

Learning Disabilities and Disorders Resources

LWIA Resources for DEI Project

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Definitions of Common Learning Disabilities and Related Disorders

ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder – Focus and concentration difficulties)

ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder – Focus and concentration difficulties with hyperactivity)

Auditory Processing Disorders (Listening difficulties)

Autism Spectrum Disorders (Social and communicative difficulties, sensory sensitivity)

Dyscalculia (Math difficulties)

Dysgraphia (Writing difficulties)

Dyslexia (Reading difficulties)

Dyspraxia (Motor skill difficulties)

Executive Functioning Disorders (Planning and organizing difficulties)

Visual Processing Disorders (Visual perception difficulties)

LD Screening resources

A number of LD screening resources are available. These do **not** diagnose a learning disability, but give an indication that professional diagnosis may be appropriate.

National Center for Learning Disabilities Online Interactive Screening:

<http://www.nclid.org/learning-disability-resources/checklists-worksheets/interactive-ld-checklist>

Washington State Learning Needs Screening (Print Version)

Full version available at <http://onestops.info/pdf/LearningNeedsTool.pdf>

STUDENT COPY

How many years of schooling have you had?

Check all earned: High School Diploma

GED

Technical/Vocational Certificate

AA Degree

Other (specify)

What kind of job would you like to get?

Do you have any experience in this area?

What makes it hard for you to get or keep this kind of job?

What would help?

READ ALOUD BY INTERVIEWER

The following questions are about your school and life experiences.

We're trying to find out how it was for you (or your family members) when you were in school or how some of these issues might affect your life now. Your responses to these questions will help identify resources and services you might need to be successful securing employment.

1. Did you have any problems learning in middle school or junior high school?
2. Do any family members have learning problems?
3. Do you have difficulty working with numbers in columns?
4. Do you have trouble judging distances?
5. Do you have problems working from a test booklet to an answer sheet?
6. Do you have difficulty or experience problems mixing arithmetic signs (+/x)?
7. Did you have any problems learning in elementary school?
8. Do you have any difficulty remembering how to spell simple words you know?
9. Do you have difficulty filling out forms?
10. Did you (do you) experience difficulty memorizing numbers?
11. Do you have trouble adding and subtracting small numbers in your head?
12. Do you have difficulty or experience problems taking notes?
13. Were you ever in a special program or given extra help in school?

LDAO Checklist of Indicators for LD

The following questions can be used to see if someone **may be at risk** of learning disabilities. Full version at <http://www.ldao.ca/introduction-to-ldsadh/ldsadhs-in-depth/articles/about-lds/checklist-of-indicators-for-ld/>

I am going to read some statements and I would like you to tell me whether they describe you. You can answer: Never, Sometimes, or Often	Never	Sometimes	Often
1. I remember faces but have trouble remembering people's names			
2. I have difficulty remembering the order that must be followed when I am given instructions			
3. I respond well to written instruction, but have trouble understanding what people are saying to me, especially when they speak quickly			
4. I have trouble thinking of the right word to say or write, even when I know the word			
5. I write well, but get confused when I'm trying to explain things to people.			
6. I am a good speaker, but when I read, the words and letters seem to jump around			
7. I lose my place easily when I am reading			
8. I have trouble sounding out new words			
9. I can sound out words, but I don't remember what words look like			
10. I remember things I hear, but misspell small words as often as big words			
11. I usually remember spoken instructions, but I have to read things several times before I understand them			
12. I lose my place when copying down information			
13. I express myself better when speaking than when writing			
14. I sometimes reverse letters or numbers, or get them in the wrong order			
15. I have good reading abilities, but trouble remembering multiplication tables			
16. I write well, but have trouble figuring out what they're asking in math word problems			
17. I can't figure out what formulas to use in math questions			
18. I know what to do in math questions, but I get the answers wrong if I don't use a calculator			
19. I have trouble judging distances			
20. I confuse left and right			
21. I have trouble judging how much time tasks are going to take to complete			
22. I am often late getting places			
23. I have trouble finding the right place to fill in information on forms			
24. I like to talk but I tend to interrupt people			
25. I have a lot of energy and often feel restless, fidgety or easily distracted			

Everyone has problems with these areas some of the time, but if there are many questions answered “often,” it may be useful to look further into the possibility of learning disabilities because there is help available.

