

***I PULLED AN ALL-NIGHTER FOR
MY CASCIA HALL GRADUATION
AND OTHER ADVENTURES OF A
HEARING IMPAIRED, DYSLEXIC
PSYCHOLOGIST***

***Seminar for Cascia Hall Preparatory School
Tulsa, Oklahoma
August 11-12, 2008***

***Presented by: Kevin T. Blake, Ph.D., P.L.C.,
Tucson, Arizona***

"At Risk" Family History

- Dad's side of the family:

- Dyslexia
- AD/HD
- Hearing Impairments
- Depression
- Addiction



- Mom's side of the family:

- Down's Syndrome
- Hearing Impairments
- Depression
- Addiction

Pregnancy

- My mother's age and difficulties during pregnancy put me at risk of having future difficulties.



The First Possible "Signs"

- In kindergarten I was the last kid who learned how to tie his shoes. My mom promised me a pair of loafers if I learned to tie my shoes, and I learned to tie my shoes!



The Hearing Screening

- In first grade I learned how to fake my way through the hearing screening at school. This I did for the next 12 years. I didn't want a hearing aid because I wanted to be allowed to play on the playground.



What's Soccer?

- When I started 1st grade I learned about soccer and begged for a soccer ball so I could learn how to play. My parents gave me one and I learned persistence.



Sports and Cascia Hall

- **At Cascia I loved basketball, but I never had the courage, or good enough self-esteem to go out for the varsity. I had poor self-esteem. Because I had poor self-esteem I played golf instead. Although I wasn't very good, I enjoyed it.**



Cascia Hall and Sports

- I learned good sportpersonship and I loved exercise.
- This helped to reduce stress and depression through the years.
- I've had a lot of fun with sports, too!
- Exercise can help cognitive function as well:

Ratey, J. J., and Hagerman, E. (2008). Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and The Brain. New York: Little Brown.

Stay Fit



Stay Flexible



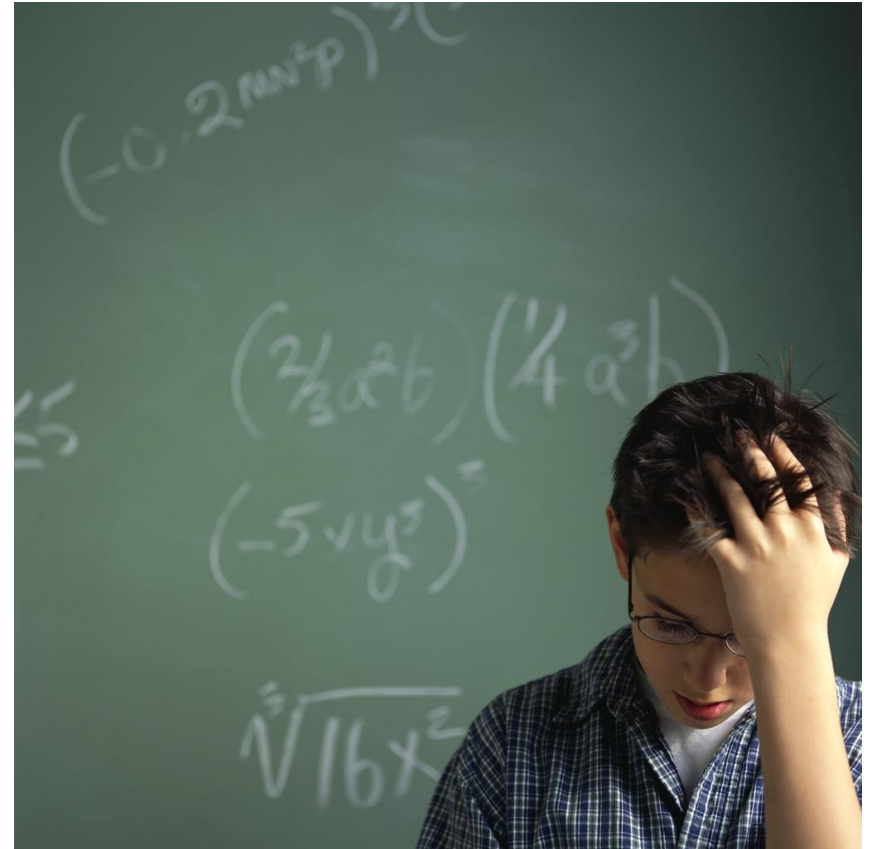
Extra Reading Help

- Many days after school I went to reading tutoring and “speed reading” through 7th grade. It didn’t help much...



