

Monaghan



Comhairle na nÓg

Young Voices. Local Issues.

HIDDEN DISABILITIES

Learn The Facts, Debunk The Myths, A More Inclusive Society

2019/2020



Youth Work Ireland
Cavan Monaghan






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INTRODUCTION

Monaghan Comhairle na nÓg is a youth council which gives young people the opportunity to be involved in the development of local service and policies. Comhairle na nÓg gets young people's voices heard by working on youth issues/topics and acting as a consultative form.

Each year the Comhairle works on a 'key topic'. This year, 2019/2020, the youth council are working on the topic of Inclusion – Raising awareness on disabilities. As part of the project the group decided to focus some of their attention on 'Hidden Disabilities'. The following booklet will explain what a hidden disability is and it will identify some of the more common hidden disabilities. Myths and stereotypes will be debunked and famous faces who have lived with and excelled in life with a hidden disability will be highlighted.



WHAT IS A HIDDEN DISABILITY?



Hidden Disabilities refer to disabilities which may not be visible to see, but can have a major effect on people's lives. They can arise from conditions such as, Autism, ADHD and Dyslexia. Invisible disability, or hidden disability is an umbrella term that captures a whole spectrum of disabilities or challenges that are primarily neurological in nature. (1.)

This booklet will focus on the following hidden disabilities:

- Anxiety
- Autism
- Dyslexia
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Depression
- Dyspraxia



ANXIETY

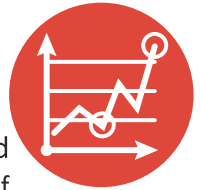
WHAT IS ANXIETY?

Anxiety is the feeling of fear or panic. Most people feel anxious, panicky or fearful about situations in life, such as money problems or exams but often once the difficult situation is over, you feel better and calmer. Sometimes the feelings of fear or anxiety continue after the difficult situation or sometimes you may feel a stronger sense of fear than other people and this is when anxiety becomes a problem and can affect you doing everyday things. (2.)



STATISTICS

The number of young people with anxiety in Ireland has increased significantly. The 'My World Survey 2' developed by UCD School of Psychology, in conjunction with youth mental health organisation Jigsaw was developed and carried out in 2019 to help build a picture of youth mental health in Ireland. The writers of the survey liaised with over 19,000 teenagers and young people aged between 12 and 25 years. They found that the number of young people with anxiety has doubled in the last seven years from carrying out 'My World Survey 1' in 2012. From the 10,459 secondary level young people spoken to, 22% stated experiencing severe anxiety. (3.)



MYTHS

“AN ANXIETY CONDITION IS NOT A REAL MEDICAL CONDITION”

There are a lot of people who can experience anxious feelings from time to time. It might be before a job interview, when you're running late for a flight or when you have an exam and are nowhere near finished studying. However, these are brief and can be considered natural experiences of anxiety that pass once the reason that has caused the stress (stressor) has been removed. Anxiety as a mental health condition occurs when these feelings are ongoing and are brought about without any reason or cause.(4.)



Difficult Roads
often lead to beautiful
Destinations

BE GENTLE WITH
YOURSELF YOU'RE DOING THE
BEST YOU CAN!

LOOK for something
POSITIVE in EVERY
Day, EVEN if some
days YOU have to
A little HARDER LOOK

everyday may
NOT be a Good
day BUT there is
GOOD in EVERYDAY ♥

Art work by young people from Clones Youth Club

CHALLENGING STEREOTYPES

'THEY ARE KNOWN FOR BEING ARROGANT'

A person with anxiety may avoid meeting others or attend different social events. This is not down to them being arrogant, but some people with anxiety may find it very difficult to be in social situations.



HOW CAN SOCIETY HELP?

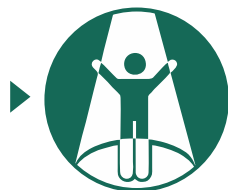
- Society need to understand that anxiety is a human feature not a flaw.
- Try and offer support but don't take over
- Understand and familiarise yourself how anxiety manifests (5.)



FAMOUS FACE

SELENA GOMEZ

In 2016, she took a break from her career due to her anxiety and panic attacks.



MY STORY

BY NICOLE REAVEY

Hi my name is Nicole Reavey and I am almost 16, I suffer with anxiety when I am unsure of the places and people I'm not familiar with. I will constantly bite my finger nails until they bleed and I am so afraid of dogs, I don't know why I have these fear as nothing has ever happened to me.

