

# **Things to keep in mind when working with Personality Disorders**

- All people, including offenders, have needs. Interpret the behavior as an attempt to meet their needs > depersonalize and disengage from the struggle for power and control.
- ***Do not engage in a power struggle*** with the person. Maintain a ***calm demeanor*** and keep your emotions out of the interaction.
- ***Keeping consistent and strong boundaries is very important!*** In a respectful, neutral manner, explain expected behaviors, limits, and responsibilities. Clearly state the rules and the consequences when these rules are violated.
- ***Do not do favors, no matter how small...***
- Avoid physical contact
- Don't fall victim to flattery
- Communicate clearly and write things out to avoid confusion (keep copies)
- All rules should be adhered to by all staff. ***Staff must communicate openly*** to avoid "splitting."
- ***Enforce rule violations consistently!***
- ***Check your own emotions*** to be able to make objective documentation as these clients can easily get under your skin!

# ***How do you work with active psychotic symptoms most effectively?***

- Be alert and careful
- ***Respect the persons personal space***
- ***Avoid being confrontational***
- ***Do not confront delusions: work with and around them, not against them***
- ***Be calm, patient, and caring*** because it elicits more co-operation than the opposite
- Re-direct when needed but allowing initial venting can build rapport
- Give explanation for what is happening or why, for example, I understand that is exciting for you but we have limited time and I have to ask you some specific questions so if I interrupt you I am not trying to be rude
- If a person is not answering and is staring intently, ask how they are feeling about speaking to you with a calm demeanor.
- If the person is very agitated find some assistance (do not go at it alone but do not crowd the person).
- Be aware of your physical placement in the room, possible weapons, and how to best get assistance if needed.
- ***Structure and consistency*** may help and if there are deviations try to explain why.
- Be prepared and have a plan how to address sexually inappropriate behavior

# *How to work with Intellectual Disabilities*

*Approach will vary with level of impairment*

- ***Be sensitive and respectful***, most persons do not want to be treated as if they are “stupid” so ***normalize any difference in the way you interact with the person*** to avoid the person beginning to fake understanding
- In general, be very concrete and direct with the person
- ***Simplify instructions***-go over them together (read it to the person) do not expect the person to read it and understand
- You may have to write (or draw) requirements in step by step instructions of what the person is expected to do and how to do ***it- DO NOT EXPECT THE PERSON TO BE ABLE TO RIDE THE BUS OR KNOW HOW TO FIND INFORMATION***-ask them if they can do the various thing that will be required of them...***DO NOT ASSUME!!!***
- CAUTION! Poor or lower cognitive functioning can be caused by extensive drug use, poor diet, head injuries, aging (and related issues such as various forms of dementia), and other physical illnesses therefore low cognitive functioning does not mean the person is intellectually disabled
- Please note: At times it may be the person’s poor educational background /opportunity contribute to their appearance to be low functioning but their adaptive functioning (street smarts) is high they are not intellectually disabled