The First "You're Lazy!"

- Third grade: I stayed up until 11:00 PM with my dad trying to learn my multiplication tables. The next morning I didn't know them and the nun said, "Kevin, you're lazy!"



MY DAD, HIS COACH and My Inspiration

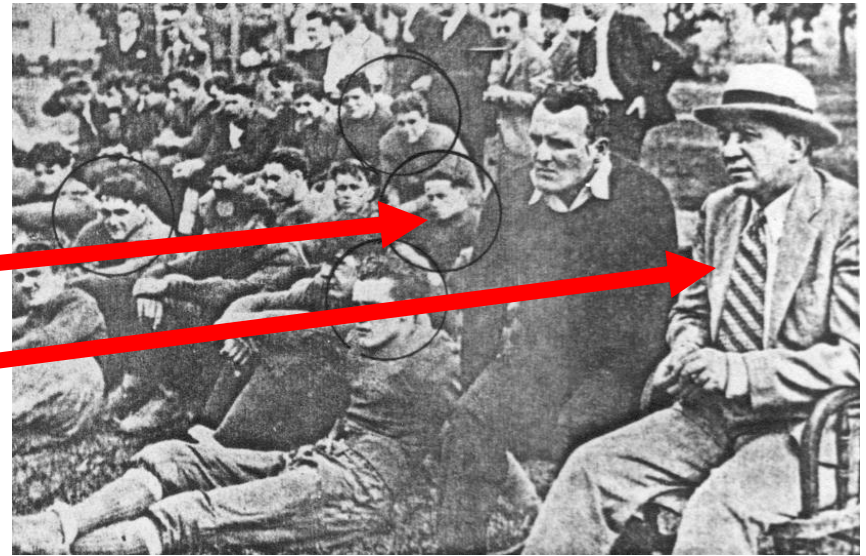
His coach was

Knute Rockne

Dad played on the 1930
Notre Dame National
Championship team.

There's dad

There's Rockne



First Tests

- During the third grade I was tested at the Oliphant Center on the TU campus. After my parents died I found the test report from that time. I was reading at the first grade level. Today that would be a warning sign of Reading Disorder/Dyslexia. Back then I was viewed as lazy or at best, immature.

“Kevin may see upside down.”

“In 8th grade the math teacher said she had seen a TV program on “Di-Lex-Something” which she described as children who see upside down. My parents immediately scheduled an appointment with a pediatric ophthalmologist. After waiting six months he examined me and I had 20/20 vision. Reading Disorder Dyslexia is not a problem with vision.

- **I need a volunteer from the audience.**

THE PAOMNNEHAL PWEOR OF THE HMUAN MNID

- Aoccdrnig to rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervisy, it deosn't mttar in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoatnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit a porbelm.

Davis, M. (2003). www.mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk/~mattd/Cmabrigde/

Rawlinson, G. (1999). Reibadailty. New Scientist. 162 (2188), p. 55. From website:
www.mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk/~mattd/Cmabrigde/newscientist_letter.html

First Learning Styles Insight

- Every year I usually earned A's and B's in all my classes except math where I received the gentleman's D. The summer between 8th and 9th grade I was sent to a summer math program offered by Fr. Ritter at Cascia Hall. There were 7th graders through 11th graders in the class. The first day of class he gave everyone a test to determine our skills.

First Learning Styles Insight

- The next day Fr. Ritter called me to his desk and went over my test results with me. He apologized for teaching me the wrong way! He said I'm going to make a \$5.00 bet with you for the missions. I bet in three days you will be teaching the 11th graders their assignments. If you can I pay \$5.00 to the missions. If I win you pay \$5.00 to the missions. But you have to agree to try. I did. Although, I thought he was crazy!

First Learning Styles Insight

In three days I was teaching the 11th graders; and it was easy. He put everything to me in words; not pictures. I think in words, not pictures. “Mr. Blake what formula am I looking for? Pontiac has one. It’s not a Trans Am, It’s a Formula...”

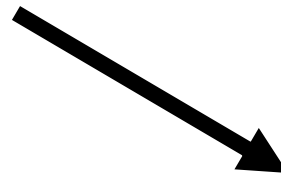
“Formula 400!” “Right formula number 4!”

