



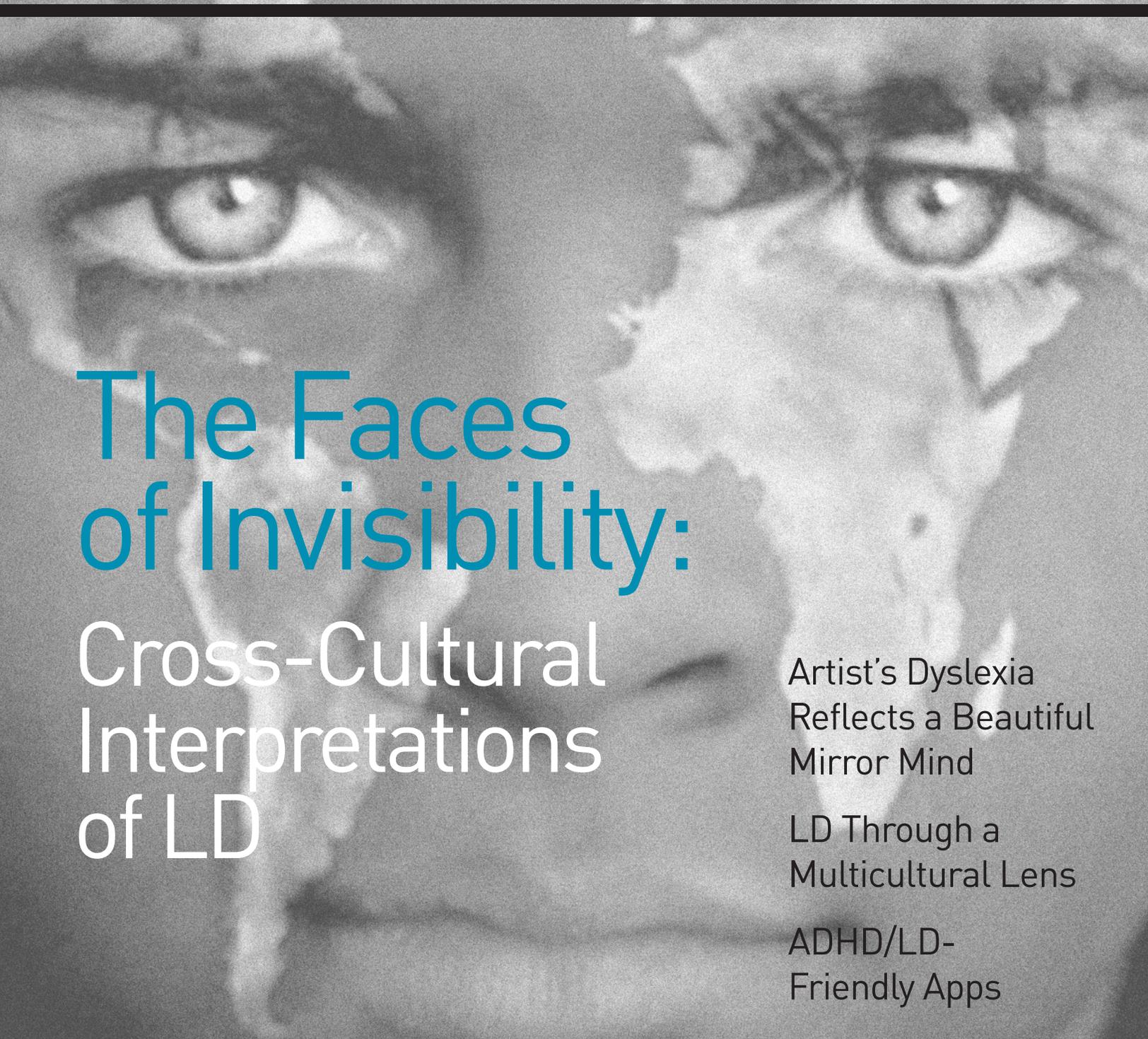
Idao • Learning Disabilities
Association of Ontario

The right to learn, the power to achieve

communiqué

THE PUBLICATION OF THE LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

SPRING/SUMMER 2013



The Faces of Invisibility:

Cross-Cultural Interpretations of LD

Artist's Dyslexia
Reflects a Beautiful
Mirror Mind

LD Through a
Multicultural Lens

ADHD/LD-
Friendly Apps

Insights into the Moore Case • LDAO Corporate Breakfast • LD Summer Camps

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Jay Mandarino has fallen 999 times and rises 1000, laughing all the way!

by Carter Hammett, Editor

Editor's Notebook

THE PEOPLE IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD



"When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'look for the helpers. You will always find people helping.'"

-Fred Rogers

The bombs had just gone off when I sat down to write this. Like many, I was stunned by the unthinkable disaster that occurred after two bombs detonated at the finish line during the Boston Marathon April 15. Like some of you, I knew people competing and the first thing I did was email my friends asking if they were okay. Fortunately, they were.

"How could this happen? Again?" was my second thought. In a world full of rude realities, the anger that swelled in my heart threatened to spill over. I simply do not understand this level of violence—the madness of a particular few over what? And why?—and never will.

But then the social media stories started coming in: Incredible tales of generosity; People running towards the tragedy, not away from it; People opening their hearts and homes to those stranded. Social media and the web played vital roles too: Boston.com rapidly setting up a web site directing people how to help. Google Search used to track the whereabouts of loved ones. Messages of hope and stories

tracked across Twitter and Facebook. It reflected both the best and worst of what humanity had to offer.

While the nakedness of the tragedy is unpalatable, it gives me pause to consider all of us who are helpers: those of us who work in the supporting professions, the volunteers who work long hours; nurses, doctors, firefighters, cops, the kid who buys that homeless guy coffee on a cold winter night. These are the givers that help enrich society, and, if even for a moment, make those who are invisible, visible.

I'm talking about people like Mabel Nipshank in Vancouver, who, despite profound visual processing issues carved out a career as a front line worker in a woman's shelter only later in life. I mean people like Tory Woollcott, whose own very private struggle with dyslexia was turned into a well-received graphic novel that offered hope to others living with the same doubts. I refer to amazing individuals like LDAO's very own Jay Mandarino who challenges the assumption that multitasking is unproductive. With a new book, a skateboard park and about 10,000 volunteer positions, Mandarino knows what it's like to be perceived as incapable and rose to the challenge to prove the naysayers wrong.

All of these remarkable individuals are featured in this issue, which includes a feature on cross cultural interpretations of learning disabilities. This is an issue that has only received scant attention, but with 250,000 new arrivals from other countries arriving annually—potentially 25,000 LD cases hitting our shores every year!—we remain woefully ill equipped to assess and support them, never mind denying the disability as so many are want to do. Along the way, we offer a salute to summer camps, introduce you to some amazing new apps-as-accommodations and offer up a profile of a Toronto-based artist who is doing some amazing things with and because of her dyslexia.

Each item in its own way is designed to help. Each page of this publication in its own way is designed to help. Each LDAO chapter where this magazine is distributed is designed to make a contribution. In the process, we create a natural ecosystem of non-judgmental support and embrace each other's differences.

It seems only fitting that the final words of this introduction come from Philo of Alexandria: "Be kind. For everyone you meet is fighting some kind of battle."



This Issue We Were...

Deana Collins is an Oshawa-based freelance writer, job developer and student and Mom. • **Mark Kawate** is a self-proclaiming Pirate Strategist, founder of Akasha Inspired, and has been in the technology industry from the age of 12. He started the non-profit brand ADHDapps

and Apps for ADHD as a way to help his brothers and sisters with ADHD/ASD/LD succeed by effectively using the technology in their lives. You can find him on www.twitter.com/ADHDapps • **Kenneth E. Seaton** is a Toronto-based freelance writer and small business consultant. View his

site at www.wordable.ca. • **Judith Wiener**, PhD is Professor, School and Clinical Child Psychology in the Department of Applied Psychology and Human Development at OISE/University of Toronto

Next Issue You Could...





Lawrence Barns, CEO

Message FROM THE CEO

STAYING THE COURSE

Staying the course is never easy. In this role I continue to be amazed with the stories of perseverance and overcoming that we highlight so often in this magazine. Look at the Moore family who fought tooth- and-nail for over 10 long years but have achieved a huge milestone ruling from the Supreme Court of Canada. Their ability to stay the course will have a lasting impact, and certainly one way beyond just receiving the justice they felt they deserved. Their fight has raised the bar to impact the future lives of many children across the country for decades to come. I am also proud of the team from the LDAC who on behalf of all of our kids fought alongside the family from the beginning.

Then we have the stories of individuals who stayed the course in their personal lives despite hurdles that would have caused many to simply surrender. I have personally seen the energy and passion of Jay Mandarino make a huge difference to LDAO over the years, but in building a skate park to connect with kids so in need of hope, he is reaching out to help others continue in staying the course and winning their personal race to maximize their potential.

At our corporate breakfast, actor and all-round funny guy Patrick McKenna showed his determination to stay the course by becoming a champion for ADHD and using his celebrity to further the cause. I am always touched when someone is so open and sharing of their journey. I believe it is our stories that connect and encourage others in ways we often find difficult to comprehend.

As a parent it can be a struggle at times to stay the course with our children and the LD we often see as a barrier. The frustration, anger, blame and other negative emotions are often only too evident. Yet when we stay the course, advocate and encourage, test accommodations and their effectiveness; try- and-fail and later, try and succeed, we can steer, coach, and cheerlead our kids to success. I know, as our family struggles became a victory when my son graduated high school after years of gradually increasing success.

Our chapters in particular exist to be there to provide support, education and encouragement to help you stay the course as well. The rewards are definitely worth the struggles!



LDAO and LD News

ADHD AWARENESS WEEK

2013 THEME ANNOUNCED: THE MANY FACES OF ADHD

"The Many Faces of ADHD," the theme for the 2013 ADHD Awareness Week, October 13-19, was announced by the Coalition for ADHD Awareness Week.

The group encourages media representatives to plan for articles and coverage of ADHD during the month of October and particularly during the week of October 13-19, 2013.

The theme, "The Many Faces of ADHD", reflects the growing awareness of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, a neurological disorder that is not confined to any one age group or ethnicity.

"While once thought that only boys were affected and that they would grow out, we now know this is not true. We now know that boys and girls, men and women are all dealing with the effects of ADHD," said Michele Novotni, coalition chair.

Ruth Hughes, CEO of CHADD (Children & Adults with ADHD) referred to current research, saying that "ADHD has many faces. It affects people of all ethnic backgrounds and all socioeconomic classes and is most often an inherited disorder. Families can often identify ADHD symptoms in several generations. Other environmental factors include premature birth, prenatal exposure to toxins such as smoking, drugs or alcohol, and other traumas to the brain."

Information about ADHD Awareness Week, related events, and collateral materials will be updated and available on our website ADHDAwarenessWeek.org.

The ADHD Awareness Coalition is made up of leading organizations in the United States with missions devoted to providing information, support, and advocacy for individuals, families, and professionals affected by ADHD.



PATRICK MCKENNA OFFERS CHANCE TO LAUGH AND LEARN AT LDAO Corporate Breakfast

It is common to be invited to a lunch-and-learn session at many corporations but at the sixth annual LDAO corporate breakfast headliner actor/comedian Patrick McKenna turned the event to a laugh-and-learn.

