

# A strength based whole person approach

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# The Mental Health Aspects of IDD

- People with IDD experience numerous health disparities, including higher rates of mental health symptoms and challenging behavior, compared to their typically developing peers.<sup>1,2</sup>
- Mental health issues are often misdiagnosed, under-diagnosed, or undiagnosed, and even when detected, few evidence-based treatments exist.<sup>3,4</sup>
- This gap has translated into costly and ineffective care, resulting in frequent crises: emergency department and psychiatric hospital visits,<sup>5,6</sup> poorer quality of life, and earlier age of mortality<sup>7,8</sup>.
- This is an ongoing capacity challenge that didactic training alone does not meet. It requires evidence-based local professional leadership development opportunities for educators, primary medical, IDD and mental health providers, police and first responders, and training/information to families
- The system of care is siloed so that cross systems collaboration is lacking creating barriers to understanding and effectiveness, the remedy must include linkages for collaboration

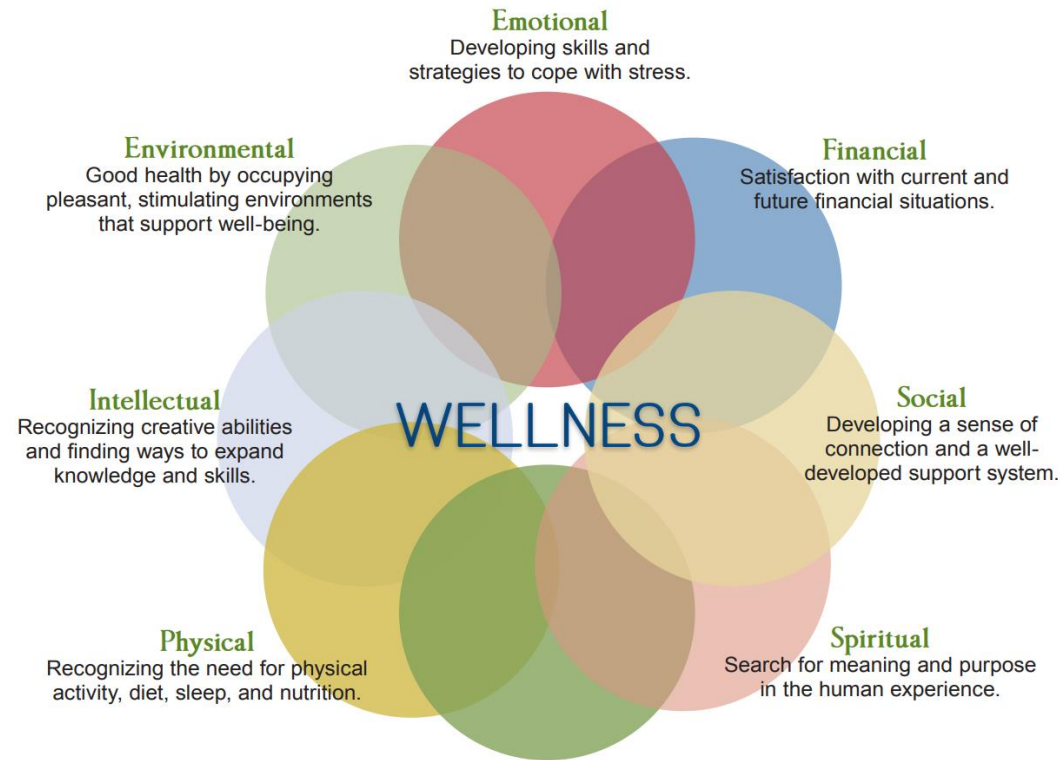
# START

## (Systemic, Therapeutic, Assessment, Resources and Treatment)

**START** is a evidence-based model of **cross system crisis prevention & intervention services** for individuals age 6 and older with intellectual and developmental disabilities and mental health needs. START was first developed in 1988.

