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Association of Ontario

The right to learn, the power to achieve

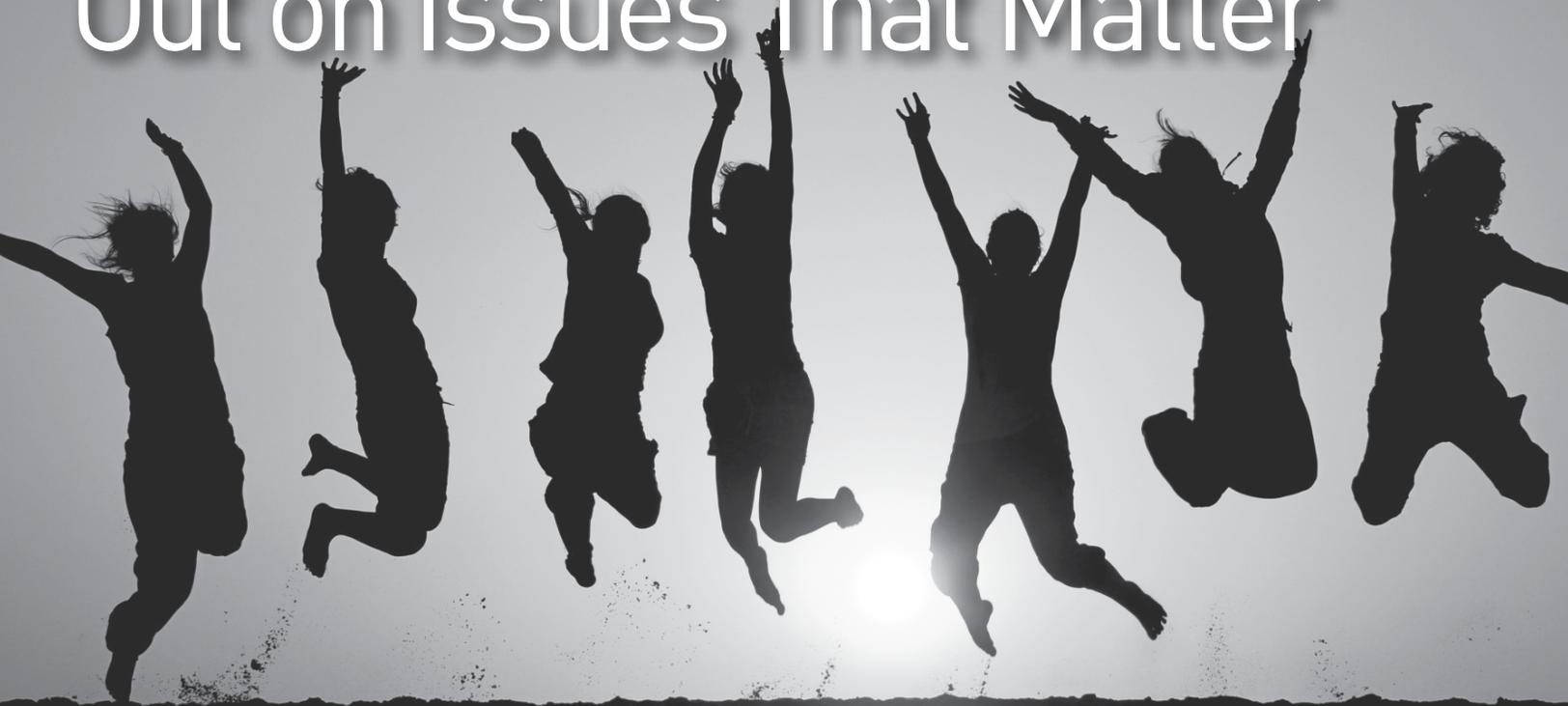
communiqué

THE PUBLICATION OF THE LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

FALL/WINTER 2013

Just Kids:

Ontario's LD Youth Speak Out on Issues That Matter



LDAO: CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

Zoë Kessler's New Book • Cyberbullying • Apprenticeships • And Funky Apps Too!

Communiqué, the publication of LDAO is published twice-yearly. Articles should be submitted to editor Carter Hammett (iwriteandedit@yahoo.com) approximately six weeks before the publication date. Content deadline for the Spring/Summer issue is March 1, 2014. Communiqué reserves the right to edit submissions for clarity, length and accuracy. Advertising rates available upon request. Subscription rate for non-LDAO members is \$25.00 yearly.

Communiqué provides a forum for information, news and opinions relevant to the field of learning disabilities. The Association does not, in any sense, endorse opinions expressed or methods or programs mentioned. Articles may be reprinted unless otherwise stated. Please mention "LDAO Communiqué" and the article's author if and when articles are reprinted.

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A chorus of voices gathered from across the province unites in this special portfolio of youth with LD/ADHD. From the rude realities of living with a disability to the perceptions of others, six young people ranging in age from 13-to-24 tackle the big questions. **By Carter Hammett**

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by Carter Hammett, Editor

Editor's Notebook

THE YOUTH HAVE IT!



If this issue has a theme, it's "youth." During the last few issues we'd meet to debrief, and discuss the concept of dropping "themes" for each issue, and just go with varied content, regardless. This would allow us to free ourselves up, breathe a little and not worry so much about generating content that may or may not fit in with the theme.

Don't get me wrong: Themes have served us very well. Over the years themes have included alternative therapies, the arts, executive functions, personal growth, mental health, The three R's (reading, writing, 'rithmetic) women, technology and more. But with each passing issue, I felt myself gulping just a little bit with finding subject matter experts to craft quality content, identify specific articles to discuss, coordinating deadlines, etc.

Finally, just when it seemed like I could breathe a little bit, the concept of "youth" suddenly presented itself. Whether it was the back to school thing, or an awareness that LD Awareness Month was just around

the corner, or the relative absence of youth-and-family-related content, the issue just seemed to manifest naturally.

From there, the issue of a "youth panel" was born and a mad scramble to solicit answers to a questionnaire took place. At first, slow, but as the idea gained momentum, a few strategic emails were placed and the material started to trickle in. At first, I was skeptical about the quality of the answers—doubted whether this was a good idea or not—and then started reading the feedback. I have to say I was rather blown away by the quality of the responses, the insights, the positivity that flowed across my computer screen. These were incredibly bright, hopeful, thoughtful people who had volumes to say, and encouraging messages to spread.

Contrast this to the rude realities and social consequences of living with LD: earlier drop out rates from high school, increased levels of pregnancy in young women who drop out of high school; increased levels of depression, drug

use and crime rates. Self-esteem in the gutter, increased suicide attempts, repeated failures throughout life. The benefits of early detection, a reasonable support system and appropriate accommodations are inarguable.

Aside from our esteemed panel, we're also pleased to provide other stories that include a look at the devastating consequences of cyberbullying, something all too common in today's world. We look at skilled trades, which are fast becoming "the new black" in terms of career choices. We're also pleased to introduce a new contributor, ADHD coach Michel Fitos, who, along with his insightful commentaries on human behaviour, tweets like a rock star!

So there you have it: Another issue, another theme. Maybe next time we'll think twice before ditching a formula that seems to work.



This Issue We Were...

Deana Collins is an Oshawa-based freelance writer, job developer, student and Mom. • ADHD coach **Michel Fitos** lives in Somerville, Massachusetts, where he parents two kids, walks a huge dog, builds community, grows food for his household and coaches joyfully. Visit his site at www.michelfitos.com
• **Mark Kawate** is a self-proclaimed pirate strategist, founder of Akasha Inspired and

has been in the technology industry from the age of 12. He started the non-profit brand ADHD Apps and Apps for ADHD as a way to help his brothers and sisters with ADHD/AS/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
• **And...** special thanks to our youth panel: **Marty Cotter** (Toronto) **Brandon Walters** (Whitby), **Anjohli Giles** (Picton), **Elisa Blasi** (Richmond Hill), **Aaron Bailey** (Kingston) and **Donny Wilcox** (Windsor)

Next Issue You Could...





Lawrence Barns, CEO

Message FROM THE CEO

When an organization reaches a milestone it is not unusual to look at your past in celebration of the achievements that have shaped the current reality. With LDAO reaching its 50th anniversary this October it is now different for us. Yet it is also a reality that these are difficult times in our movement and the future is far from certain. This issue then performs an important task, in looking at the youth that need and can flourish with support, service and a reduction in stigma associated with a learning disability.

As we look back over 50 years of LDAO in its various forms you cannot help but marvel at those who have given time and energy to carry the banner, often as volunteers, often making impacts far beyond their own goals at the time. I personally had the pleasure of meeting Heather Holden in Halton who embodied much of what inspires others to take up the cause and continue the work. Despite her health failing her over the last few years, every time I met her she had a passion and fire to make a difference that was undimmed. As we celebrate Heather's life it simply acts as a call to keep pushing and take our impact to new heights.

I was also reminded recently that while we have made great strides over the years, especially in the educational system, it is still a personal story of navigating from the

initial concerns on your child's learning, through an assessment, IEP and then years of growing as an advocate and eventually coach that each parent goes through.

My own journey with my son was one of trial-and-error at times, frustration and tears, joy and success. I am immensely proud of the young adult he has become. Yet on a recent trip to Guelph, it was clear much still has to be done to see every family equipped to face the diagnosis of an LD and support that journey. The stories in these pages of young people navigating that journey can inspire us all, but also remind me of the work still required. Our challenge is to continue to work to make sure that the supports are in place that a family will know immediately what is available, where to get education and encouragement for the way forward. I know our family story could have been one of less frustration if I had known about the LDA chapters and the support they could have provided.

That is the challenge that remains for us to focus on as we look to the future, to build a brand that will be the place to find the resources required by any family in the province to make intelligent decisions and maximise every individual's potential. Our tag line is "the right to learn, the power to achieve" is what we want to unleash and building a brand in a crowded charity landscape in Canada is the challenge that 50 years from now will be the legacy we can leave behind us together.



LDAO and LD News

LEARNING DISABILITIES COMMUNITY LOSES COURAGEOUS, DEDICATED ADVOCATE



LDAO was very sad to learn that our longtime colleague and friend, Heather Holden, passed away on Wednesday, June 26, 2013 after a long courageous battle with cancer.

Heather provided leadership in the learning disabilities movement for over 35 years. She was an integral part of the Halton Chapter and also served on the LDAC and LDAO board of directors, and as President of LDAO from 1989 to 1992. Heather was a tireless advocate for persons with LDs and their families, and showed her dedication in continuing this work right through her illness.

To honour of her legacy, LDA Halton has formally dedicated the **Heather Holden Resource Library** in her name.



5TH ANNUAL ADHD CONFERENCE



This year's CADDAC conference features great speakers. Thursday, November 21, 2013, will focus on educators with a dinner and evening presentations and choice of workshop. Friday, November 22nd will focus on allied health and human resources professionals with a full day of presentations and choice of workshop. Saturday, November 23rd, will focus on parents of children with ADHD with a full day of presentations and choice of workshop. Sunday, November 24th, will focus on Adults with ADHD and their families and partners with a full day of presentations.

Note: Active members receive 10% off registration costs. Yearly membership is \$25 plus HST. To find out the benefits of membership access Individual Membership and to become a member access our Membership Application.



