



Idawc • Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County

The right to learn, the power to achieve

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A New LDAWC Website!

After several months of planning and work, LDAWC is thrilled to announce that we have just launched a new website – still at www.ldawc.ca. We're proud of improved functionality and hope you enjoy our new website as much as we do!

The website was designed in consultation with London, Ontario-based communication agency impression1.



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“It’s always very exciting to work with non-profit agencies’ web projects, because the ability for a website to help further the advocacy work of an important cause like LDAWC’s is meaningful. It’s important for a charity’s website to draw the community in to get to know, and believe, in the cause.”

~Andrew Kaszowski, owner of impression1

We welcome your feedback on the website. It is easy-to-update and full of the latest website technology to keep it fresh and leading-edge, so we’d be happy to make any further improvements that will make your experience using it even better. There’s a new, easy-to-use contact form at the bottom of each page. You can now reach us there!

Articles – LDs and ADHD

Dealing with Learning Disabilities in Relationships

By Brita Miller



Learning disabilities may present many challenges to the individual other than the obvious. They can have a great impact on relationships and personal interactions. The effects are experienced by persons with learning disabilities and their partners. The problems can manifest themselves in a variety of situations.

A person with learning disabilities may be frustrated about the way a partner provides assistance by feeling stifled when too much is routinely provided, which may give rise to the perception that he or she is stupid or being treated like a child. Also, he or she may feel unfairly blamed for relationship

problems, such as not listening or not trying hard enough, which may be due to his/her learning disabilities.

The partner without learning disabilities may experience resentment at having to continually tend to the needs of the other, while many of his/her needs may seem to go unmet.

As everyone has good and bad days, so do individuals with learning disabilities, but theirs are often much more pronounced and frequent. Their capabilities can vary widely from day to day without any predictable patterns or identifiable causes.

Since learning disabilities often are not visible, both partners may have difficulty understanding and accepting the limitations they create. No matter who has the disability, the problems must be worked out together. It is important to distinguish between difficulties which can be overcome (using strategies and accommodations) and those which are not likely to change.

The following are some helpful tips that may be useful for partners who have learning disabilities:

- Have a good understanding of the way in which the learning disabilities affect your ability to process information, communicate, etc.
- Explain to your partner how the learning disabilities interfere with many aspects of everyday life.
- Request accommodations in a direct manner without feeling guilty or giving excuses.
- To maintain credibility with others, avoid “crying wolf.”
- Accept that some tasks may take longer.
- Be as self-reliant as possible by finding alternatives to overburdening your partner.

These tips may be useful for the partner of a person who has a learning disability:

- Try to recognize, specifically, how the learning disability impacts your partner’s ability to: pay attention, comprehend, conceptualize, visualize, communicate, be organized, follow conversations, interpret body language, etc.
- Be aware that what appears to be a simple and logical way to carry out a task for you may not be the most logical way for the person with learning disabilities. Persuading the partner to “just do it this way” is not necessarily helpful. Conversely, you should accept that what seems like a roundabout method may, in fact, be the easiest way for your partner to complete the task.

- Remember that the learning disability thought process may manifest itself in a nonlinear fashion, which may seem confusing.
- Refrain from demanding that your partner “try harder” to correct a disability. This would be like expecting a deaf person to hear by trying harder.
- Be aware that “symptoms” of the learning disabilities may be more apparent at the end of the day or when your partner is fatigued.

Socially constructed gender roles may compound the effects of learning disabilities. For instance, men have traditionally been designated as breadwinners. This has not been realistic for some men with learning disabilities who have had difficulties with job stability and career advancement. A couple can reduce the stress they feel by creating more realistic expectations and redefining their roles according to each person’s abilities, rather than tradition.

Although couples may feel that learning disabilities are a unique problem, they are shared by a great number of people. Due to the close interaction of a relationship, the effects of learning disabilities are often greatly magnified, thus creating additional stress for the couple. It is only with hard work and a lot of understanding that these problems may be resolved.

About the Author: Brita Miller is a board member of the Coalition for Adults with Learning Differences (CALD) and the Adult Issues Chair for the Learning Disabilities Association of California (LDA-CA). She is also a member of the California Rehabilitation Advisory Council and a member of the San Diego County Literacy Network.

Reprinted with permission from LD Online (www.ldonline.org)

Source: <http://www.ldao.ca/introduction-to-ldsadhd/articles/about-parenting/dealing-with-learning-disabilities-in-relationships/>

Assistive Technology Available on Standard Mobile Devices

By Michael Kerr



Mobile devices by nature of their design are for personal use. We store personal information on them, we carry them with us, we use them dozens of times a day. Some of these devices even recognize our faces, fingerprints and our voices. Mobile technology is bridging the gap between the inherent shortcomings of our brain and the tasks we ask of it every day. Long and short term memory is being supplemented, and in some cases replaced, with powerful tools available on our mobile technology. Now *that* is getting personal! For people with learning disabilities (LDs) and possible memory deficits, personalization is key. It allows the user to organize and personalize the tools they need as well as the environment that they operate in.

