



ACCESSABILITY

Adapting Therapy for Children and Adolescents
with Intellectual Disabilities

Nearly half of all children and adolescents with an Intellectual Disability (ID) have co-morbid mental health disorders along with elevated rates of both externalising and internalising problem behaviours compared to their typically developing peers, with anxiety reported as the most prevalent mood disorder in young people with ID. The added impact of mental health difficulties on the lives of young people with ID is substantial. Once mental health problems emerge, young people with ID are likely to suffer from them for a long time and significantly impact educational, vocational and social opportunities.

Recent research supports the use of psychological therapies among young people with mild to moderate ID. Despite this, rates of mental illness remain high and access to mental health services is low. One identified barrier to people with ID accessing psychological treatments is the confidence of practitioners in working with this population. Additionally parents of young people with ID often experience heightened levels of psychological distress due to increased parenting demands and uncertainty in knowing how to access such appropriate treatments.

This workshop will provide an understanding of how Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) can be adapted for the unique learning needs of children and adolescents with ID and used as an effective intervention. The workshop will explore:

- The mental health of young people with ID and the impact of adverse childhood experiences
- How to properly assess mental health concerns in young people with ID
- The barriers to accessing psychological treatments
- What neuropsychological adaptations are required for treatment
- How to adapt treatment protocols of traditional Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for the unique learning needs of children and adolescents with mild to moderate ID
- How to adapt cognitive restructuring to meet the cognitive needs of children and adolescents with mild to moderate ID
- How to provide CBT for children and adolescents with ID in both group therapy settings and individuals consultations

This workshop is suitable for a range of practitioners working with young people with ID and their parents. The presentation style will be interactive, encouraging participant contributions and questions. The workshop will include group activities and case examples.



Dr Anastasia Hronis is a Clinical Psychologist and Honorary Associate at the University of Technology Sydney where she lectures and supervises students in the Master of Clinical Psychology program. Anastasia founded the Australian Institute for Human Wellness. She has adapted and evaluated Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for children and adolescents with intellectual disabilities and anxiety. This was developed through literature review, consultations with clinicians and parents, and trialing the program in schools and clinics, in both group settings and individual consultations. She has presented her research at national and international conferences, and has published in top rated journals.