THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
NISONGER CENTER

#TherapyTogether

Social Media Campaign Kit

Insights to advance mental health treatment
for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Share the results of our focus group study with your network!
Each voice shares a tip to make therapy better – together.

Full paper: Witwer, A. N., Rosencrans, M. E., Taylor, C. A., Cobranchi, C., Krahn, G. L., Havercamp, S. M. & The Ohio State University Nisonger RRTC on Health and Function. (2025). Working with adults with intellectual disability and clinicians to advance mental health treatment: Informing practice guidelines and research. *Journal of Mental Health Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 18(1), 1-29. DOI: 10.1080/19315864.2024.2308297

Tip 1: Someone to Talk To

Adults with developmental disabilities value having **someone to talk to** about their mental health (Witwer et al., 2025).

#TherapyTogether Tip: Create a safe and respectful space where clients feel heard and understood.

“**Can you hear us now?**” Learn more about our project at https://go.osu.edu/rrtc.

Tip 2: Build a Good Relationship

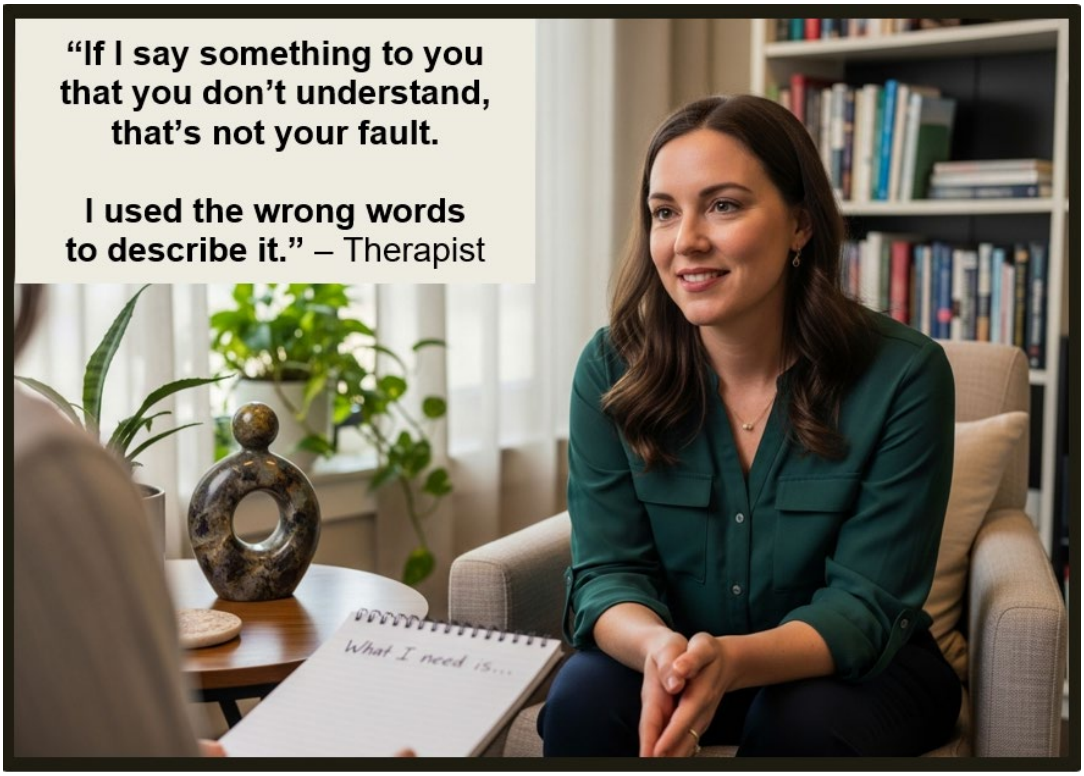
Therapists and clients with developmental disabilities noted the importance of **building a good relationship** (Witwer et al., 2025).

#TherapyTogether Tip: Start each session by discussing things you have in common (e.g., art, hobbies, movies, pets, sports).

Use the "Mental Health Therapy Toolkit" at your first session to learn more about personal preferences, interests, needs & strengths.

Tip 3: Use Clear Communication

Therapists shared the importance of **using clear communication**, like explaining privacy rules in plain language (Witwer et al., 2025).