LBS Learning Disabilities Checklist

Adapted from:

<http://www.lbspractitionertraining.com/pd-courses/practitioners/working-with-adult-learners/197-32-an-ld-checklist>

This checklist of characteristics can be used as a guide to help recognize possible learning disabilities. An adult with learning disability may exhibit some of these characteristics, but not necessarily all of them. If an individual exhibits several or many of these characteristics to such a degree that they cause problems in work, school, or everyday life, he or she might benefit from an assessment by qualified professionals.

Identified characteristics of a learning disability may include the following:

- Has a shorter attention span, fidgets, is impulsive, and/or easily distracted
- Speaks very softly or very loudly
- Has difficulty with social skills; misinterprets social cues
- Has difficulty following a schedule, being on time, or meeting deadlines
- Gets lost easily while driving or in large buildings
- Often misreads or miscopies information
- Confuses similar letters or numbers, reverses them, or mixes up their order
- Has difficulty reading, following small print, and/or following columns
- Is able to explain things orally, but not in writing
- Needs a long time to answer questions
- Reverses or omits letters, words, or phrases when writing
- Has difficulty completing forms correctly
- Spells the same word differently in a document
- Has trouble dialing phone numbers and reading addresses
- Has difficulty with math, math language, and math concepts
- Reverses numbers and has difficulty balancing a check book
- Confuses right and left, up and down
- Has difficulty following directions, especially multi-step directions
- Hears sounds, words, or sentences imperfectly or incorrectly

The Emotional Impact of Adult Learning Disabilities

Adapted from <http://ldpride.net/emotions.htm>

People growing up with a learning disability often feel a sense of shame or fear. For some, it is a great relief to receive the diagnosis, while for others the label only serves to further stigmatize them. Many adults were not accurately diagnosed while in school. These individuals were frequently labeled as dumb, written off as being unable to learn, and passed through the school system without acquiring basic academic skills.

They may feel ashamed of the struggles they cope with such as low literacy skills, slow processing, attention difficulties, chronic forgetfulness. Sadly, these feelings of shame often cause adults to hide their difficulties. Rather than risk being labeled as stupid or accused of being lazy, some adults will deny their learning disability as a defense mechanism.

Another emotional difficulty for adults with learning disabilities is fear. This emotion is often masked by anger or anxiety. Feelings of fear may be related one or more of the following issues:

- Fear of being found out
- Fear of failure
- Fear of judgment or criticism
- Fear of ridicule or rejection

Many adults with learning disabilities may develop coping strategies to hide their disability. For example, an adult who can hardly read might pretend to read a newspaper. Other adults may develop gregarious personalities to hide their difficulties or focus on other abilities that do not present learning barriers.

The National Adult Literacy Survey found that 58% of adult with self-reported learning disabilities lacked the reading and writing skills needed to experience job and academic success. Most of these adults have not graduated high school. Adult literacy programs are a second chance to learn the basic academic skills missed out in school. However, returning to an educational environment is often a scary experience for adults with learning disabilities. One of the main reasons for this is the fear of failure. The tendency for many adults with learning disabilities is to personalize failure (i.e., failure makes ME a failure). Fear of failure may prevent them from trying new learning opportunities, participating in social activities, or taking on a new job.

One positive characteristic that often helps adults overcome their fear of failure is their ability to come up with innovative strategies to learn and solve problems. These strategies are often attributed to the "learned creativity" that many adults with learning disabilities develop in order to cope with the demands in their everyday lives.