

- **Name of the study:** Beit Issie Shapiro's "Person-Centered Dental Care for Individuals with Disabilities" practice model: a qualitative evaluation of the model's impact from the perspectives of clinic staff and parents/caregivers of service users with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).
- **Year:** 2025
- **Type of research:** Research
- **Catalog Number:** 890-690-2022
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- **Research Authority:** Lev-Jerusalem College of Technology.

### Abstract

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**Background.** Oral health among individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) is influenced by multiple factors, including poor nutrition, insufficient oral hygiene support, frequent sugar intake, and medications that reduce salivary flow. They also experience physical syndromes and health conditions that increase the risk of oral and dental problems. Additionally, cognitive, behavioral, physical, financial, and environmental barriers restrict access to quality dental care. The "Person-Centered Dental Care for Individuals with Disabilities" model, developed at Beit Issie Shapiro's dental clinic, incorporates three main components: person-centered service, adapted dental treatment, and a multidisciplinary approach tailored to individuals with IDD.

**Objective.** This study examined the principles and implementation of the model from the perspectives of family caregivers accompanying people with IDD to treatment and from clinic staff.

**Methods.** A qualitative study was conducted at Beit Issie Shapiro's dental clinic. Six preliminary observations (three hours each) were carried out, followed by semi-structured interviews with 26 family caregivers and 17 staff members (dentists, assistants, and administrators). Interviews were transcribed and analyzed thematically. The study received approval from Jerusalem College of Technology's ethics committee, the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs, and Beit Issie Shapiro's research department. Informed consent was obtained from all participants.

**Findings.** Families emphasized that personalized communication, non-judgmental attitudes, and the use of multidisciplinary tools enabled people with IDD to receive optimal treatment. Successful experiences fostered continuity of care, crucial for maintaining oral health. Most staff had no prior experience treating people with IDD and acquired skills on the job, mainly through observation and practice, though some had prior exposure in training. Treatment required adaptation to individual needs, managing fears or resistance, and sometimes general anesthesia, while also guiding caregivers. Staff highlighted the importance of maintaining a positive atmosphere despite challenges such as difficulty interpreting pain signals and ensuring treatment continuity. A gradual, trust-building approach was essential, with caregivers playing an integral role in communication.

**Discussion.** Findings indicate that Beit Issie Shapiro's model, based on person-centered care, adapted treatment, and multidisciplinary practice, supports both patients and families. It helps providers deliver comprehensive, high-quality care, focus their work, and improve clinical outcomes through individualized adaptations. Practical implications include implementing the model widely in dental clinics, providing professional training for staff, equipping treatment rooms with supportive tools, and clinic funding to ensure effective integration in public dental care clinics.

1. תמצית בשפה האנגלית + מילות מפתח לחיפוש באנגלית

Oral health among individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) is influenced by multiple factors, including nutrition, hygiene, medications, and various barriers. The "Person-Centered Dental Care" model developed at Beit Issie Shapiro incorporates adapted treatment and a multidisciplinary approach. In this qualitative study, conducted at the clinic, observations and interviews were held with 26 family members and 17 staff members. Findings showed that personalized care, tailored adjustments, and unique tools enable optimal treatment and continuity of care. The model proved effective in improving patient experience and clinical outcomes and is recommended for implementation in additional dental clinics.

**Keywords**

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Dental care; Beit Issie Shapiro; Person-centered dental care for individuals with disabilities; IDD (Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities).

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