<http://www.classicresto.com/mambo/content/view/138/2/>



First Learning Styles Insight

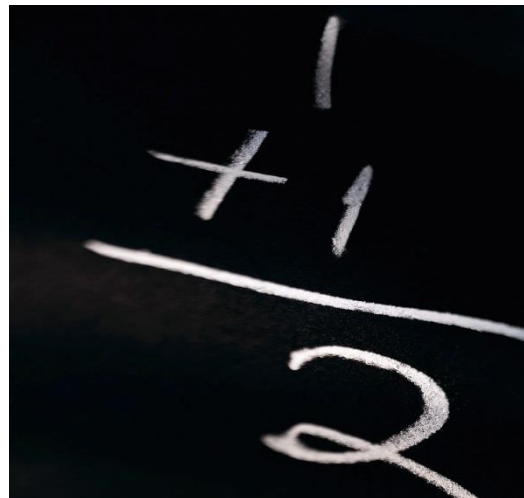
The next fall when I started 9th grade the math instruction reverted back to the old way. And I continued to get all A's and B's except for my gentleman's D in math. I found myself in the section for the “dumb” kids...Formula 400!



<http://www.classicresto.com/mambo/content/view/138/2>

First Learning Styles Insight

- After that it seemed that whenever I was interested in a career both my parents and teachers would say, “You can’t go into that! It requires math and you are not good at math!” But, there was that time at Cascia Hall I was good in math...



Career I Dreamt Of In High School

- Dr. Peter Smith's job at the University of Arizona
- Principal Investigator of the Phoenix Mars Lander Mission

<http://phoenix.lpl.arizona.edu/gallery.php>



Latin is a “Dead Language”

- At Cascia Hall I took two years of Latin. The class mainly involved memorizing and translating prayers and writings about Caesar, “Gaul was divided into three parts...”
- In college I was required to take a living language with a conversational component. I took Spanish and did a thoroughly poor job of it.

Latin is a Dead Language

- In college I was required to take 9 hours of a foreign language.
- Joe Capura, a seminarian at Notre Dame taught the first 6 hours.
- Four nights a week for 2 hours he tutored me.
- There were 24 A's and one gentleman's C. I got the gentleman's C.
- I just couldn't hear the sounds in the words.
- I was able to talk my way out of the third semester of Spanish and took Classical Archeology instead.

Linguistic Coding Difference

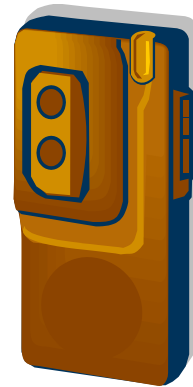
- Later I learned that many people with Dyslexia and other learning differences have trouble learning foreign languages.
- This is called Linguistic Coding Difference.
- I have problems processing the “phonemes” (smallest sounds of speech) in words. This is primarily due to dyslexia and secondarily to my hearing impairment.
- I went to a grad school where statistics and fortran were considered a foreign language.

Chemistry at Cascia

- In 11th grade I had great difficulty in Chemistry. Partly because I had problems with it and partly because I sat next to a cut-up, "...who got me in trouble."
- I really wanted to do better. My dad gave me a small (for the time) tape recorder and I started to tape the teacher's lectures. Then someone "ratted" on me. The teacher asked me why I was recording him. I told him I was trying to learn to imitate him. I got in trouble because I was too embarrassed to tell him the truth!

Audio Recordings in Grad School

- I recorded most of the lectures I had in grad school and wrote transcripts of the lectures.
- I played the recordings over and over in the car, in the shower, on the bus, while cleaning my apartment, etc.
- Today I buy recordings of the experts in my field and do the same.
- I learn best through hearing!

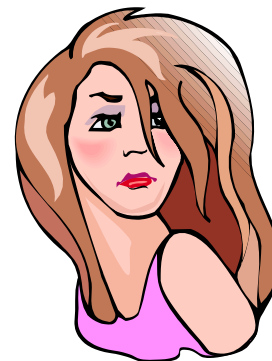


Social Skills

- At 16 my mother caught me looking at a cute girl in a restaurant and said, “Why don’t you ask her for a date? I guess you wouldn’t know how...”
- Teach your children small talk!



Flirting and Social Skills



- Cordoni stated you need the same behaviors to get a job as you need to get a date.

