Learning About Invisible Disabilities

A presentation created for the National Council for Support of Disability Issues (NCSD)

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http://www.ncsd.org/
What is an invisible disability?

An invisible disability is a condition a person has that other people can not see. These conditions usually affect some one’s ability to:

- Learn
- Communicate with others
- Control their mood
- Manage the way they think
What causes some one to have an invisible disability?

There are several reasons why a person might have a disability. Here are some common reasons:

- They were born with their disability
- They had an accident that caused their disability
- They have an illness that caused their disability
- As they grew older, their disability developed

A disability is not something some one chooses to have. People can not help acting differently because of their disability.

Fact: 54 million people in the United States have some type of disability.

*Source http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/freedominitiative.html*
Common Invisible Disabilities

Here is a list of some common invisible disabilities that we will discuss today:

- Learning disabilities
- Auditory Processing Disorder (APD)
- Visual Processing Disorder (VPD)
- Dyslexia
- Asthma
- Stuttering
- ADHD
- Mental Illness
- Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

We will look at the definitions and characteristics of a few of these disabilities a little later. But first, let’s talk more about the brain and how a person develops a disability.
The Brain

When someone has an invisible disability, their brain often works differently.

The brain is made up of several different parts.
Brainstem
Connects the brain to the spinal cord.

Cerebellum
Controls body movements and balance.

Cerebrum
Has two halves – one controls the right side of the body, the other controls the left side. Controls body temp., thirst, hunger, smell, feelings, and sleep.

Spinal Cord
Connected to, but not part of the brain. Carries messages that go from the brain to the nerves and neurons throughout the body, or from the nerves and neurons to the brain.

Brainstem
Connects the brain to the spinal cord.

Fact:
The average human brain weighs 3 pounds!
*Source: www.theablecrew.org
All of the brain’s parts work together to help your body perform functions. Your brain controls almost everything you do: how you walk, talk, play, and even breathe.

Your brain is connected to your spinal chord. The spinal chord communicates with your brain through the help of nerves and neurons. Nerves and neurons act as messengers, delivering messages back and forth between the spinal chord and the brain.
The Brain Affects Behavior

If a person’s brain becomes damaged because they were sick, because they were in an accident, or because their brain developed uncommonly, it can affect their behavior in many different ways. Their brain may not receive the correct messages, or maybe the message comes through in the wrong way.

Some one with an invisible disability might have a difficult time doing certain things in school, at home, or with their friends—things that you might have a very easy time doing. Or, they might act and talk differently than you do. But this does not mean that they are not hard workers, or that they are lazy or unwilling to try their best. Certain things just don’t come as easy to them.
At School

Some one with an invisible disability, such as a learning disability, dyslexia, or VPD, might have a difficult time paying attention and doing their schoolwork. For example, they may:

- Have a hard time sitting still and listening to their teacher
- Be unable to read or see words on the board or in a textbook
- Be unable to hear and understand words and sounds in the classroom
- Not want to participate in group activities
- Find it difficult to concentrate on their work
- Have a hard time answering questions quickly
- Have a helper sitting with them in class to assist them with their work
At Home

Some one with an invisible disability, such as ADD, a learning disability, mental illness, or APD, might have difficulty doing the every-day things that most kids do at home, such as:

- Listen and obey their parents
- Do their chores, like cleaning their room or organize their toys
- Participate in relaxing activities, like watching TV, reading a book, or listening to music
- Talk on the phone
- Cope with change, such as moving do a new city or home with their family
With Friends

A person with an invisible disability might act differently when interacting with others, such as their friends, siblings, and classmates. For example, they might find it hard to:

• Play games in large groups
• Listen and understand what some one says to them
• Hear what is going on around them, especially if there is a lot of background noise—such as on the playground or in a gym
• Move around and play as easily as other kids do
• Talk to others around them as easily as others, for example, they might have a speech impediment, have a hearing problem, or they might stutter
• Be in large crowds or in crowded public places—such as a shopping mall or a movie theater
The Myths

Let’s look at some common myths that the public often has about those with disabilities, especially learning disabilities. We will also uncover the truth behind those myths.

*Source for myths & truths: http://ldpride.net*
**Myth #1:**
People with learning disabilities are not smart and they can not learn.