Here are some types of Assistive Technology which are available on standard mobile devices:

Intelligent Personal Assistant or Knowledge Navigator

Mobile assistants are becoming more powerful and are being adopted in various forms by all major mobile technology developers. Google is developing Google Now technology, Apple continues to expand Siri and Microsoft has created Cortana. Using personal data and GPS location data, mobile assistance can provide smart information and assistance on a whole range of topics, including: dictation, reading emails, texting, making a reminder, calling someone, restaurant reservations, solving math problems, getting the weather, looking up basic information, performing a web search, getting directions and finding alternate routes, real time and geo tagged reminders, package tracking, etc. Although these are powerful tools, there are much greater personal assistants being developed.

Reminder Software

We have all used various methods of recording reminders, from to-do lists on the fridge to writing on our hands. The mobile technology of today makes it much easier to record the things we need to remember to do. There are literally thousands of programs that can be used to store and retrieve to-do or reminder lists. These programs can be device-based or stored in the cloud. They can be simple, colour-coded and feature-rich, including prioritization/completion tracking and can include date and time reminder alarms. They can even remind you to do something when you arrive at a destination. Cloud- or web-based options can be handy for people with LDs as well, as reminders can be accessed from anywhere. Help your child make a habit of using an organizer by prompting them to enter important information while they are in the beginning stages of using this technology. It can change how they work and how efficient they can become!

Calendar Applications

Calendar applications can make a huge difference in the organization of anyone's life. We have all experienced the situation where you can't make a decision about a meeting until you check the fridge calendar at home. Having multiple calendars is not efficient, particularly for anyone who experiences difficulties with organizing and prioritizing tasks. With mobile calendars, cloud-based options, and calendar subscriptions, it is possible for someone with LDs to keep all of their appointments and activities accessible all of the time. Consider having a family set of calendars that are shared so you can help your entire family stay organized. Google, Microsoft and Apple all provide free web-based calendar options for mobile devices, and they can usually talk to each other. iCal is a universal calendar system that allows you to subscribe to calendars that are available online. Imagine creating an online calendar for all of your family members that all of you could simply subscribe to and then all future changes and updates would be automatically entered into your mobile devices! That would make tracking family activities a much simpler task.

Dual Cameras

Cameras serve many purposes on mobile devices. They can assist someone with LDs in many ways. First, visual communication through applications such as FaceTime or Skype can simplify communication for everyone. Second, video cameras and still cameras can provide individuals with alternate forms of expression. Instead of a written assignment, talk to your child's teacher about the possibility of filming and editing a rant using their mobile device. Third, a camera can be used as a simple tool to capture information that might often be written down, making it easy for an individual to capture and save important information quickly. Finally, the camera could be used as a scanner to capture text and convert it to speech, allowing an individual access to mobile text-to-speech capabilities.

Dictionary, Thesaurus, Notes and Bookmarks

Built into the operating system of most Smartphones are powerful dictionary and thesaurus tools that are only a click away from any word on the screen. It is also possible to easily make notes, bookmarks and highlight text within eBook readers for reference later. These tools make comprehension and study of digital print resources easier than ever, particularly for students with LDs.

Phonetic Word Prediction

Phonetic spelling can be enabled in the accessibility settings of many devices allowing assistive word prediction accuracy to be improved for users with spelling difficulties. Speech is now available for word prediction so that the correct word can be selected by sight and by sound.

Speech-to-Text

Speech-to-text technology has evolved over the past two decades into a powerful tool for all technology users, but particularly for people with LDs who are struggling in translating their thoughts into words and sentences. It initially was available as software for desktop computers and is now very functional on mobile devices. It is increasingly being integrated into operating systems, applications and web browsers and the accuracy is very high. It is important to remember that speech-to-text works best when the user speaks in full sentences, with fluency and with good volume.

Speak Notifications

Periodically, error messages and warnings will appear on the screen of mobile devices. These can sometimes be challenging for struggling readers. Clicking “OK” is not always the best option. With notification speech enabled, these messages are read aloud for the user so they are capable of making the correct choice.

Text-to-Speech – with Highlighted Speak Selection

A text-to-speech (TTS) system, originally referred to as speech synthesis, converts normal language text into speech, and has been available for decades on personal home computers. Now it is available with multiple voices, dialects and languages on your mobile device. Text-to-speech on mobile devices can be customized for male or female voices, speed and language, quite easily in the settings of the device. Most operating systems provide a built-in voice and many applications provide additional voice options.