PARENTING CHILDREN WITH READING DIFFICULTIES

Parents are invited to participate in a short (15-20 minute) online questionnaire about their experiences parenting a child who has experienced difficulties with reading. The information provided will be used as part of an MSc Project at Goldsmiths, University of London. The online questionnaire will ask questions about: your child's reading, your child's behaviour, parenting a child with reading difficulties, the types of services you are using and the types of services you are interested in. Participants will have the opportunity to receive general information about the results of the research.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/parentingandreading>



MENTAL HEALTH'S FORGOTTEN ADULTS

There is an adult segment of the population who suffer from a mental disorder that is anything but new or obscure, yet receiving treatment (for many) can be a monumental challenge. These adults suffer from ADHD, a disorder that is often associated with children however, during many of these adults' childhood ADHD was not yet recognized or understood within schools or family health practices. These people were not diagnosed during childhood and as a result did not receive necessary treatments nor did they understand what it was that caused them to be different. These adolescents and adults were left (on their own) to deal with the challenges of living a life with an insidious undiagnosed disorder that often resulted in school, workplace and social failure, and additional coexisting mental health disorders, such as depression, anxiety disorders, and addictions. Although ADHD can prove to be a significantly impairing and ultimately

"... Data tells us that less than 11% actually receive treatment, and that on average, adults with ADHD have sought help for 12.5 years without the diagnosis being made..."

costly disorder to government and society, resources for ADHD are even more difficult to access than those for other mental health disorders.

"Without management and treatment adult ADHD remains a serious and impairing

disorder. Data tells us that less than 11% actually receive treatment, and that on average, adults with ADHD have sought help for 12.5 years without the diagnosis being made." says Dr. David Teplin, an adult clinical psychologist, with a primary focus on ADHD and other adult disorders.

THE SURVEYS:

In March of 2013 The Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada (CADDAC) conducted a survey of adults with ADHD and coexisting disorders which was a follow-up of a national survey on adult ADHD. These surveys were conducted to provide a better understanding of the unique challenges faced by adults with ADHD.

DIAGNOSIS/ASSESSMENT:

The far-reaching impact of ADHD makes it imperative that clinicians diagnose and treat ADHD as early as possible. However, both surveys confirmed that for most adults with ADHD, this did not occur. The surveys found that between 85 and 87% of adults were not diagnosed as children. Even as adults accessing a medical assessment for ADHD is difficult for many. One third of respondents indicated obstacles to receiving their diagnosis, 69% of these due to lack of access to a physician to do so, and 19% due to costs being charged above provincial medical coverage. The ADHD and coexisting disorder survey found that 32% of adults were required to pay a fee for their assessment, almost a third at a cost of \$1,000 or more, resulting in a two tier health care for ADHD. Interestingly, only 10% reported having to pay a fee to have their coexisting disorder assessed and diagnosed.

CO-EXISTING DISORDERS IMPACT:

The vast majority of adults and children with ADHD also experience coexisting disorders. From these studies we learned that these coexisting disorders can elevate the difficulty in diagnosing and treating ADHD. 58% of participants felt that their ADHD was first misdiagnosed as another disorder. "I know firsthand that treating ADHD related depression without treating the ADHD is like trying to teach a cat how to bark. No matter the amount of effort or intention, it can't be done successfully. It can even make matters worse." R.J. (an adult with ADHD).

Sixty-Nine (69%) percent felt that their coexisting disorder delayed their diagnosis of ADHD, but only 33% felt their coexisting disorder diagnosis was delayed by the ADHD. Alarming, 65% felt that the delay in diagnosis was due to their or their doctor's lack of knowledge about ADHD and 24% reported seeing at least one physician who denied the existence of adult ADHD. "The fact that medical practitioners are still so misinformed about this disorder is quite shocking," stated Heidi Bernhardt, president and E.D. of the Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada(CADDAC).

"It shows how much awareness and education work still needs to be done before equity in health care treatment for this disorder is obtained," said Bernhardt.

TREATMENT:

Many adults wrote about not being able to access treatment options for ADHD in their local areas, and further lamented that proven treatments for ADHD such as Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) and ADHD Coaching, which are most often not covered by provincial plans and

very expensive, are often unattainable, making the two tier gap in health care for ADHD even wider. The majority of adults answering the coexisting disorder study felt that a lack of access to treatment options has negatively impacted their mental health and areas of their life, such as personal finances, relationships, completing education and job opportunities. Of those surveyed almost 95% believed that ADHD decreased their work productivity, however once diagnosed and treated, missed days of work significantly decreased. "I wouldn't have had such a long relationship with failure. I think I would have gone back to school. I think I would have wanted to reach my potential" says Diane (an adult with ADHD) when commenting on how things might have been different if her ADHD was diagnosed at an earlier age.

In addition, likely due to the extreme lack of physicians who are experienced in assessing adults for ADHD, many adult psychiatrists who do these diagnostic assessments do not do follow-up care, instead referring these patients back to their family physicians, many who have little knowledge or interest in treating adults with ADHD. Dr. Margaret Weiss, an internationally recognized leading clinician and researcher in the field of ADHD commented, "The social costs, resulting from the failure to treat ADHD, far exceed the cost of providing the resources to diagnose and treat the disorder. Furthermore, a lack of education among physicians means many ADHD patients, who have had a depression, are diagnosed as bipolar and perceived as disabled, untreatable and endure years of inappropriate medication treatment with significant side effects."

CONCLUSION:

These surveys clearly show the road to an adult ADHD diagnosis and treatment is filled with roadblocks. The lack of knowledgeable accessible physicians who assess and diagnose adult ADHD is substantial, assessments fees can be sizable, knowledgeable physicians who continue with treatment are few and options to accessible affordable treatments beyond medication are limited.



Public Policy Roundup



FALL 2013

Building the Next Phase in Ontario's Education Strategy - "Great to Excellent"

The Ministry of Education is undertaking a wide consultation with stakeholders about the future of education in Ontario. A large provincial consultation was held on September 19, 2013 in Toronto, with participants from many different sectors, and there will be regional and community consultations. In addition, individuals may give online feedback to a set of seven questions probing topics such as the skills, knowledge and characteristics students will need in the future, and how to keep students engaged, foster their curiosity and creativity, and instill a love of life-long learning. The changing roles of technology and of teachers in classrooms figured highly in the discussions at the provincial consultation.

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/about/excellent.html

Supporting Minds: An Educator's Guide to Promoting Student's Mental Health and Well-being

As one part of the provincial Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, the Ministry of Education has developed a K-12 resource guide to provide educators with information on the early signs of mental health and addiction problems, along with strategies that can be used in the classroom to support students. The draft guide is available on the website, www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/health.html, along with an e-mail address for feedback. LDAO is very pleased that the draft document is now available, and will be preparing a response with suggestions for changes and additions.

AODA Issues

On September 10, 2013, the Ontario Government announced that it has appointed Mayo Moran to conduct a mandatory Independent Review of the implementation and effectiveness of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Mayo Moran is the Dean of the University of Toronto Faculty of Law. The AODA Alliance had been pressing the government to set up this review, and also to develop an Education Accessibility Standard. The Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation (OSSTF) wrote the Ontario Government on September 3, 2013 to support the development and enactment of an Education Accessibility Standard, joining the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO) and the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations in calling for this standard.



Elsewhere

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

UNITED STATES

Learning Ally Releases Audiobook App for Android Devices

Launch of Learning Ally Audio app allows individuals who are blind or dyslexic to listen to their audiobooks on popular tablets and smartphones.

Learning Ally, a nonprofit organization serving 300,000 children and adults across the U.S. who have visual, learning and reading-based disabilities like dyslexia, has released its popular accessible audiobook playback software, known as Learning Ally Audio, for Android OS smartphones and tablets.

Since its initial release in 2011 for Apple's iOS, the app has enabled thousands of users to access Learning Ally's digital library of 80,000 downloadable human-narrated audiobooks for school and home reading. The new Android version greatly increases the number of people with disabilities who can access Learning Ally's audiobook library with the freedom and portability of a mobile device. This is an important capability for the many students with print disabilities who use audiobooks to complete in-class reading and need to be able to access them anywhere, anytime.

Currently in Beta release, the app is compatible with Teacher Ally, Learning Ally's acclaimed classroom audiobook management tool. Teacher Ally enables

"This app significantly rounds out our service offering as many Learning Ally members migrate to tablets and smartphones," says Andrew Friedman, the organization's President and CEO. "With the release of this new app, virtually all of our members can enjoy instant and convenient mainstream access to the audiobooks they need."

teachers to maintain personal profiles and bookshelves for each student, track the titles and pages they are reading, and generate reports on their progress to share with parents. As more and more school districts choose to invest in Android devices, adding an app for this platform is critical to meeting the needs of students with print disabilities.

Learning Ally Audio for Android is free to download for Learning Ally members in the Google Play Store as a fully functional beta release.

Princeton, NJ (PRWEB) August 28, 2013



UNITED STATES

EBOOK READERS MAKE READING EASIER FOR PEOPLE WITH DYSLEXIA

A new study performed by the Smithsonian Institute found that ebook readers like the Amazon Kindle can actually help those with dyslexia with reading comprehension. Technology!

When you think of dyslexia, what first comes to mind might be some form of inversion--reading backwards, that kind of thing. But dyslexia is actually a broad term to cover lots of different ways in which people with otherwise normal intelligence levels have trouble reading. That could include difficulty converting letters into sounds, difficulty spelling, and difficulty separating the phonological tones of one letter from another.

The benefit of ebook readers is largely in their customization. A book, due to being, you know, printed with ink on paper, is not very customizable. But an ebook reader offers the ability to change the look of the book--and this particular study wanted to see if it would be possible to change the text so much that people with dyslexia would be able to read it without getting the letters confused.

Testing the reading comprehension and speed of 103 dyslexic students in Boston, the study found that by spacing the books to a mere two or three words per line, the dyslexic readers were able to significantly increase both speed and comprehension. The idea is to reduce visual distraction; people with the disorder have a hard time with a dense page of letters, so by spacing them out, it's easier for them to concentrate on the task at hand.

Dan Nosowitz

<http://www.popsoci.com/technology/article/2013-09/ebook-readers-make-reading-easier-dyslexics>



UNITED STATES

Not all reading disabilities are dyslexia

Lesser-known reading disorder can be easily missed

A common reading disorder goes undiagnosed until it becomes problematic, according to the results of five years of study by researchers at Vanderbilt's Peabody College of education and human development in collaboration with the Kennedy Krieger Institute/Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. Results of the study were recently published online by the National Institutes of Health.

"... When a child is a good reader, it's assumed their comprehension is on track. But 3 to 10 percent of those children don't understand most of what they're reading..."

Dyslexia, a reading disorder in which a child confuses letters and struggles with sounding out words, has been the focus of much reading research.

But that's not the case with the lesser known disorder Specific Reading Comprehension Deficits or S-RCD, in which a child reads successfully but does not sufficiently comprehend the meaning of the words, according to lead investigator Laurie Cutting, Patricia and Rodes Hart Chair at Peabody.

When a child is a good reader, it's assumed their comprehension is on track. But 3- to- 10 percent of those

children don't understand most of what they're reading. "S-RCD is like this: I can read Spanish, because I know what sounds the letters make and how the words are pronounced, but I couldn't tell you what the words actually mean," Cutting said. "When a child is a good reader, it's assumed their comprehension is on track. But 3 to 10 percent of those children don't understand most of what they're reading. By the time the problem is recognized, often closer to third or fourth grade, the disorder is disrupting their learning process."

Researchers have been able to pinpoint brain activity and understand its role in dyslexia, but no functional magnetic resonance imaging or fMRI studies, until now, have examined the neurobiological profile of those who exhibit poor reading comprehension despite intact word-level abilities.

Neuroimaging of children showed that the brain function of those with S-RCD while reading is quite different and distinct from those with dyslexia. Those with dyslexia exhibited abnormalities in a specific region in the occipital-temporal cortex, a part of the brain that is associated with successfully recognizing words on a page.

But those with S-RCD did not show abnormalities in this region, instead showing specific abnormalities in regions typically associated with memory.

