

# Psychiatric Facts for Physicians about Persons with Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (MR/DD)

1. Mental health problems are common in persons with MR/DD.
2. All types of psychiatric problems can occur in this patient group.
3. Schizophrenia and psychosis are more common in persons with MR/DD than in the general population.
4. Psychosis can be treated with antipsychotic medications.
5. Depression can produce behavioral problems, weight loss, irritability, and diminished function.
6. Depression usually responds to therapeutic doses of SSRIs.
7. Mania can produce hyperactivity, sleep disturbance, behavioral problems and weight loss.
8. Mania may respond to mood stabilizers like Valproic acid and Lithium.
9. Many types of anxiety disorders are common in persons with MR/DD.
10. SSRIs are the preferred therapy for anxiety disorders in persons with MR/DD because benzodiazepines can produce serious side effects.
11. Persons with mild retardation can abuse substances like alcohol or marijuana.
12. Drug screens are indicated for acute behavioral change in persons with mild MR/DD.
13. Abnormal behaviors are common in all types of MR/DD, especially moderate or severe retardation.
14. Behavioral management works best for behavioral problems.
15. Medications are indicated for dangerous behaviors or disabling symptoms that fail to respond to behavior management.
16. Benzodiazepines should be used with great care in all patients with MR/DD.