

An Invisible Disability

Learning disabilities (LDs) are brain-based difficulties that affect one or more ways that a person takes in, stores, remembers or uses verbal (speech) and nonverbal (non-speech) information.

LDs are difficulties in processing information. LDs occur in people with average or above average thinking and reasoning abilities. They are different from intellectual disabilities.

LDs are not caused by environmental factors such as language differences or socio-economic status, but those factors may compound the impact of an LD.

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 communication skills.



These difficulties are caused by challenges in what we call 'psychological processes', for example:

- 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)

The First Step is Diagnosis

Trust your instincts. If you suspect your child or yourself might have learning disabilities, first consult your doctor to rule out more obvious problems such as hearing or vision difficulties.

Why:

The most important piece of future success is proper diagnosis. After that, appropriate special education or employment supports can be put in place based on your learning profile.

Who:

Registered psychologists and pediatricians may diagnose learning disabilities by giving formal and informal tests. All psycho-educational and psychological assessments must be performed by or under the supervision of a qualified member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario, with informed consent from the parent(s) for minors.

Where:

Contact the special education staff at your school or a private psychologist.

When:

As soon as you suspect a problem. A good assessment is the first step towards getting help. After the assessment is done, meet with the psychologist to ensure that you know what has been diagnosed and what can be done to aid in your or your child's future success.

Recognition and Identification

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



What can it feel like to have an LD?

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

Something Can Be Done

Attend our Monthly Information Sessions / Presentations

- Open to the general public to improve public awareness and understanding of LDs.
- Designed for parents, students, adults, educators, physicians and other professionals.

Become one of our Members

Request our Advocacy Support

- We provide opportunities to share information and common concerns
- We offer support, guidance, and up-to-date resource information
 - to access and take part in the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) process
 - to develop Individual Education Plans (IEP)
- We work with the local school boards and collaborate with our Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) representatives.

Access our Resource Facilitator

- Resource facilitation assists in connecting you with appropriate local community and professional services based on your individual needs.

LD Resources on the web



ldadr • Learning Disabilities Association of Durham Region

The right to learn, the power to achieve

Imagine the difference it could make if we focused on the strengths of people with learning disabilities instead of their weaknesses.



The Learning Disabilities Association of Durham Region (LDADR) is a charitable non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children, youth and adults with learning disabilities.

We are right here in Durham Region... Contact us!

Follow: @LDA_Durham
Email: info@LDADR.on.ca
Visit: www.LDADR.on.ca

October is Learning Disabilities Awareness Month.
Help stop the stigma and realize the ABILITIES!