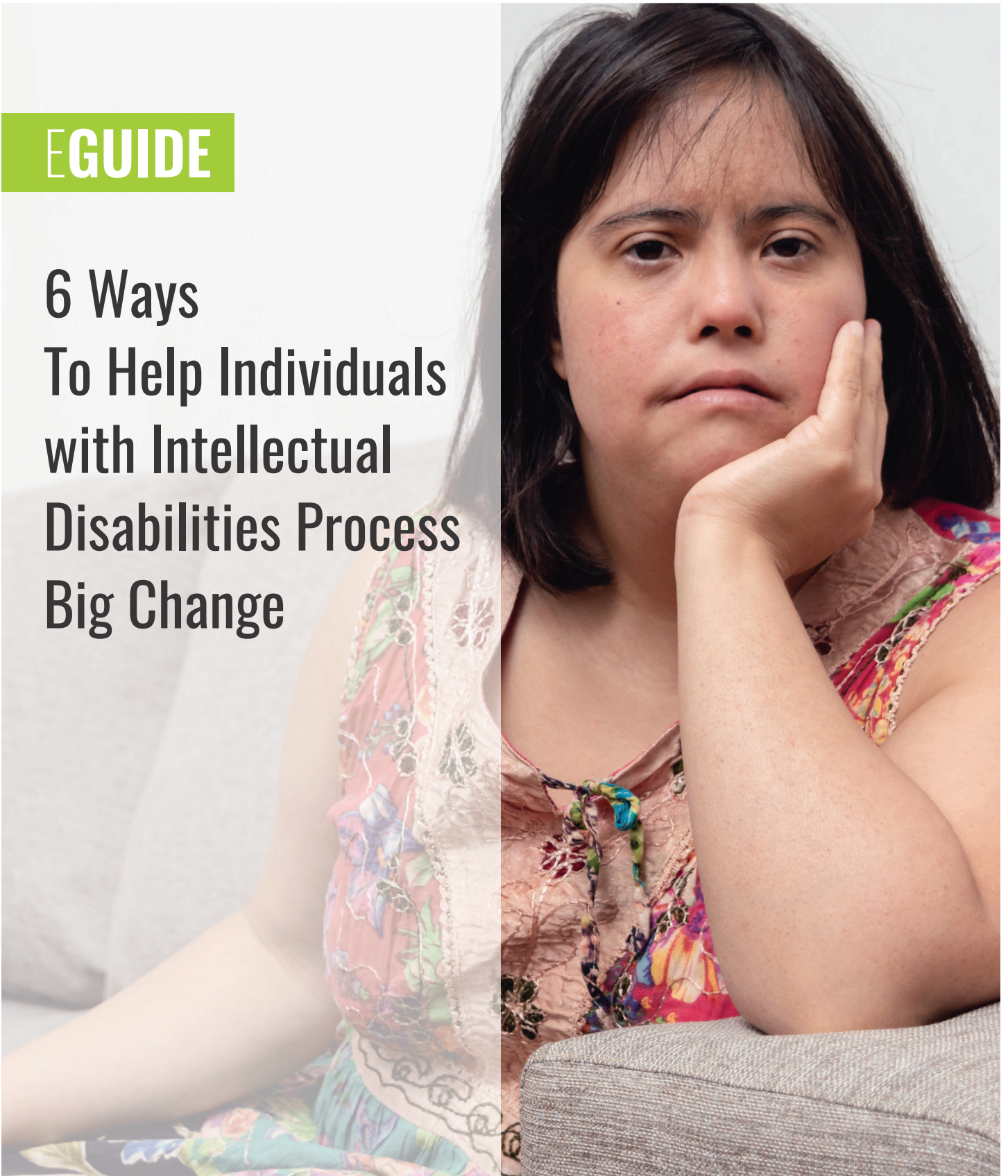


**EGUIDE**

**6 Ways  
To Help Individuals  
with Intellectual  
Disabilities Process  
Big Change**



## **EGUIDE**

# **6 Ways To Help Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities Process Big Change**

### Table of **CONTENTS**

- 3 What You'll Learn**
- 4 Stages Involved in Processing Changes**
- 5 How to Help Clients Adapt**

## What You'll Learn

Novelist Arnold Bennett once said, "Any change, even a change for the better, is always accompanied by discomforts."

Whether they are positive or negative, expected or unexpected, changes that individuals experience can trigger distress and make it difficult to adapt to the new normal. For those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, processing major life developments can be especially challenging. Changes faced by persons who reside in group homes, intermediate care facilities, and other settings may destabilize how they think, socialize and even their sense of identity. To advance the well-being of those you serve, find out top ways to better equip you to help clients navigate through big changes.