Cordoni, B. (1987). Living With A Learning Disability. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

CASCIA HALL SPEECH CLASS

- Mr. Borchart taught the upperclassmen Speech. I took his class Senior year and excelled in it. It drew on my strength; the gift of gab. It helped to draw me out a bit.
- As Fr. Spielman said, “Kevin’s a late bloomer.”



Minimester and Finding a Mentor

In 11th and 12th grade I had minimester experiences at the Hissom Memorial Center and worked with severely mentally handicapped children under Cascia Hall coach, teacher and counselor Dr. Hal McBride. He also taught Senior Psychology and Anthropology. This began my interests in the social sciences.

Parent Teacher's Meeting: 11th grade

Fr. X asked my mother, “What are Kevin’s plans after he graduates?” My mother replied, “He plans on going to Notre Dame.” Fr. X replied after a hardy belly laugh, “Kevin should not even consider junior college he should go to VoTech.” I was an honors student at the time.

www.supporting.nd.edu



I Pulled an All-Nighter for my Cascia Hall Graduation

- The night before I graduated I learned I was to do the readings at the Baccalaureate Mass the next day. I tried to memorize them word for word, but couldn't. The next day I told the stories as if I was an apostle at a campsite. Some were offended, some were impressed, but no one learned my secret; I couldn't read!

How I Got Into Notre Dame

- I was an honor's student with good extra curricular activities
- My Dad and his experience with “Rock”
- Good letters of reference
- I went to a good college prep school
- I was interested in working with the mentally retarded for my life's work.



15 Years Later

- The week I received my doctorate I returned to Cascia Hall for a basketball game. Fr. X came up to me and said, “Kevin what’s new in your life?” I replied proudly, “I received my Ph.D. in psychology this week!” I received a stunned look...

www.supporting.nd.edu



First Moral to the story?



- Among other things, being frustrated and angry helped me to achieve. Tell me I can't do something and I will!

www.supporting.nd.edu

Second Moral to the Story

- Students have learning styles that are as unique to them as their thumbprint.
- Teachers, being human, also have learning styles and teach with a bias toward their own learning styles.
- Students can thrive when teachers teach their students with the unique learning style of each individual student.

Levine, M. (1987). Developmental Variation and Learning Disorders. Cambridge, MA: Educators Publishing Service.

Gardner, H. (1983). Frames of Mind: Theory of Multiple Intelligences. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Social Skills Help

- As a sophomore at Notre Dame I was depressed, almost flunking out and didn't have a girlfriend. So I went to the campus counseling center.
- I told the counselor I was depressed, I didn't have a girlfriend, I was almost flunking out, I couldn't read and I thought I was "death."

Social Skills Help

- He noticed I had a monotone voice, no facial expression and used no hand jesters as I talked. He started a crash course in social skills. He also did a lot of work with study skills. He didn't believe I couldn't read. Regarding being "death" he said, "You mean, DEAF?" I said, "Yes." He did nothing about that, but at least I learned the difference between the words 'deaf' and 'death'.

Developing Study Skills Programs

- Sophomore year I also started developing my own study skills strategies.
- I studied in one of two places: the campus library, always in the same chair; or, an abandoned room by the furnace in my dorm.



www.library.nd.edu... at the start of **Notre Dame's ...**
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www.library.nd.edu

Developing a Study Skills Program

- When my friends went out on Friday and Saturday nights I was in the library until midnight. After that I spent a couple of hours in the “furnace room.” I was a “throat” (someone who studies all the time).

www.library.nd.edu... at the start of **Notre Dame's ...**
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www.library.nd.edu



History Class at Notre Dame

- Sophomore year I took American History.
- There were 2 textbooks and 16 books to read.
- By final exam time I had read one textbook and one of the other books.
- I had 8 hours to study for the final exam.
- I got the highest grade out of the 150 people in the class.

History Class at Notre Dame

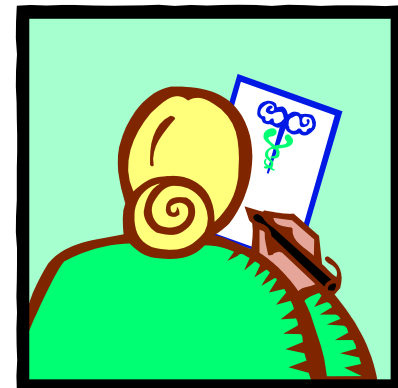
- A friend, who was in the same boat, wrote down the topics of every class lecture and got 8 encyclopedia descriptions of each.
- We then memorized these descriptions.
- When we finished we had concise, well written essays of every topic covered in the class.
- My friend got the second best grade on the final!