After surviving a childhood filled with choppy experiences at school and home, McKenna was finally diagnosed with ADHD in adulthood. Now he is able to look at his life and career through a different lens, understand the challenges his ADHD presents and be thankful that he found comedy and his career.

What makes this double Gemini-winning performer stand out is his willingness to be transparent and a leading advocate for those who feel their own school experience limits their ability to achieve. During the breakfast, while his childhood stories produced a string of funny anecdotes,



it was the Q&A that really highlighted the impact of using laughter to approach the subject. Faced with some very direct questions McKenna never flinched from honest and open answers, clearly voiced by a man who has tried to learn as much as he can to make informed choices.

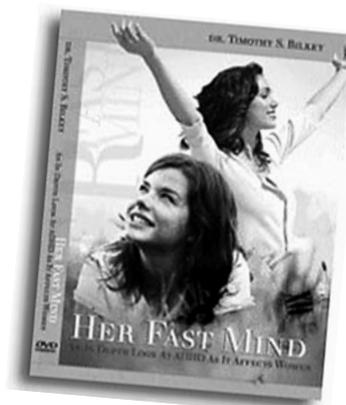
The audience of corporate executives, parents, teachers and students gained inspiration, insight and a few sore ribs before the morning was over. The goal of raising funds to support the ongoing work of LDAO was once again successful because of so many wonderful partners and volunteers. Auctions, pre-and-post McKenna, rounded out the morning.

This event really is a cornerstone of our continued operation, and our deepest thanks and appreciation go to Rob Richards and Jay Mandarino, co-chairs of the event and their entire committee who worked in the background for months, namely Kevin McKenzie, Vin Greco, Meredith Michetti, Dayl Marks and Rose Savage. Their efforts are supported by our sponsors who are listed later in this publication, but LDAO is grateful for every one of them. The volunteers provided by Scotiabank and all of the donations to the auction help to round out the morning and maximise our funding. Most importantly we want to thank everyone who attended and gave so generously to allow us to continue to help the next Patrick McKenna achieve all that they can be. 

NEW DOCUMENTARY CLAIMS TO BREAK GENDER BIAS ABOUT ADHD AND FEMALES

While the effects of Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) on the female population are well documented, this condition continues to be under-recognized in women. Dr. Tim Bilkey, in his latest documentary, uncovers the myth that ADHD is a condition that largely affects young males, and provides hope for a better future for women who have been dealing with ADHD for their whole lives.

Her FAST MIND – An In Depth Look at ADHD as it Affects Women was produced by Dr. Bilkey, an adult psychiatrist who has specialized in the assessment of adolescent and adult ADHD for over 15 years.



During that time, he has conducted over 3,400 assessments. In his practice, Dr. Bilkey has evaluated an equal number of male and females, and recognizes the need for further education regarding females with ADHD.

Bilkey commented on the impact ADHD can have on females, noting that data reveals that females with untreated ADHD can have lower levels of academic achievement, higher rates of depression and anxiety, and be more prone to addictions. Females with ADHD are also more likely to binge eat and to develop Bulimia Nervosa. Impulsivity also plays a role in ADHD as it affects females, he said, as they will be more likely to engage in risky sexual activity and to have unplanned pregnancies.

Despite the negative impact ADHD can have on females, many women never seek help for their ADHD due to a lack of information on ADHD and females.

"ADHD well and truly exists within females and I in particular think that the issue of females with

Continued on next page. ➤

ADHD is grossly under-recognized and understudied," Bilkey said. "This gender bias against females continues to the present time, along with other misconceptions around ADHD."

Through Her FAST MIND Dr. Bilkey helps to break this gender bias, and tackles the myths surrounding ADHD in women. The documentary explores how this impairing condition presents in women, but also focuses on the societal expectations of a woman's role and how untreated ADHD impacts on this role.

Her FAST MIND, which will be the focus of workshop at the Canadian Psychiatric Association's annual conference this September in Montreal, also gives two women who have strong voices within the ADHD community an opportunity to share their stories. Through interviews and a round-table discussion, author and blogger Zoe Kessler and film-maker Karen O'Donnell discuss with Dr. Bilkey their experiences growing up with ADHD, and how they have worked to overcome the obstacles this condition has thrown into their paths.

This documentary is the second full-length DVD release by Dr. Bilkey. His first documentary, "ADHD Across the Lifespan" is now used as a training documentary across Canada in various settings.

He has recently completed co-authoring a self-help book on Adult ADHD which was recently published by Harvard Health Publications and Penguin Books earlier this year.

Dr. Bilkey is an international lecturer and has developed numerous educational programs to assist physicians in the recognition and treatment of ADHD. His FAST MINDS™ program is nationally accredited through the College of Family Physicians of Canada. FAST MINDS™ has been presented across Canada, and internationally in Hong Kong, the Philippines, Malaysia, Taiwan, Argentina, Greece and Mexico.

For more information visit Bilkey's ADHD Clinic website: bilkeyadhd.com



HOTWEB GHOTIT RELEASES ITS DYSLEXIA WRITING & READING ASSISTANT APPLICATION

Assitive Technology developer Ghotit has released its new Real Writer & Reader software.

Ghotit Real Writer & Reader uses advanced writing and reading assistant technologies made for people with dyslexia, dysgraphia, and other learning disabilities.

- The Ghotit Real Writer & Reader includes the following features, all designed for the dyslexic community:
- Intelligent context-sensitive spell checker
- Advanced grammar checker
- A powerful word prediction tool
- A built-in proofreader
- A reader that can read out any document or web page.

Ghotit Real Writer & Reader works with any text application, both Microsoft Windows and Macintosh, and can also be used as a standalone text editor.

Ofer Chermesh, one of Ghotit's founders, lives with dyslexia. The struggle of producing readable text is well known to him. "I have no doubt that the people who designed regular assistance technology tools, such as text editors and spell checkers, did not have in mind people with dyslexia. Regular spell checkers are targeting people with good spelling capabilities who occasionally make spelling mistakes, not dyslexics like me. In addition, many dyslexics also struggle with reading documents or web sites, and would like to see these reading abilities integrated with their writing assistant solutions" says Chermesh.

Regular text editors and spell checkers are designed to correct relatively minor spelling mistakes. In order to identify the correct spelling of a poorly spelled word, the context of the sentence needs to be analyzed. Ghotit offers a novel patent-

protected context spell checking technology, tuned for people with dyslexia and bad spelling habits. Using these algorithms, Ghotit can detect and correct not only really bad spelled words but also misused words, words that are spelled correctly, but are written out of context. Ghotit also offers advanced grammar checking algorithms, ensuring that the corrected text is not only error-free, but also written with correct English grammar.

Ghotit launched its online free service in 2008. In 2009 Ghotit released Word Writer, its add-in for Microsoft Word for Windows. In 2012 Ghotit released its simple-to-use text editor, Real Writer for Windows and

Macintosh. Earlier this year Ghotit released its Real Writer & Reader application for Microsoft Windows and Macintosh. The Ghotit Real Writer & Reader application is based on a simple text editor which incorporates Ghotit, spell, and grammar checker and incorporates the ability to read out any text. Real Writer & Reader can be used directly from any text application such as browsers, word processors, spreadsheets, and mail applications.

"For years people with dyslexia were forced to buy a number of expensive assistive technology tools in order to help them write freely. These tools seldom managed to work smoothly together. Ghotit Real Writer & Reader offers an integrated solution, with Ghotit Reader seamlessly complementing Ghotit Writer" says Chermesh.

Though initially designed for people with dyslexia, Ghotit has demonstrated success for people with other writing and reading difficulties such as people who use English as their Second Language (ESL) and English Language Learners (ELL), enabling them to move to mainstream English Writing.

For additional information visit Ghotit web site at <http://www.ghotit.com>.

And for information on other assistive technologies, visit these sites:

- www.snow.idrc.ocad.ca/content/inclusive-technology
- www.nsnnet.org/atc/tools/contents.html
- www.adaptech.org/en/downloads/fandi/windows



Public Policy Roundup

SPRING 2013



Educational Implications of a Landmark Supreme Court Decision

The news became official last November: Students with learning disabilities deserve to receive an education that enables them to develop to their full potential. The Jeffrey Moore case sets a precedent in a landmark case in the Canadian courts and ups the ante for generations of future students with LD. Here's why.

The November 9, 2012 ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada, in *Moore v. British Columbia (Education)*, has affirmed the legal rights of students with learning disabilities to receive an education that gives them an opportunity to develop their full potential. The decision, which was unanimous, has significant implications for all students in Canada with learning disabilities.

The Supreme Court made an articulate and powerful statement that: *"...adequate special education, therefore, is not a dispensable luxury. For those with severe learning disabilities, it is the ramp that provides access to the statutory commitment to education made to all children..."*

The ruling also stated that *"There is no dispute that Jeffrey's dyslexia is a disability. There is equally no question that any adverse impact he suffered is related to his disability."*

The Supreme Court of Canada validated the position long held by learning disability associations across Canada in their support for the right of all students with

learning disabilities to adequate special education programs and services, including intensive evidence-based interventions for those who need them. The Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario has stated this position in its responses to *Education for All* and *Learning for All*.

The Supreme Court ruling stated that *"...for students with learning disabilities like Jeffrey's, Special Education is not the service, it is the means by which those students get meaningful access to the general education..."*. The court agreed with the British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal in stating that *"...a range of services was necessary for these students..."*

"... needs must be considered on an individual basis..."

The Supreme Court ruling also stated that *"Jeffrey required intensive remediation in order to have meaningful access to education"*. The ruling addressed both the importance of remedial services and the equality of opportunity for individual students in order to access and master the curriculum at their individual levels. While students have equal access to a general education, in order to have meaningful access, i.e. an opportunity to achieve

within that curriculum, their needs must be considered on an individual basis.

Furthermore, the Supreme Court ruling states that program decisions must be based on the subjective, child-centered *"individual needs"* of each student and that equal treatment may be discriminatory if it violates their individual rights. The Supreme Court rejected the argument that the needs of one special needs student should be compared with the needs of other special needs students. In other words, *one size does not fit all*.

Landmark Supreme Court Decision on LD Case

Supreme Court of Canada supports right of student with severe learning disabilities to meaningful access to education.

On November 9, 2012, in a unanimous decision, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in favour of the appeal of the Moore family, who claimed that their local school district failed to provide the special

PUBLIC POLICY ROUNDUP

education supports that Jeffrey Moore needed in order to get meaningful access to general education.

LDAO extends congratulations to the Moore family, their attorneys, and the organizations that made arguments on their behalf as interveners at the Supreme Court hearing. LDAO sends its sincere thanks to Yude Henteleff, C.M., Q.C., who has been LDA of Canada's intervener counsel since the original BC Human Rights Tribunal hearings. LDAC has appeared at every level of the Moore claim as an intervener, represented at each hearing by volunteer lead lawyer Yude Henteleff, who is a prominent and nationally respected human rights expert and advocate.

