



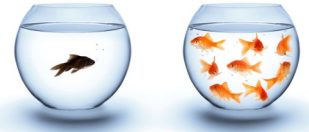
Easily led or influenced by others

- May adopt plans of valued peers without being able to weigh the risks and benefits
- May be impacted by a desire for acceptance by others

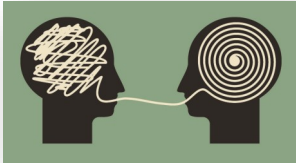


Social isolation and boredom

- A lack of social supports and activities may contribute to delinquency
- Often requires support to find and participate in activities



Difficulty understanding abstract concepts



- May think very concretely in the here and now
- Struggle to give accurate information about time frames, money, relationships or other abstract concepts

Difficulty adapting to new or unfamiliar

- Behavior may be a response to an inability to cope with a change
- May learn very specific ways and be unable to generalize to new situations
- May result in panic attacks, anxiety or other problem behavior

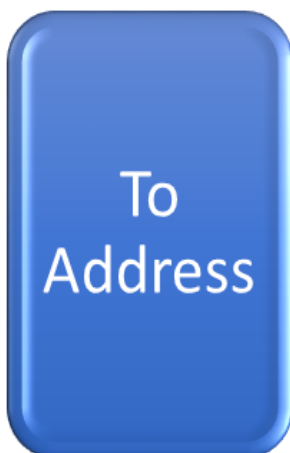


Difficulty coping with changes in routine



- May be dependent on a specific routine
- Changes may result in anxiety, aggression, non-compliance or other

EFFECTIVE RESPONSES



- Aggression
- Non-compliance
- Disruptive
- Illegal Activity
- School Concerns
- Other

- Develop a **support** team
- **Assess** the circumstances and triggers
- Develop a positive behavior support **plan**
- Set realistic **goals**
- **Adapt** the environment
- **Teach** alternative skills
- **Reward** desired behavior