The Reputation

- I became known as a person who had systems to make learning easier.
- I was a master of using Cliff and Monarch Notes.
- I was a whiz at finding out about which professors to take and what to look for on their tests, etc.
- My last semester I made the dean's list

The Mystery of the Standardized Test

- Whenever I took a standardized test (SAT, ACT, GRE, etc.) my scores were much lower than my knowledge. It seemed I couldn't mark the correct circles on computer scantron sheets.
- My counselor at Notre Dame said, "I can't explain it Kevin. You are a smart young man. You just don't test well. Perhaps, someday you'll learn why."



“Are You Dyslexic?”

- During the first year of my doctoral program I was asked to get up and read two pages of text in front of the class. I butchered it and the professor called me on the carpet for being a cut-up. A fellow student asked me later, “Kevin are you dyslexic?”
- The same professor kept writing on my papers, “Kevin, get a dictionary!”

“The Meeting.”

- A group of grad school faculty called me to a meeting. They said I wasn't cutting it. I was hopelessly behind in my work and I didn't seem to grasp things socially. They showed me tapes of social faux pas of mine. The bottom line was clean-up your act or you're out of the program!



The Diagnoses

- After some soul searching I went to a Learning Disability expert and was diagnosed as Dyslexic.
- A behavioral optometrist said I had “vertical hyperphoria.” A form of double vision that made it difficult to record the correct answers on scantron sheets. It also explained why I could read only 15 minutes at a time before my eyes hurt.
- The audiologist found that I was hearing impaired and probably had been since birth.

Learning About Myself

- So at the age of 26 I got a pair of glasses with prisms, a hearing aid, and Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic.
- I went to my first international conference on learning disorders and discovered not much was known about LD adults. At that point I decided that helping LD adults would be my life's work.
- I told all my professors and they were supportive.
- I grieved in silence.

Learning About Myself

- I bought a portable word processor/computer
- Drove a friend crazy having her teach me how to use it.
- It was necessary for me to take an extra year in grad school so I could complete the coursework.
- Life began to be less painful.

My First Test Accommodation

In 1992 I asked the Arizona Board of Psychologist Examiners for accommodations as a dyslexic for the licensure examination for psychologists. I was the first person to ask for accommodations under the American's with Disability Act in Arizona. They said, "What accommodations do you want?" After discussing this with the person who diagnosed me I requested extended time and someone to transcribe my answers to the computer scantron sheet. They agreed.

My First Test Accommodation

- I took 3 months off and studied on average 10 hours a day 6 days a week.
- I took a 5 day cram course in L.A., bought and poured over all the study materials.
- I studied in a library where homeless people would sleep on the tables. I would offer them my table. Some of them talked in their sleep.
- I studied in storms and the worst conditions I could find.

My First Test Accommodation



- I thought if I could pass practice tests in the most distracting environments possible I could pass the test in the testing center!

My First Test Accommodation

When I took the exam I was so well prepared for it I finished early. What really helped was the scribe. All my answers were placed in the correct circles. I received an 81%; 70% was passing. I passed the most difficult standardized test I ever took with flying colors!

Today

- I read scientific journals, but reading for pleasure is an oxymoron.
- For pleasure reading I use audio books.
- I am a lousy speller!
- My hearing has deteriorated significantly.
- Middle-aged presbyopia has joined the party.

Psychologist Kevin



Tessler (1998), a dyslexic psychologist wrote, “Today, people regard me as successful and assume I can do things I can’t do.” (p. 32)
“With or without a learning disability I must perform as well as my colleagues.” (p. 33)

Tessler, L.G. (1998). Accommodations Make Success Possible: A Personal Account. Perspectives, 24 (3), pp. 32-33.

Summary

- Get professional hearing and vision tests performed annually on your child.
- Don't put off getting your child a thorough evaluation even if you only slightly suspect they have learning difficulties.
 - Ask the staff of Cascia Hall where to go for such an evaluation.
 - Check out the organizations listed under Helpful Information below. They typically have lists of local people who can help.