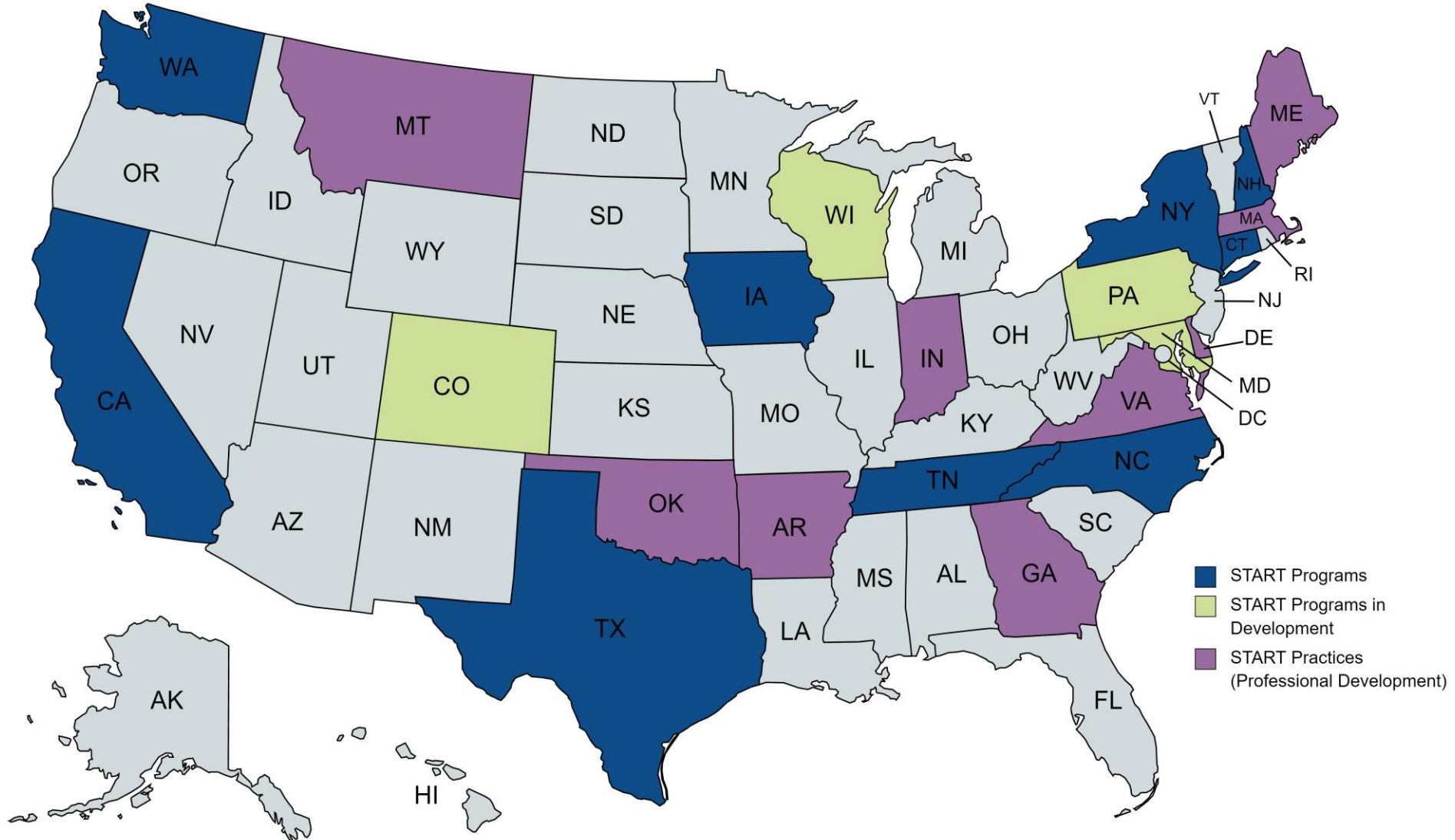
The **Center for START Services (since 2009)** at the UNH Institute on Disability/UCED is an organization of experts in the mental health aspects of IDD who develop innovative MHIDD training programs, conduct research, and facilitate the development of START programs across the country.

**Wellness Based** - The World Health Organization defines wellness as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.



<https://www.samhsa.gov/wellness-initiative/eight-dimensions-wellness>

# START Services 2021





# Why a Positive Psychology Approach?

“We believe that persons who carry even the weightiest psychological burdens care about much more in their lives than just the relief of their suffering. Troubled persons want more satisfaction, contentment, and joy, not just less sadness and worry.”

- Duckworth, Steen, & Seligman, 2005

Lee Duckworth, A., Steen, T. A., & Seligman, M. E. (2005). Positive psychology in clinical practice. *Annu. Rev. Clin. Psychol.*, 1, 629-651.