Joan Brasher | news.vanderbilt.edu/2013/06/reading-disabilities-not-dyslexia

June 14, 2013



Elsewhere

UNITED STATES

FDA Permits Marketing of First Brain Wave Test to Help Assess Children and Teens for ADHD

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently allowed marketing of the first medical device based on brain function to help assess attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children and adolescents 6 to 17 years old. When used as part of a complete medical and psychological examination, the device can help confirm an ADHD diagnosis or a clinician's decision that further diagnostic testing should focus on ADHD or other medical or behavioral conditions that produce symptoms similar to ADHD.

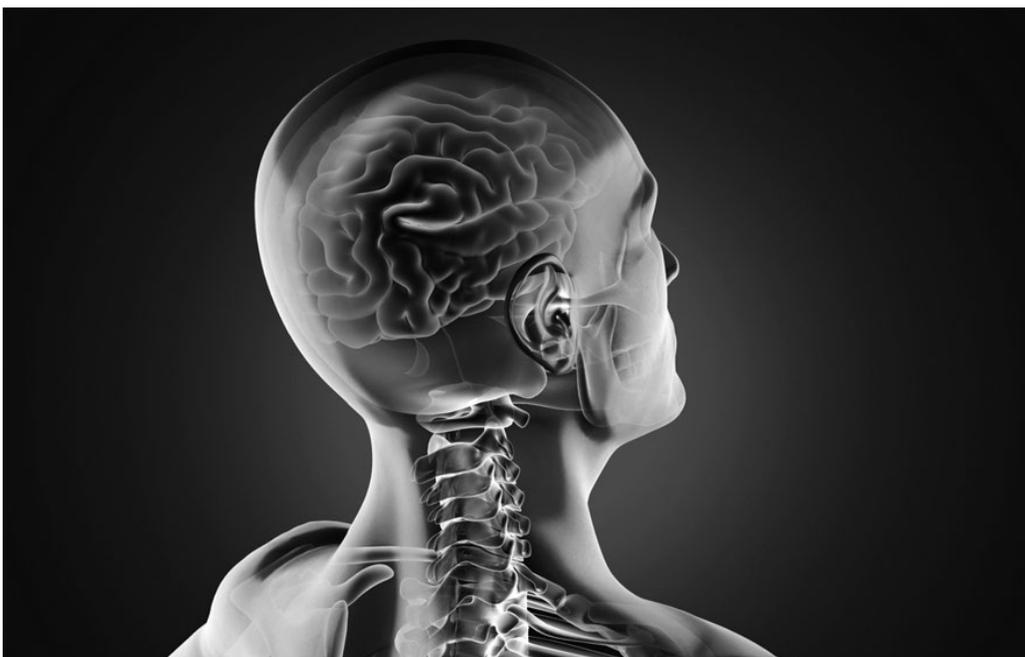
The device, the Neuropsychiatric EEG-Based Assessment Aid (NEBA) System, is based on electroencephalogram (EEG) technology, which records different kinds of electrical impulses (waves) given off by neurons (nerve cells) in the brain and the number of times (frequency) the impulses are given off each second.

The NEBA System is a 15 to 20 minute non-invasive test that calculates the ratio of two standard brain wave frequencies, known as theta and beta waves. The theta/beta ratio has been shown to be higher in children and adolescents with ADHD than in children without it.

"Diagnosing ADHD is a multistep process based on a complete medical and psychiatric exam," said Christy Foreman, director of the Office of Device Evaluation at the FDA's Center for Devices and Radiological Health. "The NEBA System along with other clinical information may help health care providers more accurately determine if ADHD is the cause of a behavioral problem." The FDA emphasized that the NEBA System was intended to be used in conjunction with other clinical information.

ADHD is one of the most common neurobehavioral disorders in childhood. According to the American Psychiatric Association, 9 percent of U.S. adolescents have ADHD and the average age of diagnosis is 7 years old. Children with ADHD have difficulty with attention, hyperactivity, impulsivity and behavioral problems.

<http://www.fda.gov/newsevents/newsroom/pressannouncements/ucm360811.htm>



The ADHD Files

by Michel Fitos

You Can Lead a Horse to a Planner...

But you can't make them write down the date of their midterm. If there's one question I hear more than all others in my coaching practice, it's this: Why doesn't my child use a planner effectively? It's such a huge point of family tension – the parent clearly sees how a planner can prevent school disasters, but the child is incredibly resistant to the idea. Even more maddeningly, they often can't clearly articulate their objections.

"... For kids with ADHD, there are two times: right now, and some other time..."

It's undeniable – using a planner is a fantastic idea! It takes a load off your memory, it helps you visually break down big projects into little pieces, it gives you a place to doodle during boring classes, it can hold stray papers and phone numbers...the list of benefits is pretty much only limited by your imagination.

Why on earth would someone not want to develop the habit of using one? Your child may even be willing to acknowledge that, yes, a planner would solve a lot of their painful school problems, but be unable to get it going. Why???????

Like they say on Facebook: it's complicated.

For kids with ADHD, there are two times: right now, and some other time. Think of the classic example of the science project. It's assigned well before it's due, and if it's written down in a planner, then they could look ahead, see that it's coming up, and do a little work on it in advance.

What usually happens, though? They forget until the night before it's due, and then they're up late scrambling to get it done, and everyone is dragging the next day. To the ADHD mind, if it's not happening right this very minute, or if it's not due in the morning, it may as well not exist.

HOW CAN I HELP THEM GET STARTED?

Encourage them to choose a planner. They'll most likely roll their eyes and try to hand you the first thing they lay eyes on, but if it's not organized in a way that works for the way they read and write, they'll never use it.

Some things that work particularly well:

- **A tough cover and spine:** This is going to get pulled out and used every day! A weak paperback binding is going to fall apart very quickly.
- **A page-per-day format:** Monthly and weekly calendars don't have enough room for assignments. Strangely, neither do

most planners specifically designed for school assignments! Keep in mind, kids with learning disabilities and ADHD often have problems with small and precise writing.

Make it easier for them to physically write, and they're more apt to do it. Daily planners may be hard to find in office supply stores, but they're relatively easy to find online.

- **Pages at the back for notes.** Encourage them to write down things other than assignments, too! Need to call a friend? Write it down! Buy new socks? Write it down! This should be the place where they externalize all of their memory. Encourage it!

- **Let them draw on it, put stickers on it, and personalize it.** Remember Trapper Keepers with Lisa Frank stickers on them? Yeah, me too. So much better.

Encouraging them to use their shiny new planner is another matter entirely, but getting it in their hot little hands in the first place is a major step toward getting those science projects done ahead of schedule and under budget.



Wired World

Our app-solutely talented writer offers up the latest and greatest downloadable helping software available

By Mark Kawate

Sometimes situations that we have to deal with in daily life are so frustrating that we have gotten used to the consistency surrounding frustrations like misplacing keys.

Instead of letting those things get to us, we must find ways to work around them and when the opportunity presents itself in the form of solid technologies, embrace them, if they work.

I am going to cover some important and interesting apps as well as some cutting-edge technology that will greatly improve certain frustrations we have to live with day-to-day.

As a special treat to my friends all over Ontario, I put together a short list of strategies that I've formulated and tested for managing your day-to-day life using a "stock" smartphone.

There are many apps out there for productivity but not all of them are very good for ADHD or LDs. I wanted to display exactly what is being brought to the table with the separate apps for increasing your productivity.



SIMPLEOLOGY - This is a web-based app that helps to simplify your day-to-day life and mental clutter using a very specific method wrapped in a to-do list, task manager, and focal tools for increasing productivity. One user has said, "I use this daily as a compass to cut a clear path through the rough waters of a world that's gone (or probably always was) insane." It is a useful tool, but the concept is harder to explain than other apps as you will grasp it quickly.

WORKFLOWY - Workflowy is a simple and quick little web-based app for making nested lists.

It embraces both simplicity and quality design in a way many web apps cannot. Its potential uses are infinite and even though there are some annoyances, this website and iPhone app is going to be amazing soon if not already!

TIME TIMER - Time Timer is definitely intuitive and comes in physical timers and apps for your device. Apparently it comforts toddlers, builds independence in youth with LDs, and is for adults with special needs as well, to help increase day-to-day productivity.

- Automatically repeat timers up to 16x
- Choose alarm or vibrate when time is up
- Use the Quick Start to create a timer in seconds
- Name and customize your timers
- Save each timer to use again
- Run up to four timers at once
- View each timer full-screen
- See a numerical countdown on top of your timer
- Set by touch – or simply choose a number
- Awake mode: make sure your iPhone doesn't fall asleep while timers are running! (optional)

.....

Here are some newer technologies that we can use to try and live a more consistent and “regular” life.

TILE: Tile is a system that allows you to find anything you attach the “tile” to. Then you can use your phone to direct you to the misplaced treasure of the tile and the keys that are attached to them!

PROS

- iOS Compatible Works with iPhone 4S, iPhone 5, iPad Mini, iPad 3rd and 4th gen, and iPod Touch 5th gen.
- You're getting warmer - You can see yourself getting closer and further away from the Tile when within a 50 - 150ft range.
- No batteries to replace? Nope, you never need to replace the batteries or even charge your Tiles.
- Tiles last a year and you will be reminded by the company when it's time to order new Tiles and they send you an envelope to recycle your old ones!

CONS

- It has not started to ship yet, but the concept and the funding are there to make an amazing tool for living your daily life without worrying about losing things all the time.

Price: \$18.95

ROOMBA - Many of us have a hard time remembering to vacuum, or wanting to. If the price of a Roomba is worth not having to ever vacuum, why not? It will take a huge stressor off. This automated vacuum system brings robotic technology to the boring-as-most chores of sweeping and vacuuming. Basically, you hit a button, and this robot collects every little speck of dirt, pet hair and other debris from all areas of the floor, including under and around furniture and along wall edges. Then it returns to its base and recharges. All automatically.

CONS

- The Roomba is a bit pricy for my liking. Perhaps it will go down in price soon.

PROS

- Not worrying about cleaning your floors.
- Freeing you to focus on other tasks.
- Minimal maintenance.

Price: \$250-700

www.roomba.com

TOUGH LAYER PROTECTION FILM FOR YOUR DEVICES

- Tough layer protection covers your iPad or your iPhone screen and is made of cutting edge materials that will absorb impact. I use it and I guarantee it will not break or scratch your screen. This will allow you to use your device for much longer! Especially, if you use something to put on the screen to help you better.

Also it will protect from fingerprints, glare, and a lot more. I know because I use 3 on different devices!

www.microsolutionusa.com/toughlayer.html

Strategies for dealing with day-to-day living using the stock smartphone.

1. Using only your camera on your smartphone, document when you pay a bill and take a picture of the bill. Then when needed, you see the pic and you know it's taken care of.

Take pictures of things that you know you will not remember because all you have to do is look on your phone and you have a record on there of everything that you have done just with the pictures as a visual reminder.

2. Time block with iCal. Schedule time to work on _____ in advance and block it off within iCal or Google Calendar. It is really helpful.

3. Use Reminders or Alarms so you do not forget important times including meds!

Never overwhelm yourself with technology, and if you do feel overwhelmed, take a step back and find your bearings. We want to continue to work together as a community. I am very glad that LDAO and many other Provincial/State/Local organizations exist to help us all find the sometimes frightening way through our struggles that are just a part of our lives!

I just want to continue and say if ANYBODY has a question regarding technologies or apps and ADHD/LD/ASD, please do not hesitate to email me directly at mark@appsforadhd.com. We must stick together and learn about ourselves individually!