In 2019 I got the opportunity to go to Lourdes with a Community Group, I had never met the people before that I was going to be travelling with, but they took the time to prepare me for what was ahead. We all met in Cavan a few weeks before we were to travel, a visit to our house was also arranged. I knew all the organisers, the nurse & the priest who would be helping me on the trip. A 'Social Story' was given to me with all information laid out and all the activities and places of interest, so I could be familiar with them and know the schedule. The organisers had detailed day to day what exactly I would be doing. I went on on my own, I was so proud of myself, so were my family. They couldn't believe that I had the confidence to do this. The trip was a success but during take-off and landing my ears popped so although I did enjoy the trip I was still anxious about the plane going home.

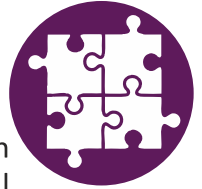




AUTISM

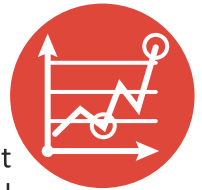
WHAT IS AUTISM?

AsIAM defines Autism as a complex, invisible condition which a person is born with. Autism is a neurodevelopmental condition which means that the way a person communicates, interacts and understands other people and the world, is different to those who do not have the condition. An autistic person will have a different understanding of the world, a different way of seeing the world and experience things differently to someone who is not on the spectrum. This presents an individual with challenges in areas that come naturally to others, but it can also present strengths and abilities due to that ability to think differently (6.)



STATISTICS

In Ireland, about 1 in every 100 people are born with Autism. It was also found that about 1 in every 65 of those attending school had been diagnosed with Autism (Study was carried out in 2016) Resulting in approximately 50,000 to 75,000 people in Ireland having Autism or on the Autism Spectrum. (7. 8.)



MYTHS

Autism only affects males: A common myth is that only males are on the autism spectrum. However, this is not the case as both males and females can be diagnosed with autism.



AUTISM AWARENESS DAY
takes place on 2nd April each year

CHALLENGING STEREOTYPES



'PEOPLE CAN'T COMMUNICATE WITH NON-VERBAL PEOPLE WHO HAVE AUTISM/ON THE SPECTRUM:'

There are many autistic people who are visual thinkers and find it easier to respond to signs and images when they interact with others. Those who don't use speech to communicate make use of a number of different approaches, such as Lámh. People with autism who are non-verbal have other opportunities to express themselves, these include artificial speakers on phones/tablets. These devices communicate words and sentences when users indicate icons onscreen. (6.)

HOW CAN SOCIETY HELP?



Over 99% of people have heard of autism, but only 16% of autistic people feel the public understand them. The National Autistic Society developed a campaign called "Too much information" Autistic people and their families responded to the campaign with the following five things they wanted society to understand - Autistic people;

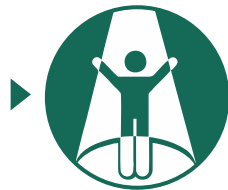
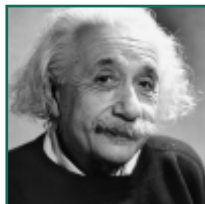
- Need extra time to process information
- Experience anxiety in social situations
- Experience anxiety with unexpected change
- Find noise, smells and bright lights disturbing
- Become overwhelmed and can experience a 'meltdown' or 'shutdown' (7.)

Pets can also help children with autism in many ways – They can provide companionship, friendship, reduce loneliness and alleviate anxiety

FAMOUS FACE

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Though autism did not become the mainstream diagnosis it is today until well into the 20th century, it is certainly not anything new. Many experts believe Albert Einstein had autistic characteristics and was on the autism spectrum. He had trouble socializing, he experienced severe speech delays and had the habit of repeating sentences to himself. (9.)



MY AUTISM

BY LILLY FAGAN

My name is Lilly Fagan. I am going to tell you about my Autism. I was born with autism and will always have autism. I couldn't talk until I was 4 years old. I had to go to a speech therapist when I was little; they helped me to learn how to speak. Some people with autism speak with an accent; I think I speak with an English and American accent.

When I was younger loud noises, the smell of some types of food and certain things I touched used to annoy me, the noise it would actually hurt my ears and I would scream if it was very loud and run away. Loud noises still annoy me but I have learned to cope. When I was little I only liked chocolate spread sandwiches for my lunch every day. I used to like sweet foods but now my taste has changed and I eat healthy food. I still don't like fruit.

Because I have autism I think differently to other children. Sometimes I find it more difficult than you to do certain activities, but I will keep trying. I have learned how to cycle a bike, swim, play piano and ride a horse so I am the same as most children only I think differently. I will always have to learn how to cope when I have autism.