If Your Child Has a Disability

- Learn as much as possible.
- Check out the organizations and books listed below.
- Consult with the Cascia Hall counseling staff and doctors who know about such difficulties in Tulsa.
- Do not shelter your child from their disability.
- Teach you child about their disability and how to self-advocate.

Grief and Disability

- Grief is a natural reaction to loss.
- It is common for a person to grieve when they are diagnosed with a disability. The same is true of their loved ones and family.
- Speaking to a mental health professional can help with this process.
- Spiritual guidance can be helpful, too.

Inspire

- Help your child find something/someone to inspire them; like my dad did with Knute Rockne.
- Encourage your child to try difficult things.
- Mentor them.
- Encourage your child to stay fit and active. Teach them good sportpersonship.
- Heartfelt encouragement helps build self-esteem.
- Find things they can accomplish and encourage them to try them.

Make Sure Your Child Learns

- Study Skills: Cascia Hall faculty can help with this as can the organizations and books listed below.
- Social Skills: You can give your child insights and the organizations and books below can be helpful.
- What Their Learning Style is and How to Adapt it to Their Teacher's Teaching Style: Cascia Hall's faculty can help with this.

World's Greatest Spell Checker

- Among other things:
 - Dr. Freda Blake



Thank You for Coming!



- Have a safe trip home and God Bless!
- Kevin T. Blake, Ph.D., P.L.C.

520-327-7002

www.drkevintblake.com

Helpful Information



Helpful Organizations

- Learning Disabilities Association (LDA): www.lda.org
- International Dyslexia Association (IDA): www.interdys.org
- Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorders (CHADD): www.chadd.org
- National Attention Deficit Disorder Association (ADDA): www.add.org

Helpful Organizations

- Nonverbal Learning Disabilities Association (NLDA): www.nlada@nlada.org
- MAAP Services for Autism and Asperger's Disorder: www.maapservices.org
- ADD WareHouse: www.addwarehouse.com
- LinguiSystems: www.linguisystems.com

HELPFUL BOOKS ON DYSLEXIA FOR PROFESSIONALS AND LOVED ONES

- Mather, N. and Goldstein, S. (2001). Learning Disabilities and Challenging Behaviors. Baltimore, MD: Brookes.
 - Reid, G. & Fawcett, A. (2004). Dyslexia in Context. Philadelphia, PA: Whurr.
 - ***Nosek, K. (1997). Dyslexia in Adults. Dallas, TX: Taylor.***
 - Bartlett, D. & Moody, S. (2000). Dyslexia in the Workplace. Philadelphia, PA: Whurr.
 - Goldstein, S. (1997). Managing Attention and Learning Disorders in Late Adolescence & Adulthood. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.
 - ***Silver, L.B. (2006). The Misunderstood Child, 4th Edition. New York, NY: Crown.***
- *BOOKS IN THIS FONT ARE GOOD FOR THE LAYPERSON***

HELPFUL BOOKS ON DYSLEXIA FOR PROFESSIONALS AND LOVED ONES

- ***Richards, R.G. (1999). The Source for Dyslexia and Dysgraphia. East Moline, IL: LinguSystems.***
- ***Roffman, A.L. (2000). Meeting the Challenge of Learning Disabilities in Adulthood. Baltimore, MD: Brookes.***
- Wren, C. & Einhorn, J. (2000). Hanging by a Twig: Understanding and Counseling Adults with Learning Disabilities. New York, NY: Norton.
- ***Rodis, P., Garrod, A., & Boscardin, M.L. (2001). Learning Disabilities & Life Stories. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.***
- ***Shaywitz, S. (2003). Overcoming Dyslexia. New York, NY: Knopf.***

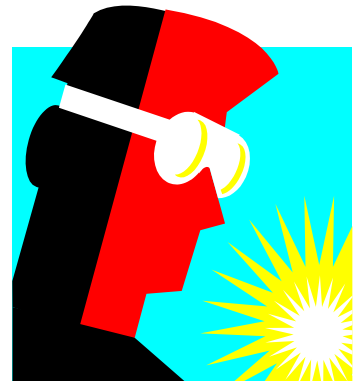
***BOOKS IN THIS FONT ARE GOOD FOR THE LAYPERSON**

AD/HD Books for Parents

- Barkley, R. A. (2005) Taking Charge of ADHD: The Complete, Authoritative Guide for Parents (3rd Edition). New York: Guilford.
- Barkley, R. A., & Benton, C. (1998). Your Defiant Child: 8 Steps to Better Behavior. New York: Guilford.
- Silver, L.B. (2006). The Misunderstood Child, 4th Edition. New York, NY: Crown.
- Tridas, E.Q. (2007). From ABC to ADHD: What Parents Should Know About Dyslexia and Attention Problems. Baltimore, MD: International Dyslexia Association.

