

Living a good independent life



When I was growing up I always knew I was different from other kids because it took me longer to do and understand things. I have always got support from family. They are protective of me, as I am not as independent as I would like to be. I also do not get any social services support. I worry about things like going out, sometimes I get scared to go out, do new things, meet people and make friends.



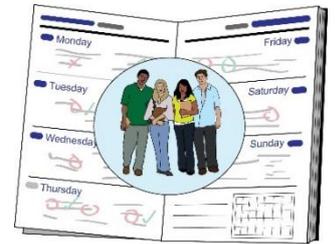
My family worry about me if I go out, and I always let them know as soon as I have planned to go out. Also, when I am out I phone them to let them know that I am ok. When I go out I do get scared but at the same time I feel happy.



I would like to go out more because it would build up my confidence and I would be happier. I know if I meet new people I would make them laugh, be more confident and more independent. At the moment I would not even go to a café or pub on my own because I would be too scared and I would start worrying.



The first thing I would like to change so I can be more independent is my day to day routine, so each week is different and I get out more. At the weekends I would like to do new things but this would worry my family and make me scared and stressed so I often stay at home.



In the future I would like to have my own house and a car, learn how to cook and many more things. For these things to happen I would need support and without support these things would not happen.



To be independent people with learning difficulties need support but having friends or family supporting can be a bad thing because:



- It is quicker if they do things without you which means you do not have control
- Sometimes family and friends can take over and make decisions for you.
- You do not feel independent because you always have to ask for help



- If people cannot help you do things then you get left out
- When they say do it this way, you normally do because it will stop you from bothering them again
- Sometimes it feels like you are not heard when they are supporting you
- Sometimes family and friends can run your life and think that they know what is best for you
- Sometimes you say what you think is best and they say no this way is better
- Sometimes you do not say what you think because you think it will be wrong
- They want to do things quickly which means you cannot take part. This is because they have got their own life and they do not have a lot of time to sit down with you
- You feel like you are annoying them because you have to keep asking them for help
- Sometimes you feel like you are a little child because you cannot do things for yourself
- It sometimes feels like you are too much hard work for people.



Getting support

People with learning difficulties often always need support to be independent, reach their goals and dreams, be happier and not have to worry. People should not always have to get support from family and friends.



The problem is you need support to get support, without someone helping you, you will not know how to find support. A lot of people with learning difficulties will not be able to get support because they have no one to help them.



However if you do have someone to support you this does not mean you will get social services support. This is because they might say that you do not have high enough support needs and this is what they have said to me before.



Without support I cannot be independent because:

- I will not move out of my parents' house
- I will not be confident enough to go out with friends
- I will not understand information



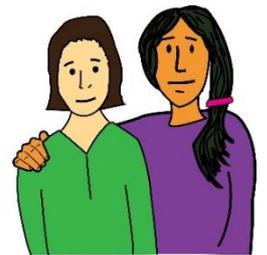
- I will not have control over my life
- I will not learn how to cook
- I will not learn how to go to places on my own,
- I will not understand some information at appointments for example banks or going to the doctors
- I will not know all my rights.



And many more things.....

If I had more support:

- Things would be easier, I would not panic
- I would be more confident
- I would do new things and go to new places
- I would do things that I fear now
- I would be happier
- I would do things such as going out, having driving lessons, going on holidays, going to the gym, going to the cinema and going bowling.



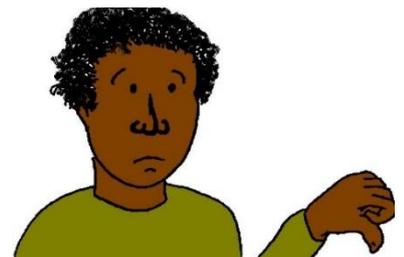
What would good support look like?

Good support would mean:

- I would not worry about things
- The fear would go away
- My mind would be at rest and I would not get stressed
- I would feel independent so I would not have to ask my family and friends for help
- I would be doing things for myself
- I would be in control of my life
- I would be more confident
- I would learn new things, like cooking
- I would feel happy about going to appointments
- I would be happy knowing that someone is there to support me when I need help
- I would sort things out if they go wrong
- I would do things that I want to do like learning to drive
- I would not be scared to go out
- I would start thinking about my future and plan things



If I didn't get support from friends and family everything would go wrong, I would be stuck and I would be in a dark tunnel with no light.



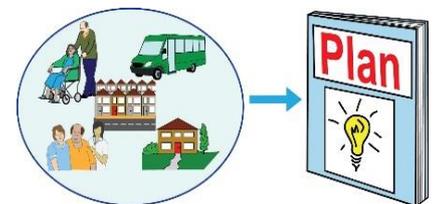
I think a lot of it is to do with fear, fear of doing things and looking stupid. I hate having to say can you say it again, because I don't understand or making excuses as to why I can't do things. So often I don't do things or I pretend I understand what people are saying. Maybe the fear will go away. I hope it will.



I want a little help, I want more of a life, I don't want to be stuck in doors all the time, and I want to be able to live a good independent life. I want to be part of society like everyone else. We are all humans and I want to be treated equally.



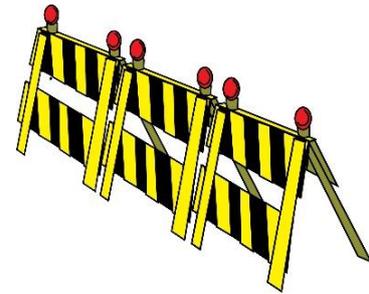
There are two important things. The first is getting help or support to get local authority support and the second thing is if or when you get support, making sure it meets your needs. Hardly anyone with a learning difficulty knows how to get support, who can help them get support, where they go to get support and what kind of support they can get.



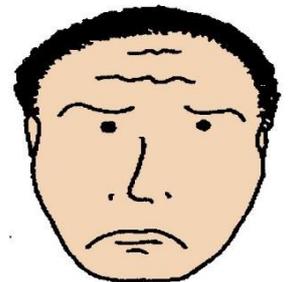
People feel stuck and lost and it is a battle to get help, with no hope. It can get very dangerous for people, they can get depressed, feel down, and things can spiral out of control.



There are too many barriers and that is why a lot of people with learning difficulties stay indoors, they want to find something out or go somewhere but they can't because they do not have support. A learning difficulty is a hidden impairment, this means you cannot see it. This may make it harder because it is not possible to see what the persons support needs are.



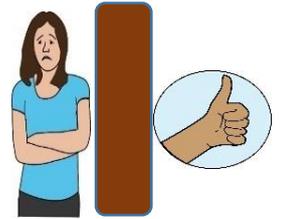
It is day to day, never ending, nothing changes, the same problems, worrying all the time, not being able to relax and not feeling happy. It feels like you are trapped.



Would you think twice about going for a drink after work? I would, I would think, do people want me there and do they think that they have to look after me? I won't be able to find my way home if it is a new place and I will have to ask someone to help me. It would also worry me because I may get lost. It will worry my family if I am home after normal time and I will have to keep calling them. Isn't it easier to go straight home? For me it is easier to just go straight home.



It feels like there is me, a wall and then fun and independent living on the other side of the wall. There is always something in the way and I just cannot get to the other side.



You know when you are small and you have to depend on your parents, you don't want that to be happening when you are an adult. You want the support to be in control and to live independently.

