



ldawc • Learning Disabilities
Association of Wellington County

The right to learn, the power to achieve

LD Connections Newsletter

April 2017



Spring has sprung.....even with the snow!

With a new season in full swing we sure have a lot going on at LDAWC!

We are running into the end of our first series of Reading Rocks in Guelph and Arthur and it couldn't be going better! With happy students and tutors we are glad to say it's been a success for us.....we are looking forward to more sessions happening in the fall! Other great things that are happening for the Association include our monthly Peer Support Network meetings and our workshop series that is currently scheduled into June. Make sure to call or email to register for these great programs! We are

excited to be looking into the fall and planning some great programs and services to better serve you and your family...we would love to hear from you with some suggestions or ideas that you feel would support you family!

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Mindfulness- LDs and Anxiety www.ldatschool.ca

To begin, it is useful to review the relationship between learning disabilities (LDs) and anxiety. The following is an excerpt from Integra's document, *LDMH: A Handbook on Learning Disabilities and Mental Health*.

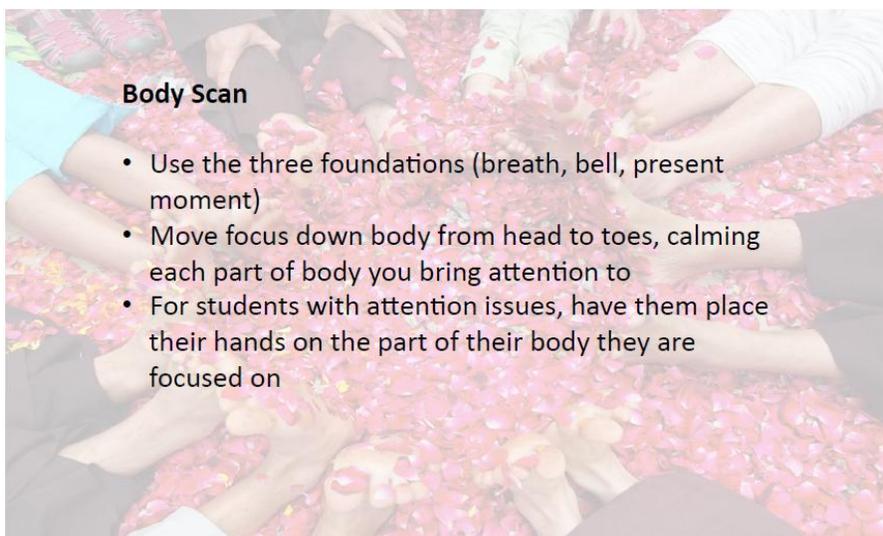
Children and youth with LDs typically experience repeated failure. In school, they may work incredibly hard but the outcome may not reflect the effort. Over time, it can be more difficult for a child to keep trying and often, we see behaviours that are identified as 'non-compliant' or 'oppositional' yet which may reflect an understandable coping strategy of avoidance or hopelessness.

This may lead to a lower sense of mastery and fewer opportunities to feel competent at something or to achieve success. Children and youth with LDs may feel like they're not meeting others' expectations, that they're letting down their parents and teachers, and not working hard enough when they're trying so hard. This can all lead to the experience of negative feelings, including worry, anger, frustration, and sadness.

Most of us do not enjoy experiencing difficult emotions. It is an understandable reaction to want to avoid experiencing hardship. Children and youth, especially those with LDs, who have experienced repeated failure in the past, learn that it may be 'better to be bad, than look stupid'. Students may act out to distract from or avoid the challenging situation, or may self-medicate, or engage in strategies to avoid experiencing negative emotions and stressors.

Mindfulness Practices to Reduce Anxiety

Elli Weisbaum, Toronto-based mindfulness practitioner and teacher, suggests the following mindfulness activities that help students understand, control, and express their emotions in adaptive ways. Body Scan



Body Scan

- Use the three foundations (breath, bell, present moment)
- Move focus down body from head to toes, calming each part of body you bring attention to
- For students with attention issues, have them place their hands on the part of their body they are focused on

Mindfulness practice provides us with several practical activities we can use to handle anxiety when it arises, such as stopping to anchor ourselves in our breath to calm our mind and body, or lying down to try a short body scan.

Doing an activity like this on a regular basis, not only when the anxiety arises, will help us to implement it at times of difficulty (such as before public speaking).

Practice Non-Judgment

In addition to breathing/meditation practices, mindfulness invites us to practice non-judgment towards ourselves and others. Anxiety and fear often arise from our own perceptions and judgments of a situation, both towards ourselves and others. If we are working to be kinder and gentler to ourselves, this will also help us to calm our anxiety and fears in a difficult moment.

Mindfulness is being aware of what is happening inside and around us, so the examples I have given above address some of the internal work we can invite our students to try (coming back to their breath, taking a moment for themselves). You might also want to bring some awareness to the external situation by looking deeply as a class at what is causing the anxiety, beyond the student's personal mindset (which is of course a big component).

Some questions you might want to explore as a class could be:

- How has the assignment been introduced?
- What pressure is connected to the public speaking assignment?
- Is there a way as a class to better prepare and support one another during the public speaking so it feels safer to attempt?

These conversations can be done with mindfulness by practicing non-judgment of each person's sharing, along with listening with kindness and compassion. Coupled with the breathing meditation activities, these are some great ways to apply mindfulness to the situation you have described.





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**Are you looking to meet other parents and share
your experiences?**



When: April 26th, May 24th, June 14th @ 7:00pm
Where: RLB Guelph, 197 Hanlon Creek Blvd Unit 103

If you're interested, we would like to hear from you!

info@ldawc.ca or 519-837-2050

Learning Disabilities at a Glance www.ldac-acta.ca

A person can be of average or above-average intelligence, not have any major sensory problems (like a hearing impairment), and yet struggle to keep up with people of the same age in learning and regular functioning. How can one tell if a person has learning disabilities?

