



NTL and LD Edge are managed by ATN and are funded by the Government of Canada

Delaware Speedway Drivers Assisting ATN Access for Persons With Disabilities Inc.

This is the fourth consecutive year, the Traction and BT Racing teams are helping ATN spread the word about disabilities.

The #77 Traction Peterbilt of Ontario Super Stocks is driven by Darrell Lake and sports the ATN logo on its side window. Also in this division is the BT Racing Team #28 Saratoga Homes car driven by Kris Lawrence.

In the Junior Racing League at Delaware Speedway the three BT Team cars helping ATN are: the #28 driven by 13 year old Jordan "Jo" Lawrence, the #50 driven by 16 year old Kristopher Lawrence and the newest BT car on the track #66 is driven by 11 year old Lucas Manning.

All of these drivers are supporting ATN by displaying our logo, handing out information flyers and newsletters.

The Super Stocks are on the oval most Friday nights in the summer and the Junior Race Division runs on Wednesday evenings.



Photo courtesy of: KPG Photo Graphics



Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario
London Region



UWO Centre for Inclusive Education



ATN and Quiznos Team up again for: “Thursdays @ Quiznos”

ATN Access Inc. has partnered with Quiznos Sub to help raise awareness of persons with learning disabilities (LDs) ATN has developed resources to assist employers, educational environments and other community resources to ensure their facilities are LD friendly. Together, ATN and Quiznos are committed to spreading the message.

How can you help?

From April 24th to May 29th visit one of these three Quiznos locations on

Thursdays only:

- 395 Wellington Road (Wellington and Commissioners)
- 735 Wonderland Road (Wonderland at Southdale), or
- 1010 Talbot (St. Thomas)

When you make your purchase, simply tell the cashier you would like to support ATN. Your receipt will be marked accordingly and, at the end of October, a portion of those sales will be forwarded to ATN.

How else can you participate? Consider having one of these Quiznos locations cater your upcoming event: board meetings, staff meeting, family reunions, and sports events!

Remember, purchases must be designated towards this ATN fundraiser in order to qualify, so don't forget to tell your server!

Share this information with your staff, your family and friends. They too can help raise money and awareness for disabilities when they visit the participating locations of Quiznos.



Strategies for ADD/ADHD Adults

By Lynn Penner

Are disesteeming attention difficulties creating chaos? Overwhelmed by work and home responsibilities? Usher in an assistant – a notepad. Jot, then cross off tasks to streamline your agenda. Correspondingly, avoid unnecessary stress. You're at your multitasking limit, diplomatically confess it as we ADD/ADHD people are susceptible to concentration problems, memory dysfunction, emotional upheavals and mood fluctuations caused by tension. Immoderate pressure performance causes frustration, irritability and scattered intentions. Clear your mind – keep spaces tidy. An over stimulated brain easily becomes frayed; our minds are too distracted to be surrounded by clutter.

Attention wanes while trying to listen to someone? Admitting: Sorry, I wasn't paying attention, is usually accepted, and preferable to embarrassing confusion. Likewise, *talking in tangents* reflects our rapid thought-negotiating process. Pause...to control thoughts; recall subject. Point forgotten? Smile and say, "I've lost my train of thought." It's forgivable, reminders are generally granted. Also, *poor memory* is helped by memorizing a string of random numbers a few times a day to build retentiveness. Use colourful sticky notes, calendars and planners as reminders. Keep a daily journal to recall past events.

Find a creative outlet which can help you in other areas of your life. Crafts, woodworking, writing drawing, model building and puzzles are very useful for focus training. *Self-discipline*, stick to projects although a new idea is more exciting; discover the gratification of completion. Affirm aloud: No, I'm doing *this* right now. It really helps. Blow off steam peacefully by hiking, gardening or walking briskly.

Concentrate better. A mellow recording of nature sounds, using headphones, helps if distractions are unavoidable. Although *interruptions* are inevitable, being disrupted from a mind-flow displaces our thoughts. Let people know if you need personal space. Also, gaps in daily regime can weaken our constructive routine. We don't always have to alter our set schedule to meet others' needs. Polite assertiveness: Sorry, is respectable. Consider your *time allotment*. Truly, nothing is more unHINGING than rushing. Just being conscious of that fact helps us plan our day.

Remember proper nutrition; physical and mental health is connected. Most notably... **live** informed; **love** your abilities and **laugh** everyday.

...(Lynn Penner is a speaker for ATN's Speakers Bureau)

UNIVERSAL DESIGN IN THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

By Joe Nolan Phd.

The Human Resources department is the first stop for most job seeking individuals. The job hunting task in itself is daunting, but when a person who needs accommodation because of a disability or perceptual difficulty approaches the HR department as a job seeker, or employee seeking assistance with personnel or benefits issues, it opens a whole new dimension of barriers.

