
Preface

There has been an impressive growth in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities—in diagnosis, assessment, interventions, and quality of life issues—and there is an urgent need to draw together evidence-based findings from across this field. Philosophy and advocacy continue to be very strong forces that drive the care of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. For example, person-centered individual support plans preceded any evidence for their efficacy or effectiveness and, even now, the evidence is somewhat slim. Indeed, empirical evidence often tries to catch up with philosophy-driven practice. In addition, fads such as facilitated communication and secretin continue to be used by some professionals. Much has been written about fads and, due to the skepticism generated, proponents of new approaches and treatments often have to weather the scientific angst during the proof-of-concept phases of their clinical treatment and research. This delays effective interventions being used in a timely manner with those who so desperately need it.

This has led to an acute need for a comprehensive handbook that maps the evidence base for all aspects of care for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The current status of approaches to their care is quite diverse and impressive, both in the depth and the breadth of assessment and interventions. As a veteran in this field, when I decided to bring together what we currently know about the care of these individuals, I was motivated to integrate the philosophy and science in this field. I wanted to provide a comprehensive guide that is based on as much of the evidence base as possible, but I also did not want to forget the individual who would be receiving the care. Relying on the evidence base to inform care is one thing, but delivering the care in a mindful, supportive way that enhances the individual's quality of life in the short and long term is quite another. It requires a dance, where evidence-base partners with quality of care and the caregivers make an emotional connection with people whom they care for on a daily basis. This applies regardless of whether the caregiver is a parent, family member, paid staff, teacher, friend, or volunteer.

The *Handbook of Evidence-Based Practices in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities* is an attempt to bring together both the philosophy and science of intellectual and developmental disabilities. I am aware that given the vast swath of the field many issues remain to be resolved and that an entire field of endeavor cannot be captured in a single handbook. What I envisioned was that a careful reader would have a relatively enhanced, if not

a more complete, view of the many facets of this field and that a clinician would gain considerable insight into improving the quality of life of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It is my hope that this clinical handbook will serve as a comprehensive reference, assisting clinicians, caregivers, and researchers to understand, evaluate, and ultimately enrich the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

A clinical handbook of this scope requires the diligent efforts of a great many people. I would like to thank the contributors who wrote uniformly excellent chapters and for their patience with the editorial process. If there is any merit to this book, it is theirs. I also thank those others who have helped me with this book, especially those colleagues, friends, and family members I have neglected in the process. I am most grateful to Judy Singh at home and Judy Jones at Springer for making this book possible. Finally, I thank my clients, colleagues, and teachers who taught me virtually everything I know, but, of course, not everything they know!

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