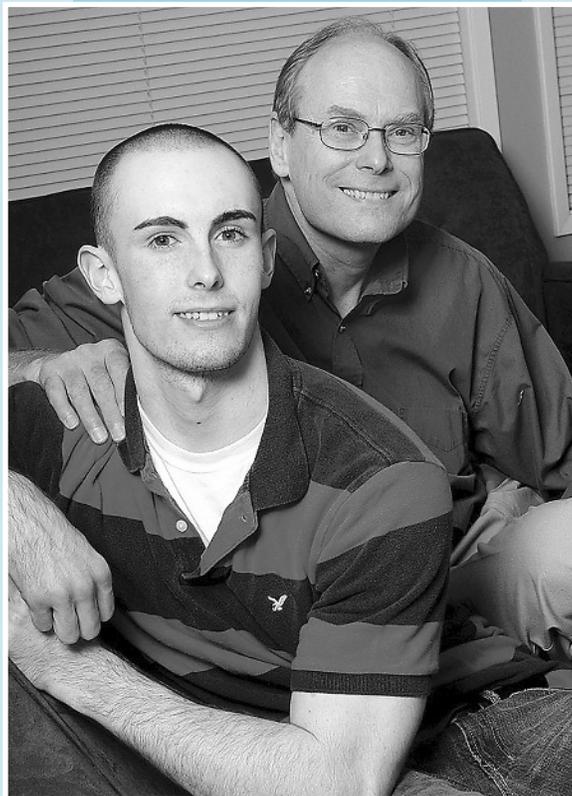
HISTORY

Jeffrey Moore had been labeled as having a severe learning disability and in 1994 he became eligible to attend an intensive program for students with severe learning disabilities. That program was cut due to financial cost saving measures and the services that were subsequently offered were not comparable to the services he would have received in the intensive program. Jeffrey's parents were advised to put him in a private school, which they did, at considerable financial sacrifice. With appropriate educational supports Jeffrey was able to go on to become a successful journeyman plumber.

Mr. Moore filed an application at the BC Human Rights Tribunal alleging a failure to provide him with an

"... adequate special education is not a dispensable luxury.."

intensive program that was as appropriate to meet his unique needs as a student. The Tribunal determined that Jeffrey Moore had experienced discrimination when the School District and the Ministry of Education failed to accommodate his needs in the delivery of educational services. The Tribunal decision was later overturned by the BC Supreme Court, and the Court of Appeal for BC dismissed Mr.



Frederick Moore with his son Jeffrey.

Moore's subsequent appeal. A final appeal was made by Mr. Moore, on behalf of his son, to the Supreme Court of Canada.

By unanimous decision the Supreme Court of Canada decided that the BC Human Rights Tribunal's original "finding of discrimination against Jeffrey Moore by the [School] District should be upheld, as should the individual orders, which reimburse the Moores for the cost of private schooling and award them damages." (Section 70 of the decision)

The court disagreed with the argument that Jeffrey should be compared to other students with special needs in deciding if he was subject to discrimination, stating that "for students with learning disabilities like Jeffrey's, special education is not the service, it is the means by which those students get meaningful access to the general education services available to all of British Columbia's students" (Section 28)

Justice Rosalie Abella's written decision contains the statement, "Adequate special education, therefore, is not a dispensable luxury. For those with severe learning disabilities, it is the ramp that provides access to the statutory commitment to education made to all children in British Columbia." (Section 5)

LDAO supports the right of all students with learning disabilities to adequate special education programs and services, including intensive evidence-based interventions for those who need them.



Elsewhere

BITS AND PIECES OF LEARNING DISABILITY NEWS COLLECTED FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

UNITED STATES

ADHD Takes a Toll Well Into Adulthood

The first large, population-based study to follow children with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) into adulthood shows that ADHD often doesn't "go away," and that children with ADHD are more likely to have other psychiatric disorders as adults. Although numbers were small, they also appear more likely to commit suicide and are often incarcerated as adults.

"Only 37.5 percent of the children we contacted as adults were free of these really worrisome outcomes," says William Barbaresi, MD, of Boston Children's Hospital, lead investigator on the study, published in the April 2013 issue of *Pediatrics* and online March 4. "That's a sobering statistic that speaks to the need to greatly improve the long-term treatment of children with ADHD and provide a mechanism for treating them as adults."

"This was a unique population based study of a large group of individuals with ADHD followed from childhood to adulthood," added Slavica Katusic, MD, lead Mayo Clinic investigator of the study.

ADHD is the most common neurodevelopmental disorder of childhood, affecting about 7 percent of all children and three times as many boys as girls. Most prior follow-up studies of ADHD have been small and focused on the severe end of the spectrum—like boys referred to pediatric psychiatric treatment facilities—rather than a cross-section of the ADHD population.

The long-running study, begun when Barbaresi was at the Mayo Clinic and

continued in collaboration with Mayo researchers, led by Katusic, followed all children in Rochester, Minn. who were born from 1976 through 1982, were still in Rochester at age 5 and whose families allowed access to their medical records. That amounted to 5,718 children, including 367 who were diagnosed with ADHD; of this group, 232 participated in the follow-up study. About three-quarters had received ADHD treatment as children.

"... we suffer from the misconception that ADHD is just an annoying childhood disorder..."

At follow-up, the researchers found:

- 29 percent of the children with ADHD still had ADHD as adults (ascertained through structured neuropsychiatric interviews).
- 57 percent of children with ADHD had at least one other psychiatric disorder as adults, as compared with 35 percent of controls. The most common were substance abuse/dependence, antisocial personality disorder, hypomanic episodes, generalized anxiety and major depression.
- Of the children who still had ADHD as adults, 81 percent had at least one other psychiatric disorder, as compared with 47 percent of those who no longer had ADHD and 35 percent of controls.
- 7 of the 367 children with ADHD (1.9 percent) had died at the time of study

recruitment, 3 of them from suicide. Of the 4,946 children without ADHD whose outcomes could be ascertained, only 37 children had died, 5 by suicide.

- 10 children with ADHD (2.7 percent) were incarcerated at the time of recruitment for the study.

"We suffer from the misconception that ADHD is just an annoying childhood disorder that's overtreated," says Barbaresi. "This couldn't be further from the truth. We need to have a chronic disease approach to ADHD as we do for diabetes. The system of care has to be designed for the long haul."

Barbaresi thinks the study findings may actually underestimate the bad outcomes of childhood ADHD. The study population in Rochester, Minn., was relatively heterogeneous and largely middle class, and the children tended to have good education and good access to health care. "One can argue that this is potentially a best-case scenario," Barbaresi says. "Outcomes could be worse in socio-economically challenged populations."

He advises parents of children with ADHD to ensure that their children are in high-quality treatment—and remain in treatment as they enter adolescence. Children should also be assessed for learning disabilities and monitored for conditions associated with ADHD, including substance use, depression and anxiety.

"Data indicate that the stimulant medications used to treat ADHD in children are also effective in adults, although adults tend not to be treated and may not be aware they have ADHD," Barbaresi says.

Elsewhere

FRANCE

Dyslexia International Launches Online Open Educational Resources

On October 5, 2012 Dyslexia International (DI) launched its free, online, open educational resources at www.dyslexia-international.org. DI's patron, HRH Princess Margaretha of Liechtenstein, declared the new site open at UNESCO's headquarters in Paris. The new DI site features an 'e-Campus' for teachers and trainers, a meeting place for education authorities, and a country-by-country directory of contacts. DI envisages building the e-Campus and its other open education resources as a joint venture that will gain momentum as more visitors share their expertise at a site that brings together teachers, trainers and education authorities. The organization's vision is to see specific reading difficulties addressed within education systems worldwide and be fully understood as an inhibitor to personal development and social integration unless it is identified and addressed.

Teachers and trainers will have global access to selected training materials that are both scientifically grounded and free of charge. From a lecture hall, film library, software section and reading room respectively, teachers can find free courses, presentations by researchers, films, articles and guides. Informal tests can be found at the test centre and a laboratory shows some of the recent scientific techniques used in research into dyslexia. Links are given for forums for the exchange of ideas on good teaching. Arabic, Chinese, Russian and



Spanish Language departments are under construction.

The e-Campus meets DI's objectives: to promote equal educational opportunities for those who struggle with reading and

"... global access to selected training materials free of charge ..."

writing, and free and fair education for all, by making teacher training the priority. It was established on research findings which showed that students with specific reading difficulties can be taught inclusively and effectively in mainstream education, provided their teachers are

trained to understand the nature of reading failure, how to identify it, and how to adapt their teaching.

Teachers who take advantage of the free online learning course will be equipped to bring new hope to at least 10 per cent of society's most excluded sector. There are 700 million people worldwide with specific reading difficulties. Dr Vincent Goetry, DI e-Campus coordinator for teachers and trainers, commented: "By using the free, online learning course, education authorities worldwide can disseminate continuously updated, professional development materials for teachers, or print out guides, where computer access is limited, for use throughout their entire school system free of charge. To date, English, French and Portuguese versions of the course are available. Arabic and Spanish versions are in production".

Education authorities that ensure all their teachers are trained to include those with reading difficulties will see their students' literacy levels rise. Teachers will find information on the nature of dyslexia and how it is addressed in other countries, statistics on literacy rates and other relevant information. They will be invited to exchange ideas on such matters as the costs to society when reading failure is not addressed, school drop-out, marginalisation, and appropriate teaching at an early stage by trained teachers that brings about social inclusion.

Source: www.globalrainbowfoundation.org/dyslexia-international-news-release#comment-21572



UNITED KINGDOM

Biological Marker of Dyslexia Discovered: Ability to Consistently Encode Sound Undergirds the Reading Process

Though learning to read proceeds smoothly for most children, as many as one in 10 is estimated to suffer from dyslexia, a constellation of impairments unrelated to intelligence, hearing or vision that make learning to read a struggle. Now, Northwestern University researchers report they have found a biological mechanism that appears to play an important role in the reading process.

Auditory Neuroscience Laboratory, Kraus and her colleagues found that the inconsistency with which the poorest readers encode sound could be "fixed" through training.

In that study, children with reading impairments were fitted for a year with assistive listening devices that transmitted their teacher's voice directly into their

"... good readers profit from a stable neural representation of sound ..."

ears. After a year, the children showed improvement not only in reading but also in the consistency with which their brains encoded speech sounds, particularly consonants.

"Use of the devices focused youngsters' brains on the "meaningful" sounds coming from their teacher, diminishing other,

"... after a year, students no longer required assistive devices ..."

extraneous distractions," said Kraus. "After a year of use, the students had honed their auditory systems and no longer required the assistive devices to keep their reading and encoding advantage."

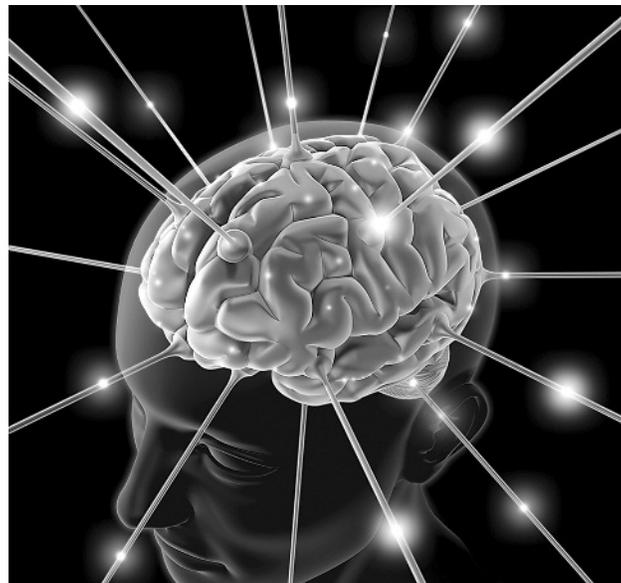
People rarely have difficulty encoding vowel sounds, which are relatively simple and long, according to Kraus. It is consonant sounds -- sounds which are shorter and more acoustically complex -- that are most likely to be incorrectly categorized by the brain.