# Positive Engagement

- Attention to personal strengths and flow
- Appreciating contributions
- Enjoyment
- Humor



# 24 Character Strengths

<b>WISDOM</b>	<b>CREATIVITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Originality</li> <li>• Adaptive</li> <li>• Ingenuity</li> </ul>	<b>CURIOSITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interest</li> <li>• Novelty-Seeking</li> <li>• Exploration</li> <li>• Openness</li> </ul>	<b>JUDGMENT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical Thinking</li> <li>• Thinking Things Through</li> <li>• Open-mindedness</li> </ul>	<b>LOVE OF LEARNING</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mastering New Skills &amp; Topics</li> <li>• Systematically Adding to Knowledge</li> </ul>	<b>PERSPECTIVE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wisdom</li> <li>• Providing Wise Counsel</li> <li>• Taking the Big Picture View</li> </ul>
<b>COURAGE</b>	<b>BRAVERY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valor</li> <li>• Not Shrinking from Fear</li> <li>• Speaking Up for What's Right</li> </ul>	<b>PERSEVERANCE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persistence</li> <li>• Industry</li> <li>• Finishing What One Starts</li> </ul>	<b>HONESTY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authenticity</li> <li>• Integrity</li> </ul>	<b>ZEST</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vitality</li> <li>• Enthusiasm</li> <li>• Vigor</li> <li>• Energy</li> <li>• Feeling Alive</li> </ul>	
<b>HUMANITY</b>	<b>LOVE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both Loving and Being Loved</li> <li>• Valuing Close Relations with Others</li> </ul>	<b>KINDNESS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generosity</li> <li>• Nurturance</li> <li>• Care &amp; Compassion</li> <li>• Altruism</li> <li>• "Niceness"</li> </ul>			<b>SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aware of the Motives/Feelings of Self/Others</li> <li>• Knowing what Makes Other People Tick</li> </ul>
<b>JUSTICE</b>	<b>TEAMWORK</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizenship</li> <li>• Social Responsibility</li> <li>• Loyalty</li> </ul>			<b>FAIRNESS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Just</li> <li>• Not Letting Feelings Bias Decisions About Others</li> </ul>	<b>LEADERSHIP</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizing Group Activities</li> <li>• Encouraging a Group to Get Things Done</li> </ul>
<b>TEMPERANCE</b>		<b>FORGIVENESS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mercy</li> <li>• Accepting Others' Shortcomings</li> <li>• Giving People a Second Chance</li> </ul>	<b>HUMILITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modesty</li> <li>• Letting One's Accomplishments Speak for Themselves</li> </ul>	<b>PRUDENCE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Careful</li> <li>• Cautious</li> <li>• Not Taking Undue Risks</li> </ul>	<b>SELF-REGULATION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-Control</li> <li>• Disciplined</li> <li>• Managing Impulses &amp; Emotions</li> </ul>
<b>TRANSCENDENCE</b>	<b>APPRECIATION OF BEAUTY &amp; EXCELLENCE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awe</li> <li>• Wonder</li> <li>• Elevation</li> </ul>	<b>GRATITUDE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thankful for the Good</li> <li>• Expressing Thanks</li> <li>• Feeling Blessed</li> </ul>	<b>HOPE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optimism</li> <li>• Future-Mindedness</li> <li>• Future Orientation</li> </ul>	<b>HUMOR</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playfulness</li> <li>• Bringing Smiles to Others</li> <li>• Lighthearted</li> </ul>	<b>SPIRITUALITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religiosity</li> <li>• Faith</li> <li>• Purpose</li> <li>• Meaning</li> </ul>


# Take the VIA Character Strengths Survey

HOME > CHARACTER STRENGTHS

## Character Strengths

Character Strengths are the positive parts of your personality that impact how you think, feel and behave. Scientists have identified **24 character strengths** that you have the capacity to express. By taking the VIA Survey you will discover your unique character strengths profile. Knowing and applying your highest character strengths is the key to you being your best self.

[TAKE THE FREE SURVEY →](#)



- Register for a FREE account
- Complete survey (15 minutes or less)
- Get your results

# Resilience and Optimal Life Experiences

Decrease stress in the environment and help the individual feel more competent:

- Increase opportunities for success in work/leisure
- Increase opportunities for satisfying social/life experiences
- Ensure ability to communicate and make choices
- Offer medical intervention/therapy when appropriate
- Offer information/education on how to cope with frustration, loss

# PERMA

- Martin Seligman, one of the founders of positive psychology, developed a five-core element of psychological well-being.
- Seligman believes that these five elements can help people work towards a life of fulfillment, happiness, and meaning.