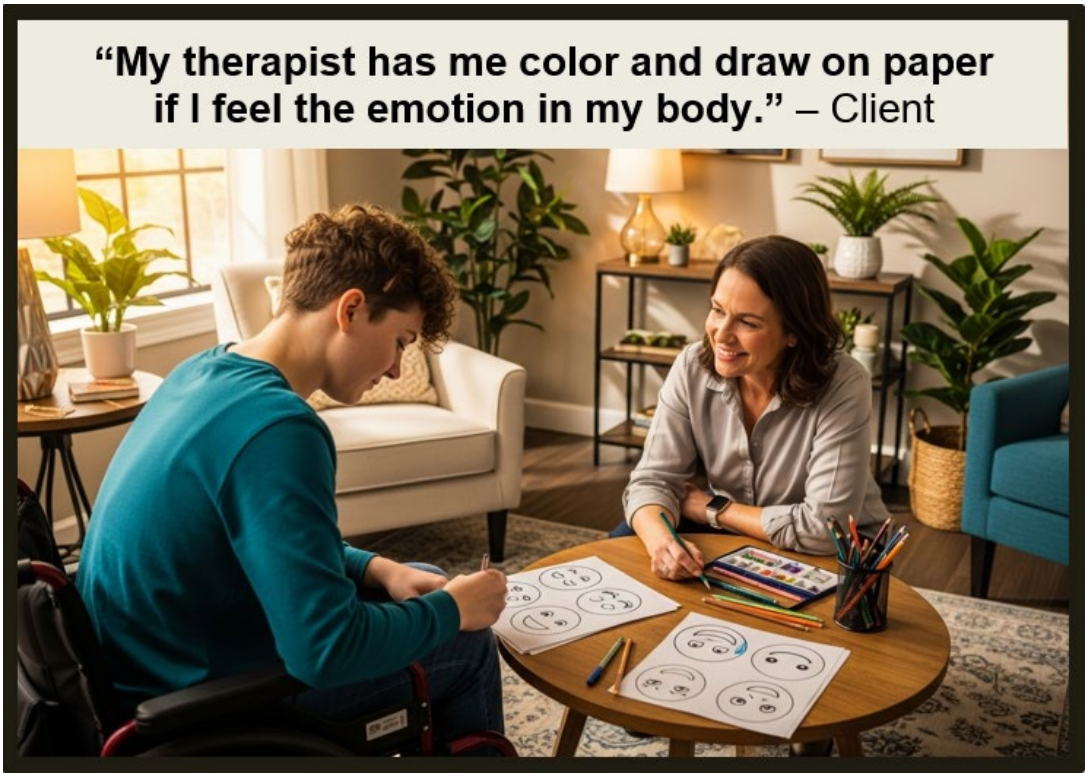


#TherapyTogether Tip: Both therapists and clients should speak up if something is not clear and find a way to understand each other.

Review best practice guidelines on how to improve mental health therapy for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Tip 4: Use Supports That Work

Clients with developmental disabilities value therapists who **use supports that work *for them*** to learn skills (Witwer et al., 2025).



#TherapyTogether Tip: Use accommodations that fit a person's communication preferences and learning needs (e.g., reminders, extra time, role playing, pictures, videos, etc.).

Learn what research tells us about mental health therapy for adults with intellectual disability.

Tip 5: Include Support People – If Wanted

Clients with developmental disabilities want to decide whether or not to **include support people** in their therapy (Witwer et al., 2025).

#TherapyTogether Tip: Respect the client’s right to include or not include family or other team members in their therapy process.

Print and post our “Therapist Session Checklist” poster as a quick reference guide with strategies to practice patient-centered care.

Tip 6: Empowerment & Self-Advocacy

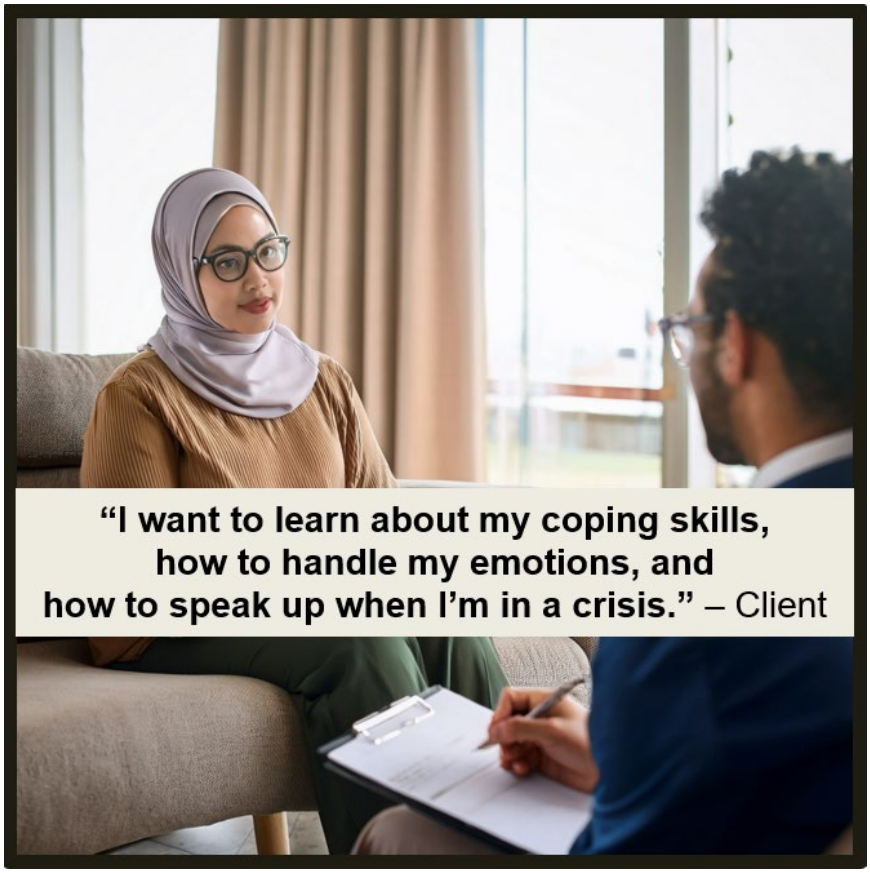
Therapists taught clients with developmental disabilities **self-advocacy skills to empower** their decisions (Witwer et al., 2025).

