A RANDOMIZED CONTROL TRIAL ASSESSING AN APS TOOL: CORNELL-PENN INTERVIEW FOR DECISIONAL ABILITIES

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The California APS Interview for
Decisional Ability Assessment Project

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CORNELL-PENN INTERVIEW FOR DECISIONAL ABILITIES CA-3.0

AKA

IDA
IDA = Interview for Decisional Abilities

- Tool developed for APS workers to assess clients’ decision-making ability
- Interview clients about a specific risk
- Useful when clients decline services or continue to make unsafe decisions
- Results help guide APS worker/supervisor regarding case management
Interview for Decisional Abilities (IDA 3.0-CA)

1. **Understand**: Does the client understand the risk in general?

2. **Appreciate**: Does the client have insight into how the risk could impact themselves?

3. **Reason**: Does the client have the reasoning ability to weigh pros/cons of options to address the risk?
Development of IDA:

Based on the Assessment of Capacity for Everyday Decision-Making (ACED)

- Jason Karlawish, MD
- James Lai, MD

Developed by the EA team at the NYCEAC

- Mark Lachs, MD
- Risa Breckman, MS

NY Team Advisors for this project

- Pamela Ansell, MSW
- Veronica LoFaso, MD
- Robert Abrams, MD
Training

- 2 full day trainings 6 weeks apart
  - Didactic component
  - Small group realistic role plays
- Participants were asked to submit at least 2 completed IDAs after each training
- Clinical professional trainers:
  - 3 Geropsychologists, 1 Neuropsychologist
  - Licensed Clinical Social Worker
  - Geriatric Physician Assistant
Goal of Randomized Control Trial

- Evaluate the impact of training and the use of the IDA tool on APS workers:
  - Experiences
  - Knowledge
  - Ability to determine client’s decisional ability
Methods
Recruitment

Participation in California APS IDA Project

- Participated in RCT (n=33)
- Participated in Pilot Study (n=5)
- Excluded due to logistics (n=11)
- No participants in study (n=9)
Pre-screening: Eligible
N=452

Enrollment
N=192

Randomization
N=190

Training Group
N=96
Baseline survey
N=71
Training Day 1
N=67
Training Day 2
N=47
Follow-up Survey
N=59
Analysis: Both Days of Training
N=46
Analysis: One Day of Training
N=13

Control Group
N=94
Baseline survey
N=88
Follow-up Survey
N=84

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Measurement

- Developed a survey tool to measure improvement in knowledge, workers’ ability to determine decisional ability

- Survey components:
  - Experiences with client assessments
  - Experiences with case management
  - Knowledge of decisional ability
  - Client scenarios
Client Scenarios

- Background information
- Dialogue between APS worker and client
- Judgements about client’s ability to
  - (1) Understand
  - (2) Appreciate
  - (3) Reason
- Select the line(s) of dialogue that support the APS worker’s judgement
- Identify next step in case management

About a particular risk they are facing
Client Scenario Example

**Case #1:** Mr. Jones is a 74-year-old African American man who is recently widowed and lives alone in his own home. The client's neighbor, Mark, goes to bank with him and withdraws large sums of money totaling $30,000 in one month. The bank teller reported this to APS and froze the account pending investigation. You’ve completed part of your investigation, and you’re concerned about financial exploitation by the neighbor and the client’s decisional ability.

You engage the client in the following dialogue:

1. **APS Worker:** Have you ever heard of someone being taken advantage of by a friend or neighbor? Maybe someone taking their money and using it for themselves?
2. **Mr. Jones:** Yes, I know these things happen sometimes. You have to be really careful these days. Yeah, Mrs. Sullivan who I know from the senior center was talked into giving away her money on a phone scam. She was really mad when she found out it wasn’t real and her money was gone.
3. **APS Worker:** Yeah, that’s terrible but it does happen! What could be the consequences of losing your money like this?
4. **Mr. Jones:** Well, depends on how much they take and how much money you have. What do you mean?
5. **APS Worker:** Well, I mean in general, what could happen to someone who isn’t careful and lets someone take their money?
6. **Mr. Jones:** You could lose it all, not be able to pay your rent or have money for food I guess.
A. Based on the identified risk (financial exploitation), please answer the following questions and refer to the dialogue to support your answers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please circle one:</th>
<th>Which line of dialogue best supports this judgment?</th>
<th>Is there another line of dialogue supports this judgment? If so, please write it.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you think the client understands the risk (financial exploitation) in general?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Maybe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you think the client has insight that he could personally be experiencing this risk (financial exploitation)?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Maybe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do you think the client has the ability to reason about the potential consequences of this risk (financial exploitation)?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Maybe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Using the information you have, what do you think is the most appropriate next step to manage this case? Select the best answer:

- This client does not appear to have decisional ability and you would consider a referral for a professional capacity assessment.
- Close the case because your client appears to have the ability to make choices even though the choices may have negative consequences.
- The client appears to have decisional ability and you will assist the client in implementing a plan that they have identified or that you have developed together.
- Continue your investigation as you don’t have enough information.
Results
## Participant Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APS Role</th>
<th>Cases (n=46)</th>
<th>Controls (n=84)</th>
<th>p-value for difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>11 (23.91)</td>
<td>16 (19.05)</td>
<td>0.513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>35 (76.09)</td>
<td>68 (80.95)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate's degree or lower</td>
<td>2 (4.35)</td>
<td>2 (2.38)</td>
<td>0.772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>15 (32.61)</td>
<td>31 (36.90)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's degree or higher</td>
<td>28 (60.87)</td>
<td>51 (60.71)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS Employment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 2 years</td>
<td>20 (43.48)</td>
<td>22 (26.19)</td>
<td>0.098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 to 10 years</td>
<td>19 (41.30)</td>
<td>44 (52.38)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10+ years</td>
<td>6 (13.04)</td>
<td>18 (21.43)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has social work degree or license</td>
<td>24 (52.17)</td>
<td>40 (47.62)</td>
<td>0.536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has clinical license (LCSW, LMFT, etc.)</td>
<td>7 (15.22)</td>
<td>12 (14.29)</td>
<td>0.846</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Client Assessment and Case Management

Average Rating Among Respondents

- Client Assessment*
- Case Management*

Cases (Baseline)
Cases (Follow-up)
Controls (Baseline)
Controls (Follow-up)

*Statistically significant at \( \alpha=0.05 \).

**Note about rating:
Range 1-5, 5=best

\( \alpha<0.05 \)

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Knowledge and Client Scenarios

Knowledge and Client Scenarios*

Cases (Baseline)  | Cases (Follow-up)  | Controls (Baseline)  | Controls (Follow-up)

*Statistically significant at $\alpha=0.05$. 

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Experience Using IDA 3.0-CA

- **97.8%** of trainees agreed IDA 3.0-CA helps document evidence that supports reasoning for closing the case or for requesting professional capacity assessment.
- **97.8%** did **not** believe IDA 3.0-CA is more difficult than it is worth.
- **95.4%** did **not** believe IDA 3.0-CA takes more time than it is worth.
Key Take Aways
IDA: An Effective APS Tool

- Workers overwhelmingly endorse use of IDA
- More thorough evidence regarding clients’ decisional ability
- Less time to complete assessments
- Better documentation of evidence
- More clarity regarding next steps in case management
- Improved discussions w/supervisors
IDA: Training Impact

• Provided new useful ideas

• Led to improved practice

• Increased workers’ confidence with clients
IDA: Practice Implications

- Systematic approach to assessment of decisional ability
- Client-centered
  - Incremental goal setting
  - Elicit client wishes
- Documentation of reasoning for declining services
- Clarity regarding referral for professional capacity assessment
IDA: Study Limitations

- High dropout rate
- Potential ceiling effect of Knowledge Scale
- Scripted vignettes insensitive to subtleties of APS/Client interactions
Research Recommendations

- For the IDA to be most effective, perhaps both supervisor and worker need to be trained.
- APS workers may require mentoring as they apply the IDA 3.0-CA tool in the field.
- APS workers with clinical degrees may be better equipped to effectively use the IDA tool.
- Filmed vignettes may provide a more sensitive evaluation method.
Study the impact of IDA on client outcomes when integrated into APS investigations!
Building the Evidence Base for IDA

- Outcome of the study supports use of IDA in APS practice

- Comports with mandates from National Voluntary Consensus Guidelines for APS Practice
• To the APS agencies in the state of California for supporting research

• To Lori Delagarammatikas for her commitment to increasing the professionalism of APS

• To ACL for their commitment to work that supports improved response to elder mistreatment