A recently added feature to mobile devices is that of highlighted text during text-to-speech reading. This feature allows readers to follow along while the article or text is being read aloud. Speed settings can be customized and the colour of highlighting in some cases can be selected. This feature has previously only been available on desktop and laptop computers with expensive software. Now it is increasingly being included in the operating systems of mobile devices.

Font Size and Font Type – Dyslexie Font – A Weighted Font for Readers with Reading Disabilities

Fonts, size and spacing all play a role in the ease with which a person can read. Unfortunately, almost all books are published in the same font size, type and spacing. These features are not customizable in fixed print, but on a mobile device all that changes. Here is a clip of a font that is available in some apps for readers with reading disabilities. It is called Dyslexie and it is weighted font that has been developed so that each letter is different from every other letter.

The font for people with dyslexia

This font is especially designed for people with dyslexia. When they use it, they make fewer errors whilst they are reading. It makes reading easier for them and it takes less effort. The Dyslexia font is used by several schools, universities, speech therapists and remedial teachers.

(Image source: http://creativebits.org/print/font_people_dyslexia_dyslexie)

Guided Access

An accessibility option available to help teachers and parents working with children with LDs is Guided Access. When enabled, it allows parents and teachers to have students focus on one app at a time. If attention is an issue, this can help the learner engage more fully with a specific app to improve their learning.

What is Coming Next to Your Mobile Device?

There are many reasons to learn to use the tools and apps on your mobile device. They can provide tremendous supports for learners in so many ways. In the future, there will be many new mobile technology developments,⁵ possibly including:

- Tablets with flexible and re-sizable screens

- Glasses that become our phones
- Contact lens screens with built-in processors
- Faster networks
- Smaller devices – Watches
- Wearable technologies
- Powerful Digital Assistants
- Battery and Wireless charging technology improvements
- Biologically embedded technology
- Health and Nutrition monitoring

Source: <https://www.ldathome.ca/2017/01/assistive-technology-available-standard-on-mobile-devices/>

Quick Facts on Learning Disabilities and Mental Health

What is LDMH?

LD = LEARNING DISABILITY
MH = MENTAL HEALTH

Not all individuals with learning disabilities have **SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL OR BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS**

About 40% of people with **LDs** experience mental health difficulties such as **ANXIETY** or **DEPRESSION**

LDMH creates **INVISIBLE BARRIERS** to learning and living at an optimal level

LDs are often underestimated. They are deceptively more **IMPACTFUL & CHALLENGING** than what "average" people face in learning and living

People living with **LDMH** **MAY BLAME THEMSELVES** and even be seen by some as "lazy" or "dumb" but **LDMH** is as real as a **PHYSICAL DISABILITY**



Who is affected by LDMH?

Learning disabilities (**LDs**) are **THE MOST COMMON FORM** of disability experienced by **CANADIAN CHILDREN**

60% OF CLIENTS within the Integra Program have **LDs** **PLUS** at least **1** other diagnosis

LEARNING HAPPENS EVERYWHERE - at home, with friends, in extracurricular activities, etc., and as a result **LDMH** can affect youth and their families in **MANY ASPECTS OF THEIR LIVES**

How we work to treat LDMH at Child Development Institute

We develop, evaluate and implement treatments that are **EVIDENCE-INFORMED**

WE CONSIDER THE IMPACT of the **LD** in understanding each child/youth's mental health concern, and we teach social and emotional **STRATEGIES AND LIFE SKILLS** to empower children and youth

THERAPY IS LEARNING and we tailor treatment to a child's learning profile

Different kinds of learners need different kinds of treatment

We work to **UNDERSTAND** each child/teen and their unique **STRENGTHS & CHALLENGES**



int-gra

POWERED BY CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE



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**Guelph Wellington
Dufferin**

Upcoming LDAWC Events & Workshops

Mental Health & Learning Disabilities

Wednesday, May 16, 2018, 7-9 PM



About our Workshop:

People with LDs are **two to three times more likely** to experience mental health challenges. When it is hard to 'show what you know', it is understandable that we might see higher rates of **school-related stress** and more school drop-out. Individuals with LDs are more likely to experience **anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation**.

But there are ways to cope and help manage mental health symptoms if you have an LD. There are also strategies to help if you're a parent or caregiver with someone living with an LD. Come to our workshop and hear experts Rose Freigang and Linda Di Nardo from Insight Psychology on Norfolk speak about the topic of mental health. Come away with practical strategies for helping with things like stress, self-esteem and depression.

