

# Recognizing and Supporting People with Developmental Disabilities in the Homelessness System

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The Arc of King County



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# Agenda

- Introducing The Arc
- Recognizing Developmental Disability
- Intersection of Developmental Disability and Homelessness
- Strategies for Effective Communication
- Resources: *Long-Term Care Services, Financial Supports, Specific Housing Resources*
- Gaps and future direction

## Our Mission:

The Arc of King County advocates for the right of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live, learn, work and play in the community - improving the quality of life for all of us.

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# Quickly Recognizing Developmental Disability

- “Stimming” – physically and/or verbally
- Facial expression incongruent with situation
- Little or no eye contact
- Toe Walking
- Dressing “down” – clothes don’t match typical chronological age
- Delayed processing – it takes longer to understand and respond
- Difficulty getting words out or repeating words
- Sensory Processing Differences –  
Oversensitive or Under sensitive





# General Characteristics of Developmental Disability

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- Spectrum of skills and challenges
- “Disjointed” communication skills
- Slowed processing speed
- Unique sensory needs
- Struggles understanding cause and effect
- Different social interests and skills
- Challenges reading between the lines
- Challenges reading social cues
- Challenges with coping skills and self regulation
- May not understand danger



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# Intersection of Developmental Disability & Homelessness

- The 2019 Point in Time Count for King County found that 64% of the unhousehold population has some form of disability, up from 53% in 2018 and 50% in 2017. According to US Census/American Community Survey, the TOTAL nationwide disability rate in the general population is 12.8%. If you just look at disability of people under age 65, it drops down to 8.7 percent. In King County, the under age 65 disability rate is 6.4 percent. In Washington, it is 9 percent.
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- 2019 was the first time King County's PIT Count included "Intellectual Disability or Memory Impairment", with 13% falling in this category. Meanwhile the US Department of Health & Human Services estimated that 1.58% of the general population had a developmental disability in 2016 (ID is one of many forms of DD). Note: We strongly believe this is an underrepresentation of intellectual and developmental disability based the format of questions, people's awareness of their own disability, and one's comfort disclosing disability.
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- Anecdotally, homeless shelters we work with estimate that 1/3 of those they serve have a developmental disability. And, shelters unanimously agree that individuals and families with DD are the hardest to rehouse.



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# Strategies For Effective Communication

## 1. Set Up The Environment For Success:

- Limit strangers observing to avoid embarrassment/shame
- Provide spaces with low-sensory stimulation if possible.
  - Limited background noise
  - Natural light rather than overhead lights
  - Limited scents or ambient smells
- Plan for more time than usual



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# Strategies For Effective Communication

## 2. Check Your Biases:

- Are you approaching this from the mindset that everyone can be successful with the right support?
- Prioritize building rapport
- Be aware of inherent power differential
- “Work with me not on me”
- Slow Down!



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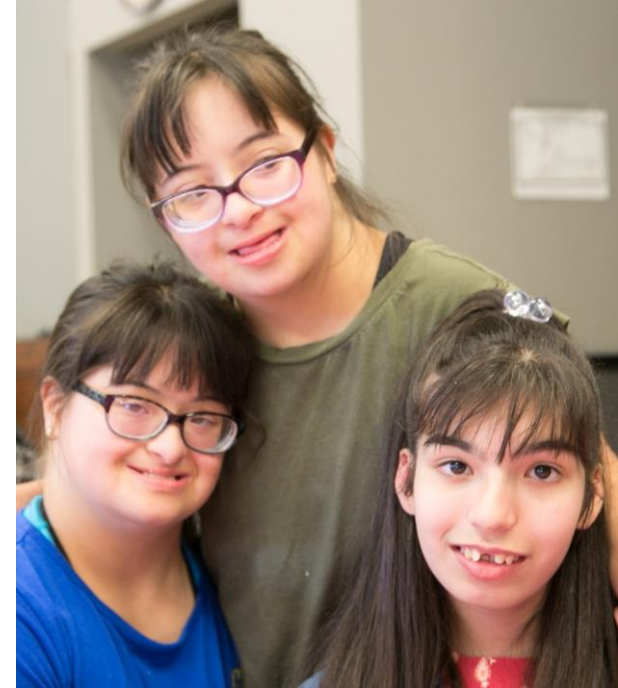
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# Strategies For Effective Communication

## 3. Can anyone else help you gain more information?

- Anyone else know the person?
- Do they have tips for communication?
- Could you utilize other people or organizations (like The Arc)?