The use of the principle of Universal Design can do much to alleviate some of the barriers in the HR office. Consequently, candidates often get a chance to show their best and maybe even present hidden talents. While Universal Design (UD) carries several definitions, Welch (1995) sees it as "an approach to creating environments and products that are usable by all people to the greatest extent possible." (p.1) The basic premise is to manipulate the environment to facilitate engagement and success.

In the next few paragraphs, we will illustrate how Universal Design can maximize the efficiency of the HR unit, and consequently, the company as a whole.

The Application and Hiring process: Many employers now have computer workstations in their HR unit. These workstations often include application and benefit forms, job postings, benefits booklets, and employee handbooks. Dragon Naturally Speaking (http://www.digitalriver.com/v2.0img/operations/scansoft/site/367062/367062_dns-talk.html) is a "speech to text" program that enables an applicant to fill out their job application using the forms feature. The program can be adapted to use company specific forms. Unfortunately, this program is only available for Windows. However, a new program for Mac, Macspeech (<http://www.macspeech.com>) uses the Dragon Naturally Speaking engine.

Text to Speech programs (otherwise known as screen readers) can make handbooks, benefits booklets, policy letters, and memorandums all accessible to individuals who for whatever reason cannot read from the screen or text. These programs can read out loud entire documents or just selected sections. Further, some of the programs contain dictionary and pronunciation functions. Some of these programs are Kurzweil 3000 (<http://www.kurzweiledu.com/kurz3000.aspx>) Texthelp Read and Write (<http://www.texthelp.com/page.asp>), and a free program known as Read Please (available through the website www.readplease.com). JAWS for Windows (http://www.freedomscientific.com/fs_products/software_jaws.asp) is a screen reader that also includes a Braille display and print capability. Each of these programs has their own features, characteristics, and idiosyncrasies (e.g. some are Vista compatible, some require newer processors and large amounts of memory or hard drive), so it would be wise to play with some demos before purchasing anything.

Individuals who have problems reading small text have the benefits of using built in accessibility features contained in both Windows and Mac Operating Systems or they can use third party software programs such as Zoomtext (<http://www.aisquared.com/index.cfm>). Zoomtext is a screen magnifier for Windows that is capable of blowing up text to the size required by the reader.

The myriad of assistive software programs on the market and within the operating systems themselves are enough to boggle the mind. Worry not, ATN provides a consulting service that can assist you in choosing the appropriate product, installation, and training to tailor the product for your HR needs.

REFERENCE.

Welch, P. (ED.) (1995). Strategies for teaching universal design. Boston: Adaptive Environments Center.

Learning Disabilities and Depression

By: Hope Clark

In today's society we have a greater understanding of LDs (Learning Disabilities) than we ever had. Yet, we do not fully understand the comorbid relationship between LDs and mental health? More importantly, - why when we have so many tools at our grasp which can help people with LDs, is depression something that we can not rid ourselves of?

According to the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada "Learning Disabilities," refers to a number of disorders that may affect the acquisition, organization, retention, understanding or use of verbal or non verbal information. Learning Disabilities may affect oral language, written language, reading and math.

The term "mental health," describes the levels of cognitive or emotional well-being of an individual and the ability to enjoy life to the fullest by having one's mental, physical and emotional health at homeostasis. A person's mental health is a balance of coping with the stressors of everyday life which include tragedies. Research shows that when a person with a learning disability is unable to cope, depression is often a result.

Depression occurs when people who are diagnosed with LDs cannot manage with everyday stressors. What one person sees as a learning experience and the ability to change ones' life to a positive – a person with an LD may see the event as tragic. According to The Royal College of Psychiatrists in the UK, depression is normally easy to spot – unless it is in someone with an LD.

Some signs of depression are as follows: listlessness, sadness, inability to sleep or sleeping too much, avoidance of people, places and things, loss of appetite and more. People with depression can usually get out of their depressive state by discussing their problems with friends, family and even a co-worker. People with LDs can have problems communicating in everyday life so when they become depressed the signs are different.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists has pointed out the signs to look out for in persons with LDs:

- Sudden or gradual changes in usual behaviour.
- Seeking reassurance.
- Loss of skills.
- Loss of ability to communicate.
- Outbursts of anger, destructiveness or self harm.
- Physical illness.
- Complaining about aches and pains.
- Wandering or searching.

V. Prasher, states that "the point prevalence of a major depressive illness in people with learning disability is between 2 and 7%, which means that depression can be twice as common in this group as in the general population." In an article by Gwen Preston, of the Vancouver Sun, she mentions a study conducted by the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada. In her article Ms. Preston quotes the study by LDAO of Canada "depression, anxiety, and unemployment are significantly more common in people with learning disabilities than in those without."

So, why is it that a person with learning disabilities is seemingly more susceptible to depression?