"Understanding the biological mechanisms of reading puts us in a better position to both understand how normal reading works and to ameliorate it where it goes awry," says Kraus.

"Our results suggest that good readers profit from a stable neural representation of sound, and that children with inconsistent neural responses are likely at a disadvantage when learning to read," Kraus adds. "The good news is that response consistency can be improved with auditory training."

Decades of research from laboratories worldwide have shown that reading ability is associated with auditory skills, including auditory memory and attention, the ability to rhyme sounds and the ability to categorize rapidly occurring sounds.

www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/02/130219172159.htm



We discovered a systematic relationship between reading ability and the consistency with which the brain encodes sounds," says Nina Kraus, Hugh Knowles Professor of Neurobiology, Physiology and Communication. "Unstable Representation of Sound: A Biological Marker of Dyslexia," co-authored by Jane Hornickel, will appear in the Feb. 20 issue of The Journal of Neuroscience.

Recording the automatic brain wave responses of 100 school-aged children to speech sounds, the Northwestern researchers found that the very best readers encoded the sound most consistently while the poorest readers encoded it with the greatest inconsistency. Presumably, the brain's response to sound stabilizes when children learn to successfully connect sounds with their meanings.

Happily biology is not destiny. In prior work in Northwestern's

The ADHD Files

by Judith Wiener, PhD

The Ripple Effect of ADHD: Peer & Family Relationships

Sarah, the mother of a 10 year old boy with ADHD, screens telephone calls from her son Jeremy's school because she knows that they likely will involve complaints about his challenges with getting his work done in the classroom, failure to complete homework, and annoying his teacher and classmates due to his constant fidgeting, interrupting, and getting out of his seat.

"... children with ADHD have profound effects on their families ..."

She tries to work with him, but feels that she is incompetent to help him. She has ADHD herself, so finds it very hard to be organized about reminding Jeremy to do his work, bring all the materials he needs to school, etc. Joan, the mother of 14-year old Sophie is not sure where to turn because her daughter, who has ADHD, has been the victim of cyber-bullying, is moody, and argues constantly. Sophie and her father have conflicts about almost everything – money, getting to school in the morning, curfew, and poor school grades. Sophie recently expressed that she thinks about suicide.

My graduate students and I have been doing research on the "ripple" effect of ADHD for several years. Children and teens with ADHD have profound effects on their families, peers, and teachers and the

reactions of families, peers, and teachers have an impact on their views of themselves, their behaviour, and their emotional wellbeing. I am summarizing some of this research below but more information can be obtained by visiting our website: www.adhdld.com.

With regard to family relationships, our research team has found that teens with ADHD and their parents engage in very high levels of conflict and that the fathers of these kids tend to blame their kids for the conflict. Parents of children with ADHD are just as involved with supporting their children's education as other parents but they feel that this involvement is very challenging – takes a lot of time and energy, they are not supported by teachers, and they feel incompetent to help. As might be expected given these challenges, parents of children and adolescents with ADHD experience extremely high levels of parenting stress. This stress is worse when the parents have ADHD themselves. Although both mothers and fathers of children and teens with ADHD experience stress due to their children's behaviours, some mothers also experience parenting stress because they feel their partners and extended family are not supportive.

With regard to peer relations, our research team has found that almost half of children and adolescents with ADHD are bullies or victims of bullying by peers and teens with ADHD report that the main reason they are victims of bullying is because they have

ADHD. The high rate of bullying in kids with ADHD is a significant long-term problem because childhood bullies are at risk of being abusive to their partners, children, and co-workers when they become adults. Victims are more likely than other kids to be anxious, depressed and suicidal as kids, and when they are adults to be victimized by their partners and employers.

Our research on the ripple effect of ADHD has many implications for teachers, school administrators, mental health professionals, and others who might provide support for children and teens with ADHD and their parents. Teachers and school administrators need to be aware of the parenting stress that parents of children and teens with ADHD typically feel and that this stress is worse when they are blamed for their children's challenging behaviours. It is therefore important to make it a priority to develop a trusting and

"... examining reasons why teens with ADHD are bullies and victims ..."

collaborative relationship with parents by being empathic and nonjudgmental. Some parents may be as disorganized as their children not because they don't care, but because they have the same problems with planning and organization. Joint problem



solving to identify actions that improve the situation without putting undue stress on families is extremely important. It is

“... teens with ADHD and their parents engage in very high levels of conflict ...”

necessary to strike a balance between having expectations for performance of children and adolescents with ADHD and accepting that they struggle to focus, turn in work, and in some cases be cooperative.

Teachers and schools as a whole are powerful in preventing bullying. Teachers and school administrators should model respectful communication with students with ADHD, show that they appreciate them for who they are, and recognize their strengths. It is often helpful for school staff to monitor playgrounds, hallways, and cafeterias where bullying typically occurs in order to prevent it. Kids are less likely to be bullied when they have friends, so placing students with ADHD in situations where they might meet compatible peers could be helpful. Education about cyber bullying, especially in middle school and secondary school, is essential. Bullying of all kinds is more likely to occur when there are bystanders who provide encouragement just by being there and witnessing it. Encouraging potential bystanders to face to face and cyber

bullying to step forward and let adults know and then taking action on the information is critical.

Although medication often controls ADHD symptoms, it usually is not sufficient treatment. Mental health professionals should implement evidence-based treatment such as parent management training for parents of young children. When children move into adolescence it is especially important to involve them in treatment. Family therapy, and mindfulness cognitive behaviour therapy for teens with ADHD and their parents are sometimes helpful. Our recent research showed that mindfulness cognitive behaviour therapy for teens with ADHD and their parents is associated with reductions in parenting stress, and teen inattention, social, and oppositional problems.

Our research has many implications for government policy. Parents of children with autism and other developmental disabilities are eligible for supports such as respite care. Parents of children with ADHD, however, do not receive this type of support. Even though many are very stressed and need a break, they can't hire a teenage babysitter because of the severity of their children's behavioural challenges. There are long wait lists for treatment, and then treatment may be brief and inadequate because children's mental health agencies do not have sufficient resources or are unaware of the treatments that are supported by research.

There is still considerable research that needs to be done. We are expanding our research in order to find out how parents of 13 to 18 year old teens with ADHD, cope with their parenting stress and how their parenting stress affects their parenting. We are also investigating how parents of teens with ADHD can support their children's learning. With regard to peer relations, we are examining the nature of the friendships and romantic relationships of adolescents with ADHD and the reasons why teens with ADHD are bullies and victims (which may help us understand how to prevent these problems). Teen

“... our research has many implications for government policy ...”

participants in our studies (including teens with and without ADHD) can choose between being paid or receiving community service hour credits. We also provide a report on the educational and social and emotional functioning of our adolescent participants that outlines strategies for parents and the teens themselves, and gives suggestions for approaches for educating the teens. Readers who want to know more about how to participate in our studies can access our website (www.adhdld.com), email us at adhdld@utoronto.ca, or telephone 416-978-0933.



By Carter Hammett



The Faces of Invisibility

Cross-Cultural Interpretations of LD

Despite greater understanding and awareness of learning disabilities, ADHD and other invisible disabilities, these challenges are often perceived far differently by people in other cultures. The end result is an additional layer of invisibility that can result in even greater shame and isolation. For those ready to speak out such as the people in this story, cultural competence and a willingness to ask for help, have all been valuable first steps towards embracing differences.

Every day Mabel Nipshank wakes up with gratitude. Every day Mabel Nipshank thanks her creator for blessing her with gifts.

It's quite a change from the feelings she had as a child growing up. The 64-year-old, Vancouver-based, shelter support worker had always thought she was stupid.

"I grew up in a Metis village of about 300 people in northern Alberta. I struggled and wouldn't apply for jobs that involved thinking," she says. "I thought the only thing I had to offer was my looks."

"I was articulate and grew up speaking Cree. My grandparents would say I was smart and I would pick up things, but in a school setting things were different. All the kids would tease me."

Somehow, she managed to cope and learned to get by with her reading and writing challenges. Then, after returning to school in her 40's, an instructor identified her struggle by name: dyslexia.

"I was never ashamed about not 'getting' something. If she (the instructor) said it out loud, I would get it. She said I was an audio learner.

"I have a hard time reading columns; tables as well," she says. "I have a hard time reading recipes or anything with a 'tail'. And I'm a horrible, horrible speller! Spell Check is the best thing that ever came out for me. At work, when documenting activity for the day, she "double-and-triple checks everything."

Proud of her culture, Nipshank points to the rich oral traditions that formed such a deep part of her Cree heritage

"It really shaped me," she says. "Elders teach you in a way you have to figure out yourself, by storytelling. If my grandmother caught me doing something wrong, she'd sit me down and tell me a story so I'd figure the problem out."

And storytelling perhaps, was the bridge between the oral traditions of her culture and auditory processing for Nipshank. Both played to her learning and processing

strengths. Indeed, visual processing and spatial relations appeared to be at the root of her learning struggles. In this case, Nipshank believes that her cultural belief systems played an active role in helping her cope. "My culture has always been

"... I thought the only thing I had to offer was my looks ..."

accepting of difference," she says. "And as more studies surface regarding disabilities, there's definitely more sensitivity and more of a push towards different methods of teaching."

But this is certainly not the case across all cultures. Because of its invisibility, learning disabilities (LDs) and ADHD are often hard to detect. Easily misinterpreted, LDs might be perceived as a mental health condition or laziness or an intellectual disability. Furthermore, they might be seen as a "white" or "urban" condition.

"I have worked with individuals with learning disabilities and families where one or more members have a learning disability from both collectivist and individualistic cultures. If the individual has been diagnosed with a learning

"... my culture has always been accepting of difference ..."

disability it is typically perceived as an intellectual deficit that acts as an obstacle to learning, school success, relationships with family and friends along with future success. The learning disability is often seen as "unfair" and unique to the individual/family. For those involved in educational systems unfamiliar with, or unprepared for, students with learning disabilities they are often greatly frustrated by the lack of understanding and services available to them," says doctor of education and Ryerson instructor, Audrey Huberman.

A 1998 study by Selway and Ashman claims that German and Australian communities are most accepting of learning disabilities, followed by English, Italian, Chinese, Greek and Arabic communities. Other stats, however, suggest that "families who see disability as a punishment for past wrongs may be reluctant to seek intervention for loved ones with LD. (Wong, 2005)

It's no secret that racist undertones, however subtle, can flow throughout the attitudes of a dominant culture as well. Visible minorities with disabilities wind up often paying the price in a systemic context.

The National Association for the Education of African American Children with Learning Disabilities (AACLD) alludes to 2008 statistics on its web site, stating that, "although African Americans represented just 15% of all students, they represented 21% of students in the special education category of specific learning disabilities, 29% in the category of emotional disturbance and 31% in the category of mental retardation." The web site further goes on to say that minority children with disabilities present a huge discrepancy when it comes to drop out rates compared to whites.