The Third Choice

By Carter Hammett

Once considered “the third choice” by learners—including those with LD/ADHD -- who felt they couldn’t succeed in postsecondary environments, the skilled trades are currently undergoing something of a Renaissance in Canada and proving themselves to be a formidable career choice.

Chris raises a brawny arm and wipes the sweat off his brow. The 24-year-old Toronto-based construction worker who lives with dyslexia and ADHD combined type, has finally arrived at a place in his life where he is poised to take control of his life.

“For years, dyslexia ruled my life. I thought I was stupid and never did well in school,” he says. “It’s taken me a long time to realize it has to do with the way my brain understands language and memory and concentration.”

He speaks easily, and jokes in between thoughtful long drags of a cigarette and sips of an extra-large, double-double Tim Horton’s.

But it wasn’t always so easy for him. Dropping out of school at grade 10, Chris worked a series of menial “McJobs” for years before finally obtaining his GED a few years ago, with the help of an adult learning centre.

By that point, he had lost faith in himself and at one point, even considered suicide.

“I didn’t understand these uncontrollable urges to fight, to steal things,” he says. “But with counselling I realized there was a lot of anger and poor self-esteem underneath this... rough image I’d created for myself. I just wanted people to stay away.” He remembers many lonely evenings smoking pot and drinking himself silly to cope with the pain.

Then one day, while working on a general labour job, he started to speak to a colleague who told him about something he’d never heard of before:

construction craft labourer. According to apprenticesearch.com, “Construction Craft Workers (450A) prepare, excavate, backfill, compact and clean up a work site. They also handle materials as well as ship and receive parts.”

Part of the appeal was that the apprenticeship only required grade 10. Another element was the diversity of the career, which included work on bridges and tunnels. It was also year-round.

“... It’s taken me a long time to realize it has to do with the way my brain understands language and memory and concentration ...”

Hooked, he enrolled at Conestoga College. And life changed forever.

For decades, skilled trades have been unfairly perceived as a repository for workers who would never succeed in school; a place where people went because they “weren’t too good at that book learnin’.” And for years people with learning disabilities and other invisible conditions took refuge in jobs like plumbing and construction, partly because they could divert poor literacy skills into successful careers using well-developed motor skills. In short, they could hide their disability. But criteria and standards change and even the most humble careers today require a certain level of literacy,

mathematics, ability to read blueprints and so on.

But as the government bemoaned skills shortages and began importing workers under the CREWS program and others, a societal shift began to occur. Sure, it’s not as sexy a career as say, hi tech or biotechnology, but people are beginning to understand how essential the sector is to daily living—think of how many skilled trades alone it takes to build the house you live in. Flipping on a light switch required someone with five years of education to install—and realizing that the trades in fact, are actually quite well-paying, obtained through mostly hands-on learning and carries broad appeal for people who struggle with traditional academic requirements, ESL speakers and people who prefer physical work. Furthermore, money is good—drywallers, for example, can earn upwards of \$55,000: not bad moola for anyone not into that book learnin’.

“Over the past ten years, the government has significantly expanded the apprenticeship system. In Ontario, there are more than 120,000 apprentices learning a trade today, which is 60,000 more than in 2002-03. New annual apprenticeship registrations have grown from 17,100 in 2002-03 to more than 30,000 in 2012-13,” says Gyula Kovacs, senior media relations/issues coordinator with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) via email.

"In 2013-14, the government will invest over \$160 million in 2013-14 in Ontario's apprenticeship system, through 17 programs which offer support to both apprentices and employers. These investments will ensure Ontario has the skilled workers it needs to succeed in tomorrow's economy."

Lastly, as the economy has changed, so too have the trades continued to evolve and expand in definition. It wasn't that long ago when most people thought of jobs like electrician, cook, plumber and bricklayer as "trades." Now, listen: Information Technology - Contact Centre Customer Care Agent; Child and Youth Worker; Special Events Coordinator; Native Clothing and Craft Artisan; Film Projectionist. Indeed, the nature of the work is changing drastically to meet the needs of a fickle economy, and people are starting to wake up and realize one thing: The trades have become respectable.



Earlier this year The Conference Board of Canada released a rather startling report

that suggested skills shortages were severely affecting Ontario's economy by as much as \$24.3 billion in economic activity and a further \$3.7 billion in tax revenues in part because employers couldn't find people with the skills to "innovate and grow in today's economy," according to the report, *The Need to Make Skills Work: The Cost of Ontario's Skills Gap*.

Skills gaps currently affect much of Ontario's economy, including sectors that account for almost 40 per cent of employment: manufacturing; health care; professional, scientific, and technical services; and financial industries. Skills gaps are projected to worsen if action is not taken.

To get a clear picture of employers' skills needs, the Conference Board conducted the Ontario Employer Skills Survey. More than 1,500 Ontario employers, representing over 760,000 employees (13.5 per cent of the workforce) from across the provincial economy, responded to the survey.

Survey results show that employers most need post-secondary graduates in

science, engineering, and technology; and business and finance. The most widespread needs are for employees with two- or three-year college diplomas (57 per cent); four-year degrees (44 per cent); and trades (41 per cent).

Pretty significant gaps indeed. But where do people considering careers start? With about 300 trades to choose from across the country, decision making can be overwhelming. So just where does one start to understand how the trades work and the careers that are best for them?



APPRENTICESHIP 101

Let's start with some basics: "Apprenticeship" is a training program based in the workplace that imparts knowledge in the trades to achieve skills and perform tasks required by industry standards. Most training occurs on the job with the remainder usually offered through a college or other training venue. Required hours of study of course, vary by trade. Once the apprentice has completed

Continued on next page. ➤

EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING INITIATIVES:

APPRENTICESHIP SEAT PURCHASE

— an initiative that subsidizes the cost of the in-school component of apprenticeship training;

SUPPORT FOR APPRENTICES WITH DISABILITIES

— an initiative that assists Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology to help people with special needs participate in apprenticeship programs, pre-apprenticeship programs, and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program;

EXAMINATION PREPARATION SUPPORT

— provides funding to help training providers deliver up to 30 hours of exam preparation support to help apprentices write their certification exams;

Apprenticeship Completion Bonus in Non-Red Seal Trades — provides a \$2,000 taxable bonus to apprentices

completing training in any Ontario non-Red Seal trade in addition to the \$2,000 federal Apprenticeship Completion Grant in Red Seal Trades.

APPRENTICESHIP COMPLETION BONUS TO EMPLOYERS

— The Bonus is a taxable \$1,000 cash grant to employers per apprentice who have completed their apprenticeship training, received a Certificate of Apprenticeship and, where applicable, a Certificate of Qualification, while in their employment;

SUPPORT FOR NON-EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ELIGIBLE APPRENTICES DURING IN-SCHOOL TRAINING

— an initiative that provides up to \$1,500 to help apprentices who are not eligible for Employment Insurance;

APPRENTICESHIP INNOVATION FUND

— provides funding to update apprenticeship classroom training standards and support innovative training methods (for more information: http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/employers/innov_fund.html);

CO-OP DIPLOMA APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

— an initiative that increases flexibility and accessibility for young people who choose skilled trades training, by combining a college diploma with apprenticeship training (for more information: <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/apprentices/coop.html>);

ONTARIO SKILLS DEVELOPMENT APPRENTICESHIP INCOME SUPPORT

ONTARIO YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM — offers students an opportunity to train as apprentices while completing their secondary school diploma (for more information: <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/apprentices/oyap.html>); and the

PRE-APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

— provides opportunities for more people to learn trade-related skills essential to becoming an apprentice (for more information: http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/apprentices/pre_apprent.html).

RED SEAL

The Interprovincial Standards Red Seal Program (also known as the Red Seal Program) was established more than 50 years ago to provide greater mobility across Canada for skilled workers. Today it represents a standard of excellence for industry. Through the Program, tradespersons are able to obtain a Red Seal endorsement on their provincial/territorial certificates by successfully completing an interprovincial Red Seal examination. The Interprovincial Standards Red Seal Program acknowledges their competence and ensures recognition of their certification throughout Canada without further examination. There are currently 55 Red Seal designated trades.

the required hours, they write an exam to qualify for a Certificate of Qualification for the province or territory they reside in.

Apprenticeships are provincial/territorial responsibilities and are geared to the unique labour market requirements in each part of the country. So, if you have your heart set on being a fishmonger, Nova Scotia might be a better place to consider as a career than say, Saskatchewan might. Likewise, working as an arborist probably wouldn't go far in Prince Edward Island: BC might be a better bet. Every province offers programs and support to respond to the needs of their stakeholders.

Becoming an apprentice requires legwork. You have to be able to locate an employer willing to take you on. The employer has to register you with the provincial apprenticeship authority as an apprentice in his specific trade. Most trades require at least grade 12 as a prerequisite and you can expect to attend technical training (such as college) for about 10 percent of the time.

While apprenticeships vary in length according to provincial requirements, most are designed to be completed between two-to-four years. An apprentice can expect to spend up to 44 weeks a year in the field and attend training for about ten weeks or so. The apprenticeship program is considered complete once all training sessions, work hours and

examinations have been successfully finished. The overseeing province then issues a Certificate of Apprenticeship. Once the apprenticeship is complete, the learner can write a Certificate of Qualification exam. For students with LD/ADHD, accommodations can be put in place for this.

Trade categories fall into two distinct categories: compulsory and voluntary. With the latter, no certification is required, which means a person can legally work in a certain trades without a Certificate of Qualification. A sampling of voluntary trades in Ontario includes: automotive painter, baker, ironworker, arborist, painter and decorator, construction millwright, tool and dye maker, glazier and industrial electrician.

A great go-to source for determining compulsory trades is The Ellis Chart, which offers a comprehensive look at all of the trades in Canada and their specific provincial requirements. Some of the hottest trades in Ontario include: general machinist (up 63 percent in terms of registration over the past three years, according to MTCU), information technology contact centre-customer care agent (up 35 percent) and heavy duty equipment technician (up 20 percent). Declining registrations include contact centre technical support agent (down nine percent); cook (down eight percent) and general carpenter (down by five percent).

THE ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

All of Ontario's trades are now overseen by a new regulatory body, The Ontario College of Trades, which the provincial government rolled out earlier this year. According to Gyula Kovacs, people who work in the skilled trades will have decision making power about what matters to them.

"Like other regulatory colleges, the College of Trades has complaints, investigation and discipline processes that protect the public. A public registry will let the public and employers know who is qualified to work as a journeyperson, and that their qualifications are in good standing. By protecting standards of training and quality of work, the College of Trades will help skilled workers keep pace with change and ensure the public benefits from highly skilled work.

"Ontario needs to maintain high standards in the skilled trades to make sure we have the qualified workforce we need, and to protect public and workplace safety. Workplace enforcement will protect certified workers and registered apprentices from unfair competition," says Kovacs.

"... The Supports for Apprentices with Disabilities program provides \$2.7M annually to assist colleges helping people with special needs participate in apprenticeship programs ..."

Furthermore, the College will also determine the scope of responsibilities of the employers/sponsors for on- the-job training and the curriculum for in-school training for all apprentices including persons with disabilities.

On top of that, the government also sponsors several programs to assist learners with disabilities succeed. These include in-school programs like "The Apprenticeship Enhancement Fund (AEF) which recently increased its budget by

ESSENTIAL SKILLS AND THE ONTARIO SKILLS PASSPORT

\$2M annually to assist non-college apprenticeship providers to upgrade their facilities to ensure accessibility for apprentices with disabilities.

“The Supports for Apprentices with Disabilities program provides \$2.7M annually to assist colleges helping people with special needs participate in apprenticeship programs, pre-apprenticeship programs and Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programs. It is to be used for accommodation and accessibility needs of apprentices with disabilities attending colleges across Ontario,” says Kovacs.