People Who Can Help with NVLD/Asperger's Disorder

- American Speech-Language Hearing Association:
www.professional.asha.org
- Behavioral Neurologist/Neuropsychiatrists and/or Neuro-Ophthalmologist: www.anpaonline.org and www.ama-assn.org
- Mental Health Professionals
- American Occupational Therapy Association:
www.atoa.org



Helpful Websites NVLD and Asperger's Disorder

- www.nldontheweb.org
- Nonverbal Learning Disability Association: www.nlda.org
- LD Online: www.ldonline.org
- MAAP Services for Autism and Asperger's Disorder: www.maapservices.org
- UC Davis M.I.N.D. Institute: www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/MINDInstitute
- Yale Child Study Center: www.med.yale.edu/chldstdy/autism/aspergers.html

Helpful Books NVLD and Asperger's Disorder

Ozonoff, S., Dawson, G., and McPartland, J. (2002). A Parent's Guide to Asperger Syndrome & High Functioning Autism. New York, NY: Guilford.

Neff, B., Neff-Lippman, J., and Stockdale, C. (2002). The Source for Visual-Spatial Disorders. East Moline, IL: LinguSystems.

Attwood, T. (1998). Asperger Syndrome: A Guide for Parents and Professionals. Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley.

Thompson, S. (1997). The Source for Nonverbal Learning Disorders. East Moline, IL: LinguSystems.

Good Book on Transitioning

Ford, A. (2007). On Their Own: Creating an Independent Future for Your Child with Learning Disabilities and ADHD. New York, NY: Newmarket Press.

Transition Programs

- Landmark College (Putney, VT):
www.landmarkcollege.org/
- Chapel Haven West: (CHWEST) is a Transitional Residential Program serving adults in the Autism Spectrum and those with mild Developmental Disabilities located in Tucson, Arizona.
<http://www.iser.com/chapelhaven-CT.html>
- Life Development Institute (Phoenix, AZ):
<http://www.lifedevelopmentinstitute.org/>
- Brehm OPTIONS Program (Carbondale, IL):
<http://www.options.brehm.org/>

There are other programs across the country.

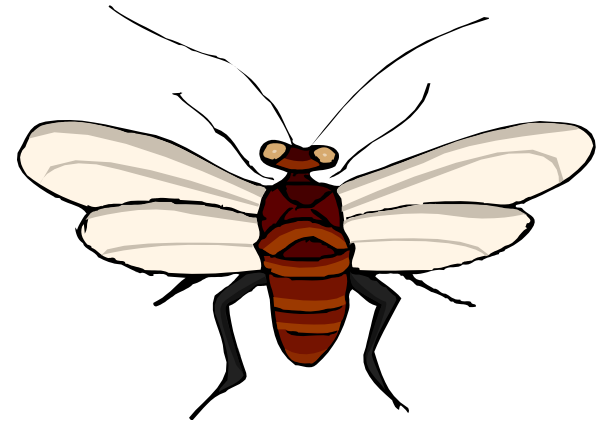
*Alternative and Integrative Medicine
Treatments for LD, AD/HD, NVLD and
Asperger's Disorder*



Alternative and Integrative Medicine Treatments of AD/HD & LD

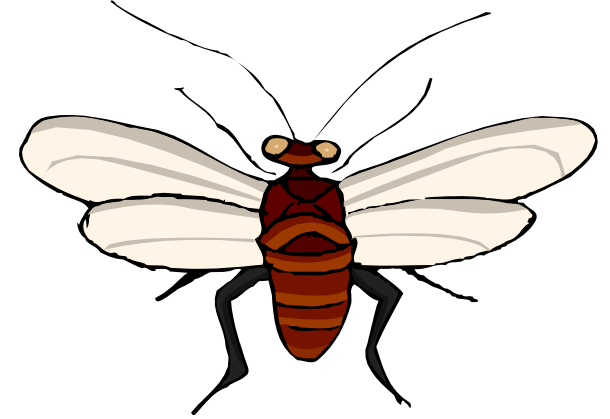
“We should all eat dung, because a thousand flies can’t be wrong!”