The condition may also be hidden from others in the family and this can have devastating consequences says doctor of education Audrey Huberman.

"An individual with a learning disability, from a collectivist culture, may experience conflict around issues of identity, inclusion, and belonging. Collectivist cultures differ from individualist cultures in their tendency to value and promote the needs of the whole over its parts. Individuals with diverse abilities, needs and behaviors, such as those with learning disabilities can present as obstacles to the collective framework. Therefore individual differences may be disguised, denied, dismissed and diminished. The individual may be left to experience shame, marginalization, exclusion and an incomplete sense of belonging and cultural

identity. S/he is denied the interventions and accommodations that lead to individual and collective success.”

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One day Cindy Wang, a Chinese social worker, now 37, asked her mother how she had explained her daughter’s non verbal learning disability and ADHD to the rest of the family.

“She said there is no language for it and that is very telling in a cultural context,” says Wang.

“The closest thing is to describe someone as ‘slow’ or with a genetic deficiency or incapable of learning. There is no distinction made between Down’s Syndrome and central auditory processing disorder; not even acknowledging that there is such a thing!

“My uncle, who is in his 70s, once said to my mother, ‘well this obviously comes from your side of the family.’ Since then, there have been some signs of similar conditions within younger members of the family, so my uncle keeps quiet. He does try his best and tries to be more sensitive now. Whenever he sees me, he refers to it as ‘your condition’ but still can’t name what I have.”

“Unfortunately, individualist cultures, while comfortable with individual differences, are often equally uncomfortable with

“... the closest thing is to describe someone as ‘slow’ ...”

“disability” as are collective cultures, however due to reasons of personal discomfort rather than concerns around the collective good. Resolving the problems that arise from a culture’s discomfort with “difference” regardless of the reason -- personal or collective -- rests in the cause

of the problem. Therefore, cultural frameworks require re-adjustment. When collectivist cultures reframe individual differences to opportunities for novel perspectives those with learning disabilities can receive the support they need and contribute to the collective. When individualistic cultures reframe disability to “different ability” barriers can diminish and new opportunities, lifestyles and economies can develop. This reframing is essential. Denial, disguising, dismissing and diminishing rarely work for long as learning disabilities do not hide themselves or go away with time. However, with proper support they certainly can be compensated and accommodated for along with engaged for the novel perspectives



with which they afford the individual,” says Huberman. .

Accessing support is definitely one aspect towards resolving the situation, but some cultures engage in behaviours perceived as “normal,” which may in fact be seen as inappropriate or even pathological through other eyes. Other complications can include elements such as differing diagnostic criteria and rating systems. The standard reference in North America, for example, is of course, the Diagnostic Statistical Manual, an update of which is due for publication later this year. In the United Kingdom, however, the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) criteria is more restrictive. It may also explain

lower rates of ADHD (for example) in the UK than in the States.

Of further interest is a 2008 study where Lebanese teachers and parents were presented with vignettes of kids with different ADHD subtypes and asked to describe the behaviours they observed. The

“... individualist cultures are often uncomfortable with ‘disability’ ...”

teachers did not observe any medical conditions and many of the parents identified the behaviours as being positive when the child was a boy. Therefore, “the recognition of ADHD symptoms and the labeling of distress as being deviant or pathological depend on the norms behaviour accepted in a particular culture,” noted Rousseau et al (2008).

So, it seems reasonable to suggest that LDs and ADHD (and possibly other invisible disabilities) are contextual, and depends on a variety of sociocultural variables and the individual’s relationship with them. Nonetheless, the individual must learn appropriate coping and supportive strategies and

accommodations must take the environment into account when treatment is offered or available.

The sociocultural perspective is rather new, but it does open up new avenues for analysis and insights into attitudes of some cultural groups regarding LDs and ADHD. It also broadens the biological and medical perspectives that have, until now, been the primary methods used for research in this area. And even that has been rather scant.

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A 2008 story published online in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, suggested neurological

differences in the way Chinese and English speakers processed information. The study found that English speakers tended to have “functional abnormalities” in the back parts of the brain associated with reading. On the other hand, Chinese speakers with dyslexia tended to have brain abnormalities in both function and structure related to reading in the left middle frontal region of the brain.

The research is based on brain scans performed on 16 Chinese speakers with dyslexia and 16 of their peers with normal reading ability during the course of a couple of tests. The researchers explained that the Chinese language uses characters while English uses a letter alphabet.

“At the functional level, it’s easy to understand why Chinese and English speakers use different parts of the brain to read language,” says Li-Hai Tan, a professor of linguistics and neuroscience at the University of Hong Kong, and author of the paper.

“The different brain networks accommodate the different features of English and Chinese. The two systems are dramatically different. Chinese is

“... the ability to process syllables into phonemes is a key issue in dyslexia ...”

pictographic and English is more phonological, or sound-based.”

But he says that it is striking that the Chinese children with dyslexia had less grey matter in the middle frontal gyrus, and that was probably a function of genetics, since this phenomenon is thought to be largely genetic.

This would suggest that the genetic make-up of Chinese speaking children with dyslexia is different from that of English speakers with the same disorder since they have reductions of grey matter in different sites of the brain

A 2004 study published in Nature magazine, suggested that learning Chinese



creates specific demands on the human brain for remembering visual patterns.

English readers tend to utilize areas for phoneme processing. The ability to (analyze) process syllables into phonemes—the smallest unit of linguistic measurement to convey meaning or distinction of a word in any given language—is a key issue in dyslexia, suggest researchers Joey Tang and Brian Butterworth

They go on to suggest that reported dyslexia rates are higher in English (approximately five per cent) than Chinese. Returns on a Beijing survey of 8000 school children indicated that 1.5% were dyslexic.

In his study, Butterworth argued for a universal basis in the brain that affects phonemic analysis. Tan, however concluded that “the biological abnormality of impaired reading is dependent on culture.”

If anything, the research suggests that there is much more work yet to be done.

Solutions?

“Five-to-seven years ago, the world was a different place,” says Rondon Rollocks, a special events project manager living with dyslexia and ADHD. “Dragon and other apps weren’t around. It was a completely different world and now my life has opened up.”

As an Afro-Canadian growing up in Toronto, Rollocks didn’t know he was dyslexic. Simple things seemed impossible.

“I was always labelled as having “potential.” None of the testing I ever did identified me as ‘dyslexic.’” But, he notes, at 16-or-17, he didn’t possess the fundamentals in grammar that would allow him to go further. “In high school, I kept going for extra help but was told I lost the chance to go to university.”

His reading is very slow and he says he has to look at the shape of the word to determine what it is. “My brain looks at

word shapes instead of processing phonetically.”

Despite these challenges, he has done well, establishing himself as a prominent entrepreneur with a host of accommodations and the ability to delegate at least some people, tasks he finds difficult to perform. He has been successful in part because of a sprawling network and a supportive family.

“I came from an exceptional family that has done well. I don’t have an accent and I’m very confident. I don’t think my experience is typical because I’ve always done well. Also, growing up middle class offered access to money and to power.”



For Rondon Rollocks, the focus has shifted from “culture” to “communication.” People (in organizations like the workplace) just want to get their message across,” he says. “We’re looking for common ground to get the message out and people just want a clear way to communicate. There are many different reasons why people can’t understand. At some point the message has to shift to a place where the meaning becomes more clear, such as walking

people through a combination of steps to convey information. It’s time consuming, yes, but the alternative is chaos.”

Still, others aren’t so fortunate and have to sometimes choose between obtaining help or risk being shamed by a culture that doesn’t understand or accept invisible disabilities.

Cindy Wang points out that, coming from a collectivist culture, “it takes a person with enormous will power and a strong self esteem to get support, regardless of community acceptance. You need to find your network, your community and support elsewhere, if you have to,” she says, with a slightly exasperated sigh.

And once that support has been accessed, it can be transformative says Huberman.

“As a helping professional, I rarely see individuals or families that deny a learning disability or any other issue. While, they may call it something else or not know what it is, a problem has been acknowledged -- an essential first step in seeking help. In my experience, once the family and/or the individual has come for help, a conversation around explaining and normalizing a learning disability is possible and can lead to the understanding that their learning disability is “manageable” and even the underlying cause of the personal qualities that they are proud of.

behaviour, poverty and separation from family can all have an impact on learning.

“Unfortunately, the current point system, suggests that Canada values “able” immigrants over those less able. The “indicators” that an applicant may have a learning disability overlap those of poverty, minority status, lack of education and opportunity. Therefore, to prevent the further mistreatment and disempowerment of those on the margins - women, those with mental illness, the poor and uneducated along with individuals with learning disabilities and/or physical disability - an immigration system based on a commitment to inclusion rather than “ability” is required,” says Audrey Huberman.

Fortunately, a greater sensitivity to the needs of minorities, early intervention and identification strategies, an awareness of

“... it takes a person with enormous will power and a strong self esteem to get support ...”

differing learning models through universal education and other strategies are slowly merging—albeit at a glacial pace—to assist people from various cultures.

“... the current point system suggests that Canada values ‘able’ immigrants over those less able ...”

Which is great if you have acquired knowledge and ownership of your LD. But the denial of LDs and ADHD by some cultures also presents another set of implications for the Canadian workforce. Current annual immigration levels hover at around 250,000 people. If we’re to accept that about 10 per cent of the population has some form of LD, this means that approximately 25,000 people with potential LDs are settling into the country every year.

In her 2002 workshop on ESL Speakers with LD, Robin Schwarz identified several reasons why the presence of LD might be misidentified or harder to detect in ESL speakers. Behaviours that may be perceived as normal or possibly even healthy, such as speaking out of turn and rote learning in some cultures may in fact suggest LD in North American culture. Furthermore, phenomena such as culture shock, poor health, gender status and





I Just Don't Learn The Way You Learn

A PROFILE OF AUTHOR/ARTIST TORY WOOLLCOTT

By Kenneth E. Seaton

Tory Woollcott is one-of-a-kind, the “goofy” kind, but still one-of-a-kind! She’s an award-winning writer, artist, comic and one ferocious supporter of dyslexia awareness. Tory is also a proud Canadian who graduated from the University of Toronto with an Honours BA in archeology and Near Eastern studies.

She’s also studied graphic design at George Brown and is now a working full time as an adaptive technology trainer with LEARNstyle.

Tory has become a campaigner for dyslexia awareness; has appeared on CBC Radio’s Metro Morning, Ontario Morning, and Canada AM, and been featured in many articles. She is spreading the word on dyslexia by speaking at events including: Word on the Street and Right to Read, as well as at the University of Toronto and at a variety of public schools around the city.

Her highly successful graphic comic book *Mirror Mind: Growing up Dyslexic* tied for first prize in the General Category of the

SPACE Awards. It’s her story on the challenges she faced growing up in Toronto with dyslexia. Tory did and does things on her own terms and her book frankly illustrates how she was misunderstood by some of her teachers and teased by her classmates. It describes how she eventually got the assessment, the help and the education that she was missing.

“... experts view it cross-culturally as a survival tool crucial to human advancement ...”