#TherapyTogether Tip: Involve clients in every decision and help them choose between options based on their wants and needs.

Review the "Hear Me" handout during a therapy session together to support self-advocacy, self-report, and self-determination.

Tip 7: Set Goals Together

Clients with developmental disabilities and therapists both valued **setting goals together** to track progress (Witwer et al., 2025).

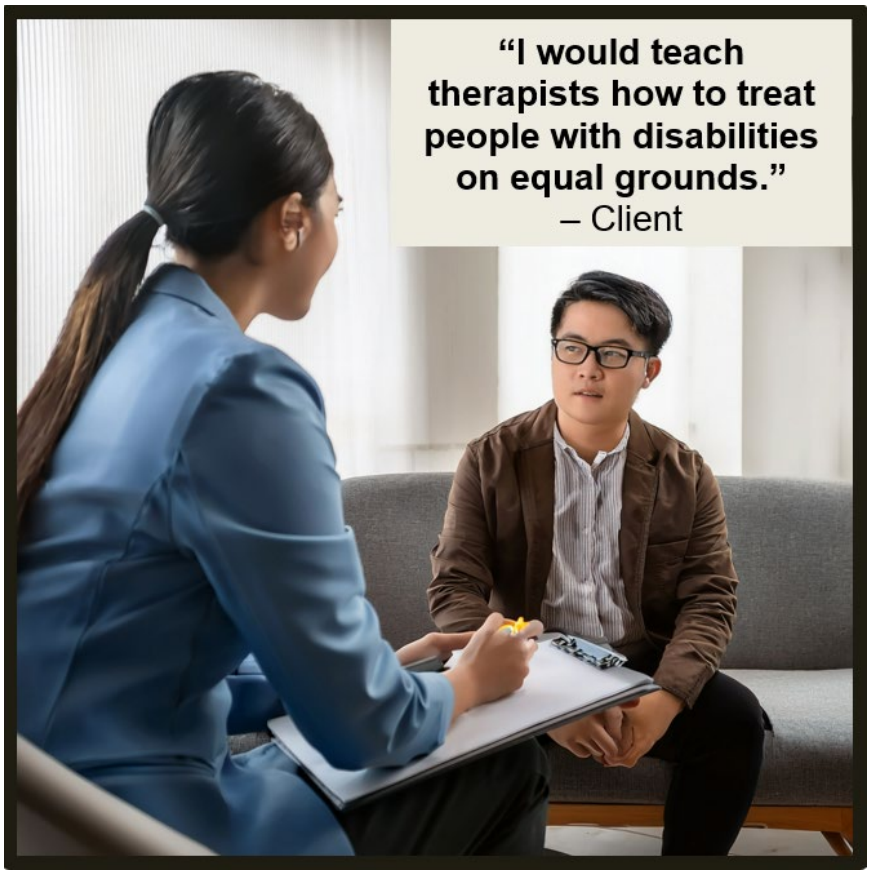


#TherapyTogether Tip: Work with clients to set personal and meaningful therapy goals that are written in their own words.

Use our "Therapy Helper Tools" to support communication, work on personal goals, and track progress over time.

Tip 8: Learn More About Developmental Disabilities

Clients with developmental disabilities and therapists both agreed that professionals need **disability training** (Witwer et al., 2025).



#TherapyTogether Tip: Watch our video, "Mental Health Therapy Together: Advice from Clinicians and Clients with Intellectual Disability."

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