Russell Barkley, Ph.D.



Barkley, R.A. (1998). ADHD in Children, Adolescents, and Adults: Diagnosis Assessment and Treatment. New England Educational Institute, Cape Cod Symposia, August, Pittsfield, MA.

Controversial Treatments



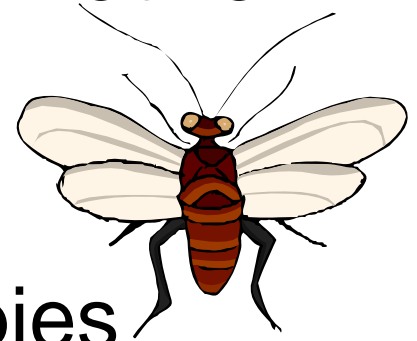
When to question if a treatment is legitimate:

- when no research in peer-reviewed journal is available;
- when they say, “traditional medicine, etc.” refuses to accept what they are saying;
- if most professionals would not use the method; and
- when the person pushing the treatment says, “...prove me wrong...” (p.4)

Silver, L. (Summer, 2001). Controversial Therapies, Theme Editor's Summary. Perspectives, 27 (3), pp.1 and 4.

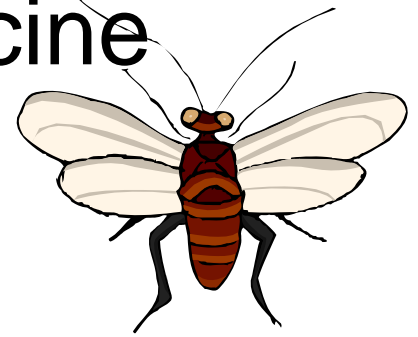
Alternative and Integrative Medicine Treatments of AD/HD & LD

- 56% of those with Anxiety use alternative treatments.
- 53% with Depression
- 16% of hospitals offer CAM therapies
- Highest rates used by those with serious and debilitating conditions



Dittmann, M. (June, 2004). Alternative Health Care Gains Steam. Monitor On Psychology, 35 (6), pp. 42-44.

Alternative and Integrative Medicine Treatments of AD/HD & LD

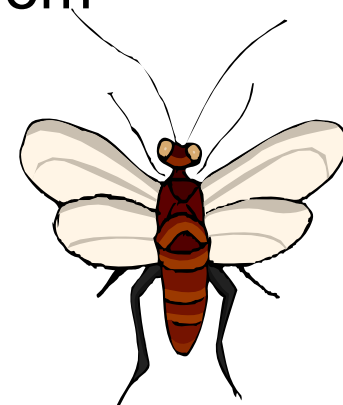


- “Today’s complementary and alternative medicine is tomorrow’s mainstream, but first it must meet with rigorous scientific evaluation.”
- –Alan Leshner, Ph.D., National Advisory Council for Complementary and Alternative Medicine and CEO of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (p. 44).

Dittmann, M. (June, 2004). Alternative Health Care Gains Steam. Monitor On Psychology, 35 (6), pp. 44.

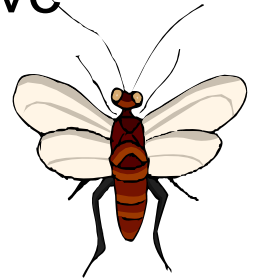
Alternative, Integrative & Complementary Medicine and LD and AD/HD

- December 2003 edition of **Attention!** Available from CHADD.
- CHADD's National Resource Center
- www.MyADHD.com
- Rappaport, L.A., & Kemper, K.J. (2003).
Complementary and Alternative Therapies in
Childhood Attention and Hyperactivity Problems.
Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics, 24, pp. 4-8.
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Places To Check Out “New” Treatments For AD/HD and LD: National Institute of Health (NIH)

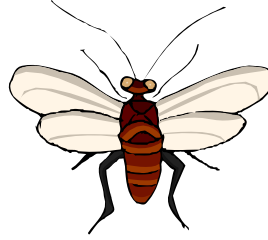
- National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine: www.nccam.nih.gov
- NCCAM Clearinghouse: 888-644-6226
- Some findings:
 - St. John’s Wort (*Hypericum Perforatum*) no better than placebo with Major Depression. Now being studied with “Minor” Depression-There is some research that St. John’s Wort can help with mild to moderate depression.
More research is needed!



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