One can’t help but laugh when you meet Tory Woollcott: not at her but *with* her. She exudes humour and it doesn’t just seep out of her--it leaps out and grabs your attention. There is a fine line between laughing at someone and laughing with someone and Tory seems to have been

able to discover how to blur that line to her advantage.

When asked when she first started to use humour as a defence mechanism she chuckled, drummed her fingers on the desk and said, “Oh God... in the uterus! Always always...the terrible thing is, I’m not that funny! If I were actually funny it would probably work a lot better. I’ve found that if you say something ridiculous and then just wait with a ridiculous face on long enough, someone will giggle.” I wondered if they were laughing at her or with her. Grinning she said, “I don’t care so long as they are laughing and I can get out of it, I’m thrilled!”

While doing research for my interview with Tory I found some interesting You Tube videos of her that were filmed in libraries. Since we were meeting at the Toronto Reference Library; I had to ask her if she found it ironic that she seemed to be interviewed a lot in libraries? And given that she has dyslexia, was there some sort of hidden message here? She laughed,

agreed that it was ironic and said, "I love libraries so much, especially the reference library. It's like nothing else."

"When I was young and I would go to libraries and try to find a book and I would say that I'm not very good at reading, the librarians would always find ways around it. Librarians are so great, so invested and I think that they are a lot like teachers in that it is more than a job, it is a completion of something!"

She goes on to say that most people who have any sort of LD really know pretty early on that there is something a bit different about them and everybody else. For her it was probably going into kindergarten, because everybody else was getting something out of books, "(It was) something that I really wasn't understanding and I really liked the pictures but I never really felt an interest in these word things that everybody else seemed to be into," she says. "Honestly, when I was very young, I just thought that everyone else was crazy: Why are you worrying about this when we could be looking at the pictures."

In her book she writes: *"I made a decision then that has followed me for the rest of my life. I would keep everything separate. Home would be different. I would not make my mom sad because of what happened to me at*

"... of particular importance is the structured nature of how lessons are delivered ..."

school or with my friends or anything. I would never tell. And I never did. This book is the first she has heard of it. I became a secret keeper I think that I will always be like this." Was she still a secret keeper? "Yea I am. Actually, when I first started noticing that there was something different about me I was mostly invested in keeping it a secret. That need-to-keep-it-a-secret was the occupation of everything, it wasn't great but I was so preoccupied with trying to cover it up that any other emotion would kind of take second fiddle to it."

We are having our chat in one of the reference library's new study cubicles. It's made of glass and sort of looks like a fish bowl. While functional, there's a lot of distractions going on outside. During our interview Tory's eyes are constantly roaming, but now they lose focus as she stares off into space. She remembers that when it was story time in school she would run and hide or do something goofy or loud in order to get ejected from the room. "Anything-to-avoid seems to be something that all of us that are bundled into this LD package do," she laughs, "Seems to be our main tactic."

Tory goes on to say that she has a self-esteem war going on and that she kind of likes her defence mechanism of being goofy and always having a joke handy or being silly. "The way I communicate, the way I speak, I know comes from the dyslexia and from the way my brain is wired. It allows me to communicate and understand things in that way, it is a bonus. I certainly think that the bonuses [of having dyslexia] outweigh the negatives."

Fire leaps from her eyes and she leans forward, pushing into my space as she declares, "I really don't like the term 'disabled.' I don't like it especially for 'learning disabled.' No, I'm not, I can learn anything; I just don't learn the way you learn. But I think that it is an inaccurate word and I think that's what bothers me about it; I hate it!"

"Spelling Disabled"

Tory asserts she is not learning disabled if anything she is spelling disabled. "I don't like somebody who is not me putting me into a learning disabled box that I have not named." She prefers the term, 'learning difference' instead of 'learning disabled' and whenever she says, 'LD' she is talking 'learning difference.'

"I'm kind of done with this LD being a negative; certainly all my life I thought of it as being a negative and thought of myself as being less than everyone else." She looks at me speaking softly. "You know that feeling keeps creeping in to me and it's that little dark monster that I don't think that I'm ever going to get rid of."

She's now working fulltime with kids, loving it and ready to turn her humour on anyone who doesn't get these kids. "But every single kid that I work with is certainly not less than anybody! I talk to these kids and they're smarter, they're faster, they're coming up with stuff. Like yeah, some of them have a delay, right. So I will say to a kid how do you spell 'red', and you're going wait for a second. It doesn't come to them right away, and then they say 'red,' R-E-D but that delay allowed all sorts of crazy stuff to happen in there."

She stops to catch her breath and plunges on. "I say, 'okay, spell 'red' and it takes them a minute to spell 'red' but what else did you think about? 'I thought about apples, I thought about Little Red Riding Hood, I thought about the colour red, I thought about blood, I thought about this, I thought about that!' Like there is the same amount of brain juice happening in this kid

"... but instead we shrug it off as someone who is simply off-kilter ..."

as is happening in any other kid, it's just that the way that this idea is expressed is just taking a second longer."

I asked her if there was anything special that she'd like to say to our readers. She grins and says, "I just feel that there is this negative attitude towards something that is in fact, positive. It's like, oh, dyslexia is so bad, but if it's good enough for Einstein it's good enough for me. It's fine and like ADD, okay...have you hung out with a kid who has ADD? They are awesome, they're awesome!"

"That's the thing that I want to get off my chest!" She thumps the table, "Let them play video games, let them goof off, let them read comic books, let them do things for fun, let them be good at something, don't make them do their homework all the time. All these kids ever do is their homework and they get yelled at for not paying attention in school, let them play soccer; just let them go and goof off with



their friends and just be teenagers, you know. It is so important.”

I was curious about her “secret keeper status” and how her Mom reacted to the book. “My Mom was very surprised and sad, sad that I haven’t told her since. My Mom and I have a really excellent relationship. She was sad in that she felt that she probably would have helped, but I didn’t want to tell her. In that when I was home, I was home and this was a different world and when I am home I am with my parents and I am safe and everything is fine!”

With the success of *Mirror Mind* I was curious if we could expect a sequel or was she working on something else? She replied that interesting enough her next book will be titled Toronto to Tuscany. It will be a sort of travel diary which evolved from a month-long journey that Tory and her boyfriend took through Italy. *Mirror Mind: The University Years*, is still in the works.

However, the second book is proving to be much trickier to write. “I’ve got the story mapped out but as I was writing it, it started to become more and more about my grandmother because my grandmother had become very sick and passed away recently.” Her voice continues with a catch in it, “I wanted to talk about that and the story kept changing and evolving, becoming this different thing and moving

away from the LD and the focus of that. I keep having this debate with myself. Do I want to continue to focus my books on being about having dyslexia or do I want to focus them on the experience of me being me?”

Having sat with Tory for over an hour-and-a-half now and listened to her story I now, like her readers, feel that I know her a little better. I felt comfortable asking her if she was going to grab a banner and charge to the front as an advocate for dyslexia. Laughing, she skirts the question by saying that she loves working at LEARNstyle and that they have given her the opportunity to work with kids, and as a result, she is taking her mirrormind.ca blog more seriously.

“I do want to start blogging with more of a direction than I have been in the past because my blog was more about my art and goofing off, it was just a fun thing and I’m starting to realize that there aren’t very many advocates for dyslexia who are themselves dyslexic. I’m starting to see how important that is!” As to being more of an advocate she says, “Yes I hope to. I view the LD community as a tribe and I just want to look out for my group. They are my “peeps” and I just want to do anything I can to help out my group! I just love LD kids; I think that they are the best and I just want to hug them and tell that everything is going to be okay!”

TORY-TESTED AND OK'D TECHNOLOGY

- Word Q software helps the user with typing and proofreading by providing features such as word prediction, highlighting, and auditory feedback. It can also read back text as the user types.
- Dragon speech recognition software types as the user talks and it allows the user to use their voice to create and edit documents or emails. It can also be used to launch applications, open files, manipulate the mouse, etc.
- Smart Ideas is concept-mapping software used as a visual learning tool that helps the user to develop and organize written assignments, and understand complex ideas. It includes extensive clip art galleries and a multi-language template library.
- There is also Kurzweil an award winning integrated literacy software that reads text aloud from digital, online and print formats. It provides reading, writing and test taking support.
- AudioNote allows the user to take notes synced to audio via note-taking software. It combines the functionality of note-taking and voice recording in a downloadable app.
- Or go old school by using your smart phone to take photos of things that you need to remember, to buy, where you parked your car, etc.
- She also uses a cheap plastic fifteen-inch ruler to help her focus on what she is reading by placing it beneath the line that she’s reading. Its function is to block out the words and sentences she doesn’t need yet.



Sign Me Up For Camp!

By Deana Collins

For decades, summer camps have been a hallmark of Canadian summers. Fortunately, kids with LDs and other neurological disabilities aren't left out in the cold here as they have a wide variety of camp options available to them. Deana Collins offers a primer on a great Canadian tradition...

With the school year ending and summer fast approaching, many parents with children affected by LD are beginning to feel the anxiety connected to an abundance of 'idle time', as well as decreased supervision and structure to their children's daily routines.

An important philosophy adopted by summer camps that specialize in campers with learning disabilities involves the decreased use of competition by athletic coaches, art instructors and counsellors alike. Professionals in the field agree that stress is greatly reduced in camp populations with decreased (mild-to-moderate) rates of competition. Moreover, levels of co-operation and sportsmanship increase when campers aren't consistently made opponents. Campers learn and

develop good citizenry and, more importantly, model healthy attitudes and appropriate behaviours when they aren't posited in competition.

Fortunately, Ontario offers a cornucopia of summer camps in licensed recreational facilities specially designed to help stimulate and develop the young minds of kids and teens with all forms of LD.

Whether you're looking for a day camp that fosters independence or a more socially-intensive overnight camp that promotes team work and sportsmanship, the choices are impressive and help to direct parents in ways that foster the interpersonal growth of their kids. This article features but a fraction of summer camp options. For a more comprehensive list and site overviews, consult an Internet search engine (i.e. Google).

Camp Towhee

Nestled in the scenic waterfront landscape of Haliburton, Camp Towhee delivers a residential, therapeutic program for children and youth with LD and related psychosocial difficulties. Camp Towhee, operated by the Integra Foundation, a year-round Torontonion mental health centre, has been rewarding kids with positive camp experiences since 1968. Ensuring high staff-to-camper ratios and programming that addresses individualized camper needs, Camp Towhee takes great pride in its work and invites parents to explore! Please visit www.camptowhee.ca for details.

Camp Kodiak

Camp Kodiak is an integrated (20% of campers are without identified disability) residential camp primarily for children and teens with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) but also catering to other forms of LD, including non-verbal forms and Asperger Syndrome. Over 230 campers ranging in age from six-to-18 come from all over the world to participate in a wide variety of self-esteem building camp experiences. Although Camp Kodiak boasts a low camper-to-staff ratio, it's not an appropriate choice for individuals with extreme behavioural problems. For more information, please visit www.campkodiak.com.

Camp representatives report that their summer programs are so successful because children with LD commonly lack confidence, and that the camp experience markedly builds confidence in a multitude of unique ways. Given that things most important to kids are harder to reach for





those with LD (things such as school, sports and extra-curricular activities that include socializing and maintaining friendships). Camp programs now offer up to 50 different activities, including such things as the Red Cross swimming program, water-skiing, knee-boarding, wake-boarding, sailing, canoeing, kayaking, team sports, tennis, archery, dance, pottery, sketching, painting, sculpture, crafts, drama, photography, computers, high ropes and rock-climbing--to name a few!

