When you do a psycINFO search with the “Map term to subject heading” ticked/selected, you get a list of subject headings which match the term that you’ve used. You may get a longer or a shorter list, depending on how good the mapping might be. So whether there is a subject heading which directly mimics yours or if there’s maybe some other different options that psycINFO suggests.

In the case of intellectual disorders with the map term to subject heading ticked, the subject heading suggested is “Intellectual Development Disorder”. If you click on that in the view that comes up, it puts that term, that subject heading, into context. These subject headings are in a classification scheme, so there are broader terms within which there are more specific, or narrower, terms and so on. So for the example of Intellectual Development Disorder, what psycINFO tells you is that the broader term beneath which Intellectual Development Disorder falls, in psycINFO’s classification scheme, is “Neurodevelopmental Disorders”. The more specific forms of Intellectual Development Disorder that psycINFO has subject headings for are those four listed there [in the screenshots] including “Down’s Syndrome”.

Then there’s another section headed “[Related Terms]” and these are subject headings which if somebody was interested in Intellectual Development Disorder, they may find useful or want to have a think about. So if you’ve thought about Intellectual Development Disorder do you want to think about “Developmental Disabilities” or “Cognitive Impairment”, for example.

In those Related Terms you can see some of them, two of them, in the screenshot, “Brain Damage” and “Developmental Disabilities” they have a [+NT] at the end of them and that means that if you clicked on Brain Damage, the view that you would get would include some Narrower Terms of its own. So Brain Damage would have some more specific, so called “Narrower Terms”, and Brain Damage would be the “Broader Heading”. Just as Neurodevelopmental Disorders is the Broader Heading for Intellectual Development Disorder within psycINFO’s classification.

The number which is along from Intellectual Development Disorder in this screenshot, 37,641, is the number of records which have Intellectual Development Disorder in the subject heading field so that gives you an idea of the number of records, or rather the exact measure of the number of records that have Intellectual Development Disorder in the subject heading.

And then further along again, so in the very far column to the right, there’s what’s called the “Scope note”, the blue information circle. If you click on that, in psycINFO it’s not always quite so helpful, but what the scope note is, is a description or definition of what an article has to include, or has to be about, to have the particular subject heading added to it. So if you agree with the way that psycINFO defines Intellectual Development Disorder in its scope note, then that can give you some confidence in considering it to be a good synonym, as we’ll see later.
The subject heading field, the subject heading information, is useful as a source or synonyms.