



Emergence Health Network

**Crisis Intervention Services: Addressing Disparity of Mental
Health Services for the IDD–MH population**

**CRISIS EMERGENCY
SERVICES DIVISION**

It's time to recognize the unique mental health needs of individuals with IDD and provide tailored crisis intervention services to support them.

Learning Objectives:

- 1. Discuss disparity of mental health services for IDD population.**
- 2. Differentiate appropriately the 3 main challenges IDD clients experience.**
- 3. Identify tools and strategies to address risk factors and trauma in IDD.**

Introduction to IDD

- Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) often require specialized mental health support to address their unique needs.
- The disparity of mental health services for the intellectual developmental disabilities (IDD) population is a significant concern that highlights the need for **improved accessibility** and **quality of care**. Intellectual developmental disabilities encompass a range of conditions, such as Developmental Disorders (autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, genetic disorders, etc...) and levels of severity in intellectual disability, which can significantly impact an individual's cognitive functioning and adaptive skills.





Importance of specialized mental health crisis intervention services for IDD

There are several reasons why the IDD population faces disparities in accessing mental health services:

- Limited understanding and awareness
- Diagnostic overshadowing (*Medical, Behavioral, Mental Health*)
- Communication and comprehension challenges
- Lack of Specialized services
- Accessibility barriers/ Service fragmentation
- Stigma and discrimination

Limitations- Understanding & Awareness

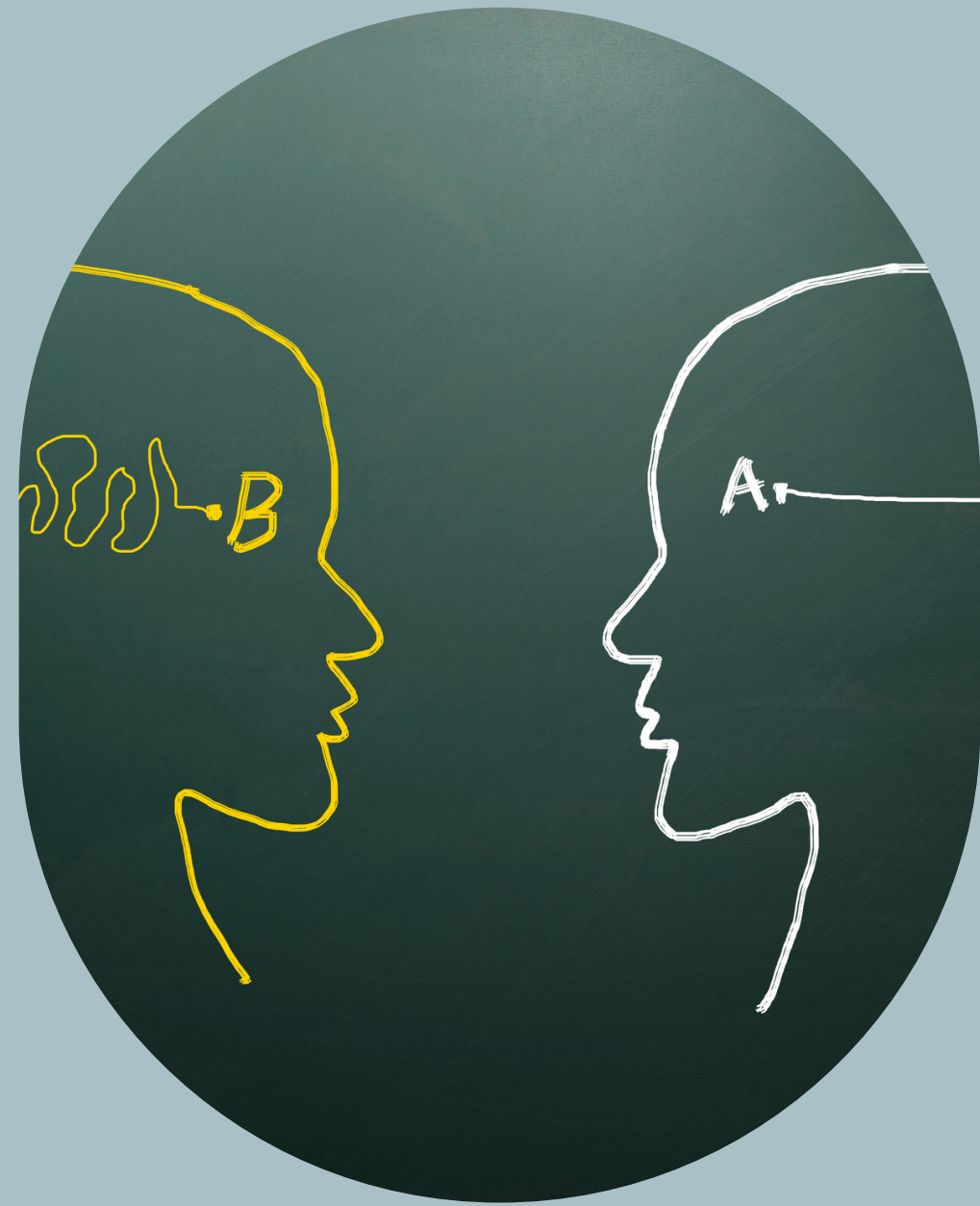
- **Mental health conditions** in individuals with IDD are often *misunderstood* or *overlooked* due to the complexity of their disabilities.
 - Historical beliefs on every symptom being categorized as a "behavior".
- This **lack of awareness** among healthcare professionals, policymakers, and the general public can result in a *failure to recognize and address* mental health concerns adequately.
 - Lack of education, specialized training and awareness does lead to inappropriate sought out treatments by healthcare professionals.
 - Negative culture built around the level of independency and autonomy a person diagnosed with ID/D can achieve.

