

## Review Article

# Interventions and reasonable adjustment for people with learning difficulties and mental health problems

**Tahreem Riaz<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Akram<sup>1</sup>, Umme Laila<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Talha Khalil<sup>1</sup>, Rida Zainab<sup>1</sup>, Momina Iftikhar<sup>1</sup>, Fethi Ahmet Ozdemir<sup>2</sup>, Gawel Sołowski<sup>2</sup>, Ebrahim Alinia-Ahandani<sup>3</sup>, Marcos Altable<sup>4</sup>, Chukwuebuka Egbuna<sup>5,6</sup>, Adonis Sfera<sup>7</sup>, Muhammad Adnan<sup>8\*</sup>, Pragnesh Parmar<sup>9</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Department of Eastern Medicine, Government College University Faisalabad, Pakistan

<sup>2</sup>Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics, Faculty of Science and Art, Bingol University, Bingol, 1200, Türkiye

<sup>3</sup>Department of Biochemistry, Payame Noor University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran

<sup>4</sup>Department of Neurology, Neuroceuta, (Virgen de Africa Clinic), Spain

<sup>5</sup>Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Uli, Anambra State, Nigeria

<sup>6</sup>Nutritional Biochemistry and Toxicology Unit, World Bank Africa Centre of Excellence, Centre for Public Health and Toxicological Research (ACE-PUTOR), University of Port-Harcourt, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

<sup>7</sup>University of California Riverside, Patton State Hospital, USA

<sup>8</sup>Alshehat Unani Medical College Faisalabad

<sup>9</sup>Additional Professor and HOD, Forensic Medicine and Toxicology, AIIMS, Bibinagar, Telangana, India

\*Corresponding author email: [adnanop99@gmail.com](mailto:adnanop99@gmail.com)



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## **Abstract**

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People with learning disabilities (LDs) sometimes struggle with mental health concerns, which can make it difficult for them to live happy lives. The purpose of this study is to investigate the various therapies and reasonable adaptations that can be done to assist people with learning disabilities and mental health issues. Individuals with learning disabilities and mental health issues frequently encounter considerable barriers to adequate care and assistance owing to a variety of physical, cognitive, and emotional impairments. The study opens by underlining the prevalence of learning disabilities and mental health disorders in the population, as well as the difficulties that people with these conditions confront. It then looks at the many interventions and reasonable adaptations that can be done in various settings, such as healthcare, education, and employment, to help individuals with learning disabilities and mental health issues. Environmental modifications, such as creating sensory-friendly environments, communication adjustments, such as utilizing plain language and visual aids, and psychological interventions, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy and social skills training, are among the interventions available. The study also emphasizes the significance of including people with learning disabilities and mental health issues in decision-making and planning, as well as the need for a person-centered approach to care. This study intends to contribute to the development of more effective and inclusive ways to care and support for this group by analyzing the many interventions and reasonable changes that can be made to support people with learning disabilities and mental health concerns.

## **Key words**

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Learning difficulty, Autism, Mental health problems, Reasonable adjustments, Innovations.

## **Introduction**

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People with learning disabilities and mental health issues frequently experience major challenges to receiving healthcare [1]. LDs are characterized as conditions that impair cognitive functioning, resulting in restrictions in adaptive behavior, communication, and social skills [2]. According to the UK government, there are around 1.5 million people in the country who have a learning disability, with up to 70% of them having co-morbid mental health disorders [3]. However, due to a lack of awareness, resources, and suitable accommodations in hospital settings, these persons frequently have difficulties in accessing necessary support [4]. This can result in a variety of undesirable results, including poorer health outcomes, social isolation, and a lower quality of life [5].

There has been an increasing realization in recent years of the necessity of offering appropriate adaptations and tailored treatments to enhance

the health and wellbeing of people with learning disabilities and mental health concerns [6]. Changes that can be made to accommodate individuals with disabilities and ensure that they are not disadvantaged in obtaining healthcare services are referred to as reasonable adjustments [7]. Reasonable adaptations include providing accessible information in a manner that is appropriate for the individual's needs, giving additional support during appointments, and modifying the physical environment to make it more comfortable and less daunting [8].

Several interventions have been developed to assist people with learning disabilities and mental health issues. Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is one example. It has been shown to be useful in treating anxiety and depression in people with learning difficulties. Mindfulness-based therapies and peer support programmes, for example, have shown potential in increasing mental health and wellbeing in this demographic.

Longer appointment times are another example of a fair change. People with learning disabilities may require more time to articulate their wants and concerns, as well as more time to digest information. Longer appointment times can assist ensure that persons with LDs receive the care and support they require.

Despite the potential benefits of reasonable adjustments and focused treatments, much work needs to be done to guarantee that they are properly and consistently applied in healthcare settings. Healthcare providers may lack the essential knowledge and resources to provide appropriate support, and institutional hurdles to obtaining necessary accommodations may exist. Addressing these concerns would necessitate a multifaceted approach involving collaboration among healthcare practitioners, lawmakers, and individuals with learning disabilities and mental health disorders. This review's objective is to outline the importance of intervention and reasonable adjustment for providing best healthcare services to the individuals with intellectual disabilities.

