

Transcript of the video: Identification; Effective Strategies for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

0:00 – 0:06

Text on screen

The scenarios in this video are based on real-life situations.

0:07 – 0:23

Music starts to play, flashes of scenes involving individuals with a developmental disability interacting with police officers.

Title of video: Effective Strategies for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

0:23 – 1:49

Host on camera

“As a professional in law enforcement or the criminal justice system, you may have encountered persons with developmental disabilities. Statistics show this is a group of people that is becoming overly represented as victims of crime, as suspects, and as offenders. And the reasons are varied.

This series of video segments, will help you identify a person with a developmental disability, or DD, to communicate effectively with that individual, and to deescalate situations.

This video segment will help you identify situations involving individuals with a development disability or DD.

The video(s) will provide tips and strategies using interviews and scenarios that reflect common situations, in which persons with a developmental disability may become involved with the law.

The goal is to reduce the likelihood of persons with developmental disabilities from becoming further involved with the criminal justice system, or being unnecessarily incarcerated.

Given that police officers are often the first point of contact, it’s especially helpful for officers to increase their awareness and knowledge of those with developmental disabilities.

Other professionals that would benefit from this information include those working in courts, probation and parole, and correctional institutions, across both the adult and youth justice systems.

At the end of the video(s), we will list resources available to further build knowledge and understanding.”

1:49 – 2:54

Title: Identification of individuals with developmental disabilities

Host on camera; series of shots of individuals demonstrating behaviours listed on the screen.

“Early identification of a developmental disability can help in assessing a person’s mental capacity and decision-making. Someone with a DD may:

- Look like anyone else
- Not self-identify as having DD.
- Be a witness, victim, suspect, or an offender.

And could

- Exhibit questionable behaviour due to medication, illness, injury, experience of abuse, trauma, or environmental factors.

Some general indicators include:

- Mannerisms like hand flapping, fidgeting or hitting themselves
- Unclear speech, perhaps due to hearing or other issues
- Being unresponsive to social cues
- Socially inappropriate behaviour like standing too close, talking loudly, even shouting.

And

- Too much eye contact or none at all.”

2:54 – 3:17

Host on screen with list appearing on screen.

“An initial conversation can provide clues. For example, an individual with a developmental disability may:

- Reference special ed or “worker”
- Group home or older and living with parents
- Difficulty expressing themselves
- Overly honest- even rude
- Appear to lack empathy”

3:17 – 3:27

Text box appears:

In this scenario a member of the public contacted police to report a suspicious individual loitering in a playground.

3:28 – 4:06

2 police officers stand in the playground speaking to Garrett who is sitting at a picnic table.

Police Officer: Hey, how you doing?

Garrett Thompson: Good.

Police Officer: Good? What's going on today?

Garrett: Just sitting here.

Police Officer: What's your name?

Garrett: Garrett.

Police Officer: Garrett? What's your last name, Garrett?

Garrett: Thompson.

Police Officer Thompson. Do you go to school, Garrett?

Garrett: Yes. No.

Police Officer: No? Do you work, Garrett? Where do you live?

Garrett: Napanee.

Police Officer: Napanee? You live with your mom or dad?

Garrett: No.

Police Officer: So Garrett, does anyone know you are here?

Garrett: No.

Police Officer: Who do you live with?

Garrett: Group home.

Police Officer: How what do you do during the day? Because you're in Kingston now, you're not in Napanee.

4:07 – 4:18

Host on screen

“Here is Dr. Jessica Jones, Associate Professor and Clinical Forensic Psychologist with the

Department of Psychiatry at Queen's University.”

4:19 – 4:59

Dr. Jones sitting in front of the camera

“What’s crucially important for identifying someone with a developmental disability is recognizing that they do bleed into each other in terms of how they present.

So they more communication and reading the communication style of the person is going to dictate whether they have a developmental disability or not.

So an individual who may be intoxicated can still use sophisticated language, can keep up with the pace of the conversation. However an individual with developmental disabilities may use very literal or concrete terms and the pace of conversation and understanding and responding to questions are going to be a red flag for officers.

