From Dr. Escudé...

Dental Causes of Behavior in People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD)

In people who communicate in ways other than with words, behaviors are often used to communicate information to others. It is important to rule out underlying Dental causes for adverse behaviors before initiation of medications, restraints or other behavior modification initiatives. Below is a list of behaviors that might indicate that a person is having dental issues in people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and other venerable populations.

Behaviors that might indicate underlying dental issues:

- Hitting self in any area including the mouth and jaw
- Putting their hands in mouth
- Refusal to eat because of pain
- Spitting out food because of pain with chewing, tongue pain, buccal pain or pain with salivation
- Physical or verbal aggression particularly around meal times as the person has learned to anticipate pain in these instances and may use these measures to avoid the pain

Gastroesophageal Reflux can also cause pain and similar symptoms. Please look for pitting, erosions in the posterior teeth, and step-off erosions in teeth that are filled. If these are noted, recommend a referral for evaluation of this condition.

Thanks for your careful attention to helping improve the lives of people we support.
Dr. Escudé has dedicated his career to providing healthcare for people with IDD and other vulnerable populations and teaches on the subject throughout the country.