# Strategies For Effective Communication

## 4. When Communicating:

- Utilize combination of modalities (e.g. speaking, writing, pictures, videos, check lists, etc.)
- Be direct. Avoid euphemisms, slang, etc.
- Open-ended questions may not work, use closed-ended questions as needed.
- Break things into small steps
- Expect repetition
- Wait!

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# Strategies For Effective Communication

## 5. Be aware of yourself

- Speak calmly.
- Move slowly.
- Allow time.
- Avoid a power struggle.
- Be patient!



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# RESOURCES: Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)

## Eligibility:

### Criteria

- **Age:** Different criteria for ages <4, <10, < 18
- **Diagnosis:** Developmental Delay, Intellectual Disability, Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy, Autism, Other Neurological Condition
- **Substantial Limitations:** Full Scale IQ and Adaptive Skills Composite from before person turns 18. Limitations cannot be a result of mental illness or other factor beyond DD.

**\*Do not assume an individual with DD is enrolled in DDA. Most are not.\***

# RESOURCES: Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) cont.

## Services:

- **Community First Choice/ Personal Care\***
- **Medicaid Waivers:** “Package” of services that may include:
  - Person-Centered Planning
  - Respite Care
  - Behavior Supports
  - Environmental Modifications
  - Supported Employment
  - Community Inclusion/ Community Guide/ Community Access
  - Residential Services
  - Parenting Support



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# RESOURCES: Personal Care

- Personal Care is a Medicaid (Community First Choice) entitlement for children who have extraordinary care needs.
- For Children – provided through Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)
- For Adults – provided through Home and Community Services (HCS) unless the adult is a DDA client in which DDA provides the service
- Services address certain “Activities of Daily Living” that individuals need help with (e.g. toileting, walking, eating, etc.)
- Given an assessment, and a certain number of “Personal Care Hours” are designated, for which a caregiver can be reimbursed, by the state, for hours they provide care.
- Caregivers can either contract directly with the state (an Individual Provider) OR they can work through a Caregiver Agency.
- Note that for children under the age of 18, a PARENT or Legal Placement cannot be the individuals paid caregiver for Personal Care!

# RESOURCES: Social Security

- The two most common Social Security benefits that people with developmental disabilities receive are SSI and SSDI
- SSI = Supplemental Security Income. It is a cash benefit for people with disabilities who also have a low income.
  - Children qualify if their family income is below a specific threshold based on family size and the child has a documented disability
  - Adults over 18 years old qualify based on their own income and assets – NOT their families.
- Title II Benefits (SSDI = Social Security Disability Income)
  - If a parent has retired, passed away, or become disabled, their child with I/DD may be eligible for SSDI or Title II Benefits.
  - These benefits are based on the child's (or adult child's) parent's work history.
  - Also known as either Child Disability Benefits (CDB) or Social Security Disabled Adult Child (SSDAC)



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# RESOURCES: Housing Specific