**Truth:**
People with learning disabilities have average to above average intelligence (Gerber 1998).

Studies have also shown that 33% of people with learning disabilities are gifted students (Baum, 1985; Brody & Mills, 1997; Jones, 1986). This means that they are especially talented in a certain area or areas of study.

With the proper tools and understanding, people with learning disabilities can definitely succeed in school, as well as in the other areas of their life.
Myth #2: When someone says that they have a learning disability, it is just an excuse for them to act in an irresponsible, lazy or ignorant way.

**Truth:** As we discussed earlier, learning disabilities are caused by neurological disorders, or disorders of the brain; they are not personality disorders.

People with LD’s do not have a choice in the way their disability affects them. Because they have to do things differently and may go at a slower pace, those with LD’s often get labeled lazy, but this is wrong.

In fact, The National Information Center for Adults and Youth Disabilities states that people with learning disabilities are not lazy or unmotivated (NICHCY, 2002).
Myth #3: Learning disabilities go away in time. If some one has one as a child, they will grow out of it in adulthood.

Truth: Learning disabilities continue through a person’s life span.

If some one has a learning disability as a child, they will also deal with that same disability as an adult.

As a person grows older, they may find ways to deal and manage their disability more easily, but their disability will not just go away. In fact, most people with learning disabilities are not even diagnosed until they reach adulthood (LDA, 1996).
Myth #4: All invisible disabilities are the same. Everybody who has an invisible disability acts the same way.

**Truth:**
Not all people with disabilities look, act, or feel the same way at all. Everybody in this world is different. This fact does not change when some one has a disability.

People living with disabilities may do many every-day things differently than most people do. But that does not mean that a person living with dyslexia, for example, has the same issues or characteristics that some one living with APD has.

(We will look more closely at the specific characteristics of different invisible disabilities a little later in the presentation.)
Myth #5:
Learning disabilities only affect a person’s academic life, or the way they learn. They do not affect any other area of a person’s life.

Truth:
Although some people with learning disabilities have a particularly tough time with school subjects—such as reading, writing, or math — this does not mean that their disability does not affect the other areas of their life as well.

In fact, most people with learning disabilities have more than one area of difficulty. Also, people will usually encounter the same types of difficulties in both social and school activities.
Myth #6:
Children with learning disabilities will not be able to succeed later in life. They won’t go to college or have a successful career.

Truth:
Adults with learning disabilities can certainly go to college and attain their career goals. In fact, studies show that adults are pursuing higher education more frequently (Gerber & Reiff 1994).

With the proper tools, instruction, and support, children with learning disabilities can grow to become successful adults—academically, socially, and professionally.
Myth #7:
Invisible disabilities are like diseases; they can be transferred from one person to another.

Truth:
You can not catch a disability like you might catch a cold or the flu.

It is true that a person’s disability may have been caused by an illness that occurred early on in their life. Also, a person with a serious illness, such as cancer, HIV, or heart disease, may be considered to have a disability. But a disability is the result of a physical illness or dysfunction. The disability itself is not a disease and it does not act like a disease — it can not be transferred from one person to another. It can be inherited.
Did you know that Albert Einstein had a learning disability and couldn’t read until he was nine years old? Also, Walt Disney, Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, and many other well-known people had difficult reading their entire lives.

*Source: www.ldonline.org*
The Emotional Effects

Invisible disabilities do not only affect a person’s physical condition. The physical effects of a disability can often lead to many emotional side effects as well. These emotional effects may include feeling self-conscious, shameful, or afraid.

Because of their differences, people with disabilities may have had their actions and behavior misunderstood by others and, as a result, people might treat them unfairly. As a result, those with disabilities may develop low self-esteem and/or other negative behaviors.

Fact:
Internalized negative labels of stupidity and incompetence usually result in a poor self concept and lack of confidence (Gerber, Ginsberg, & Reiff, 1992)

*Source: http://ldpride.net
Shame

Feeling shame or fear are two common emotional side effects that a person living with an invisible disability might experience.