## Stages Involved in Processing Changes

Each resident may respond differently to change. Yet there are some common stages individuals typically go through when they face new situations. Understanding the phases involved in processing changes can guide you in effectively helping your clients adapt successfully.

### > Shock and Disorientation

When introduced to change, some individuals experience a sense of confusion. The changes can be unsettling and individuals may be unable to make sense of them. They will likely experience feelings of uncertainty and anxiety.

### > Emotional Responses

Disorientation often triggers personality changes such as moodiness, fear, anger, isolation and even hostility. During this stage, individuals are still in denial and need reassurance to help them stay optimistic.

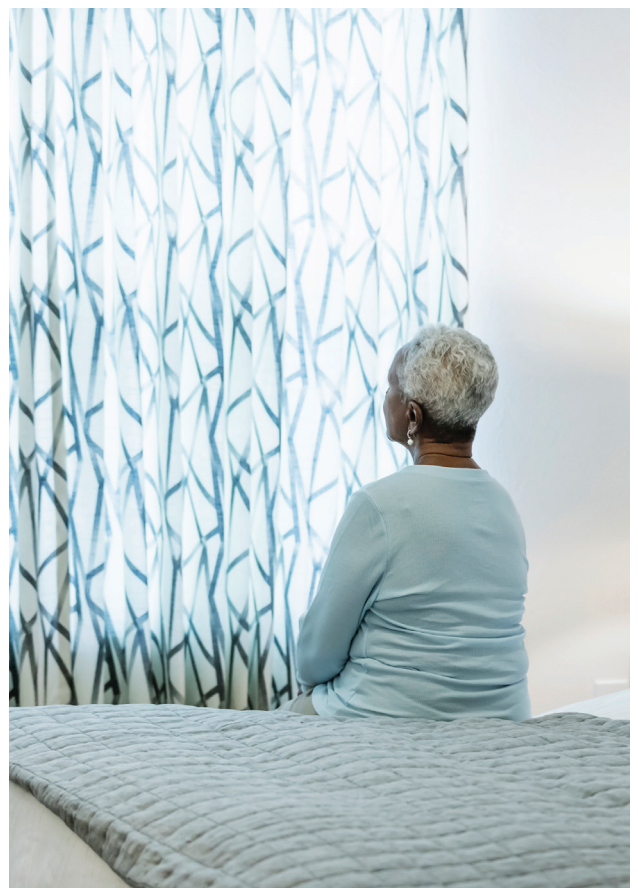
### > Adjusting to the New Situation

In this stage, individuals slowly shift focus toward the new situation. They have realized that change is the only way forward, and embark on the trial of new behaviors to cope with the transition.

### > Acceptance

This is the stage where individuals have internalized change and have completely adjusted to the new normal. They may still have valuable memories from the past but are determined to move on regardless.

At each of these points along the path to adapting, organizations can support clients in processing change.





# How to Help Clients Adapt

When processing changes, it is natural for clients to swing between waves of emotions. During the transition to acceptance, there are key ways your organization can help clients.

## 1 > Prioritizing relationships

Be friendly and empathetic with them. Dr. Gillig, a Professor in Wright State University department of Psychiatry, states that supportive and structured trusting provides an aura of safety, predictability and sanctuary to the clients during the difficult period.

## 2 > Acknowledgement

Recognize their feelings and allow them to go through the emotions. To prevent them from spiraling into gloom, use appropriate humor to lighten the mood. Laughter decreases stress hormones and increases feel-good hormones.

## 3 > Cognitive Reframing (CR)

Support consumers in CR, which is a technique used in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy to mold a positive outlook to a situation and may make individuals feel more optimistic about what they are experiencing.



## 4 > Sublimation

Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis theory defines sublimation as a process by which negative urges, drives, and behaviors are channeled into more socially acceptable behaviors. Offer opportunities like exercise or dancing sessions that can serve as healthy distractions and allow clients to channel their emotions.

## 5 > Gratification

Recognize clients' personal achievements and use felicitations like "Congratulations," "I'm proud of you," or "way to go." Eventually, through the use of repeated recognition, clients may feel better.

## 6 > Repetition

When adapting to change, repetition will help clients transition from conscious to the subconscious mind. For example, a new clients trying to settle in in a group home may have trouble socializing with other residents. You can create a mantra for them to recite before social activities. Chanting mantras brings peace to the mind.

**Following the above techniques will enable you to help clients more easily process big changes, and ultimately live a life shaped by resilience.**

Pharmacy Alternatives has the most expertise in the I/DD market and has been meeting the needs of individuals and agencies for over 30 years. We share your commitment to making a difference every day with closed-door pharmacy services for specialized populations delivered locally in all 50 states. Learn how our services and hands-on support can help you empower those you support to live life to the fullest.