

What Helps?

Most people with LDs are resilient, and learn to manage challenges and achieve success.

There are a number of factors that help:

- Understanding their LDs and what helps them learn
- Learning how to set realistic goals, to solve problems and to make good choices
- Being open to asking for and getting help
- Not giving up when things get hard
- Believing successes are due to their own efforts
- Believing they can learn from their mistakes
- Feeling respected and connected to others
- Having someone who will listen to them and understand their feelings
- Being an active member of a community or group

Learning disabilities are complicated. Helping isn't.

We all can help by:

- Showing understanding and encouragement
- Recognizing small successes
- Learning more about LDs



LDs are life-long conditions that affect people differently depending on the situation. In order to find good, effective strategies for compensating and success we need to understand how a person's learning profile interacts with their environment.

To see a full definition of LDs please visit the LDAO website at www.LDAO.ca

For more information contact:



INTEGRA

Improving the Lives of Children & Youth with Learning Disabilities

Integra is an accredited Children's Mental Health Centre specialized in treating the social/emotional needs of children and youth with learning disabilities (LDs). A leader in the field of learning disabilities and children's mental health, Integra offers innovative clinical services, including individual, group and family therapy, a residential summer camp, community consultation and professional training, and research.

www.integra.on.ca
or call **416.486.8055**

The Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

(LDAO) is a charitable non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children, youth and adults with learning disabilities. LDAO supports chapters around Ontario who offer their own programs and are knowledgeable about resources in their communities.

www.LDAO.ca
or call **416.929.4311**

ldao

Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

What are LEARNING DISABILITIES?

www.integra.on.ca

www.LDAO.ca

Learning disabilities are complicated. Helping isn't.

Learning Disabilities (LDs) are very common and affect 5 to 10 percent of Canadians.

LDs are brain-based problems that affect one or more ways that a person takes in, stores or uses information. LDs can interfere with learning basic skills such as reading, writing, and math.

They can also interfere with higher level skills such as organization, time management and social skills.

People with LDs are intelligent and can learn.

The difficulties they experience are due to impairments in one or more of the psychological processes related to learning:

- Phonological processing (*identifying and manipulating speech sounds*)
- Working memory (*holding information in mind while also using the information*)
- Processing speed (*speed of taking in, using or pulling out information*)
- Language processing (*understanding and expressing information using words*)
- Visual-spatial processing (*perceiving or organizing visual information*)
- Executive functions (*planning and organizing*)
- Visual-motor processing (*carrying out hand-eye activities*)

LDs come in many forms and their effects are different from person to person. They relate to:

- Getting information into the brain (*Input*)
- Making sense of this information (*Organization*)
- Storing and retrieving information (*Memory*)
- Getting information back out (*Output*)

What do LDs affect?

No two LDs are the same. LDs vary greatly in form and intensity, and can affect one or more of the following areas.

Academics

People with LDs may experience problems with:

READING (sometimes called *dyslexia*)

- Understanding what is read
- Recognizing words
- Reading fluently
- Breaking words down into their individual sounds

WRITING (sometimes called *dysgraphia*)

- Handwriting
- Putting thoughts on paper
- Organizing written work
- Spelling and grammar

MATH (sometimes called *dyscalculia*)

- Doing arithmetic and calculation
- Understanding visual-spatial relationships
- Learning number facts
- Using symbols in math

Daily Life

People with LDs may experience problems with:

- Organizing
- Managing time
- Problem solving
- Learning to drive
- Planning & decision making
- Finding their way in an unfamiliar environment
- Interpreting graphs, charts and maps
- Following multi-step instructions
- Finding things on a cluttered desk
- Seeing the “whole picture” or knowing what details are important

Social Life

People with LDs may experience problems with:

- Interpreting facial expressions
- Understanding body language
- Understanding tones of voice
- Taking turns in conversations

What can it feel like to have LDs?

LDs can affect people differently depending on what they understand about their LDs, and what supports they have in their environment.

People may struggle with:

- Feeling frustrated with not being able to do what people expect of them
- Having difficulty keeping up with their class mates, co-workers or friends
- Feeling shame about having a disability
- Experiencing a lack of understanding from the people in their lives
- Being the target of bullies

These situations may lead to:

- Low self-esteem
- Lack of confidence
- Feeling dumb
- A sense of failure
- Appearing less motivated
- Loneliness
- Social withdrawal

Not all individuals with LDs have social, emotional or behavioural problems. About 40% of people with LDs experience mental health difficulties such as anxiety and depression.

What does the term Nonverbal Learning Disabilities Mean?

Some people use the term Nonverbal LDs (NLD or NVLD) to describe a group of people who learn best by using words, but may experience problems in any of the following areas:

- Understanding visual-spatial relationships
- Soving problems
- Understanding time
- Understanding social cues
- Math, science and writing
- Motor skills (related to printing and writing)