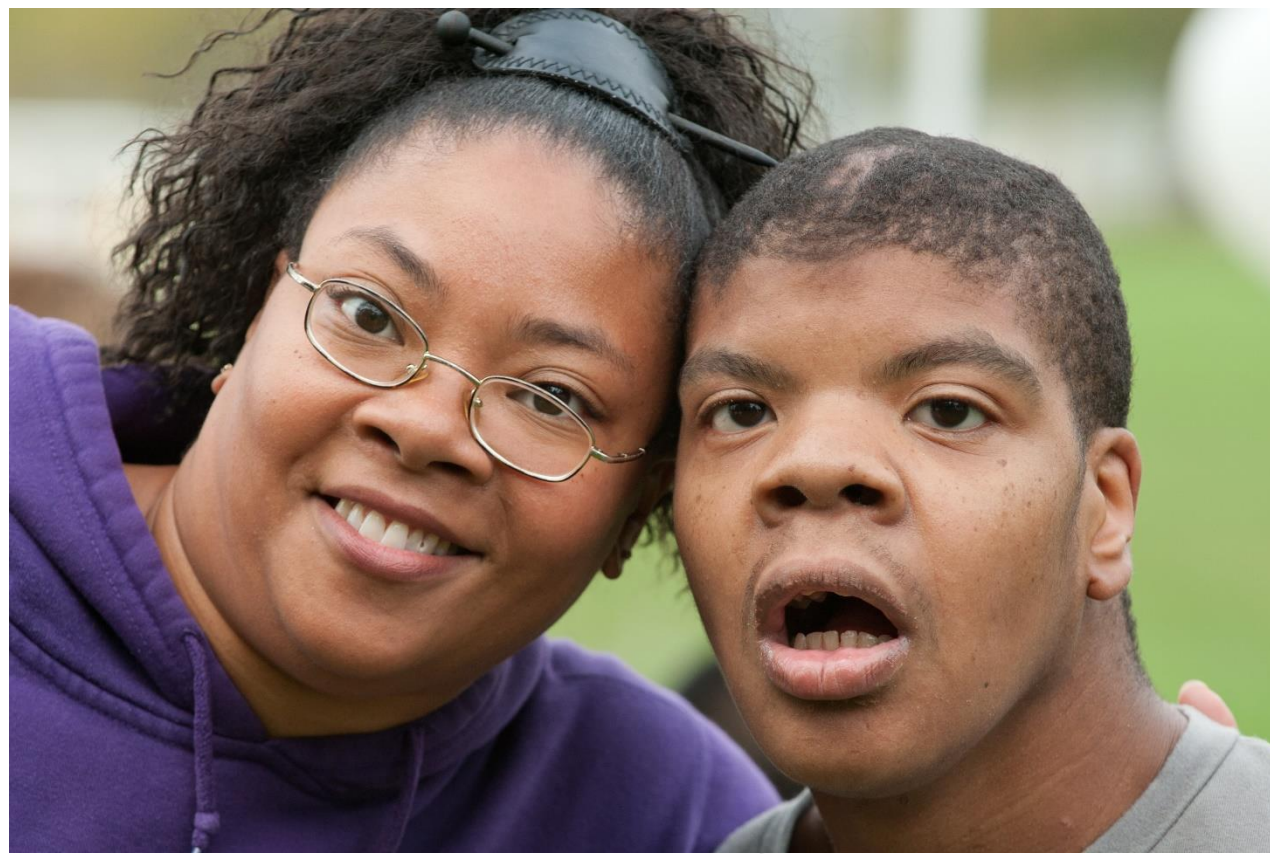
- Resources for housing specific to the Developmental Disability community are scarce or nonexistent in most counties in Washington.
- In King County there is a Section 8 HASP Voucher specifically for DDA clients, but there is only one or two available per month.
- We must better understanding how NED Vouchers might support families and individuals with Developmental Disabilities.
- We also must better understand how Supportive Housing can work to serve folks with Developmental Disabilities.

# GAPS IN THE RESOURCES

- Even when housing is attained, it is difficult to remain stabilized.
- ADA Accommodation alone do not meet the needs of people with developmental disabilities.
- There are a multitude of services and supports that play into whether or not someone is stable in housing – guardianship, representative payee services, social security, DDA Medicaid services, etc. It is difficult to find supports who are experts in ALL of these systems and can help bring them all together for folks.
- People with Developmental Disabilities require more time and money to be rehoused and stabilized. There is no ‘quick fix’ option for folks with DD.

# NEED FOR INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY

- Given the gaps in resources and lack of disability specific support for homeless people with disabilities, people with DD rely on the individual advocacy of service provider.
- Vulnerability is often not accurately captured.



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# LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY



# Contact Info

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