I don't really play with others when I am on my break. I like watching others play. I like to talk but I find it challenging.

Sometimes I script when I am on my break. Scripting is when I remember a TV

programme I like in my head word for word, this helps me to relax and stay calm and keeps my mind off things. So when you see me talking to myself in the playground I am watching a TV programme in my head, which I think is pretty cool.

I am not different or weird or strange.
I am Lilly and I have autism.



Art work by Monaghan Comhairle na nOg for Autism Awareness Day 2020

MY STORY

BY DANIEL LEONARD

Hi! My name is Daniel. I am a ten year old boy and I love Currin GFC, Clones Town FC, Monaghan GAA, Liverpool FC, my family, friends and my dog Magoo (but not in that order!)

I was born at 32 weeks and spent some time in the Special Care Baby Unit in Cavan General. I went to Enable Ireland from I was 9 months old and have had physiotherapy, occupational and speech and language therapy pretty much ever since only now it's with the guys in the child development team.

My parents worried I would never walk (and me a footballer!), I took my first step aged 2 years, 2 months and nine days old on Valentine's day. I don't remember but with lots of exercises and a cow designed walker I was walking independently a year later.

I struggle with lots of things that my brothers and sister find easy, they are all younger so it is annoying that they are faster than me, can read and write better than me but I will always be the oldest and they have to go to bed earlier than me. They go on lots of sleepovers and playdates... the sleepovers make me sad... I am a big boy, I want to go on sleepovers. I go to my Nanny's or my cousin house but I wish I could go to friend's houses like they do.

I thought I had autism for a long time... not because anyone told me I did but I knew from mammy that I was special and I knew my friends in the autism unit were too. So I thought I was like them too but no I'm not like anyone else I know.

I struggle to communicate but I give it a good try! It's not nice when I have to keep repeating and repeating and repeating..... and sometimes, I admit, I give up. But I hate it when people nod and pretend they know what I said or even worse ignore me and pretend I didn't speak so they don't have to talk to me. It's really strange to me because it is usually Adults who do this and they are supposed to have *good* manners. Kids my age just say "what" or "I don't understand" and that's ok, then it's my choice whether I try again or leave it. I now have a communication devise that I use to help communicate, I get a bit embarrassed having a voice talk for me but I am getting a lot quicker and Daddy says to keep trying.

Mammy worries that I will fall through the cracks, not sure what she means but it doesn't sound good! I don't have a BIG diagnosis so she has to fight to get resources for me.

Sometimes I cry and can't get happy. Not sure why.

It helps to spend time with my dog Magoo she makes me feel happier, my Godfather got her for my birthday (best present ever, I can't wait until next year).

I love to play football, I know I am not fast, I get very tired and I don't see a lot of the ball but I am happy just to be with my team. Even though the coaches are tough!

I love to joke, laugh and play. I am happy to just be there – be it the football pitch, a birthday party or the park – Mammy says that's a special gift.

Jack McCarron is my favourite player then Mo Salah. Jack signs jerseys for me and I have beaten him at draughts!

I am going to be a firefighter when I go up.

Severe phonological disorder as well as receptive and expressive language difficulties, global developmental delay and an intellectual disability.

DYSLEXIA

WHAT IS DYSLEXIA?

There are many definitions of dyslexia. A simple definition would be that dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty which makes it hard for some people to learn to read, write and spell correctly. The Dyslexia Association of Ireland defines dyslexia as a specific learning difficulty affecting the acquisition of fluent and accurate reading and spelling skills. This happens despite access to appropriate learning opportunities. (10.)



STATISTICS

450,000 people in Ireland have dyslexia (1 in 10). On average, 3 children in every classroom have dyslexia. (10.)



MYTHS

'KIDS WITH DYSLEXIA JUST NEED TO TRY HARDER TO READ'

The brain functions differently because people with dyslexia rely more on the right hemisphere and frontal lobe of the brain, so when they read a word it can get delayed in the frontal lobe which increases the difficulty of the reading. (11.)



CHALLENGING STEREOTYPES

'DYSLEXIA IS A SIGN OF BELOW AVERAGE INTELLIGENCE' -

There is no association between dyslexia and intelligence. Children with dyslexia can experience greater to or equal academic success compared to their peers. 'If you have dyslexia you will not be successful' – People with dyslexia are often gifted in other fields such as music, art and engineering. Dyslexia does not define a person. (11.)