Emerging legislation like the AODA will also help guide The College through guidelines to make its supports accessible to students with varying disabilities.

There’s no denying that it’s an exciting time to be entering the skilled trades. Once considered “the third choice” after university and college, the trades have positioned themselves as a viable alternative for all learners while providing a response to a growing skills shortage in specific areas of the economy. Students with LD/ADHD are ideally placed to not only succeed but flourish in a sector that continues to shape and define itself.



Essential Skills enable people to interpret and to effectively respond to the world around them. They include the ability to learn, communicate, read and write, pass on knowledge and participate actively in the workplace, at home and in the community. Essential Skills provide the foundation for learning all other skills and are important throughout an individual’s career. There are nine Essential Skills: reading, writing, numeracy, oral communication, working with others, document use, computer use, thinking, and continuous learning.

Research has identified that weaknesses in core skills are a barrier to participation in apprenticeship training for many individuals interested in working in the skilled trades. In thinking about how to best support these individuals, improving Essential Skills is widely recognized as part of the solution. Access to tools and resources, upgrading and personal support improves the ability of individuals to fully participate and benefit from apprenticeship training.

The Ontario Skills Passport (OSP)

provides clear descriptions of Essential Skills and work habits and includes videos and tasks that show how people use these skills in everyday life and on-the-job. Learners can use the OSP tools and resources to assess, build, document and track their skills and transfer them to further education, training, the workplace and everyday life.

These skills can be demonstrated in the classroom, cooperative education and other experiential learning opportunities, Specialist High Skills Major and Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programs, Community Involvement, volunteer opportunities (e.g. SpeakUp and Students as Researchers Projects) and extracurricular activities. This information will help learners develop their Individual Pathways Plan (IPP) as they answer the questions: Who am I? What are my opportunities? Who do I want to become? What is my plan for achieving my goals?

For more information, check it out at: <http://www.skills.edu.gov.on.ca/OSP2Web/EDU/WelCome.xhtml>



Cyberbullying

By Deana Collins

With the suicide of Nova Scotia teen Rehtaeh Parsons making headlines across the country earlier this year, the devastating consequences of cyberbullying touched a national nerve and awakened Canadians to a concern that's reaching epidemic proportions.

Few things are more devastating to kids and teens than being bullied. Traditionally, bullying was defined by face-to-face situations where a person or party was harassed, threatened or humiliated by another. It involved visible scenarios and was ultimately addressed personally by appropriate authority figures. Although treacherous, traditional bullying was relatively straightforward...

Meet "cyberbullying", the new and virulent cousin of traditional bullying, a menacing force that intimidates and harasses 24 hours-a-day, through virtual, pervasive devices such as computers and cell phones.

Cyberbullying is defined by Wikipedia as; "...The use of the Internet and related

technologies to harm other people, in a deliberate, repeated, and hostile manner." The sort of harassment and abuse currently delivered through technology is much harder to identify, address and therefore remedy than traditional bullying. It occurs when someone uses cell phones or the Internet (e-mails, texts chat rooms or social media sites) to harass, threaten or humiliate another person---usually to a vast and virtual witness pool. Moreover, it's often delivered as "anonymous", making its very origin puzzling.

With all its perks, there's an undeniable "dark side" to modern technology, as it provides an easy conduit for such things as bullying, stalking and identity fraud. Online

forums complicate harassment situations by making both their case details and the accountability of their culprits difficult to discern. In other words, because bullying is no longer publicly obvious (i.e. confined to schoolyards or even face-to-face contact), it's adopted a covert approach. Once 'underground', it's far more likely to go unreported---at least initially---and sometimes until a situation has escalated to unanticipated heights!

Online attacks tend to become more personal and critical because they're not face-to-face, and they become especially merciless when they lack author identification. Internet forum comments are a good example, where debate can quickly become derogatory, specifically when one user perceives another as intellectually inferior. There's a "speed-and-spread" component to cyberbullying that is unique too. Libelous words, pictures and videos, for example, can be massively broadcast quickly, and once they enter cyberspace, can literally be impossible to retract. One second of poor judgment resulting in the click of a mouse can leave a permanent mark in a virtual universe and a permanent scar on its target!

Students with learning disabilities are especially susceptible to online bullying by a wide variety of peers, acquaintances and strangers alike, because technology now spans the globe in seconds, making its messages both instantaneous and utterly pervasive. Since individuals afflicted by LD are so often perceived as "different", and because they tend to lack conventional language and social skills, they have



greater difficulty with early recognition and the diversion of their bullies' unwanted attention. Since LD can impair language, motor and social skills, people with LD are easy targets for bullies.

According to researchers such as W.N. Bender, C.B. Rosenkrans and M. Crane at the Learning Disabilities Quarterly, adolescents with LD are at increased risk

"... Students with learning disabilities are especially susceptible to online bullying by a wide variety of peers, acquaintances and strangers alike, because technology now spans the globe in seconds, making its messages both instantaneous and utterly pervasive ..."

of depression for a multitude of reasons, including but not exclusive to such things as poor academic performance, impulsiveness and unrefined social skills. Sociologists and neuroscientists, specifically in North America and Europe, are actively collecting and interpreting information that clearly demonstrates how global impairments not limited to paraverbals (body language), but also affecting information processing and linguistics, manifest themselves in extremely negative ways over modern virtual platforms.

While research has determined that teenagers with LD don't process online content or comprehend the implications of cyberbullying as quickly or fully as their non-affected peers, the goals of experts in how depression relates to learning disabilities, such as Dr. John Maag at the University of Nebraska, now publish books and teach courses in behaviour management, cognitive therapy and strategic interventions with the collective goal of not just improving the lives of those living with LD, but also, in some cases, saving them! In other words, researchers at reputable scientific faculties and medical schools in universities such as Cambridge, Oxford, Queens and Yale now

argue that teens experiencing hormonal shifts in the presence of LD are more predisposed to suicide, as growing bodies of data indicate that this particular subgroup suffer higher rates and more intense bouts of depression.

The American Academy of Pediatrics concedes that methodological complications make statistics in this area difficult to quantify and report, but said research is currently being conducted in most first-world countries and is progressively presenting a solid, scientific case for increased awareness of and support for this "at risk" group in the form of breakthrough strategies by such field experts as Dr. Mark L. Wolraich, professor of pediatrics, chief of developmental and behavioral pediatrics at Oklahoma University Health Sciences Center, and director of the university's Child Study Center. Dr. Wolraich and his colleagues boast the authorship of 22 books, as well as a vast and respected body of field research on said implications in relation to both LD and ADHD .

Studies published by the University of Texas (in addition to those conducted at various academic and scientific institutions) indicate that while both genders cyberbully, they tend to do so in very different ways. Girls tend to lie, spread rumours, expose secrets and practice exclusion, while boys typically use "sexting" (sending sexually explicit messages) or more overt threats of physical harm. Interestingly, studies show the ease of cyberbullying makes

"... Adding insult to injury, parents or care-givers, teachers, administrators and even police, are often ignorant of cyberbullying, simply because technology is a youthful arena that excludes non-savvy authority figures ..."

'perpetrator' and 'victim' roles more interchangeable---that is to say it's common to toggle between victim and cyberbully. The dramatic increase in

oscillation between the two adds another dimension to the social phenomenon of cyberbullying and is perhaps our biggest challenge to eradicating it.

Ways to cyberbully are as creative and diverse as technologies and bullies themselves. From teasing, to threats, to account hacking, to identity theft--- cyberbullies do it all! Some even create attractive, interactive web sites and social media pages to target victims, and many victims afflicted with LD have trouble deciphering complex forums whose participants now use "flash-and-dash" to provide their viewers with fun experiences while simultaneously bullying. Adding insult to injury, parents or care-givers, teachers, administrators and even police, are often ignorant of cyberbullying, simply because technology is a youthful arena that excludes non-savvy authority figures.

You might be asking what you can do about cyberbullying....If you or someone you know is being cyberbullied, remember, help is available. Statistics presented in the links below show that a third of all teenagers suffer from cyberbullying and that it happens 24 hours a day, everywhere. They also consistently indicate that while victims of cyberbullying are indeed diverse and countless, the act of cyberbullying is particularly devastating to kids with learning disabilities.

Research and funding to eradicate bullying continue to rise in response to the fact that teens---especially those afflicted by LD---are demonstrating higher rates of depression and suicide. No form of bullying should be tolerated, and the following web sites are resources to help safeguard against and possibly derail the growing problem of cyberbullying:

www.stopbullying.gov
www.kidshelpphone.ca
www.cyberbullyhelp.com
www.stopcyberbullying.org
www.helppguide.org
www.ncpc.org



Just Kids

ONTARIO'S LD YOUTH SPEAK OUT ON ISSUES THAT MATTER

By Carter Hammett



They come from all walks of life and from all over the province. They come from privileged backgrounds and not-so-privileged. They are just starting out, they are already on their way. They are the first generation born entirely into both technology and a cross cultural society. In short, they represent a gallery of voices, ages and conditions collected from around various corners of the province to lend their voices to a highly experimental “youth panel” on how they see themselves; how they perceive others seeing them and how they perceive the world.

One surprise is that most of the messages are resoundingly positive. It suggests that with the proper support, tools and attitude young people can still flourish and live extraordinary

lives. The timing is good. As they prepare for an uncertain future where contracts rule the day and a Bachelor degree is now perceived as the minimum qualification for many jobs, they weigh in on challenges, dreams and hopes.

Perhaps most tellingly, they send messages of hope to those struggling with LDs; trying to understand and coming to terms with being different or awkward in a world that seems to be rapidly moving beyond them. The messaging is clear: You are not alone. We have survived, so can you. Own your disability and not the other way around.

We are grateful that this talented and insightful group took some time to thoughtfully answer questions about their lives and hopes and we thank them for sharing their message with others.

Without further adieu, here is your panel:



ANJOHLI GILES, 13, from **Picton**, is a homeschooled kid who loves Minecraft and Star Trek. (The television show) "My Little Pony teaches me that friendship and being a good person is important. Everyone should watch it. It also teaches you to find your talent and get good at it. That's a good message for everybody. Not just me or other people with learning disabilities or ADHD."



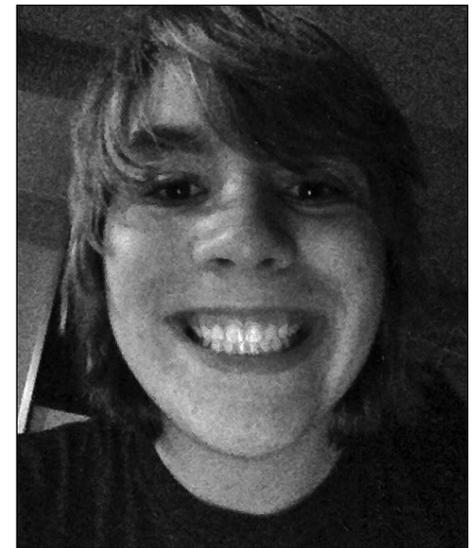
Richmond Hill's ELISA BLASI was diagnosed with a learning disability in grade two. "Through my experiences in elementary school and high school I developed tools and strategies that have allowed me to own my learning disability. I am the type of student who is very aware of my difficulties and thus I strive to ensure that I am always in control of my learning. With this in mind, I am now currently enrolled as a fourth-year psychology major at York University."