Learning disabilities can affect a person's ability in the areas of:

- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing
- Mathematics

Other features of a learning disability are:

- A distinct gap between the level of achievement that is expected and what is actually being achieved.
- Difficulties that can become apparent in different ways with different people.
- Difficulties that manifest themselves differently throughout development.
- Difficulties with socio-emotional skills and behavior.

Identification

Learning disabilities affect every person differently, and the disorder can range from mild to severe. Sometimes people have more than one learning disability. In addition, approximately one third of people with LD also have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), which makes it difficult for them to concentrate, stay focused or manage their attention to specific tasks. If there is reason to think a person might have learning disabilities, it is important to collect observations from parents, teachers, doctors and others who are regularly in contact with that person. If there appears to be a pattern of trouble that is more than just an isolated case of difficulty, the next step is to seek help from the school administration or consult a learning specialist for an evaluation. What causes learning disabilities?

Experts are not exactly sure what causes learning disabilities. LDs may be due to:

- **Heredity** - Often learning disabilities run in the family, so it's not uncommon to find that people with learning disabilities have parents or other relatives with similar difficulties.
- **Problems during pregnancy and birth** - LDs may be caused by illness or injury during or before birth. They may also be caused by drug and alcohol use during pregnancy, low birth weight, lack of oxygen and premature or prolonged labor.
- **Incidents after birth** - Head injuries, nutritional deprivation and exposure to toxic substances (i.e. lead) can contribute to learning disabilities.



Learning disabilities are not caused by economic disadvantage, environmental factors or cultural differences.
Strategies, Accommodations and Modification

Depending on the type of learning disability and its severity, as well as the person's age, different kinds of assistance can be provided. Each type of strategy should be considered when planning instructions and support at a school or in the workplace. Finding the most beneficial type of support is a process of trying different ideas and openly exchanging thoughts on what works best. Under the Charter of Rights and Freedom and Human Rights Acts of individual provinces and territories, people of all ages with LDs are protected against discrimination and have a right to different forms of assistance in the classroom and workplace.
Are learning disabilities common?

1 in 10 Canadians has a learning disability.

Learning Disabilities and Adulthood

It is never too late to get help for learning disabilities. Testing specialists are available for people of all ages, and assistance is available for every stage of life. Taking the initiative to seek out support and services is the first step in dealing learning disabilities. Many adults (some of whom are unaware of their LDs) have developed ways to cope with their difficulties and are able to lead successful lives. LDs shouldn't hinder a person from attaining goals. Regardless of the situation, understanding the specific challenges and learning strategies to deal with LDs directly at every stage can alleviate a lot of frustration and make successful living much easier.

significant differences in the attributes measured.



Useful Links

Canadian ADHD Resource Alliance

<http://www.caddra.ca/>

People for Education

<http://www.peopleforeducation.ca/profile/child-advocacy-project-cap/>

LDA Ontario

<http://www.ldao.ca>

Special Needs Ontario Window (SNOW)

www.snow.idrc.ocad.ca

Totally ADD

<http://totallyadd.com/>

The We All Learn Differently Organization

www.thewald.org

Learning Potentials

www.learningpotentials.com

Family Anatomy

www.familyanatomy.com

Alexandre G. Tavares, MD, FRCPC

Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist

Medical Centre

www.drtavares.ca

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Don't forget to like us on facebook for the chance to learn about information and events happening in your communities!

www.facebook.com/LDAWellingtonCounty



You can also find us on Twitter!

@lda_wellington



Events

Workshop: “Surviving After School Homework
at Home- Strategies and Tactics”

LDA Burlington

April 25 @ 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Free

<http://www.ldao.ca/event/workshop-surviving-after-school-homework-at-home-strategies-and-tactics-burlington/>

Parent Tool Kit Workshop: “Organizing the Disorganized Learner”

LDA Oakville

May 17 @ 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Free

<http://www.ldao.ca/event/parent-tool-kit-workshop-organizing-the-disorganized-learner-oakville/>

Workshop: “Investigating ADHD”

LDA Hamilton

June 14 @ 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Free

<http://www.ldao.ca/event/workshop-investigating-adhd-hamilton/>



LDAWC Annual Family Conference- Saturday October 21st 2017

Location: TBA, Guelph

Cost: FREE

Watch out for updates in our newsletter, on our website and on facebook and twitter

LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM



Mr. Mrs. Miss Dr.

New Membership

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Business Phone: _____

Chapter Affiliation: _____

Please check this box if you agreed to receive your copies of Communiqué by email in the future

E-mail address: _____

Type of Yearly Membership (please check one)

Family/Individual \$50.00 Professional \$75.00
Institutional \$125.00 Student \$20.00 (ID # Required)

Type of Payment

Cash (only if paying in person) Cheque (payable to LDAO) Money Order Visa Master Card
Card # _____ Expiry Date: _____

Name as it appears on the Credit Card: _____ Signature: _____

Benefits of Membership for all Members:

- Discount to LDA Programs and services
- Communiqué (Provincial) newsletter – 2 times per year (5 copies each printing of Communiqué for Professional and 10 each for Institutional members)
- National newsletter – 1 time per year (5 copies each printing of National for Professional and 10 each for Institutional members)
- Chapter newsletters (frequency varies from Chapter to Chapter)

Please make all payments payable to LDAO and forward to:

LDAO Membership Coordinator

365 Bloor Street East, Box 39 Ste. 1004, Toronto, ON M4W 3L4

Phone: 416-929-4311, ext 21 Fax 416-929-3905

Website: www.LDAO.ca



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