Diagnostic Overshadowing



- Diagnostic overshadowing occurs when mental health symptoms are attributed solely to an individual's intellectual disability, leading to the overlooking or dismissal of co-occurring mental health conditions. As a result, individuals with IDD may not receive appropriate mental health assessments or interventions:
 - **Medical comorbidities**
 - **Behavior**
 - **Mental Health symptoms**

Communication & Comprehension Challenges



- Individuals with IDD may have communication difficulties, making it challenging for them to express their mental health concerns effectively.
- Healthcare professionals need specialized training to effectively communicate with and assess the mental health needs of individuals with IDD.
 - **CIS adapted 3 communication methods to help IDD individuals answer their C-SSRS short evaluation.**

Lack of Specialized Services

Addressing the disparity in mental health services for the IDD population requires comprehensive and multi-faceted efforts:

- Many mental health services are not tailored to meet the unique needs of individuals with IDD. There is a scarcity of specialized professionals, such as psychiatrists, psychologists, and therapists, who have expertise in working with this population. As a result, individuals with IDD often struggle to access appropriate and effective mental health interventions.
 - Awareness, training and education
 - Integrated care models-(LMHA/LIDDA)
 - Texas Zero Suicide Initiative
 - Community Support, advocacy and policy changes
 - Research and evidence based practices- Assess, Intervene, Monitor (AIM model)



Service Fragmentation



- Mental health services for individuals with IDD are often fragmented, with separate systems for intellectual disabilities and mental health. This fragmentation can lead to difficulties in accessing comprehensive and coordinated care, resulting in a lack of continuity and increased gaps in service provision.
 - Learning to work with professionals in the community outside of Local Authority's.
 - Goal is to complement/enhance services, not to replace services

Accessibility barriers



- The physical and logistical barriers can further impede access to mental health services for individuals with IDD.
 - Lack of transportation, physical accessibility, & therapeutic needs issues in healthcare facilities
 - Long waiting lists for services can create significant hurdles for individuals and their support systems.

Stigma & Discrimination

The stigma surrounding both intellectual disabilities and mental health can compound the challenges faced by individuals with IDD.

They may experience:

- Discrimination,
- Social isolation,
- And lack of support, which can exacerbate their mental health issues– unmet mental health needs can contribute to a crisis



A close-up photograph of a hand placing a puzzle piece into a larger assembly. The puzzle pieces are dark blue with a lighter blue, glowing light emanating from the gaps between the pieces. The hand is positioned at the top right, and the puzzle piece being placed is a dark blue piece with a lighter blue, glowing light emanating from the gaps between the pieces.

