Many children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs) have serious health concerns that affect their learning, socialization, and quality of life. In recent years, there has been increased research attention toward treating individuals who have disease symptoms and chronic medical problems. Another vital concern is reducing health-risk factors and preventing onset of illnesses and other afflictions. Notably, the disciplines of applied behavior analysis (ABA) and more generally behavioral psychology have contributed greatly to health care for people with IDD. Behavioral methods are used in combination with traditional medicine and sometimes as a sole treatment agent. While early behavioral medicine applications were reported in the professional literature, there have been many new developments in theory, practice, and research.

This book addresses the contribution of behavioral psychology, applied behavior analysis, behavioral medicine, and cognitive–behavioral treatment to health issues among people who have IDD. It is intended as a contemporary synopsis and review of evidence-based procedures that have been extensively researched and translated into effective practices by multidisciplinary healthcare providers. From the perspective of tertiary prevention, chapters are included for treating health problems such as food refusal, sleep disorders, body-focused (tissue-damaging) repetitive behaviors, and rumination. A second emphasis of the book is on reducing risk factors that impose health concerns, for example, non-compliance with medical routines, maintaining personal hygiene, and substance abuse. Considering primary prevention, the book covers areas such as encouraging healthy lifestyles and increasing exercise—physical activity. In addition to highlighting these symptom-directed, risk reduction, and primary prevention interventions, chapters address consultation and training models for working successfully with physicians, nurses, parents, direct care practitioners, and ancillary healthcare professionals. In summary, my twofold purpose for the book has been to aggregate the most contemporary research on behavioral prevention and intervention for health issues among people with IDD, and to provide a research-to-practice translation so that practitioners can learn about and adopt the most effective and evidence-based methods.
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