People with invisible disabilities know that they are different, even if they don’t show it on the outside. People around them might notice that they are different too. For that reason, people with invisible disabilities might:

• Be ashamed of their behavior
• They might feel embarrassed because they don’t do as well in school as other students around them, or because they do not make friends as easily as others
• They may hide their differences to avoid being teased, ridiculed, or labeled “stupid,” “lazy,” or other negative terms—especially if they have been teased before.
Fear

As a result of their differences, people with invisible disabilities might experience a lot of fear:

- They may demonstrate this fear by acting angry or anxious around others or in certain situations when they feel uncomfortable.
- They may be afraid of being “found out,” or having others notice their differences.
- They might also be afraid of not being “good” at something, and so they might not try new things at all.
- They might be afraid of being criticized by others, and so they won’t demonstrate the talents that they have.
- They might be afraid of being rejected because they aren’t seen as capable as others.
- They might be fearful of building strong relationships with others, especially if they have been socially rejected before.
Minding your P’s and Q’s

Has anyone ever said something that hurt your feelings? Have they ever done something to bother you, like lean on you, mess up your hair, or pull on your clothes? Did it make you angry and feel like they had no right to do that?

That’s a lot like what a person with an invisible disability feels like when they are unfairly labeled, teased, or ignored because of their differences; it feels like someone is pestering them and making them feel bad for no reason.

*Source: http://www.theablecrew.org
You Can Help

Even though there is not a cure for the physical and emotional affects, there are many things that can help alleviate the stress and difficulties those that have invisible disabilities experience—such as special learning tools and awareness activities like this presentation. In fact, there are several things that you can do to help.

**Pat Yourself on the Back**
A big first step in helping is learning about disabilities—what they are, how they develop, and how they affect people. By viewing this presentation, you have already taken a giant leap in learning about invisible disabilities and making life a little easier for those who have them.
We will learn more about the other ways in which you can help a little later in the presentation. But first, let’s take a closer look at the different types of invisible disabilities.
Specific Characteristics of Invisible Disabilities

First, let’s talk about the definitions and characteristics of learning disabilities.

**Learning Disabilities (LD’s)**
Definition: A learning disability is a type of invisible disability that affects the way a person’s brain functions. It is a disorder in which a person has a difficult time processing information. For example, they may find it especially hard to read, write, spell, remember information, and perform organizational tasks.
Learning Disabilities (LD’s)

There are several different types of learning disabilities. A learning disability can not be cured or fixed; it is a life-long disorder. But, with the right learning tools and support systems, people with learning disabilities can overcome many difficulties in order to be successful in school, work, and social activities.

Fact:
According to the National Institute of Health, fifteen percent of the U.S. population, or one in seven Americans, has some type of learning disability.

*Source: www.ldonline.org
Here is a list of characteristics commonly found in a person who has a learning disability:

- Has a difficult time remembering things—such as a new lesson they learned, or a task like bringing their homework home
- Is unable to remain patient—for instance, if they are learning something new that they do not understand
- Has a difficult time listening to and understanding information
- Can not speak or write language clearly
- Is unable to organize information that they see and hear
- Has a hard time making friends and participating in social activities
- Has a hard time learning school subjects in general—especially reading and math

Fact:
80% of students with learning disabilities have reading difficulties.

*Source: http://www.ldonline.org*
Common Types of Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities come in many different shapes and sizes – not all LD’s are the same. Here are few common or well-known types of LD’s:

**Dyslexia:** When a person has a hard time understanding written words

**Dyscalculia:** When a person has a hard time solving math problems

**Auditory Processing Disorders (APD):** When a person has a difficult time understanding language that they hear with their ears

**Visual Processing Disorder (VPD):** When a person has a difficult time understanding words, objects, and symbols that they see with their eyes

*Fact:* Attention disorders, such as Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and learning disabilities often occur at the same time, but the two disorders are not the same.

*Source: http://www.ldonline.org*
As we mentioned earlier in this presentation, some one with an LD lives with it for their entire lives: from childhood through adulthood. You may see many adults in your own life that have learning disabilities. They may have a hard time doing tasks such as shopping, reading, making lasting friendships, dealing with change, and holding jobs. They may also be easily overwhelmed by their environment and deal with their emotions differently than others.
Learn and Be Aware

It is important for people to learn and be aware of invisible disabilities like LD’s – so those trying to deal with these disabilities can get the help and guidance they need at an early age. If people are educated, then they are better prepared to understand, help, and respect those around them who live with disabilities. As a result, those with disabilities can receive the proper tools and instruction to adjust and deal with their differences more easily.
Defining VPD and APD

Some people have an especially difficult time understanding information that they see or hear. These disorders are called Visual Processing Disorders (VPD) and Audio Processing Disorders (APD), and they are two different types of learning disabilities. Those with VPD and APD may have perfect vision or hearing, but their brain does not allow them to process information correctly.