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Perhaps, if one is unable to cope with normal everyday stressors and if they have problems or an inability to communicate with friends, family or co-workers those normal everyday stressors may become overwhelming – especially if they have been diagnosed with an LD. We as a society tend to take for granted the things that we learn, retain, express and can move on from. Persons with disabilities do not always have the same capabilities and it is important to acknowledge that fact. If you have a learning disability or know someone who may have a learning disability knowing some coping strategies could be beneficial.

Some coping strategies that have been suggested by the Learning Disabilities Services team at ATN Access Inc: www.atn.on.ca, are:

- Don't be ashamed to ask for help if it is needed
- Make sure you are communicating with those around you. Whether you are in school, at work or elsewhere – the people around you need to know if you need some extra help
- If you are feeling overwhelmed, depressed or just low then seek help from your family physician, close friend, clergy or someone else you feel that you could confide in
- Give a daytimer or planner a try. When you organize your life it seems to run a little more smoothly – that goes for everyone 😊 No matter how good your memory may be if you are not organized you're bound to forget something.

If you know someone with a Learning Disability who has been behaving out of the norm of their usual behaviour – speak to them. Clear dialogue is so important to any discussion – no matter the topic. The person with the LD may not have the ability to recognize that they are depressed.

References:

Fir, Alex. How Depression Effects Learning Disabilities retrieved from: <http://ezinearticles.com/?How-Depression-Effects-Learning-Disabilities&id=91198>
Reviewed: April 15, 2008

The Royal College of Psychiatrists "Depression in People with Learning Disability: retrieved from: <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinformation/mentalhealthproblems/depression/learningdisability.aspx>
Reviewed: April 15, 2008

Prasher, V. (1999) Presentation and Management of Depression in People with Learning Disability. *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment*, 5, 447 -454.
Reviewed: April 15, 2008

Distinctive Learning Center Update...

The Distinctive Learning Center is moving forward and will hopefully open in January 2009. We are in the funding stages and still require additional funding in order to make this project a reality. The Distinctive Learning Center will be a non-profit school for children who learn differently - A place where a curriculum is built to fit a child because that child, despite intelligence and an eagerness to learn, has experienced barriers to learning in a standardized classroom. DLC – London will provide:

- A 1:5 teacher-to-student ratio and individualized curricula for every child
- A social environment that fosters peer acceptance among children who have experienced similar difficulties and face similar challenges
- Financial accessibility by engaging support from the business community to offer an income-contingent tuition program Help children with LDs meet their true potential.

Childhood should be a time filled with acceptance and accomplishment - and children should grow up to contribute to their society to the fullest extent of their abilities. Please consider helping children with LDs to realize their true potential. Your donation makes the school accessible to families with financial challenges through our income-contingent tuition program.

Brochures are available upon request.

If you have any information that could help or would like to donate please do not hesitate to contact us: **519-433-7950**

Speakers Bureau Update...

Our Speakers Bureau is off and running with presentations being made to youth community groups, major employers and City of London departments. Each of our current three speakers has a 30-40 minute presentation that they can bring to your workplace, meeting or event free of charge. These speakers will share their experiences of living with a learning disability, telling how people treated them, how they felt emotionally and physically and tell you how they overcame the road blocks presented to them.

To book your presentation, please call us today at 519-43-7950 ext 372.

Contact Us:



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We hope you have enjoyed this issue of the LD Edge Newsletter and that you are looking forward to the June issue.

If you have any information or articles or submissions to share with us, please contact us at anytime.



For an Adobe Acrobat (PDF) version of this document click on the link "LD Edge Newsletter" at: www.atn.on.ca

If we give them an edge,
they may give us one.



10th Annual Charity Golf Tournament! Forest City National Golf Course Monday, July 7, 2008

Each year we look to the community to assist us in our endeavours, particularly those that are not supported by traditional government sponsorship, and yet are so important to our consumers.

Our niche in the service sector is computer training, computer assisted learning and addressing the needs of individuals with learning barriers.

As a registered charity and community-based training agency, ATN regularly provides services to over 600 individuals. It's through fundraising efforts such as our Annual Golf Tournament that we have been able to provide programs specifically geared towards enhancing the quality of life of those we serve.

You can take part in our biggest fundraiser of the year by:

- **Registering your team of 4** (\$140.00 per person visit www.atn.on.ca)
- **Sponsoring a Hole** for \$100 (Your company's name would be prominently displayed on a flag)
- **Donating a Prize**
- **Contributing a Silent Auction Item**
- **Sponsor a Golf Cart** for \$25
- **Registration Goodie Bag donation** (160 pieces of any corporate promotional items or samples)

All sponsors will be recognized in the Tournament Program. Charitable receipts can be provided, and pick up of donated items can be arranged.



Thank you for Supporting ATN!
www.atn.on.ca Info@atn.on.ca