Facing the demanding curriculum of my program and the ever-changing world around me, I continue to adapt to situations that challenge my learning disability. "I think it's important that we all start talking about learning disabilities more often. I want my little sister to come home from school one day and say "we learned about all the different types of LD's today in class." Learning disabilities needs to stop being such a mystery to other people who do not have one. I want to see a child openly say they have an LD to their friends and they only have positive things to say back. I want everyone, LD or not, to be informed and to have a voice."



AARON BAILEY is a 23-year-old child and youth worker with a Bachelor's in human services from Griffith University. He currently works for the Regional Assessment and Resource Centre at Queen's University in **Kingston**. "I think one of the most important things I heard at college has really stuck with me, and has become a personal statement of mine. Growing up with ADHD and LDs I felt that they defined me as a person, and that's how people thought of me, as a disability first and a person second. Throughout school I had teachers asking me constantly "what do you have", so that they could better

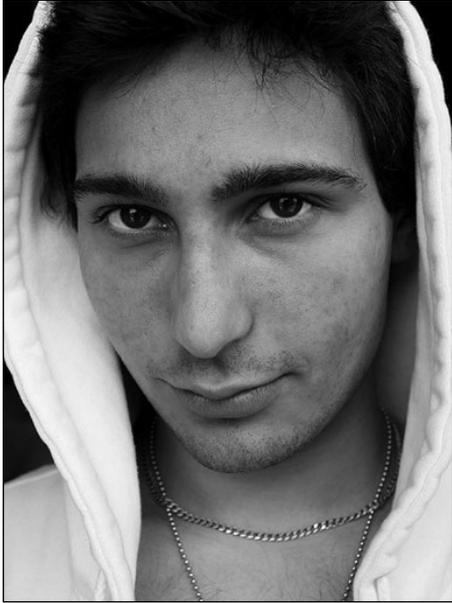
understand what I would be like in class. Having authority figures like teachers always ask me that made it even more apparent that my disabilities defined who I was. It wasn't until I went to St. Lawrence College, when I was talking to the adaptive technologist that my mind was blown. He was telling me that I'd have to go through an interview process to find adaptive technology that best suit me. In my mind that meant that he had to know what I had, I quickly started to blurt out my disabilities; he quickly stopped me and said "I don't care what you have... All I care about is how you learn". That has been stuck in my head for the past five years. I think there's a certain beauty to think like that, that in essence my disability doesn't matter (Yes I do realize it does matter in certain circumstances for accommodations, adaptive technology etc.), but all that matters is how I learn, and how staff can accommodate that. I guess that's what my personal statement has become for anyone with a disability, it doesn't matter what you have, all that matters is how you learn!"



DONNY WILCOX, 16 Hailing from **Windsor**, attends Riverside Secondary School and aspires to attend university. He is currently the student representative

Continued on next page. ➤

for the LDA-WE (Windsor-Essex) and loves computers and technology. "Education is important. You are important. Take the time to do what you love and remember to always present yourself truly. You are unique - be proud of that."



Whitby's **BRANDON WALTERS** 21, is in university studying criminology and hopes to become a police officer. "If someone doesn't treat you well, they are not deserving of your kindness. Remember that you have a beautiful heart and that you are worth just as much kindness and love as you give out."



MARTINA COTTER, 24 and from Toronto, has spoken at functions at the LDAO Toronto chapter; she is a current member of their adult support group. She

attended Scholars Hall in Waterloo, ON a school that specializes in helping children with LD and autism. Her passions include singing, taking dance classes, Hero burger and her cat, Macy. She hopes to work more with the LDAO to be an advocate for the rights of LD people everywhere. "I want all people with learning disabilities to know the biggest challenge you must overcome is negative thoughts. You are not stupid. You are not bad. No matter what people say around you or what situation you are in. Your disability will never go away but you must fight constantly to ensure it does not run or define your life in a negative way."

"... They are the first generation born entirely into both technology and a cross cultural society ..."

What is your specific learning disability/ADHD?

AARON BAILEY: I have a learning disability in reading, writing, and mathematics. I also have ADHD, the combination type, so I have the impulsivity, the hyperactivity, and inattention.

ANJOHLI GILES: I have ADHD, dyscalculia and mild dyslexia

MARTINA COTTER: My learning disability is unique in that when I was tested my verbal output and memory scored in the 96% percentile, meaning I was technically gifted but my spatial reasoning abstract reasoning scored in the 35% percentile. So I am a unique case in that I am a gifted and learning disabled brain trying to make sense of the world around me.

BRANDON WALTERS: My learning disability is ADHD and auditory memory loss.

ELISA BLASI: Specifically speaking, you can categorize my learning disability as a non-verbal learning disability. The nature of my LD is that I often have a hard time with the manipulation and understanding of numbers, processing speeds,

phonological processing, memorization, organization, and visually spacing out my written work as well as the space around me. With that being said, it is not that I have the inability to accomplish any of the difficulties listed above; but rather that I approach these challenges from a different angle than most people.

DONNY WILCOX: I have what is referred to as communication learning disabilities. These include dyslexia, a reading disorder, and dysgraphia, a writing disorder.

How does LD/ADHD affect you in your daily living/work/school?

AARON BAILEY: My LD's and ADHD affect me in many ways in my daily life. It affects my organization, I personally feel like I have potential to do a lot in my day, but with my inability to stay focused or on-task, I find myself sometimes just doing nothing or starting multiple tasks without finishing one of them (Which can be very frustrating). I find my LD's also affect my comprehension skills with daily tasks. Whenever I'm trying to complete a task such as banking, work related questions, cooking etc. I find myself taking a lot longer to complete the task because I either don't understand what I am being asked to do, or need to have someone describe the procedures over and over again, or in a different way.

MARTINA COTTER: In terms of tasks I find hard doing the most difficult is learning a new task with a series of steps quickly. For example when someone attempts to "show me what I just showed you method". It feels as if I have no learning curve when the new task is being accessed by the spatial reasoning and sequencing faculties of my brain. I tend to make a lot of mistakes as each part of the new task feels very disconnected, the parts that build on each other will not be very clear I will misunderstand what are the important parts and put created importance on ones that are minor. Then as soon as the processing of information is taken over



by my memory I will be able to execute the task flawlessly repeatedly. Often I find myself getting very frustrated because once I am able to complete the task I am behind on new things. Instead of being able to enjoy the fact I accomplished something new I find myself feeling guilty for not "getting it" sooner.

ELISA BLASI: Interestingly enough, people often assume that my learning disability affects me more at school than it does in my daily life; where the opposite is actually true. When I am at school and I leave the lecture room to write my exam in an alternate room people often make the connection that I must have a learning disability. However, when I am standing in front of a cash register and cannot count the right amount of change to give the teller; people assume that I am "stupid." People seem to truly believe that a learning disability disappears once you walk out of a classroom. To guarantee I do not end up in situations like the one I have just mentioned I am constantly ensuring that I am in control of my surroundings. For example, I often lose track of time when concentrating on a task, and therefore I have to organize my day quite strictly by using the assistance of the alarm clock on my phone.

ANJOHLI GILES: I homeschool. I get headaches from florescent lights and I can see them flicker. And a lot of unknown noises bother me, so I don't like going shopping or being around huge crowds. Schools would be a very bad place for me to be every day. ADHD makes it hard to wake up in the morning, and my brain doesn't shut off at night, so I have a hard time concentrating on things without my mom keeping me on schedule and taking my pill every day. Math is really hard for me.

BRANDON WALTERS: Oh boy do my learning disabilities affect everything. I can never concentrate properly on anything so when it comes down to school work or remembering or studying, I have great difficulty just recalling necessary information at times. It almost makes me feel like I'm worthless because I know I can't function properly. Though this doesn't happen all the time, it just seems to affect me most when I need to remember the important things. With work, I still function as "normal" as everyone else. We all forget things sometimes, especially when you're running around a kitchen trying to cook and prepare dishes of food for almost 500 people or more a night. Finally, as for day to day life, people I care about get frustrated with me because I can never remember what they tell me or they will get frustrated when I cannot focus properly. I ask them to bear with me, but they tend to shove my faults in my face

"... people often assume that my learning disability affects me more at school than it does in my daily life; where the opposite is actually true ..."

sometimes and say "Just that because I have ADHD and Auditory Memory Loss, doesn't mean you are allowed to forget everything". What people don't understand is that these things are not always controllable; I wish that they were, but society doesn't have a forgiving

viewpoint on this kind of stuff. Especially since most people I know do not consider these problems normal.

DONNY WILCOX: My learning disability affects my everyday life by making taking notes almost impossible. My handwriting is almost completely illegible and reading is extremely time-consuming and difficult. When work is submitted to teachers without being typed, I will almost definitely fail. The school has provided a laptop which helps considerably.



What is the most annoying thing about it?

AARON BAILEY: I think one of the most annoying things about my LDs is how much it affects me in my daily life. People don't realize how much stress and strain LDs can have on people. Also I know some people who think that LDs only affect people in school or the "learning environment", when in reality the "learning environment" happens every single day outside of school, in daily interactions with people. One of the most annoying things about my ADHD is that sometimes I would love to sit down and focus for more than five seconds, but I just can't.

MARTINA COTTER: The most annoying part of my learning disability is something that has changed with age when I was younger it was more a feeling of constant frustration and comparing demanding answers as to why am I like this? Why can't I be like other people who have been blessed with the ability to just will themselves to do any given task? As I have gotten older the naiveté of those questions has given away to frustration about why people can be so close minded and honestly believe that just because a certain method has always worked for them that it should work for me. In my experience those people have a deficit as well just as long as they keep producing others around them will never have a need to mention it.

ELISA BLASI: An even better word for annoying is "hurtful." "What hurts you the

Continued on next page. ➤

most about it?" This seems to be a better question in my situation. When you have an LD "annoying" becomes the new normal. Annoying is the fact that your dad has to drive you around at age 21 because driving is becoming more and more difficult for you. Annoying is when you have to pull an all-nighter because you're having difficulty focusing under the amount of stress you put yourself under. Annoying is chasing around T.A's and professors to try and get your accommodations met. That stuff is annoying but... I can deal with it. I have learned to adapt and have a thick skin about things like that. The difficult part is the things that still hurt no matter how much control I have on a situation. What hurts is having no one who actually truly understands what you go through. It hurts when you talk to someone who refuses to understand that a learning disability does not mean I cannot learn.

ANJOHLI GILES: ADHD is really annoying because I lose a lot of things and spend a lot of time having to look for them. And I don't have school books and a back pack to keep track of! That would be really hard for me. Being ADHD makes me anxious all the time. Trying to pay attention to the right thing at the right time is hard especially when everything has your attention all the time.

BRANDON WALTERS: This would have to be my short term memory. I can walk away real quick from talking to someone I care a lot about and when I come back, I can't remember a darn thing. This always irritates people around me.

DONNY WILCOX: The most annoying thing about having a learning disability is needing help. I know my material and content but have difficulty getting it down, or getting it down on time. The computer helps but it still takes a long time to type with dysgraphia. The computer does make me stand out in class, especially the programs that read to me or where I am expected to dictate. I can go to the LST room if it is available, but sometimes it needs to be quiet in there as well, so word-processing wins out due to convenience.

What is the BEST thing about it?

AARON BAILEY: The best thing about my LD's and my ADHD is that it makes me think outside the box. It helps me see things differently from everyone else. Clearly the way I learn doesn't fit in our "education system". I can't learn by sitting down and practice reading, writing, and math. I psychologically cannot do that. My LD's and ADHD make me push myself to find other ways to learn, and I think there's a certain beauty to that.