- The word “Visual” means: the experience of processing information with your eyes

- The word “Auditory” means: experience of processing information with your ears
Some one living with VPD may find it difficult to:

- Recognize letters, numbers, and other symbols
- Tell the difference between two different symbols or objects
- Understand pictures, graphs, and/or words
- Keep their place when they are reading a book or doing math problems
- Remember things that they saw or read
- Take tests
EXAMPLE

When your teacher writes something on the board, such as a math problem like $2 \times 2$, this is what happens:

You use your eyes to see and read the problem on the board.

1. Your eyes communicate with your brain, telling it about the information you are looking at.

2. Your brain processes that information, and tells you that you are looking at a math problem. You know answer to the problem $2 \times 2$ is 4.

This process happens very quickly, and you are usually unaware that it is going on.
When some one has VPD, their brain may not be able to process the math problem they see as easily as some one who does not have the disorder. They may not understand what they are looking at, or their brain doesn’t receive enough information to tell them the answer.

Their eyes work just fine. It is their brain that makes it hard for them to understand the information.
APD Characteristics

Some one living with APD may have a difficult time:

- Understanding lessons in school or other types of directions
- Telling the difference between rhyming words (such as “cat” and “mat”), or mixing up numbers (such as hearing “94” instead of “49”)
- Hearing people talking to them and understanding what they are saying, especially if there is a lot of background noise (such as others talking, lockers slamming, bells ringing, etc.)
- Remembering information that they hear (such as directions or instructions)
When your teacher reads something aloud from a book, such as a page from the story *The Wizard of Oz*, this is what happens:

1. You use your ears to hear what your teacher is reading to you.
2. Your ears send a message to your brain, telling it about the words you are listening to.
3. Your brain processes that information, and it tells you that you are listening to the adventures of Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the Lion.

Just like the math problem, this process of hearing and processing information occurs very quickly.
APD

When some one has APD, the processes is slowed down and they may not understand what they are hearing, or it there may be too much noise in the classroom for their brain to tell them what they are listening to.

Their ears work fine; their brain has a hard time understanding the information it receives.
People with APD and VPD can still do very well in school and in their social lives. All they need are the proper tools and techniques to help them work with their differences.

There are many ways that teachers, family, and friends can find the tools to help people living with VPD and APD. One of the most important things is to remember that no two people with VPD and APD are alike. Focusing on the specific strengths and weaknesses of each individual is a very helpful thing.
A List of Things that Help
Here is brief list of things that teachers, parents, family, and friends can do to help those with VPD and APD:

**VPD**
- Provide enlarged print
- Color code words/print
- Read information out loud
- Be aware of each individual’s weaknesses
- Accommodate their specific needs, and focus on their strengths

**APD**
- Write down instructions and directions for them
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Remain patient if they do not understand what you are saying at first, and being willing to repeat yourself if necessary
- Be aware of each individual’s weaknesses
- Accommodate their specific needs and focus on their strengths
Mental Disorders

Defining Mental Disorders

Mental disorders are alterations in thinking, mood, behavior, or some combination of these, which cause distress and/or impaired functioning.

Mental Disorders can be caused by traumatic events, brain chemistry, or they may be inherited.
Characteristics of Mental Disorders

Everyone has off days now and then, but people with a mental disorder have a difficult time functioning in everyday life. For example, person with a mental disorder might have a hard time with:

- Productive activities
- Thinking
- Getting along with other people
- Adapting to change
- Coping with adversity
People with mental disorders have been feared, misunderstood, and looked down upon throughout history. Other people often react to them by distrusting, stereotyping, fearing, and avoiding them. This makes it difficult for people with mental disorders to work, find a place to live, have friends, and even get help.

Science understands more about mental disorders and is finding better ways to treat it. Treatment for mental disorders can include psychotherapy and/or drugs. With the proper help, many people with mental disorders can lead a great life with and even be cured.

*Source: http://www.webmd.com/content/article/60/67134.htm; http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/mental-illness/HQ01079*
Science understands more about mental disorders and is finding better ways to treat it. Treatment for mental disorders can include psychotherapy and/or drugs. However, insurance companies do not always pay for psychiatric help or they may just pay for just a few weeks of treatment. But with the proper help, many people with mental disorders can lead a great life with and even be cured.