### **Autism, Learning disabilities and mental health problems**

Autism is frequently identified in childhood, but in certain cases, particularly in individuals who are high-functioning or have fewer overt symptoms, the diagnosis may be delayed. It's crucial to remember that autism is a lifelong illness, and those who have it may encounter mental health issues at any time in their lives. Studies show that people with autism are more prone than the general population to develop mental health problems [9]. For instance, research has shown that Autism sufferers are more likely to have autism than the general population to experience anxiety disorders, depression, and suicidal thoughts [10]. This can be ascribed to a number of things, including sensory sensitivity, social isolation, and communication difficulties in social settings [11]. A sizable portion of those who struggle

with learning difficulties have challenging behavioral issues. These behaviors include self-harming behavior, aggressive behavior towards others, and a variety of socially inappropriate ones. Some of these actions might be serious enough to involve the criminal court system [12].

**Table - 1** represents the prevalence on mental health disorders with learning disabilities.

**Table - 1:** Mental health disorders with learning disabilities [13].

<b>Mental Health disorder</b>	<b>Prevalence rate</b>
Severe problem behavior	10-15%
Autism	7%
Dementia over 65 years	20%
OCD	2.5%
Agro phobia	1.5%
Specific phobia	6%
Generalized anxiety disorder	6%
Depression	4%
Bipolar affective disorder	1.5%
Schizophrenia	3%

Co-occurring mental health conditions may negatively affect a person's quality of life more so than their core autistic characteristics [14]. Priorities for stakeholders, including autistic people, their families, providers, organization and system leaders, and researchers, include analyzing and dealing with co-occurring mental health issues, the requirement for mental health services, evidence-based mental health therapies, and expanding the availability of mental health services for those with autism [15, 16].

### **Development of reasonable adjustments**

Promoting the wellbeing of people with impairments requires making reasonable adjustments. They are adaptations designed to make it possible for people with disabilities to access resources, take part in activities, and live independently. Making fair accommodations can aid in removing obstacles to participation and

fostering diversity in society. Reasonable adjustments can significantly improve the quality of life for those who suffer from mental health conditions. Environmental changes including decreasing sensory overload, offering quiet spaces, and altering lighting are examples of reasonable adaptations. Changes to communication, such as utilizing plain language and giving information in accessible formats, might also be considered to be reasonable changes.

People with learning disabilities and mental health issues encounter major barriers to receiving proper healthcare. Individuals with learning disabilities are more likely to acquire mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, and behavioral disorders, according to research [17]. Furthermore, people with learning disabilities may struggle with communicating, making it difficult for them to access and receive healthcare services. It is therefore critical to provide reasonable accommodations to ensure that individuals with learning disabilities and mental health issues can access and receive necessary healthcare treatments.

It has long been known that people with learning difficulties or autism spectrum disorder (ASD) have special mental health needs. Although it is recognized that this demographic needs excellent mental health treatment, many people still receive subpar or unsuitable care, which can have a variety of unfavorable effects. It has been determined that one of the most effective methods for raising the calibre and accessibility of mental health care for this group is to make reasonable adjustments, which are described as changes made to allow people with disabilities to access services and facilities on an equal footing with others. Despite the potential advantages of reasonable adjustments, there is still a sizable knowledge gap about how they affect people with ASD or learning difficulties. By investigating the effects of reasonable adjustments on the mental health & general well-

being of this population, this study aims to close this gap.

Reasonable adjustments can aid people with mental health illnesses in managing their symptoms and enhancing their general well-being in addition to enhancing access to mental health resources. For instance, changing the atmosphere can make people feel less anxious and stressed, and changing the way people communicate can help them grasp their disease and the available therapies. Reasonable adjustments can also assist people in creating coping mechanisms, enhancing their social abilities, and feeling better all around.

### **Communication adjustment**

All interactions with healthcare professionals should be checked for mutual comprehension. For the majority of autistic people, using honest yet It's best to speak clearly and rely less on nonverbal communication. Try to simplify things by creating more precise questions or a limited number of possibilities because open-ended questions and too many options might be confusing. For people with autism, using written communication or augmentative and alternative communication devices may be simpler. Anxiety limits one's capacity for people with autism, using written communication or augmentative and alternative communication devices may be simpler. There are more and more tools and apps available to help in communication. In accordance with the accessibility guidelines, if they discover that a certain option works well for them, this should be noted so it can be used when appropriate.

### **Person-centered care**

It is important to note that providing personalized treatment as a reasonable adjustment necessitates a departure from conventional modes of care, which frequently place more emphasis on the disease or diagnosis of the patient than on their particular requirements and preferences. This may call for adjustments to how services are

planned and provided, as well as staff training and support [18]. Personalized care may have advantages, but there are drawbacks that come with putting it into practice. For instance, staff members may encounter change resistance or a lack of knowledge of person-centered approaches due to a lack of financing or resources for training and assistance [19].

