

Types of Learning Disabilities

Non-Verbal (NLD)

NLD is a neurological syndrome characterized by the impairment of nonverbal or performance-based information controlled by the right hemisphere of the brain. Difficulties will arise in the areas of gross motor skills, inability to organize visual-spatial relations, or adapt to novel social situations. Frequently, a person with NLD is unable to interpret non-verbal signals and cues, and therefore he or she experiences difficulty interacting with peers in socially normative ways.

The four major categories of deficits and dysfunction present as follows:

- Motoric (lack of coordination, particularly on the left-hand side of the body, severe balance problems, and difficulties with graphomotor skills).
- Visual-spatial-organizational (lack of image, poor visual recall, faulty spatial perceptions, difficulties with executive functioning and problems with spatial relationships).
- Social (lack of ability to comprehend nonverbal communication, difficulties adjusting to transitions and novel situations, and deficits in social judgment and social interaction).
- Sensory (sensitivity in any of the sensory modes : visual, auditory, tactile, taste or olfactory).

Persons with NLD are particularly inclined toward developing secondary internalizing disorders such as stress, anxiety and panic, as well as debilitating phobias. Without appropriate intervention, the cumulative effect of ongoing stress can advance to an unmanageable state for anxiety for an NLD person, who is already predisposed to internalizing disorders.

Some common signs are:

- Talk a lot but really say very little
- The "trees" not the "forest"
- Focus on details, do not apprehend the main idea.
- Do not "see the whole picture."
- Do not "read" facial expressions, gestures, or other nonverbal aspects of communication, they miss the subtleties, nuances.
- Be inappropriate in their social interactions.
- They have few friends, friendships tend to be with older or younger persons rather than peers
- They tend to process information in a linear, sequential fashion, not seeing multiple dimensions.
- In spite of relative strength in sequencing or recalling sequences, they may confuse abstract temporal concepts, they have significant difficulty recognizing cause-effect relationships.
- They frequently "shut down" when faced with pressure to perform, such pressure might come from too many simultaneous demands, from tasks which seem to complex. or from expectations to perform at a rate which seems too rapid.
- As adults they tend to be underemployed relative to their educational experiences.