A Spectrum of Transitions in I/DD

Alya Reeve, MD, MPH
DDMI-TUG
11-10-14
Overview

- Definition
- Daily Transitions
- Interpersonal
- Personal Care
- Endings
- Grief/Loss

- Leaving/arriving
- Why are transitions hard?
- Importance of transition
- Transition Skills
- Conclusion
Transition

- noun:
  - A passing from one condition, form, stage, activity, place, etc. to another;
  - A word, phrase, sentence, or group of sentences that relates a preceding topic to a succeeding one to that smoothly connects parts of a speech or piece of writing;
  - (Music)- a shifting from one key to another; modulation; an abrupt change into a remote key; a passage connecting two sections of a composition.
DAILY TRANSITIONS

- Waking from sleep
- Dressing/changing clothes
- Home ↔ Community
- Transportation ← → Destination
- Meals
- Evening activities
- Weekdays vs Weekend-days
- Falling to sleep
INTERPERSONAL transitions

- Greeting(s)
- New people & functions
  - Family members
  - Staff; professionals
  - Community-based
- Safety / Trust
- Friendship
- Intimate partners
PERSONAL CARE

- Layers of protection = clothes
- Vulnerability
  - Need for assistance
- Temperature
- Touch
- Speed
ENDINGS {complement Beginnings}

- Absence of beloved
  - Notice of a change
- Switching
  - Attachment
  - Allegiance
- Process of letting go
  - Less emotional investment is easier
- Risking NEW attachment(s)
GRIEF/LOSS

- Loss of emotionally meaningful relationship
- Impermanence
- Energy drain
  - Cognition
  - Sleep
  - Sadness
  - lability
- Catastrophization *(is this a word?)*
LEAVING/ARRIVING

• Introductions / Make time for leave-taking
• Respect for autonomy
  • Prior experiences
• Provide opportunity for trust
• Adapt to individual rates/preferences
• Assist in bridging to next supports
WHY ARE TRANSITIONS HARD?

- Element of RISK
- Meaning of change
- Novelty
- Physiologic arousal
- Past experience(s)
  - Positive? … Negative?...
- Ability to evaluate (observing self)
IMPORTANCE OF TRANSITION

• Services provision
• Aging process
  • Birth → Death [*applies to everyone*]
  • Build in skills [Infancy – Adult]
  • Expand opportunities [Teen – Mid-adult]
  • Losses in flexibility/relationships [Adult – Elder]
• Basic survival skill
TRANSITION SKILLS

- Identify situation
- Reduce to elements of manageable size
- Pace change when possible
- Articulate steps (repeatedly if needed)
- Everyone is affected
  - Share your own experience with honesty and constraint
- Provide emotional space for adaptation & expression of conflicting emotions
CONCLUSIONS

• Transitions happen all the time 😊
• Life transitions are stressful and can be handled artfully.
• Support resiliency & recovery
  • Attitude
  • Creative solution building
• Maintain respect for individual experiences
• Shared experience & support makes the psychological process easier for everyone
Thoughts, Comments, Experiences…

Thank you for your attention & participation!