“... enhancing social skills & improving self esteem ...”

Camp Kirk

Since its inception in 1993, Camp Kirk another residential (overnight) summer camp has been devoted to nurturing kids aged six-to-13 with any form of LD. Its mission is to share the “magic” and life-affirming impact of summer camp with exceptional kids. Camp Kirk boasts an extremely high staff/camper ratio (30:36) and gives each camper the individualized attention and support they need, through one-one-one support and individualized activity plans. It offers a vast array of athletic, academic and social pursuits. Please visit www.campkirk.com for more information

Camp Winston

Another long-standing camp, Camp Winston provides inspiring recreational opportunities for kids with complex neurological disorders who need highly specialized support. Located on Sparrow Lake in Muskoka region, weekend retreats and week-long retreats are offered throughout the year.

According to their web site, Camp Winston’s primary focus is to set our children up for success. They operate four, two-week summer sessions attended by a total of 120 campers aged 6 – 12 years from across Canada. There is also a teen program for ages 13 – 17. In most cases, this is the first time in their lives they feel welcome and secure enough to participate without being rejected or alienated by their peers. Skills are learned both socially and through camp offerings, many experienced for the first time by campers. Winston is notable for the fact that a wide cross section of campers are represented, including those with ADHD, OCD, Tourette’s Syndrome and autism spectrum disorder. For more information, visit them on the web at <http://www.campwinston.com/>

Camp Kennebec

Camp Kennebec, another overnight camp specializing in the advancement of children six years and older with LD has been devoted to campers with a wide range of exceptionalities since 1967. Kids with

Autism, Asperger’s, ASD, ADD, ADHD, OCD, Tourette’s Syndrome, anxiety, shyness, learning and various social and behavioural difficulties can choose between overnight camp sessions that last from one-six weeks. Camp Kennebec promotes flexible daily schedules, and staffers strive to make each day a memorable blend of individually-chosen waterfront, land-based, creative and artistic activities. Outings to movies and provincial parks, camping trips to a private island, theme days and special events mark the uniqueness of this camp, and delicious, nutritionally-balanced meals feature fresh-baked bread, salad bar, homemade soups and desserts. A 2:1 camper-to-staff ratio includes teachers, child/youth, social and developmental workers and comprises a dynamic leadership team that includes intern programs for young adults. An optional fee-for-service one-on-one academic tutoring with on-site educators is also available. Please visit www.campkennebec.com for more information.

The camps featured in this article share a common vision: To enhance the social skills and thereby improve the self-esteem of their campers. Since many campers are often “loners” without best friends and strong social networks, these mandates are paramount, and most campers agree that their time spent at camp was the time of their lives!



A Few Of My Favourite Apps

FOR PEOPLE WITH ADHD AND LD

By Mark Kawate



Technology means progress, and we must use this technology to further ourselves. If we don't, there is no point to the technology beyond the concept. This means adapting the way we behave with technology to be efficient and useful, weeding out the distractions and enhancing the day-to-day quality of our lives.

"... apps are merely tools to help us effect a positive change in our quality of life ..."

Before I start gushing about apps that are out there and how amazingly effective or important these new technologies are for people with ADHD/LD, I need to address a key problem within our community.

Apps are merely tools to help us effect a positive change in our quality of life. Please keep this in mind while inserting their use into your own daily lives. ADHD/LDers can be predisposed to distraction by novelty, and there are many "shiny" apps that will cause distraction rather than help. It is important to look at how we use the technology, from touchscreen smartphone apps to the Internet, and even the devices themselves.

I put together some basic rules that I have developed from my own experiences for success with apps.

5 RULES FOR USING APPS FOR PROGRESS

- Rule #1:** Find what works for you and then use it.
- Rule #2:** One Task/Screen/Device at a time.
- Rule #3:** If you do not use the app, lose the app.
- Rule #4:** Try apps one at a time. It is too easy to lose focus otherwise.
- Rule #5:** The deciding question for using applications should always be, "Does this enhance my quality of life or distract/hurt it?"

I test out around 20 new apps every month coming from a spectrum of sources: From clinicians seeking promotion for their practice, to very original Mom and Pop start ups, developing apps that are born of necessity. I write this because I want you to understand that there are an overwhelming volume of apps out there, compared to the potentially ten apps that will be helpful for you.

I have been sloshing my way through the app jungle for a very long time, and these are my top app picks for ADHD/LD community that I have hiked out with on my back and use every day.

Evernote - You are most likely familiar with this brand, as it has been extremely popular and free.

Evernote's catchphrase is, "Remember everything", and I have personally been able to retain every single idea that has popped into my head in the past three years because of this app/service. Just to be clear, that is NOT an exaggeration. And to be candid, I have still have memory issues from a seizure.

Evernote is great for anybody who would like to save ideas, things they like, see or hear. You can record by microphone, take pictures, copy website content, organize files. The ceiling is high in regard to the types of ways to benefit from Evernote. You may also access what you save from almost any device or computer.

Evernote also develops products that work with its main application, and the one that stands out in my mind for the ADHD/LD community is Evernote Clearly.

Evernote Clearly - Evernote Clearly allows you to remove all of the distractions from a website, except for what you are reading. You may also save the text to Evernote for later reading. This browser extension can



be a really large advantage to people that are easily overwhelmed when reading or have a problems with attention during reading. It is available for Chrome and Firefox browsers. If you are using Safari, don't worry. Safari comes with its own version of this. To access this, while on the page you want to "un-distract" click the button labeled "Reader" on the far left of the URL bar. Just like Evernote itself, EC is free.

Mindnode - Perhaps some of you have heard of mind-mapping, which is a way of organizing your thoughts in a visual fashion.

As an ADHDer, this has helped me focus on the big picture and the small details of any project I am working on. This would be very good for people who have a hard time focusing on details, or get too distracted by details. MindNode allows you to focus on any part of the mind-map while hiding the rest. This can also be of benefit to anybody whom is a better visual learner. I would definitely look into this if you are in school.

Pillboxie - This is a brand new app that reminds you to take your meds in a scheduled and accountable way. Pillboxie is visually appealing without being distracting and is simple to use. You can customize the name and style/color/etc. of medication and set the time you take it. It is akin to a digital 7-day pill dispenser with a calming alarm attached to a journaling

program for medication. This is for anybody who regularly takes medication, and it costs \$.99.

Guided Access - Apple built something called Guided Access into the new iOS 6 iPad, iPod, and iPhones. Guided Access is built specifically for people who have vision, hearing, learning, and mobility disabilities to get the most from using these devices.

This built-in feature will allow you to only run one app, or allow you to restrict touch to certain areas of the screen, and you can disable the hardware buttons on the iPad/iPod/iPhone, as well as the ability to disable/enable the motion sensor.

Guided Access helps students that have specific struggles remain on task and focused on content. Guided Access comes standard with all iOS 6 or newer devices.

KhanAcademy - Is a free online school that tracks your progress and shows you what you need to work on.

KhanAcademy is an important resource for everybody, but specifically the LD and ADHD community. KhanAcademy helps understand and further facilitate learning by allowing anybody access to all subject

matter in a more concise form, and then testing your skills until you are proficient.

You learn first through video and then by practicing, building on a base of knowledge until it is complete. I highly recommend this to everybody. There is a smartphone app from KhanAcademy.org which is free to use as well.

These are a few of my favorite things. When asked about the "best apps" and techniques for using any technology, I will always point you to Rule #1. It does not only apply to technology, but how we live our lives with the weight of our "disorders" on our backs. Find out what works for you and use it to make progress toward your personal ideal.



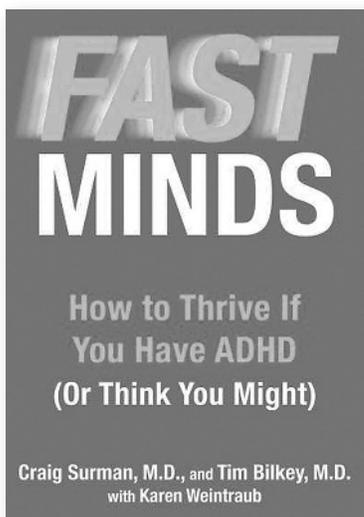
Shelf Life

NEW BOOKS TO TEMPT THE MIND AND CLEANSE THE ADHD PALETTE

FAST MINDS: HOW TO THRIVE IF YOU HAVE ADHD (OR THINK YOU MIGHT)

by Craig Surman, Tim Bilkey, Karen Weintraub

FAST MINDS is an acronym for common symptoms that are often seen in Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Millions of adults have ADHD or some of its traits, but they are under-



recognized, under-treated, and often under-supported.

This book empowers people with ADHD, or some of its characteristics, to adapt and thrive. By working through the program in this book, you will develop personalized strategies to take control of your life.

Forgetful. Achieving below potential. Stuck in a rut. Time challenged.

Motivationally challenged. Impulsive. Novelty seeking. Distractible. Scattered.

If any or all of these symptoms are making it difficult for you-or someone you know-to live life to the fullest, then the clinically proven, cutting-edge program in this book will help you understand your struggles and challenges. Whether you have been diagnosed with ADHD, think you may have it, or just exhibit many of these traits, FAST MINDS will help you:

- Figure out what isn't working in your life, and the keys to fixing it.
- Build personalized strategies for managing your time, tasks, and relationships.
- Learn organizational habits that work for you.
- Stop communicating poorly, making impulsive choices and taking pointless risks.
- Eliminate negative thinking patterns that waste your mental energy.
- Create environments that support your challenges.
- Make the most of both medical and nonmedical resources (medication, coaching, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, mindfulness, support groups, lifestyle change).

With inspiring stories of real people who have adapted and thrived using the methods in this book, FAST MINDS will help you create the kind of life you want to live.

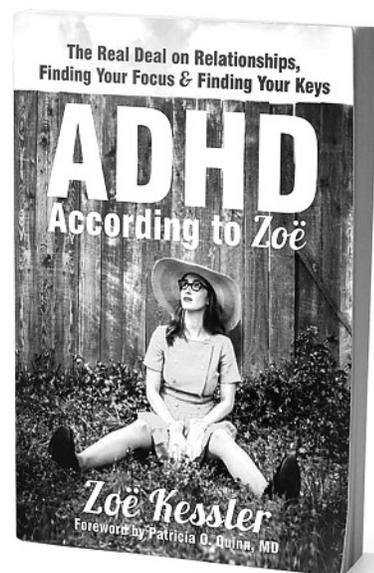
ADHD ACCORDING TO ZOE: THE REAL DEAL ON RELATIONSHIPS, FINDING YOUR FOCUS, AND FINDING YOUR KEYS

by Zoë Kessler

Like many women with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), journalist and popular blogger Zoë Kessler was diagnosed late in life - well into adulthood, in fact. But instead of seeing this label as a burden to bear, Kessler decided to use it to gain a better understanding of herself, and to connect with others through her writing.

In this unique and engaging memoir, Kessler shares her own stories of living with ADHD in a way that is relatable, but never predictable. Inside, she describes how her impulsive behavior has effected her love life; how being disorganized once stood in the way of landing a job; and how inattentiveness has caused certain challenges in her relationships.