In fact they may come across as overfriendly of the opposite, they may be very rude because of the difficulty in reading the social situation, more likely because they are seeking approval from people in authority.

So individuals with developmental disabilities may not be able to read or write, or tell the time. So any written information that we give them needs to be adjusted to their level of comprehension and level of understanding. “

5:27 –

As Dr. Jones speaks, video footage of police interactions with individuals and families in various settings plays.

Dr. Jones sits in front of camera

“They also may agree to things that aren’t true, or agree to things that they cannot abide by and we refer to that term as suggestible.

An individual’s eye contact, tone of voice, body language and then determining what the intent or motivation is of that person.

Individuals with developmental disabilities have difficulty with their memory due to their cognitive problems. So recalling events or sequence of events, can be difficult and for the purpose of self-preservation, like you and I, we don’t like to admit when we don’t know something, they try to fill in the gaps.

They may have fewer coping strategies than you or I. They may react agitated quite quickly. It may also trigger past abusive experiences for these individuals.

By the nature of their difficulty, they also have complications with insight and recognizing consequences beyond the immediate situation.

So, by not foreseeing consequences of their actions in the future, they can be, or at risk of being interpreted as dismissive or indifferent to their own consequences of the actions of their behaviours.”

6:39 – 7:01

Music. Scene in background of Garrett at the playground, list appears with the following indicators:

- Unable to read, write, tell time
- Difficulty concentrating
- Eager to please
- Easily influenced
- Difficulty understanding tone of voice, body language and emotions.
- Difficulty recalling facts, details, following instructions
- Argumentative, angry or agitated

7:01 – 7:40

Host on screen with a list of list of behaviours appearing on screen

“In cases where a person with a DD is a victim, the individual will exhibit behaviours, such as:

- Being eager to please
- Being easily influenced, targeted or victimized
- Believing the perpetrator is their 'friend'
- Be less able or likely to report being victimized
- Be unaware of the seriousness or danger of a situation
- Not be considered a credible witness, even in situations where they are competent to provide evidence and their testimony is truthful
- Be unaware of their rights and believe that the way they have been treated is appropriate”

7:41 – 10:22

Elena sits in an interview room across from a police officer.

Police Officer : Can you tell me the best you can about what happened?

Elena: My friend took my money out of my purse.

Police Officer: Where did this happen?

Elena: At the *Cat Centre*, at the food court.

Police Officer: Do you remember roughly when this happened?

Elena: No, I don't.

Police Officer: Do you have some dates in mind?

Elena: No.

Police Officer: Anything that might have happened close to this?

Elena: No.

Police Officer: Would say it was within the last month?

Elena: I don't know.

Police Officer: You said your friend took some money out of your purse. This friend of yours, can you give me their name?

Elena: No.

Police Officer: How come you can't give me their name?

Elena: Because I want to keep my friend's name to myself. I don't want to get her into trouble. That's all.

10:24 – 10:53

Host on camera

“At any stage, if you think that an individual may have a DD, it is important to ask them if they have a social worker. And when you do recognize that a victim, witness, suspect, or offender may have a developmental disability, then offer to have a support person present during the interview. This person should help provide insights, and a calming influence.

You may also want to consider contacting internal agency support such as mental health or vulnerable persons unit.

10:53 – 11:18

2 police officers are in the playground with Garrett

Police officer: Garrett, are you in a program?

Garrett: Yes.

Police officer: What program are you in?

Garrett: Crescent Center.

Police officer: The Crescent Center? Do you have a worker?

Garrett: Yes.

Police officer: Who's your worker?

Garrett: Kelly.

11:18 – 11:24

Host on screen

“Here is a list of resources that may provide you with further knowledge and support.”

Information on screen with images of Justice Tool-kit and the logo for Community Networks of Specialized Care. Music.

In text box: For more information on developmental disabilities and resources available in your community, visit www.communitynetworks.ca to view or download the Developmental Disabilities Awareness in the Justice System Tool-Kit which includes a regional resource guide.