*Source: http://www.webmd.com/content/article/60/67134.htm; http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/mental-illness/HQ01079
Types of Mental Disorders

During the next couple of slides, we will briefly look at the characteristics of some common intellectual & developmental disabilities.

Anxiety disorders
People with anxiety disorders respond to certain objects or situations with fear and dread, as well as with physical signs of anxiety or nervousness, such as a rapid heartbeat and sweating.

An anxiety disorder is diagnosed if the person's response is not appropriate for the situation, if the person cannot control their response, or if the anxiety interferes with normal functioning.

Examples are generalized anxiety disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic disorder, and social phobia.
Types of Mental Disorders

**Mood Disorders**
Mood disorders, which are also called affective disorders, involve nagging feelings of sadness, spurts of feeling overly happy, or frequent changes from extreme happiness to extreme sadness. Examples are depression and bipolar disorder.

**Psychotic Disorders**
Psychotic disorders involve distorted awareness and thinking. Two of the most common symptoms of psychotic disorders are hallucinations -- the experience of images or sounds that are not real, or false beliefs that the ill person accepts as true, even if there is that it is not true. Schizophrenia is also an example of a psychotic disorder.
Eating Disorders
Eating disorders involve extreme emotions, attitudes, and behaviors involving weight and food. Anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge eating are the most common types of eating disorders.

Impulse control and addiction disorders
People with impulse control disorders are unable to resist urges or impulses to perform acts that could be harmful to themselves or others. Pyromania (starting fires), kleptomania (stealing) and compulsive gambling are examples of impulse control disorders.

Alcohol and drugs are common objects of addictions. People with these disorders often become so involved with the objects of their addiction that they begin to ignore important responsibilities and relationships in their lives.
Personality Disorders
People with personality disorders have extreme and stubborn personality traits that are distressing to the person and/or cause problems for them in work, school, or social relationships. In addition, the person's patterns of thinking and behavior significantly differ from the expectations of society and are so rigid that they interfere with the person's normal functioning.

Examples include antisocial personality disorder, obsessive-compulsive personality disorder and paranoid personality disorder.
Defining Intellectual & developmental disabilities

Some one who has an intellectual and developmental disability has a biological condition that affects how they think, look, and act.

They might have had an accident or developed an illness very early in their life that had affected their brain. They may also have inherited certain genes or had complications during their birth that caused their disability. Not all people with intellectual & developmental disabilities are the same, and individual symptoms can range from mild to severe.

Fact:

As many as 3 out of every 100 people in the county have mental retardation

Characteristics of Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities

Those who have an intellectual and developmental disability think, feel, and perceive the world around them differently than most people do, and they might not be able to move around as easily as others. They might talk, act, and accomplish certain tasks differently. The following is a list of some common examples.

A person with an intellectual and developmental disability might:

• Use a wheel chair, walker or other tool to help with their mobilization
• Have a helper with them—a person who assists them with their daily skills, tasks, and needs
• Perceive and react to their environment differently
• Learn at a slower pace
• Have a hard time understanding certain concepts or ideas, solving problems, or thinking logically
• Communicate and interact with others differently or not at all
Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities
Pictures of Success

As with other invisible disabilities, with the proper tools, understanding, and assistance, most people who have an intellectual and developmental disability can become successful individuals.
Learning Disabilities should not be confused with other invisible disabilities—such as autism, behavioral disorders like ADHD, speech impediments, or mental illness and retardation—that might also affect the way someone learns, plays, and interacts with people. Let’s look at a few characteristics of these other types of invisible disabilities.
Other Invisible Disabilities

Autism

Autism is an invisible disability in which people have a difficult time communicating, interacting socially, and using their imagination and creativity skills. An autistic person might have some of these characteristics:

- Can’t understand common facial expressions, gestures, or tones of voice
- Has a hard time coming up with creative ideas, and may copy the ideas of others
- May act unfriendly, or might distance themselves from other people
ADHD
Some one with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) may have some of these characteristics:

• Has a hard time concentrating
• Act and talk quickly, or talk too much
• Is easily distracted
• Acts in a hyper or overactive way
Other Invisible Disabilities

**Speech Impediments**
Some one who has a disability that affects their speech might:
- Stutter
- Talk incorrectly, or use incorrect English
- Talk loudly
- Asthma

**Asthma**
A person with asthma may have the following characteristics:
- Has trouble breathing or coughs
- Might carry an inhaler with them
- May not be able to run, play sports, or participate in other activities
There are several more types of invisible disabilities, and we have not covered them all in this presentation. At the end of the presentation, there will be a list of websites you can visit for more information.

