



DISABILITY FACT SHEET

Learning Difficulties

Communication strategies

- When communicating with a person with learning disability it is important to acknowledge that each person is an individual and should be approached as such.
- Meet in a setting that is comfortable and does not cause anxiety or distraction. Always remember to keep your voice tone low and unhurried.
- Use visual aids like pictures, drawings and photographs.
- Ask the person about the most appropriate way of communicating with them.
- Use short, clear direct sentences to be more easily understood. Make instructions clear and brief.
- Avoid complex language or words that may be taken literally.
- Be patient.
- Rephrase information if it is not understood, or present in another way.
- Ask questions to ensure the person understands the information being discussed.
- Always provide an opportunity to answer any questions or provide further information.

Disability Overview

A learning disability refers to a variety of conditions. These conditions can affect the way in which a person takes in, remembers, understands and expresses information.

Learning disabilities range in severity and invariably interfere with the acquisition and use of one or more of the following important skills:

- oral language (e.g. listening, speaking)
- reading (e.g. comprehension)
- writing (e.g. spelling, written expression)
- mathematics (e.g. problem solving, concepts)

People with a learning disability are intelligent and have abilities to learn despite difficulties in processing information.

The exact cause of learning disabilities is not known, in some cases it may be due to genetic, other congenital and/or acquired neuro-biological factors.

Learning disabilities may co-exist with other conditions including attentional, behavioural and emotional disorders, sensory impairments or other medical conditions.

Implications

- For some individuals a learning disability can lead to difficulties with organisational skills, social perception and social interaction.
- They may experience problems with reading comprehension, spoken language, writing and mathematics.
- A learning disability may make it difficult for a person to receive information from their senses.
- People with a learning disability may find it difficult to communicate what they know.