MARTINA COTTER: I think my learning disability for better or worse has made me unique and always unforgettable. It is this quality that has allowed me to bond with so many wonderful mentors for each chapter of my life there has been someone who took a shine to me, whether they were aware of my learning disability or not they often saw parts of themselves in me and helped me fight my battles, tried to offer me advice for the challenges ahead or even just gave me a little extra break when no one was looking. For these Kindred spirits who encouraged me to build on my strengths I am eternally grateful. It is because I have been shown so much kindness by all these people that I approach others with the same understanding things people would be quick to write off as excuses I look a little deeper and challenge people to build on strengths their struggles have built. If you never know struggle you never know stride.

"... My LD's and ADHD make me push myself to find other ways to learn, and I think there's a certain beauty to that ..."

ELISA BLASI: For a long time I could not see how any good could come from an LD. When I started taking control of the situations around me, I saw it. When I started having conversations with employers and new friends, I saw it. When I was faced with a difficult or defeating situation, I saw it. When I would talk to

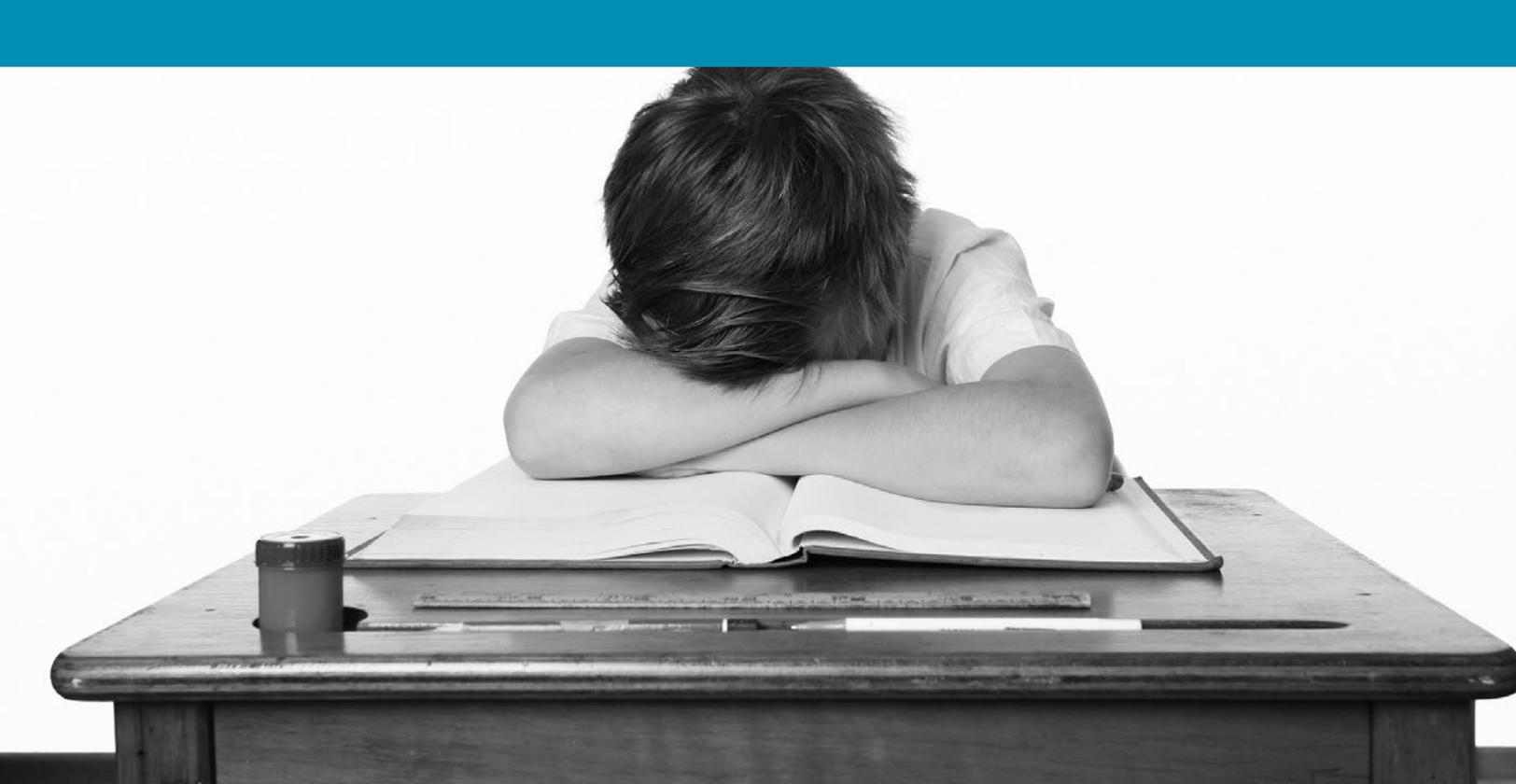
employers or friends I started to see something in myself that I thought an LD would never cause. I often take a different perspective than most people. I seem to see things differently. I'm guessing this is because I had to do this my whole life-when other students would be looking to solve a math problem the regular way, I always had to find a new way to answer it as that "regular" way would never work for my learning style. I realized later on that this is a valued skill in both the work place and in my day-to-day life. I am automatically set apart from most people because I naturally see things in a very different light. This is what a lot of employers are actually looking for.

ANJOHLI GILES: I guess my creativity...I am a good drawer and I like video games a lot because I learn better hands-on and by watching.

BRANDON WALTERS: I cannot say that there is anything positive about auditory memory loss. It's a nuisance for me beyond compare. But with the ADHD, I always find myself full of energy when other people don't have anymore. I think my ADHD is the only reason how I can really keep up with the best jocks in my courses when it comes to sports and athletics. I also notice that I have a faster reaction time to certain things and I can create elaborate out-of-this-world kind of ideas no problem. Other people don't think the same way I do because my brain is hard wired differently.

DONNY WILCOX: I am thankful that I have an IEP that is meant to address my needs and help me out. It lists accommodations that I find absolutely necessary - like the fact that I need assistance with notes. I am not able to copy notes from a board or overhead, so I get copies or I can take a picture with my Ipad (my own personal device).

Other great things about my LD is that I get to be a student representative for the LDA-WE and have a voice. I like to be a part of the education of others about the challenges people living with LDs face. I had the opportunity to do a radio show on CBC about living with a learning disability.



I feel that all these opportunities empower me and help me, and others, to deal with these challenges.



What accommodations do you use?

AARON BAILEY: When I was in school the accommodations I used were time and a half, quiet testing room, a computer to write my exams, a note taker, a scribe for my exams. I also used adaptive technology such as Premier Tools, and Inspiration.

MARTINA COTTER: The book ADD Friendly Ways to Organize Your Life by Judith Kolberg and Kathleen Nadeau taught me a lot of effective strategies to establish routines in my life and to recognize unhealthy patterns. Having a rough schedule of what I need to accomplish in every given week allows me

“... People do not understand how it feels to work twice as hard to accomplish half as much ...”

to prioritize and prevents me from feeling overwhelmed. When I was in school I used

a program called Mac Speech Dictate that allowed me to speak into a microphone and the words would appear as text that was essential. There is also programs like Kurzweil will read text aloud.

ELISA BLASI: I can write my exam in an alternate exam room. Use a computer for my exams.

Use Kurzweil and Word in an exam; get double the time for an exam than the regular class. If the Math class gets a formula sheet they have to write out and can bring to the exam, I get to type out that sheet rather than write it like the rest of the class.

ANJOHLI GILES: I use a schedule calendar on an old cell phone that my mom gave me. I have reminders for my chores and an alarm that goes off every hour of the day to make me notice what time it is. Also Mom can email me reminders and I get them there too...I just have to try not losing my phone and remember to keep it charged.

BRANDON WALTERS: I don't use accommodations, not anymore at least. I used to be on an IEP when I was way younger, but now I just bear with everything and push my limits. I feel that I am a normal person so why take the easy way out? The only way I will learn properly is if I push myself way harder

than I'm used to.

DONNY WILCOX: I have a laptop that was assigned to me at the school. One program or one piece of equipment doesn't necessarily take care of all of the problems, but the combination helps. I use a school-assigned laptop for word processing. The programs I use most is Word because voice-to-text software is not always the best thing to use in a school setting. I have my own iPad and use it to take pictures of labs and/or notes in class that haven't been copied. I also use it to keep track of my notes on Evernote or to use Dropbox to enable better access to my school stuff at home. I also require extra time on tests and assignments and access to the learning support teacher.



How do you think society perceives people with learning disabilities?

AARON BAILEY: Sadly, I feel that people perceive people with learning disabilities as stupid or dumb. I feel they perceive people with LD's as people who won't accomplish much with their lives. Also if you look at the word that we use to describe learning disabilities, what are

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“... when other students would be looking to solve a math problem the regular way, I always had to find a new way to answer it as that “regular” way would never work for my learning style. I realized later on that this is a valued skill in both the work place and in my day-to-day life ...”

we really telling people? Let’s flip the words “learning disabled” and it becomes “disabled learning” or in other words, it’s saying that I am disabled in my learning. So it just makes sense that people with learning disabilities can’t learn, right? ;)

MARTINA COTTER: People do not understand how it feels to work twice as hard to accomplish half as much. People have a very narrow definition of disability since learning disabilities are often not visible it is very easy for people to ignore or label as bad behaviour. I can see fine but it may take to longer to see the big picture. I can hear fine but I may need you to repeat that. I can walk fine but it may take me longer to get there. I feel that people are more than willing to take advantage of our gifts but then are very hard on our short comings.

DONNY WILCOX: Some people view people with learning disabilities for what they are - individuals dealing with a couple of challenges. Others view those with LDs as stupid. They think that we’ll never get it, or that we are stupid or slow. That is not the case. A learning disability is a very specific challenge that we must address. It does not indicate that we can’t learn or don’t understand.



What do you think the world will look like in ten years? Will it be better or worse for people with LD?

AARON BAILEY: I think the future is looking positive for people with learning

disabilities. I believe this because it seems like it’s an epidemic at this moment. More and more people are being diagnosed with some form of learning disabilities, and/or ADHD. It’s just a matter of time when we realize that we need to take a look at how we are educating our children/youth, so that we can accommodate all forms of learning disabilities.

BRANDON WALTERS: Will it be better or worse for people with LD? I believe the world will be full of people with all sorts of learning disabilities and in time I think people will grow more accustomed to people’s disadvantages and strengths. People will become more understanding and nurturing to others. Only with proper education people will realize that people with learning disabilities are just as “normal” as the next person. When that day comes, life will be beautiful!

DONNY WILCOX: I believe that the population is becoming more educated in learning disabilities. I hope that as a result, education and vocational accommodations will level the playing field in the future. Those with specific LDs will be able to function in schools and work without being centered out or made to feel inferior in any way.



If you could communicate with someone struggling with an LD, what message would you want them to hear?

AARON BAILEY: You’re not alone, as much as some people may feel utterly alone, it’s important to know that there are many others struggling just like you out there. Also to let them know not to give up. It’s a hard long fight, but trust me, once you get through all the crap, life can be so much easier, and everything may start to make sense soon! Just keep going!!

ELISA BLASI: Own it. Your LD will always be with you. I used to hide it or pretend it was not happening. That seemed to make everything worse. You should learn how to explain it, and most importantly learn what is so great about your LD. I know that sounds odd, but my LD has made me who

I am today. I am so much stronger and compassionate. I am determined and have a great outlook on life. Further, I take so much pride in how far I have come. Once you start to see this in yourself you will start to see the different ways you’ll want to take control of your LD.

MARTINA COTTER: The most important advice I can offer to people of all ages affected by LD is to make time in your life for something you enjoy. I think this is good advice for all people but it is especially important for people with LD to have that hobby or activity that is not a burden. Our lives are so often dominated with what we have trouble doing. An activity that ignites your passion helps you to become aware of your strengths which will allow you to build on them in other aspects of your life. For parents this can be as simple as a weekly lesson or a summer camp the benefits will pour over into every aspect of your child’s life.

