



What Does It Mean to Have Learning Disabilities in Nova Scotia?

ADULTS 22 TO 29

The Research Committee decided to divide the adult population into three groups: 16 to 21; 22 to 29; and 30 to 44. This profile focuses on adults aged 22 to 29. People in this age group are typically making decisions about their careers. They are also establishing themselves as independent adults — setting up their own homes, getting married, starting families.

The data in this section were taken from the 2001 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS). PALS was a cross-sectional survey that was focused on disability. The PALS sample was selected from those people who answered “yes” to one or more of the disability questions on the 2001 Census of Population long questionnaire.

HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE LEARNING DISABILITIES?

Of those people aged 22 to 29, slightly more than one person in 100 (1.4%) said that they had a learning disability on the 2001 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS). Among males aged 22 to 29, the rate was 1.8%; it was lower for females at 1.1%.

Among those young adults who said that they had a learning disability, almost two-thirds of them were males (60.3%). Males make up 43.8% of the total population aged 22 to 29 years in Nova Scotia.

WHAT TYPES OF FAMILIES DO THEY LIVE IN?

51.1% of people with learning disabilities aged 22 to 29 reported that they lived with at least one parent. This was higher than what was reported by those aged 22 to 29 in the total population. Amongst that population, the figure was 30.5%.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT AT SCHOOL?

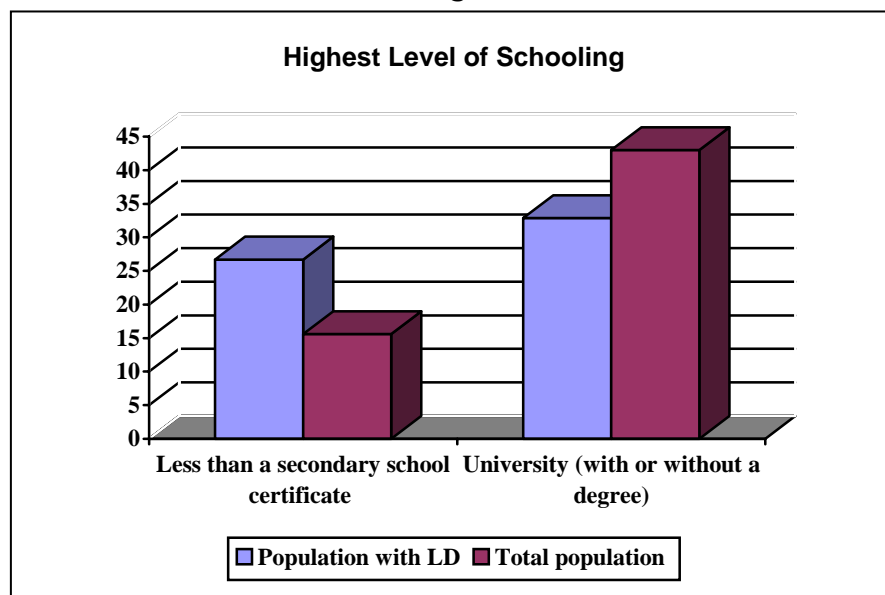
Thoughts from the Focus Groups

I had one teacher who helped me when I was in school; his was the only class that I excelled in. I went to school for three years and I felt like I didn't come out any smarter for it.

Public school was a bad fit for me. I was like the square peg in the round hole.

What the Data Tell Us

Just over one in four males and females aged 22 to 29 who said that they had a learning disability (26.7%) reported less than a secondary school certificate as their highest level of schooling. In contrast, 32.9% reported attending university (with or without a degree).



Among people with learning disabilities age 22 to 29 years, 41.9% reported that it took them longer to achieve their present level of education because of their disability.

The story was different among the total population of Nova Scotia aged 22 to 29. For this population, 15.6% reported less than a secondary school certificate and 43% said they had attended university (with or without a degree).

WHAT IS THE IMPACT AT WORK?

Thoughts from the Focus Groups

It takes me a while to adjust to things. My boss wasn't interested in trying to help me adjust. She was only interested in making money, not helping me.

I always question how my employers perceive me. Other people who I came into the organization with are further up the ladder than I am. They all have their weaknesses too. It sometimes makes me doubt myself.

What the Data Tell Us

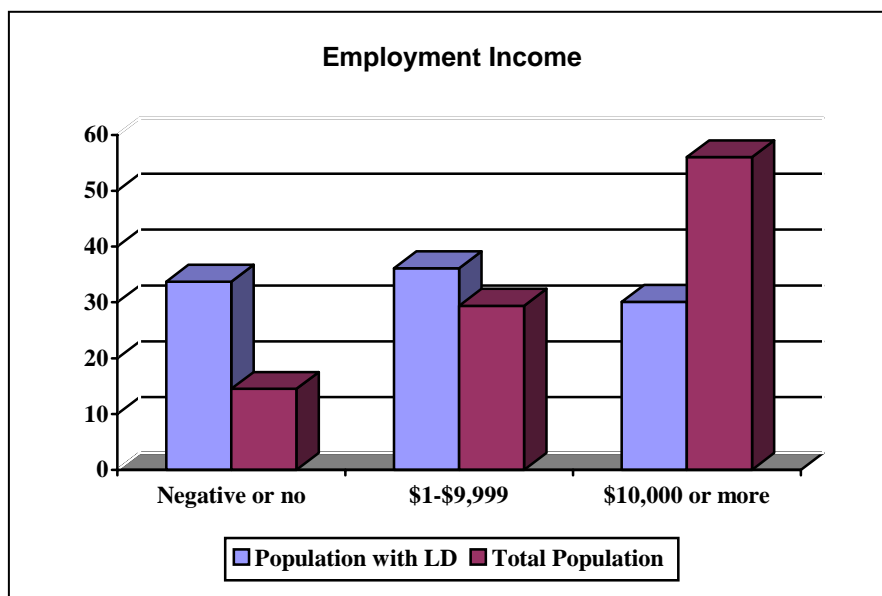
People with learning disabilities aged 22 to 29 were less likely than the total population of the province to have said that they were employed in the week prior to the 2001 Census. The figures were 51.5% and 72.4%, respectively.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT ON INCOME?

Having a learning disability did have an impact on the amount of income earned by adults with learning disabilities. Adults aged 22 to 29 with learning

disabilities — both sexes — earned less than adults in the same age group in the total population. 33.7% of those with learning disabilities reported that they had earned either a negative or no

income in 2000; this figure was 14.5% among the total population aged 22 to 29. 36.1% of adults with learning disabilities said that they had earned between \$1 and \$9,999 in 2000 and 30.1% said that they had earned \$10,000 or more. These figures were 29.4% and 56%, respectively, for the total population aged 22 to 29.



73.1% of adults aged 22 to 29 with learning disabilities — both sexes — were not members of low-income families (as calculated using data from the 2001 Census). This figure was 80.2% for the total population aged 22 to 29.

According to the *2001 Census Dictionary*, the **low-income cut-off** is defined as the income level at which families or unattached individuals spend 20% more than the average on necessities (i.e., food, shelter and clothing).

The data in this section were taken from the 2000 and 2002 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), Cycle 1.2 – Mental Health and Well-being. The CCHS was a cross-sectional survey (it was only done once) that focused, in this cycle, on mental health and well-being. The sample for this survey was selected from the Canadian Labour Force Survey.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT ON HEALTH?

When asked about their ability to handle unexpected demands, 55.1% of people with learning disabilities aged 22 to 29 — both sexes — said their ability was either good or fair. This figure was 30.6% among the total population aged 22 to 29.