Remember, just because some one acts differently, looks differently, or learns differently than you, they are still a real person with real feelings — just like you.
It is important to understand that people who have disabilities did not choose to have their disability and, in most cases, they were born with their condition. It is not like having a broken arm; a disability is something a person must deal with very day and learn to live with.

Unfortunately, you can not do anything to change the fact that a person has a disability, and they must learn to live with their disability. However, there are many things you can do to make their lives easier. You can help some one with a disability find the right tools to enable them to learn, interact socially, and be successful individuals.
The First Step: Respect

If you want to help some one who is different than you, you must start by treating them with respect.

Treating some one with respect means that you do not tease, ridicule, or put them down because they are different than you.

Instead, to respect some one who is different than you means to accept the fact that they are different, and then treat them kindly and thoughtfully—just like you would want some one else to treat you.

Remember, people with disabilities are still people—even though they may act different, they still have feelings and emotions that can be hurt by negative behavior.
The Second Step: Learning

The second step towards helping those with disabilities is to learn more about disabilities. In learning about disabilities, you can:

- Remember that despite the differences they face, they can grow to become successful individuals.

- Understand the characteristics of disabilities, such as how they develop, how they affect a person’s behavior, and why they might act, play, and/or talk differently than you.

- Focus on the strengths—not the weaknesses—of those who are disabled, and be patient. Remember, no two people with disabilities are alike.
The Third Step: Interacting

When you come into contact with someone who has a disability, they might frighten, alarm, and confuse you, or they might make you feel uncomfortable because they appear different.

But once you understand the importance of treating all people with respect and learning about the different types of disabilities, you will be able to interact in a helpful and kind way.
How to Help
Here are some tips on you can help:

• Ask before you help and approach carefully
  People with disabilities can often manage on their own — they might not always need or want additional help. But most of the time, people appreciate a helping hand. Just be sure to ask before you jump in and help.

• Remember, people first
  People with disabilities are still people, and they need to be treated with respect.
How to Help

• **Speak clearly and directly**
  When you are talking to a person with a disability, talk to them just like you would to anyone else, like your friends, teacher, and family members. Even if they have a helper or an assistant, look directly at the person and not at their helper.

• **Most importantly, be respectful, understanding, and patient**
  People living with disabilities work hard make adjustments for their differences. They do not need negative behavior from others to make their work even more difficult.
Conclusion

• Invisible disabilities are caused by differences in the way a person’s brain functions and how it sends and receives messages to and from the rest of the body. This affects the way a person learns, communicates and interacts with others, controls their mood, and/or manages the way they think.

• People who have disabilities did not choose to have them, nor do they choose how their disability affects them. They cannot help how their differences interfere with school, their home life, their ability to work, or the way they interact with their friends and others around them.

• There are many different types of invisible disabilities and no two are the same.

• Many myths exist about invisible disabilities, but by learning the truth behind these myths, you can take a big step towards creating a better understanding and awareness about invisible disabilities in our world.
Conclusion

• There are many physical and emotional side affects of invisible disabilities that may cause some one who has one to act differently than you. But it’s very important to remember that people with disabilities are still people with real feelings just like you.

• With the proper tools, understanding, and education, people living with invisible disabilities can achieve the same life goals as those who do not have a disability.

• You can do a lot to help. Start by climbing the knowledge ladder that starts with respect, continues with learning, and builds to interacting with people who have disabilities in a helpful and friendly way. Put your knowledge about invisible disabilities to use!
Below is a list of websites and resources that were used in making this presentation. You can visit these sites to learn more about invisible disabilities.

- http://www.ncsd.org
- http://www.theablecrew.org
- http://ldpride.net
- http://www.ldonline.org
- http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat
- http://www.thearc.org
- http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/dd/ddmr.htm
- http://www.nichcy.org
- http://www.webmd.com/content/article/60/67134.htm
- http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/mental-illness/HQ01079