

oral health & intellectual disability

a guide for dental practitioners

oral health is central to good overall health

Good oral health is required if people with intellectual disability are to:

- ▶ experience good overall health and wellbeing
- ▶ participate in their communities
- ▶ function to the best of their abilities

People with disability are at increased risk of poor oral health and face multiple barriers to accessing dental services.

This guide is for dentists, dental therapists, oral health therapists, dental hygienists and dental prosthetists. It outlines some of the barriers to good oral health experienced by people with intellectual disability. It provides strategies that dental practitioners can use to identify these barriers so that they can engage patients' support networks and provide high quality dental care.

Most patients with mild or moderate disability can be treated successfully in the general dental clinic.



"Oral health is considered integral to general health, with poor oral health likely to exist when general health is poor and vice versa. Oral health refers to the standard of health of the oral and related tissues that enable an individual to eat, speak and socialise without active disease, discomfort or embarrassment. While oral diseases are common, they are largely preventable through population-level interventions (including water fluoridation), and individual practices such as personal oral hygiene and regular preventive dental care."

(Centre for Oral Health Strategy NSW, 2013:4)