



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

## **ADULTS 30 TO 44**

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 30 to 44. People in this group have typically finished their schooling and are in the work force. They are also usually busy with their family lives.

*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 30 to 44, almost two persons in 100 (1.7%) said that they had a learning disability on the 2001 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS). Among males aged 30 to 44, the rate was 1.8%; it was lower for females at 1.5%.

Among those young adults who said that they had a learning disability, just over half of them were males (52.7%).

## **WHAT TYPES OF FAMILIES DO THEY LIVE IN?**

45.9% of people with learning disabilities aged 30 to 44 reported that they were the head of their household or spouse of the head of household compared to 83.9% in the total population.

## **WHAT IS THE IMPACT AT SCHOOL?**

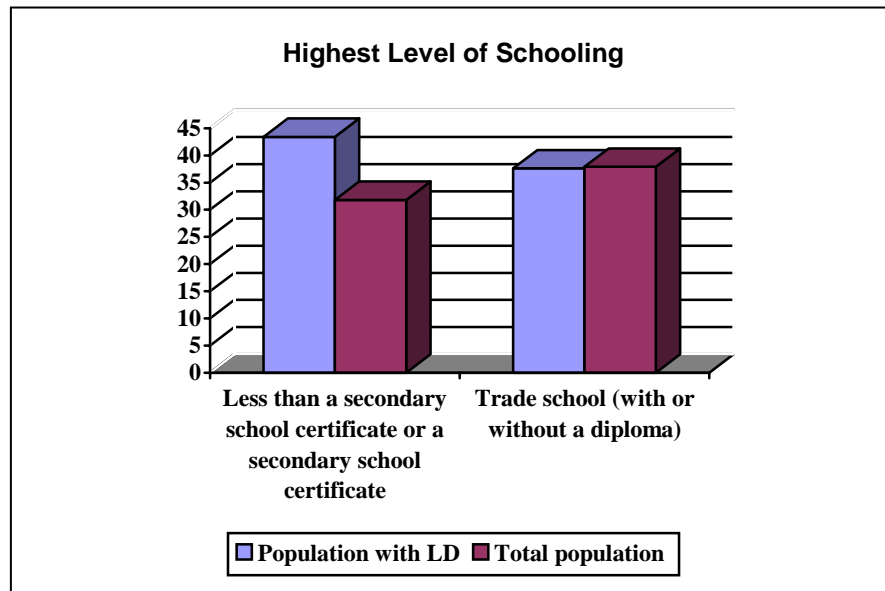
### **Thoughts from the Focus Groups**

*It was harder for me in high school. The classes were bigger and there was less one-on-one time with the teacher.*

*I had a tough time in high school. I always felt like my back was against the wall.*

## What the Data Tell Us

43.4% of males and females aged 30 to 44 who said that they had a learning disability reported less than a secondary school certificate or a secondary school certificate as their highest level of schooling. In addition, 37.6% reported



attending trade school (with or without a diploma). The story was slightly different among the total population of Nova Scotia aged 30 to 44. For this population, 31.8% reported less than a secondary school certificate or a secondary school certificate as their highest level of school and 37.9% said they had attended trade school (with or without a diploma).

Among people with learning disabilities, almost one in three (31.2%) reported that it took them longer to achieve their current level of education because of their disability.

## WHAT IS THE IMPACT AT WORK?

### Thoughts from the Focus Groups

*In my work, I constantly have to manage my disabilities. It's exhausting. I don't disclose at work but I choose the type of job I do and type of working environment I'm in. I'm very selective.*

*I have learned what my strengths are so I know what careers are definitely not for me.*

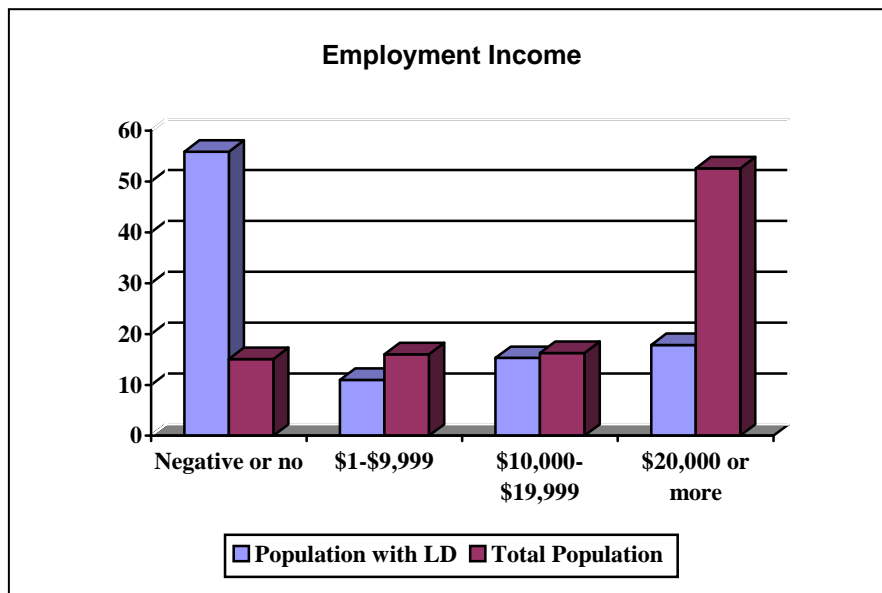
### What the Data Tell Us

People with learning disabilities aged 30 to 44 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 31.1% and 74.8%, 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 30 to 44 with learning

