

wwild-svp...

WWILD –SVP Association Inc is a not-for-profit organisation based in Brisbane, Queensland that works with people with intellectual disabilities who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing sexual violence or have been criminally victimised. They were funded by the Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney General to develop a resource to assist mainstream services to build their capacity to support people with intellectual disability who have been victims of crime or exploitation. Their resource kit called 'How to Hear Me' contains a book and accompanying DVD and is designed to augment the existing expertise of counsellors and other professionals and allow them to adapt their current practice to meet the needs of a wider and more diverse client base.

It is the view of WWILD-SVP that all counsellors have a professional responsibility to increase their competence in working with this broad group of clients, as they would with any other group of service users. In the past, people with intellectual disability have been portrayed as lacking the cognitive ability and insight to engage meaningfully in counselling. This, along with the lack of confidence that counsellors often express about working with this client group, has often led to people with intellectual disability being excluded from mainstream or generalist counselling services.

Counselling services that cater to the specific needs of people with an intellectual disability are rare. Thankfully, we are becoming more aware of people's emotional and psychological needs and there are an ever increasing number of mainstream counsellors seeking to work with this client group. The 'How to Hear Me' resource kit was developed to build the capacity of mainstream services to provide quality support and therapeutic interventions for this group whose needs are still largely misunderstood and under-recognised.

Fundamental to the purpose of this resource is the knowledge that people with intellectual disability in Australia are over-represented in nearly every area of disadvantage, for a wide range of complex individual, social and systemic reasons. For the same complex reasons, people with intellectual disability are significantly more vulnerable to becoming victims of crime than other members of the population and therefore more likely to experience trauma and require therapeutic counselling and support. We have given considerable space to discussing the 'lived experience' of this disadvantage in the first half of the book to support professionals to better understand this complexity.

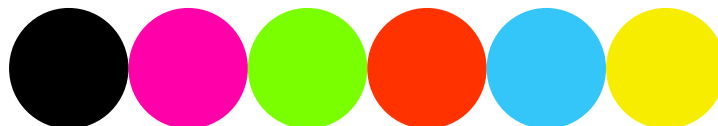
The book provides information to enhance understanding and practice skills in the counselling context when working with people with intellectual disability, includ-

ing barriers to communication, useful therapeutic approaches, important considerations for practice and tips for legal professionals. The accompanying DVD provides a short explanation and demonstration of four individual counselling techniques that might be usefully applied in counselling practice with people who experience intellectual disability. It aims to contribute to the conversation about how this group can be better served and supported within our community, particularly within the mainstream counselling setting. ●

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reading list...



Cramm, J.M. and Nieboer, A.P. (2012). Longitudinal study of parents' impact on Quality of Life of children and young adults with intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*. Vol 25, Pp.20-28.

A nice literature review to start that confirms that emotional, social and situational variables can change Quality of Life among children with intellectual disability.

Cottis, T. (2009). *Intellectual disability, trauma and psychotherapy*. Routledge, London.

I am still only part way through but I thought this would be interesting to add to the list as a way of understanding the practical issues of participating in therapy for people with intellectual disability. Also of interest is the developing of secure attachments.

Emerson, E. and Einfeld, S. (2011). *Challenging Behaviour*; 3rd edition. Cambridge university press. New York.

A handy book that describes everything a beginner might want to know; with more detail for the practiced clinician. This book is really a handbook as it describes the social context, epidemiology, biology, behaviours and pharmacotherapy. It also acknowledges assessment, intervention and the challenges ahead. If you are bored on a Sunday choose an article from the 48 page reference list to read.

McKenzie, K. and Megson, P. (2012). Screening for intellectual disability in children: A review of the literature. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*. Vol 25, Pp.80-87.

We have received many questions about assessment and screening. This article is a sufficient literature review with a nice reference list.

Rillotta, F., Kirby, N., Shearer, J. and Nettelbeck, T. (2012). Family quality of life of Australian families with a member with an intellectual/developmental disability. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*. Vol 56, Iss 1, Pp. 71-86.

This issue of the journal of intellectual disability research focuses on quality of life of people with intellectual disability. There are several articles based around the world; this one is close to home.