

# General Aging in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

## The Role of Polypharmacy

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# Polypharmacy



- ❑ Medical care gets more complex and possibly more fragmented with age
- ❑ Routine review of the medication list is essential!
- ❑ As individuals age they take on multiple specialists/prescribers, who may or may not communicate with one another
- ❑ To be safe, assume they **DON'T**
- ❑ Reassess regularly – is the medication necessary? Do the benefits outweigh the risks? Is there room to simplify?



# Medications, Medications....

## ❑ Look out for:

- ❑ Anticholinergic medications (ex: benadryl, bladder medications, etc.)
- ❑ Sedating, long acting medications
- ❑ Medications that have therapeutic levels that require monitoring
- ❑ The prescribing cascade: medication B prescribed to address the side effects of medication A
- ❑ Overlapping or conflicting medications – occurs frequently when providers don't communicate or if med lists are not carefully updated



# Medications, Medications....

- ❑ **Keep in mind:** Nonpharmacologic strategies for behavioral issues are frequently underutilized
- ❑ Is there any room to solve/improve this problem without adding another medication?
- ❑ Could the best step actually be **removal** of an offensive medication rather than adding another one?
- ❑ Advocate for making only **one** medication change at a time to allow cleaner assessment of its impact, good or bad



# Additional Webinars on Aging with IDD

## General Aging in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

- ❑ Understanding Age Related Changes
- ❑ The Role of Polypharmacy
- ❑ Identifying and Assessing Pain
- ❑ Behavior Related Changes and Aging in Adults with IDD
- ❑ Health Promotion and Aging in Adults with IDD
- ❑ Mobility and Aging in Adults with IDD
- ❑ Aging with Down Syndrome
- ❑ Aging and Cerebral Palsy

## Dementia and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

- ❑ Introduction to Dementia and Aging with IDD
- ❑ Early Evaluation of Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease
- ❑ Stages of Alzheimer's Disease
- ❑ Applying the Knowledge to Dementia Caregiving and Caregiver Support
- ❑ Caregiving in Action: Case Studies and Practical Tips



# Additional Aging with IDD Resources

*Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS)*  
*[www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dds/aging-with-id.html](http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dds/aging-with-id.html)*

*Center for Developmental Disabilities Evaluation & Research*  
*[http://shriver.umassmed.edu/cdder/aging\\_idd\\_education](http://shriver.umassmed.edu/cdder/aging_idd_education)*



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