

Feeling Down: Improving the mental health of people with learning disabilities



Easy read summary



What is mental health?

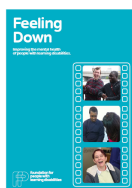
Your mental health is how well you feel in your mind.



Sometimes we feel unwell in our bodies.

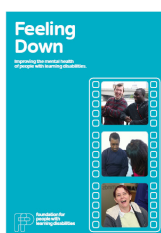


But sometimes we can feel unwell in our minds, feeling and thinking things we can't control and we need help to make us feel better again.



What is this report about?

We have written this report as part of our project helping people with learning disabilities get good support for their mental health.

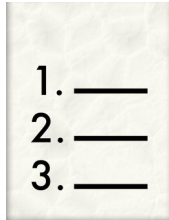


This report is for people in charge of making sure people with learning disabilities can get good support with their mental health.





We wanted to show staff how people with learning disabilities could be helped when they feel very sad or have issues with their mental health.



With this project we want to:



- Let people know that people with learning disabilities need more support to look after their mental health.



- Let people know what is being done to help them now.



- Make some information to help people with learning disabilities think about how they can look after their own mental health.



Why have we done this work?



Research shows that people with learning disabilities are more likely to have problems with how they feel in their minds.



It is really important that people with learning disabilities are given good support to help them when they feel unhappy.



At the moment people with learning disabilities find it hard to find out about and use mental health services.



Mental health staff do not understand the kind of support people with learning disabilities may need.



Some staff do not think that people with learning disabilities can use things like talking therapies to help them feel better.



This means that if someone with a learning disability is feeling really sad and unwell in their mind, they may not get much support to help them.



What did we do?



We looked at what had already been written about the mental health of people with learning disabilities.



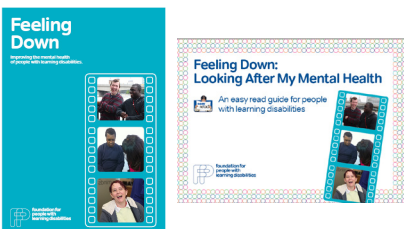
We worked with a group of people with learning disabilities who have all felt sad or unhappy at times to think about what we should be doing.



We asked questions to people with learning disabilities, their families and friends and professionals and carers to see what they thought about the mental health services they have used.



We asked these questions face to face and in a questionnaire.



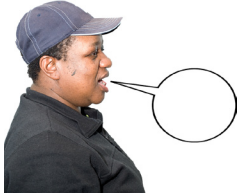
We have written this report and a guide for people with learning disabilities to help them think about their mental health.



Please see our website to find out more.
www.fpld.org.uk/mentalhealth



What did we find out?



These are some of the most important things people told us:



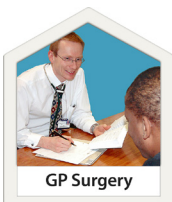
- People with learning disabilities want to be in charge of their mental health.



- People with learning disabilities do not feel listened to when they feel down.



- Family members and friends do not know how to find help and support when someone they know feels down or unhappy.



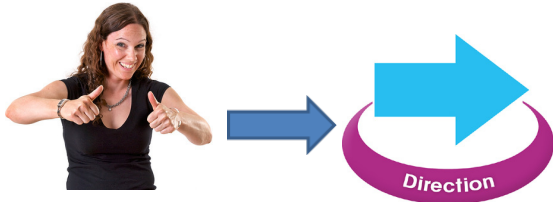
- Having a GP who understands and can help is really important to getting some support but this doesn't always happen.



- Mental health services need to make more changes to how they are run so that they are easy to use for people with learning disabilities.



Next steps



To help make things better we think these things need to happen:



1. People who run services need to make sure people with learning disabilities have good support with their mental health



2. The new groups in charge of health (called the Clinical Commissioning Group) need to have someone to give advice and act as champion for the needs of people with learning disabilities.



3. People in charge of education and training should make sure that all people who work in health jobs are trained about the needs of people with learning disabilities.



4. GP's to make sure they know all of the people with learning disabilities on their register and offer health checks to them (including for their mental health).



5. NHS England need to make sure that all mental health services should be easy to use for people with learning disabilities.



6. People who run services, like housing, for people with learning disabilities should make sure that people with learning disabilities have good support around health when they are in hospital and in the community.



7. People in charge of social services should make sure people with learning disabilities are getting support which is right for them (personliased support).



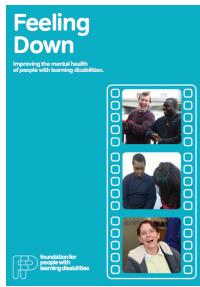
8. NHS England and local commissioners need to make sure services are easy to use and make plans of how people with learning disabilities should be supported.



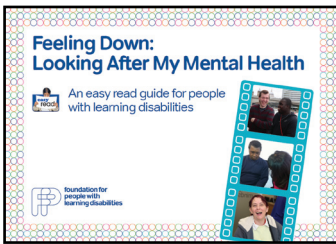
9. The Care Quality Commission need to check that care services, like hospitals, are making their services easy for people with learning disabilities to use.



For more information about this project please get in touch with Christine Burke:
cburke@fpld.org.uk



Please see the report:
Feeling Down Improving the mental health of people with learning disabilities



and the guide
Feeling Down: Looking after my mental health



on our website:
www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/mentalhealth



Thanks to:



The reference group for their ideas.



The Mental Health Strategic Partnership and the Department of Health who gave us the money to do this work.





**Colechurch House
1 London Bridge Walk
London SE1 2SX
United Kingdom**

**Telephone
020 7803 1100**

**Email
info@learningdisabilities.org.uk**

**Website
www.learningdisabilities.org.uk**

Part of the



**Registered Charity No.
England 801130
Scotland SC039714
Company Registration No. 2350846**

© Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities 2014

**changing
lives**