Kessler also offers key coping skills based on her experience; skills that you can use to focus your energy, become more organized, and boost your self-esteem while tapping into creativity and humor. Kessler's story illustrates how being diagnosed with ADHD late into adulthood can be bewildering, but it also shows what a great opportunity it can be to take stock of your life and make real, lasting changes. Whether you share her diagnosis of ADHD, or just like a good story, ADHD According to Zoë will inspire you and encourage you to embrace your quirks. For more information about Kessler and her work, please visit chickadd.com



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Chapter News & Views

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM AROUND THE PROVINCE!

YORK REGION

Three Decades of Dedication

The Learning Disabilities Association of York Region (LDAYR) is a non-profit, volunteer-led organization dedicated to the advancement of educational training and employment opportunities for persons with learning disabilities (LD). LDAYR acts as a catalyst and a resource for the development of appropriate community services for the population with LD. We believe that while people with LD learn differently, a different way of learning can lead to success.

LDAYR has been supporting children, youth adults and their families since 1976, since our humble beginnings in a church basement with limited resources. Today our offices are located in the community hub that is the Loyal True Blue and Orange Home in Richmond Hill.

During the past three decades we have had 15 presidents. Our current president is Terri-Lyn Zaremsky who joined the association in 2008. One of our past presidents, Lynn Ziraldo, began as a volunteer in 1979, becoming president in 1981 and the first executive director in 1985. She continues to provide leadership to the association now for an outstanding 34 years!

In 1985 we became a United Way agency that supports our parent, family and adult support groups, social skills program and resource center. Over the years, we've also received funding from Trillium Foundation, helping us launch our Tutor program currently in its eighth year; The Region of York assisting us with our Transitions SOAR and Job Fit programs. With support from the Ministry of Education, for our diversity and inclusivity projects, we have been able to reach out to the Tamil, Korean, Persian and Chinese

communities, and have been able to translate our information to over 10 different languages! We continue to benefit from private donations, weekly bingo and memberships.

Over the years we have hosted several special events such as our Vintages and Jazz wine and food gala, family and picnics. For three continued years we have also participated in the Waterfront Scotiabank Marathon, with our "Right to Learn" Team which has raised several thousand dollars.

To carry out our Mission and Vision we use the following guiding principles:

- Dignity & Respect
- Inclusivity, Support & Empowerment
- Public Education and Advocacy
- Innovation and Learning
- Collaborative Partnerships
- Leadership

- Quality Programs and Services
- Integrity and Accountability

LDAYR is very fortunate to have a great team. Currently the association has resource facilitators, a program coordinator and community development staff. We also have various contract staff assisting with the delivery of programs such as Social Skills, SOAR and our tutor program run mainly by community volunteers.

LDAYR has proudly hosts practicum students from different prestigious institutions in the fields of social work, child and youth work and community service work. These students are a crucial source of support for our programs and services and we are very proud each year to see them grow and become part of our LDAYR family.

Our resource library offers over 6000 resources to families and members of the professional community servicing people with learning disabilities. It's a welcoming environment for our members to get support and is open to the public Monday to Friday from 10am to 3pm.

Over the years the LDAYR has developed many partnerships in the community, with school boards, physicians, health care workers, social service agencies professionals and educators.

In 1992 we established the V.I.P award to honor persons in the community for their contribution to people with learning disabilities. To date we have presented 21 persons/groups with this prestigious award.

This year LDAYR has very proudly taken on an ambassador Elisa Blasi. She has become a voice for people with learning disabilities and we proudly welcome her to LDAYR.

Join the Right to Learn Team

This year LDAYR has set their goal at \$10,000! You can join our "Right to Learn" team by contacting our office at (905)884-7933 x 23 or by emailing volunteer@ldayr.org or by visiting our team page to make a donation. We really appreciate your support!

The event takes place on Sunday October 20th 2013.

Visit: www.torontowaterfrontmarathon.com/en/charity.htm and search for our association on the 2013 official charities sub-parent page from Charity and Community section.

"I have learned that my disability sets me apart from other people and this is something that can be celebrated and seen as an advantage.

"The way you view your learning disability makes all the difference."

Elisa Blas, LDAYR Ambassador

NIAGARA

Literacy Program Expansion Successful

The Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region expanded their after-school literacy support programs this past Fall. The program expansion was a success with this past fiscal year serving over 400 participants at 41 program sites across the region with 200 volunteers and 60 facilitators within programming. The success and recognition of those who contributed was acknowledged at this year's Appreciation Dinner on March 22nd. Also recognized for her outstanding volunteerism was Heidi Mori who was named volunteer of the year! Next up, LDANR is preparing for its third Sunshine Learning Achievement & More (SLAM) full-day summer literacy support program where children have the chance to stay on their toes during the summer months to help ease the transition back to school in the Fall all while participating in hands-on engaging academic and non-academic activities. SLAM is expanding by offering a third week in both the Welland and Niagara Falls locations and continuing to offer 7 weeks in St. Catharines. LDANR will be partnering with the local Y for the St. Catharines site once again. Last, but certainly not least, LDANR would like to announce its upcoming fundraising event

– LDANR's 1st annual trivia night! Details on programming and the trivia night can be found at www.Ldaniagara.org.

PEEL REGION CHAPTER

North Peel and Mississauga Chapters Merge

The Board of Directors of the Learning Disabilities Association of Mississauga and North Peel are excited to announce that the amalgamation between the two chapters has been finalized. We are now legally "The Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region".

We are on our way to expanding our programs and services throughout the Region and have the support from our major funders; The United Way of Peel Region, the Region of Peel and our membership. We want to assure you that during the next few months during the transition, programming will continue as planned in the Mississauga and Brampton locations and we anticipate no impact on programs for our clients and their families.

The new organization will provide a clear focus on learning disabilities in Peel Region and will allow us to be more effective advocates for our clients and their families.

As we proceed with this new beginning, Peel Region is pleased to announce upcoming fundraising events and programs for this year. Mark Breslin's Yuk Yuk's International Stand-up Comedy in Mississauga will host a Comedy Benefit Show on Thursday, May 9th, 2013. When you purchase advanced tickets from our offices, you will receive a discounted dinner voucher for a nearby restaurant and

a complimentary door prize ticket to be entered in a draw on the night of the event.

Our 5th Annual Talent Show will be held on Monday June 3rd, 2013 at Mississauga Secondary School from 7:00pm to 8:30pm. Children and youths with learning disabilities and their supporters will showcase different talents including dance, vocal, instrumental, acting and presenting artwork. This event is open to the public and will include door prizes, bake sale, and a silent auction.

The Peel Region chapter is gearing up for another year of summer camps. Advance registration is required and now open. Camps are offered for six weeks between July 2nd and August 6th for participants aged six to thirteen. Participants will be encouraged to develop and improve their academic skills, social skills and take part in exciting activities and trips.

A new Health and Nutrition pilot program for parents will commence in Fall 2013 as a five consecutive weeks program. Facilitated by a licensed naturopathic doctor, this program will focus on healthy eating and increased concentration for persons with learning disabilities and attention regulation challenges. Registration is limited and a program fee will apply for the pilot program.



In Person

JAY MANDARINO

By Carter Hammett

Fall 999 Times, Rise 1000 Times

Jay Mandarino puts the “ask” in “multitask.”

Whether he’s managing one of 12 companies, supporting another cause through his tireless community work or demonstrating a new skateboard move, Jay Mandarino never seems to stop. Giving seems to be in his blood.

“... if I could say something to kids with LD and ADHD, it’s ‘never give up’ ...”

Indeed, the award-winning founder of C.J. Graphics, one of North America’s most successful print companies and long-time LDAO board member has overcome numerous obstacles to emerge as a leading light in the community. And one of the great tools at his disposal has always been humour.

It’s made him a much-sought-after inspirational speaker, a go-to guy for fundraising auctions and now, after a life time of challenges wrought by dyslexia and ADHD, a new title can be added to his mantle: author.

Cause for Laughter, a compendium of jokes, stories and anecdotes, is told with the rapid fire rancor he’s become known for. It’s the culmination of listening to two decades worth of humour offered by world class comedians he’s crossed paths with at

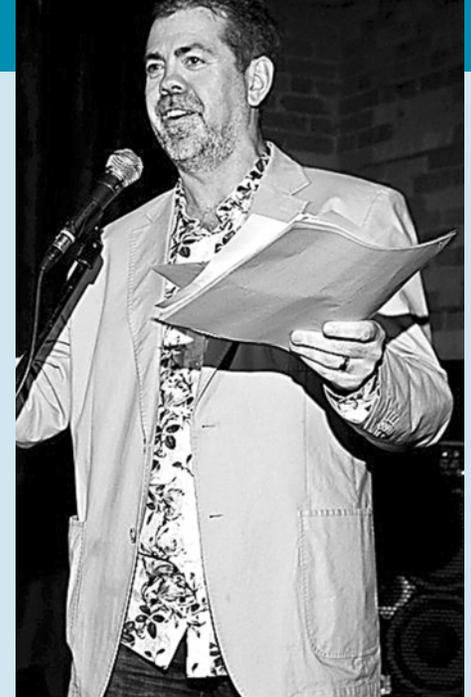
the innumerable charity auctions he’s been a part of.

His life hasn’t been all laughter though. Growing up, he was labelled as a slow learner with a short attention span. Psychologists suggested that the best career he could hope for might be a gasoline attendant, “if he was lucky.” At school he was an outcast, lonely and—at the age of eight (!!--considered suicide. Thankfully, through the intervention of LDAO, he was eventually sent to a private institution in the United States, The Gow School, where he was finally diagnosed with dyslexia.

It was also around this time that a friend introduced him to what would evolve into a life-long love: skateboarding. Mandarino, not only found out he was actually good at something, he excelled at this activity too. For the first time in his life, he began to feel empowered and capable.

“Skateboarding’s an individual sport not a team venture, so there’s no pressure to be good at it,” he says. “I fell 999 times before getting up the 1000th time. Skateboarding empowered me after so many failures. People with LD need order, and skateboarding is fun engagement.”

For several years, his non profit service C.J. Skateboard Park and School—the fourth largest of its kind in the world—has introduced kids to a sport that continues to grow while building their self esteem in the process, too.



“Skateboarding changed my life,” he says, noting an infamous jump at the CNE one year, where he successfully leaped over a Ferrari. “Now, we’re giving back to the community and creating a safe environment no matter what the challenge. With some kids, it’s the first time they feel alive.

“I was on a radio show and the interviewer asked if dyslexia was a negative. I said we look at things outside the box, which makes it a huge asset!”

With his seemingly inexhaustible supply of energy, Mandarino continues to give: as a board member of LDAO, as a mentor to kids, as a fundraiser and mentor. His enthusiasm is inspiring and he shows no signs of slowing down.

With the first book barely cooling in the window, Mandarino is hard at work on his second publishing venture to be launched later this year, *All You Need to Know About Skateboarding*, a book aimed at kids. The book is sure to be an empowering source of motivation.

“If I could say something to kids with LD and ADHD, it’s ‘never give up.’ Find the right friends and ignore bullies, they’re just jealous,” He says.

Sound advice from someone who has spent not only a lifetime developing boundaries, but empowering kids on how to transcend their own.



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