Person-centered care is one strategy that has shown promise in improving the health and well-being of people with learning disabilities and mental health issues. Person-centered care is a strategy that prioritizes the needs and preferences of the individual and includes them in decision-making [20]. This approach emphasizes the need of communication and collaboration between healthcare practitioners and people who have learning disabilities or mental health issues.

Person-centered care might include a variety of interventions, such as communication aids and support personnel. Picture books, for example, can help people with learning disabilities comprehend and convey their needs and preferences to healthcare practitioners [21]. Support workers can also play an important role in providing practical assistance and advocating for people with learning disabilities and mental health issues to ensure that their needs are addressed.

### **Cognitive behavior therapy**

Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is another intervention that has showed promise in improving the health and well-being of people with learning disabilities and mental health issues. CBT is a type of psychotherapy that tries to help people understand and alter harmful thought and behavior patterns [22]. CBT has been shown to be beneficial in treating a variety of mental health problems in people with learning disabilities, including anxiety and depression [23].

However, because of communication issues, administering CBT to individuals with learning disabilities and mental health concerns can be difficult. To address this issue, redesigned CBT programmes that use visual aids and reduced language to teach concepts and methods have been developed [24]. Individualized support, such as one-on-one sessions, can also be provided to assist persons with learning disabilities and mental health issues in understanding and applying the skills taught in CBT.

### **Accessibility to healthcare**

Reasonable modifications can also be made to healthcare facilities to make them accessible to people with learning disabilities and mental health issues. Signage, for example, can be made to incorporate symbols and visuals to improve comprehension, and quiet spaces can be offered to alleviate sensory overload [25]. Staff training can also be provided to assist healthcare personnel in understanding and communicating effectively with people who have learning disabilities or mental health issues.

### **Impacts of reasonable adjustments**

An important field of research focuses on how reasonable adjustments affect the mental well-being and wellness of those with autism or intellectual disabilities. Changes made to the environment or practices that give people with disabilities the same opportunity as those without impairments are referred to as reasonable adjustments.

Individuals with learning disabilities and mental health problems require person-centered care that recognizes the value of communication and collaboration between healthcare practitioners and individuals with learning disabilities. Person-centered care, cognitive-behavioral treatment, appropriate adaptations to healthcare facilities and peer support groups can all help to improve the health and well-being of people with mental health issues and learning disabilities. These



interventions necessitate careful consideration of the individual's wants and preferences, and they may necessitate changes to existing healthcare services in order to assure accessibility. Healthcare providers should be trained to communicate effectively with people who have learning disabilities or mental health concerns and to understand their needs.

The First, people with learning difficulties or autism get benefit mentally from reasonable adjustments. The adjustments guarantee that individuals with impairments can receive healthcare services without facing discrimination, improving the outcomes for mental health. According to research, people with autism or learning difficulties compared to those without disabilities, are more prone to suffer from mental health issues. Therefore, for the early detection and management of mental health issues, appropriate changes that guarantee access to healthcare services are crucial. Second, making reasonable adjustments encourages social inclusion and lessens isolation among those with autism or other impairments. Due to the difficulties they have accessing social activities; isolation is a serious issue for persons with disabilities. People with disabilities can fully engage in social activities thanks to reasonable accommodations including accessible transportation, public spaces, and events, which improves wellbeing. Thirdly, adjustments that are reasonable help people with impairments get jobs. Promoting the well-being of individuals with impairments requires employment. People with disabilities can obtain and sustain employment thanks to reasonable modifications including workplace accommodations, accessible workspaces, and assistive technology, which improves mental health outcomes.

However, a number of obstacles prevent people with autism or learning difficulties from fully realizing the benefits of reasonable adjustments on their mental health. First, there is a dearth of knowledge regarding the significance of

reasonable adjustments in supporting the wellbeing of individuals with disabilities among healthcare professionals and the general public. Due to a lack of information, people face discrimination and obstacles while trying to access social, job, and healthcare opportunities. Second, it is challenging to execute modifications in the environment or practices that improve the well-being of persons with disabilities since there aren't enough resources set aside for reasonable adjustments. Furthermore, mental health providers can modify their physical environment to make it more accessible to those with LDs. This can involve things like providing clear signs, lowering noise levels, and making sure places are well-lit. These modifications can assist persons with LDs reduce stress and anxiety while also improving their overall experience with mental health care. In addition, mental health services can train mental health professionals on how to interact effectively with people with learning disabilities. This can entail learning how to communicate with persons who have LDs, assessing mental health needs, and providing appropriate care and support.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, the research indicates that making reasonable adjustments can improve the wellbeing of people with learning difficulties, autism, and mental health issues. However, there are a number of restrictions and holes in the current literature that must be filled. Future studies ought to concentrate on examining the precise effects of reasonable adjustments on the wellbeing of people with learning impairments, autism, and mental health issues, as well as the cost-effectiveness of making these accommodations in various contexts. Additionally, studies on the efficiency of reasonable adjustments and their effects on the wellbeing of people from different cultural backgrounds should concentrate on the perspectives of people with intellectual difficulties, autism, and mental health disorders.

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