About our Speakers:

Rose Freigang is a Registered Psychological Associate with the College of Psychologists of Ontario in the areas of Clinical and School Psychology. She has provided assessment and treatment services to individuals across the lifespan in hospital, community agency and private settings for more than 25 years. Rose has a particular interest in and experience with ASD and other Neurodevelopmental Disorders, SLD, and AD/HD. Rose has a strong commitment to early intervention, optimizing strengths, and fostering independence.

Linda Di Nardo is a Registered Psychological Associate with the College of Psychologists of Ontario in the area of School Psychology. Linda has extensive knowledge and expertise in assessment, consultation, and working on many multi-disciplinary teams. Her work has spanned many school boards, private practice, hospital and mental health settings for over 30 years. She provides psychological assessments with children and adolescents, and diagnosing various Learning Disabilities, ADHD, and Autism Spectrum Disorders. While Linda particularly enjoys working with the children she sees, she consults with and supports parents through the assessment process.

Where: Village of Riverside Glen – Town Hall, 60 Woodlawn Rd E, Guelph, ON

Cost: \$15 for non-members; \$10 for LDA members

We never want cost to be a deterrent! Please contact us about subsidies.

Register: <http://www.ldawc.ca/events/>

May 23rd Peer Support Network



About our Peer Support Network:

LDAWC peer support network's goal is to provide an informal setting to share experiences, challenges, successes and resources. Living, learning and/or working with a LD, or supporting a family member with LD, has its ups and downs. Come learn from others. Benefits are:

- Learning about relevant resources, supports and strategies
- Insights into what has and hasn't worked for parents and families
- Learning you and your student aren't alone through shared ideas and experiences
- Reduced stigma and stress

About our Facilitator:

Jen Paterson, Resource Coordinator at LDAWC, will be facilitating the evening. She has extensive experience helping parents navigate the special education system, especially when their kids have an LD or ADHD.

When: Wednesday, May 23, 7-8:30 PM

Where: The Village of Riverside Glen – Town Hall room;
60 Woodlawn Rd E., Guelph

Cost: FREE

Register here: www.ldawc.ca/events

Other Community Events

LDA Peel Region

“How to Explain a Diagnosis to a Child”

Presented by Janet Arnold and Francine McLeod

Thursday, May 31, 7 PM

Chinguacousy Library, Brampton

Cost: FREE

Register: Lilia at (905) 272-4100 x 203 or lmastrocola@ldapr.ca

Arnold and McLeod are authors of a newly published book, “How to Explain a Diagnosis to a Child”. This book is Janet’s own recollection of her personal journey with her son and how the diagnosis strengthened her commitment to work collaboratively with his educators to ensure his rights and needs were met.

“Introduction to Executive Functioning and Emotional Regulation”

Presented by Integra

Monday, June 18, 7 PM

Chinguacousy Library, Brampton

Cost: FREE

Register: Lilia at (905) 272-4100 x 203 or lmastrocola@ldapr.ca

This workshop provides participants with an understanding of the nature of executive functioning (higher order thinking skills including organization and problem solving) for youth with LDs and/or ADHD. Practical strategies to support the development of executive functioning skills and self-regulation in youth will be shared.

LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO
MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL APPLICATION FORM



**Idao • Learning Disabilities
Association of Ontario**

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Date _____

Name _____

Member #: _____

Chapter #: _____

Address _____

City/Province/Postal Code _____

☐ Please check this box if you agreed to receive your copies of Communiqué by e-mail in the future

Email address: _____

(please print clearly)

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 ☐ Money Order ☐ Visa ☐ Master Card

Card # _____ Expiry Date: _____

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

I would like to volunteer: ☐ at the local level ☐ at the provincial level

Benefits of Membership for all members:

- ☐ Member fee rates to all LDAO programs and services, including online workshops/courses, etc.
- ☐ Member fee rates to all chapter programs and services, where available
- ☐ 2 issues of the LDAO Newsletter Communiqué – by mail and now electronically to those who chose to receive their issues to a designated email address
- ☐ Chapter newsletters (frequency varies from chapter to chapter)

For Professional and Institutional Members only (In addition to those mentioned above)

- ☐ Professional members will receive 5 hard copies of each issue of Communiqué to use as they choose (if a member elects to receive their copy of Communiqué by email we will still send hard copies) and 5 member fee rate entitlements to any **LDAO** programs and services, including online workshops/courses, etc.
- ☐ Institutional members will receive 10 hard copies of each issue of Communiqué to use as they choose (if a member elects to receive their copy of Communiqué by email we will still send hard copies) and 10 member fee rate entitlements to any **LDAO** programs and services, including online workshops/courses, etc.

Please make all payments payable to **Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario** and forward to:

LDAO Membership Coordinator

365 Evans Avenue, Suite 202, Toronto, ON M8Z 1K2

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



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