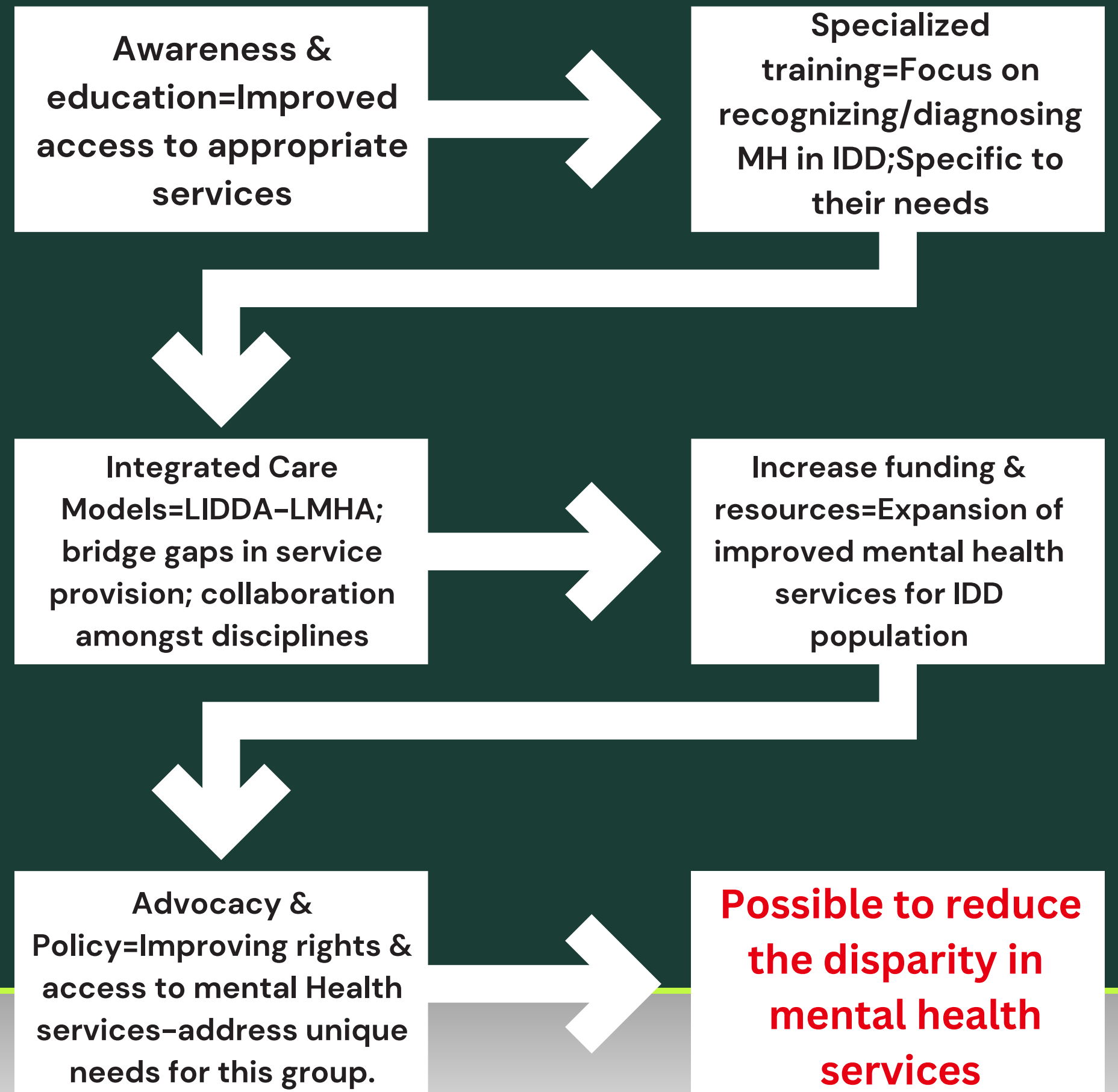
Solutions

Addressing the disparity in mental health services for the IDD population requires comprehensive and multi-faceted efforts:

- Awareness, training and education
- Integrated care models–(*LMHA/LIDDA*)
- Texas Zero Suicide Initiative
- Community Support, advocacy and policy changes
- Research and evidence based practices– *Assess, Intervene, Monitor (AIM model)*

Benefits of potential solutions

Our specialized mental health crisis intervention services for IDD provide personalized care, improved quality of life, and increased safety.



Our team

Our team consists of specialized mental health professionals:

- Medical Director available for Psychiatric Consultation & Medication Reconciliation.
- Licensed LMSW for clinical case review, and development of treatment & safety plans.
- Program Manager
- Crisis Intervention Specialists with dual knowledge and skills on IDD and Mental Health crisis de-escalation
- Mobile Outreach Crisis Team collaborative initiative
- LIDDA service coordination





Questions?!

Email us: CIS-IDD-MH@ehnel Paso.org

**Director of Crisis Emergency Services
Jessica Morales, LMSW, QMHP, QIDP**

jmorales2@ehnel Paso.org

915-479-4683

**Crisis Intervention Services Program
Manager**

Deborah Alvidrez, MaEd, QIDP

dalvidrez@ehnel Paso.org

915-218-1472

*Thank
you!*