disabilities — both sexes — earned less than adults in the same age group in the total population. 55.9% of those with learning disabilities reported that they had earned either a negative or no



income in 2000; this figure was 15.1% among the total population aged 30 to 44. 11% of adults with learning disabilities said that they had earned between \$1 and \$9,999 in 2000, 15.3% said they had earned between \$10,000 and \$19,999 and 17.9% said that they had earned \$20,000 or more. These figures were 16.0%, 16.3% and 52.6%, respectively, for the total population aged 30 to 44.

Over two-thirds (61.2%) of adults aged 30 to 44 with learning disabilities — both sexes — were not members of low-income families (as calculated using data from the 2001 Census). This figure was 86% for the total population aged 30 to 44.

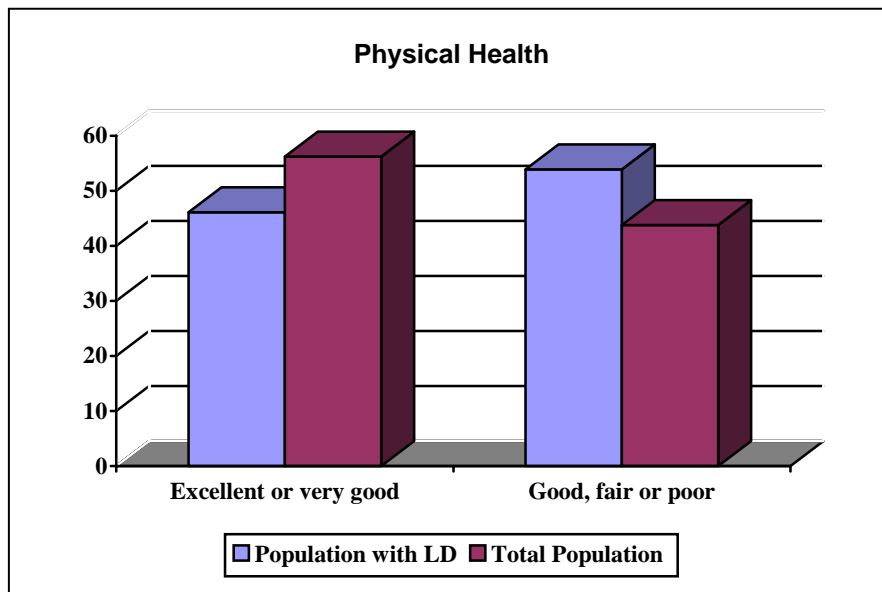
According to the *2001 Census Dictionary*, the **low-income cut-off** is defined as the income level at which families or unattached individuals spend 20% more than the average on necessities (i.e., food, shelter and clothing).

*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?

Almost six in ten (59.3%) of the survey respondents aged 30 to 44 with learning disabilities — both sexes — reported that they thought their health in general was good, fair or poor. This figure was lower (30.3%) among the total survey population aged 30 to 44.

When asked about their physical health, almost half (46.1%) of the population aged 30 to 44 with learning disabilities — both sexes — rated their physical health as excellent or very good. The figure was 56.2% for the total population. Conversely, 53.9% of the population



aged 30 to 44 with learning disabilities said that their physical health was either fair or poor. This is higher than what was reported by the total population aged 30 to 44; the figure for this group was 43.8%.

Survey respondents were also asked about their mental health. Amongst the population aged 30 to 44 with learning disabilities — both sexes — 22.9% said their mental health was either excellent or very good. This figure was much higher at 62.8% the total population aged 30 to 44. 77.1% of the population aged 30 to 44 with learning disabilities — both sexes — said their mental health was good, fair or poor. This figure was 37.2% among the total population aged 30 to 44.

The CCHS also asked respondents about their ability to handle the unexpected problems that can arise. Among both males and females aged 30 to 44 with learning disabilities, 22.8% said that they thought their ability to handle unexpected problems was excellent and 28.9% said it was very good or good. The figures were 16.8% and 72.5%, respectively, among the general population aged 30 to 44. Amongst persons with learning disabilities, almost half (48.3%) said that their ability to handle unexpected problems was fair or poor; for the total population, only one in 10 (10.7%) reported fair or poor.

When asked about their ability to handle unexpected demands, just over one in three (36.6%) of people with learning disabilities aged 30 to 44 — both sexes — said their ability was either excellent or very good. This figure was 68.3% among the total population aged 30 to 44.