ANJOHLI GILES: Stuff is hard sometimes... but learn what you are good at and make that your job. If it is swimming, be a swimmer. If it is art, do that... If it is cooking, do that. We all have things we are good at.

DONNY WILCOX:

1. You are not stupid!
2. If you are identified, know what challenges you face - they probably aren’t as extensive as you think. Concentrate on the areas you need help with the most and know where your strengths are!
3. If you need help, ask for it. People and educators are not going to seek you out and assume you are having difficulties. Sometimes you need to pass that message on.
4. View your challenges as part of your uniqueness! They are not a weakness, they are just something that you have to work on.
5. Know your IEP. Keep a copy of it to refer to and know what accommodations you are entitled to as a result.
6. Don’t get discouraged...life is good!



Shelf Life

NEW BOOK TO TEMPT THE MIND AND CLEANSE THE ADHD PALETTE

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

by Zoë Kessler

Although the book's branding is clearly aimed at women, let's make one thing perfectly clear: ADHD According to Zoë is a book for everyone touched by ADHD.

Following a tightly-structured pattern of autobiography/consolidation of meaning/ solutions offered, Kessler creates a compelling read that deftly cycles between heart-wrenching, hilarious, pragmatic and spiritual.

When her diagnosis finally arrived at the age of 47, Kessler's self perception was suddenly smashed to pieces. "I was now certifiably crazy. At least that's how I felt," she writes. "I always thought I had a good brain. Sure I had lousy social skills, was moody and impulsive, fought alcoholism, binge smoked, was constantly overwhelmed, had no career, and no money and changed boyfriends more often than I changed my socks but still I was smart –right? Didn't my two university degrees, two college diplomas and writing and debating skills mean I had a good brain? The one thing I thought I had going for me was gone."

From there, the chapter shifts into reflective analysis about her situation to this point, and lots of questions are asked: Why wasn't she diagnosed as a child? Why hadn't anyone detected her condition before this? As she begins the arduous process of disclosing her condition to various people in her life, she is sometimes surprised to learn that she isn't as alone as originally believed. The remaining parts of the chapter offer a broad range of practical suggestions. The book's 17 chapters all follow a similar model.

And those chapters cover a broad range of topics, breaking down the components of ADHD nicely in the process. Topics specific to ADHD, including impulsivity, inattentiveness, hyperfocus, disorganization, time management, and creativity are all addressed in a style that's accessible and informative. Kessler frequently cites current research to back up her statements and tosses in some surprises when it comes to managing the condition.

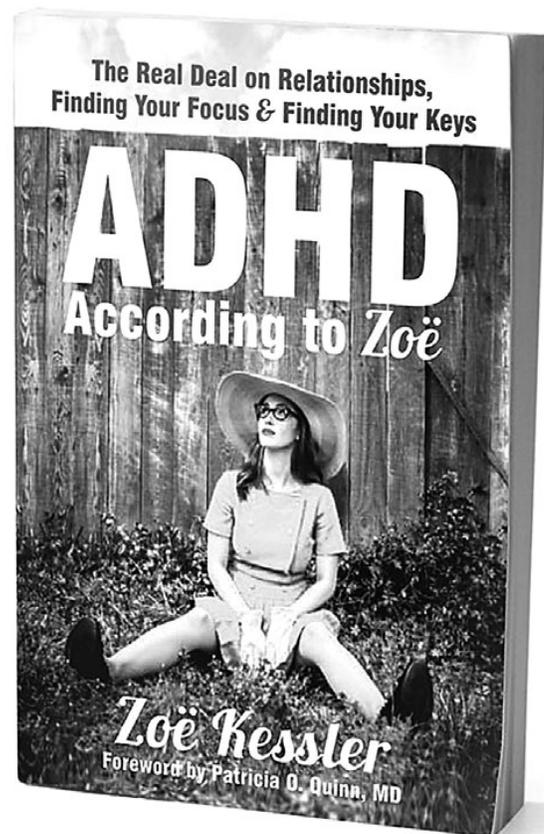
Like a confessional songwriter, she is open and generously shares her experiences. Readers—male and female alike—will be able to relate to anecdotes involving failed relationships, lost keys, frequent job changes, being broke, lost, humiliated. And

while they may not be able to relate to drumming and herbal remedies as possible solutions, there are plenty of other proposed suggestions—some, eyebrow-raising— that make up for it.

My one major quibble with this book is its conclusion: There is none! The final chapter, "Being Experimental" rattles off a nice battery of alternative treatments before closing with a funny line about broken legs, and then....nothing. I wish there had been a summing up at the end; some kind of synthesized wisdom to share— but instead, the book just stops dead in its tracks. The End. That's it, there ain't no more. It's quite jarring, considering how taut and well-organized the material is.

That quibble aside, it's nice to have the companionship of this breezy book that celebrates the crests and chasms of a life well-examined. ADHD According to Zoë offers a refreshing and reflective intimacy that flows forth like the discovery of a late and lovely spring.

Carter Hammett



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Our thanks also to the many anonymous donors who contributed to LDAO through our online presence on CanadaHelps or through directed donations on their United Way annual pledges.



Chapter News & Views

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM AROUND THE PROVINCE!

YORK REGION

New Committee Formed in Partnership with Local School Board

The Learning Disabilities Association of York Region (LDAYR) continues to support the needs of all children, youth, adults diagnosed with a Learning Disability and/or ADHD, as well as their families and educators.

With the continued success of our Executive Function Workshops for parents and educators, as well as one-to-one academic coaching led by Denise Harding from Evoke Learning, we look forward to another year of upcoming workshops and programs for individuals in York Region. In partnership with Evoke Learning, throughout the summer we successfully hosted a Math Transitions Program which supported students from Grade 7-9 with math strategies. Another big thank you goes to the team at Learnstyle, for an outstanding March Break and Summer Camp Assistive Technology Program for students.

This past March we were honoured to be one of two recipients for the 20th Annual Mayor of Richmond Hill's Charity Golf Tournament. We would like to thank Mayor Barrow and his committee for their support this year which will truly make a difference in the lives of individuals and families living with an LD/ADHD. In appreciation for our members, staff, and volunteers, we hosted a Family BBQ to end the summer with: fun activities, a jumping castle, a snow cones machine, even the local EMS and YRP came out to support! This October, we will also be participating in our 3rd Annual Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon with the

hope of reaching our \$10,000 goal in donations – Go Right to Learn Team!

The student voice is more prominent than ever at the LDAYR. We are overwhelmingly proud of the exemplary efforts of our LDAYR Ambassador Elisa Blasi whose personality radiates in every article and speaking event she does. In addition, we are proud to announce the stories of our new LDAYR Champions Matthew and his mom. Don't forget to check out Elisa and Matthew's Corner on our website (www.ldayr.org) and in our quarterly newsletters.

The Gift of LD & ADHD

LDAYR presented its Annual Conference on October 21st 2013 featuring guest speaker Jonathan Mooney! In this presentation, Jonathan spoke with humour and wit outlining research that validates LD/ADHD as a cognitive gift. Most importantly, Jonathan empowers students, parents, and educators to build a positive self-understanding.

For further details contact LDAYR at: 905-884-7933 x 23 or www.ldayr.org

Learning Disabilities: Stop the Stigma, Pursue Potential!

An exciting partnership with the York Region District School Board and Learning Disabilities Association of York Region has formed the Learning Disabilities Steering Committee, which is an interdisciplinary committee dedicated to ending the stigma surrounding learning disabilities and to assist our students to achieve their full potential. We will do this through our commitment to innovative leadership, knowledge mobilization, research, advocacy and collaboration that will ensure a system-wide focus on capacity building and implementation support.

We strive for excellence in our work by following these Guiding Principles:

- Student-centered
- Dignity and respect
- Shared responsibility and commitment
- Innovation and learning
- Leadership
- Accountability
- Evidence-based/promising practices
- Self-advocacy



In Person

ZOË KESSLER

By Kenneth E. Seaton

Everything's Coming up Zoë



With a new book hot off the press, *Psych Central's* popular blogger takes a moment to chat with us about self-esteem, being diagnosed with ADHD later in life and keeping a sense of humour through it all.

Zoë Kessler is an author, journalist, blogger, documentarian and comic who's widely recognized as an authority on women and ADHD/ADD. Zoë Kessler is all that and more! She is highly in-demand as a motivational speaker and her presentations have been described as "exhilarating," "inspiring" and "engaging."

Kessler's popular blog, *ADHD from A to Zoë* has garnered a loyal readership that spans the globe and she's been interviewed on international radio, featured in countless magazine articles, documentaries, and books on the topic of women and ADHD. She's produced a radio documentary and has a stand-up routine that has audiences falling out of their chairs as she talks about being a woman with ADHD.

"I've always used humour since the time I was a child to cope. I was the proverbial class clown and that is a very atypical thing for kids with ADHD," she says. "But, on the other hand, my theory is that one of the great things about ADHD is that we are all very creative people."

Her latest book, *ADHD According to Zoë: The Real Deal on Relationships, Finding Your Focus & Finding Your Keys* is predicted to become a best seller and seems to reinforce her theory. Now 54, she was only diagnosed with ADHD at 47 and this forms a core part of her

messaging. She engagingly writes of her first-hand experiences as an adult with ADHD and offers up real-world tips on how to not only cope with ADHD, but to also grow with it as well.

She says that "a late diagnosis is difficult because by the time you reach my age, which was 47 years old, you have a life time of challenging experiences with no understanding of why you keep bumping into invisible walls at every turn." In her book, Kessler describes how she was fired from jobs, suffered financial losses, broken relationships, near-addictions and "how the late diagnosis was a mixed blessing and because now I can go forward and do as much as I can with the time that I have left."

Kessler wrote the book to be a cautionary tale so that she can help men and women with the challenges of ADHD; especially with their self-esteem and self-confidence. In *ADHD According to Zoë* she ended up putting herself out there in a really personal way. "I wrote the book to put a voice to statistics, the statistics about women and ADHD are abysmal!"

Keeping busy is important to Kessler who claims she still has more energy than most people her age and that's what she calls the ADHD fountain of youth. She's ambitious and has a lot of catching up to do. "You know, I have fun but damnit...if I

had been diagnosed a long time ago I know that I would have 12 books out not two!"

There are more books in her future, as she still has much to say; perhaps even a novel, however not necessarily anything to do with ADHD. She is also interested in herbal medicine and wants to learn more about it.

Kessler says that the most important thing for people with ADHD "is to really love yourself, get over the shame, the blame and rebuild self-esteem and self-confidence, which is hard to do in the face of all the adversity that we face out there. It's got to be done because otherwise where is the motivation to care about yourself? I actually love who I am!"



Zoëisms on

✓ *Just got home from band practice. We're Canadian. We spent half the night apologizing to each other.*

✓ *I thought my workplace was closed today. Then they called & said, "Come in as normal." I said I'd just come in as myself.*

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LDAO is proud to be a partner of GivingTuesday!

Many people know about Black Friday and Cyber Monday... now GivingTuesday is coming to Canada on December 3, 2013.

GivingTuesday is a new Canadian day of giving and volunteering. It is the "opening day of the season," where charities, companies, and individuals join together to share commitments, rally for favourite causes and think about others.

To find out how you can support LDAO and help your community by being part of the movement, visit www.GivingTuesday.ca. Your donations and support always go toward a great cause; making Ontario a better place to live, work, and learn.



*"We have two days that are good for the economy.
Now we have a day that is good for the community too."*



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