# PERMA+

**P**



POSITIVE  
EMOTIONS

**E**



ENGAGEMENT

**R**



RELATIONSHIPS

**M**



MEANING

**A**



ACCOMPLISHMENT

**+**



PLUS

# Positive Emotion

**Positive emotions** – feeling good; amusement, hope, interest, joy, love, compassion, gratitude, and pride.

Build positive emotion by:

- Cultivating gratitude and forgiveness
- Spending time with people that you care about
- Doing activities that you enjoy, such as hobbies or pastimes
- Play with your children, your pets or your friends
- Listening to uplifting music that you love
- Practicing mindfulness, hope, and optimism

# Positive emotions:

- build physical, intellectual, social and psychological resources
- undo the effects of negative emotions
- speed-up recovery from illness
- foster optimism
- enhances perseverance and creativity

# Engagement

**Engagement** – being completely absorbed in activity that fully uses your skills, strengths; activity is its own reward; in flow

Build Engagement by:

- Engage in activities that you really love, where you lose track of time
- Learn mindfulness techniques, such as meditation, yoga or tai chi
- As you go about your daily activities, take the time to savor every moment
- Appreciate being in the ‘now’ and be aware of how you use your time
- Spend time in nature, watching, listening, and observing what happens around you



# Engagement

- builds on strengths
- builds cognitive and emotional endurance
- increases self-esteem and self-efficacy
- lowers stress
- decreases risk for depression

# Relationships

**Relationships** – being authentically connected to others; feeling loved, supported, and valued by others

Build relationships by:

- staying in contact with those who love you
- accepting help/support from others
- doing acts of kindness for others
- make new friends by joining a group
- re-engage with someone you lost contact with

# Relationships

- Family, friends, co-workers (“natural supports”)
- increase support
- protect against cognitive decline
- contribute to better health
- increase happiness

# Meaning

**Meaning** – purposeful existence, being a part of something larger than ourselves

Build sense of meaning:

- Become involved in a cause or organization that matters to you (religious, family, work, justice, community, social causes, etc.)
- Spend time with people you really care about
- Review your strengths. What are you really good at or really passionate about? Think about how you could apply these to your life
- Be authentic – embrace the real ‘you’

# Meaning

- Increases life satisfaction
- guards against depression
- helps in weathering negative life events
- facilitates post-traumatic growth

# Accomplishment

**Accomplishment** – a sense of achievement, mastery, competence; in work, sports, games, hobbies, simple life goals

Build sense of accomplishment:

- Set yourself achievable goals
- Goals don't have to be big. Learning how to do a Sudoku puzzle could be enough!
- What strengths have you used to succeed in the past? Can they help you again?
- Look for ways to celebrate your achievements - with yourself as well as with others
- If at first you don't succeed, try again!

# Accomplishment

- builds self-belief
- enhances overall well-being
- builds perseverance

# Plus

Plus – Physical activity, nutrition, sleep; recognition that we cannot have good overall psychological wellbeing if we are neglecting our physical health.

- Physical activity - Any activity that gets your body moving, makes your breathing become quicker and your heartbeat faster. Be active on most, if not all, days/week
- Nutrition – ‘eat your fruits and veggies’.
- Sleep – most adults need 7-9 hours



# Resilience

- The ultimate goal of what we just covered – recognizing stress, self care, and enhancing PERMA – is to build resilience
- We are the external promoters of resilience this is needed for everyone.
- Resilience is the process of adapting in the face of stress and adversity. Resilience is, simply put, a person’s ability to effectively cope with, adjust, or recover from stress or adversity
  - effective problem-solving;
  - adaptability;
  - positive coping;
  - self-regulation; and
  - social support.

# PERMA+ and Resilience

- **P**ositive emotions – builds cognitive and psychological reserve; fosters optimism
- **E**ngagement – builds endurance; increases self-esteem
- **R**elationships – increases happiness and health
- **M**eaning – increases life satisfaction; guards against depression
- **A**ccomplishment – Increases perseverance and self-belief
- **P**lus – increase health and physical well-being

# Racial and cultural identity

- There is an intersection with all aspects that identify who we are that must be considered.
- Be aware of structural barriers and make effort to overcome them
- The importance of culture and language
- Facing our own biases
- Promoting inclusion and belonging

# What has this got to do with employment? Everything

- Knowing your strengths
- Practice of Flow
- Meaningful life and resilience
- The evidence: Work matters