

CHANGING YOUR THINKING

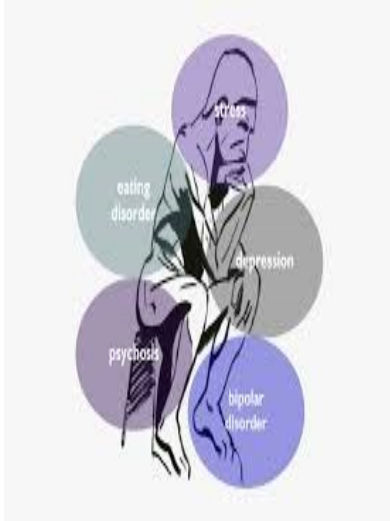
EASY READ DOCUMENT

LEARNING DISABILITY AND MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS

Mental health disorders are illnesses that can affect your mood, thinking and behaviour.

Examples of mental health disorders include :

- ♦ Anxiety disorders
- ♦ Depression
- ♦ Bipolar disorder
- ♦ Schizophrenia
- ♦ Eating disorders
- ♦ Dementia
- ♦ Addictions



LEARNING DISABILITY

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MENTAL HEALTH DISORDER

A learning disability is not the same as a mental health disorder. A mental health disorder can happen to anyone at any point in their life and is usually treatable.



But mental health disorders are more common in people with a learning disability. And people with a learning disability can suffer from any of the disorders in the list above.



Research says that adults with a learning disability are up to twice as likely to suffer from a mental health disorder than the general population.



And children with a learning disability are up to 4 times as likely to suffer from a mental health disorder.



Older adults with a learning disability are up to 4 times as likely to suffer with dementia



There are many possible reasons why mental health disorders are more common in people with a learning disability.



Some reasons are biological including poor physical health, genes and inheritance and epilepsy.



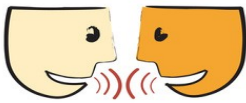
Other reasons are down to life events. These include loneliness, poverty, stress, bad life events and poor support.

Treatments for mental health disorders are the same for people with or without a learning disability.

These treatments can include:



- ♦ Medications



- ♦ Talking therapy



- ♦ Family therapy



Some of the medications can make you very tired or give you other negative side effects.



And there can be a problem where these medications are given to people with a learning disability but not with a mental health disorder, in order to just sedate them and control their behaviour.



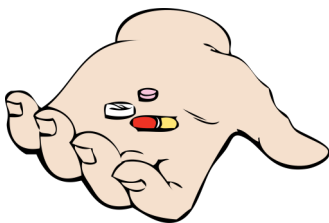
Public Health
England

A few years ago, Public Health England said that in England there were between 30,000 and 35,000 adults with a learning disability prescribed medications for mental health problems that they didn't have.

STOMP



This is a big problem. To tackle this problem, there is an English project called **STOMP** (Stopping over medication of people with a learning disability, or autism or both).



The goal of the project for the person to get the right medicine at the right time. This can be done if everyone works together including the professionals, family, carers and the person.



There is a problem because mental health problems in people with learning disabilities are not always diagnosed.

This means that treatments that could help are not given.



There are many reasons why mental health problems are not diagnosed.

These include:

- ♦ Mental health services and learning disability services not always working together
- ♦ Assessments used by doctors are not always suitable for the person
- ♦ Symptoms are assumed to be just down to a person's learning disability. For example challenging behaviour. Professionals are not always listening to the person with a learning disability and the people who know them best.



It is important that if someone with a learning disability is concerned about their mental health then they need to go their GP. The same goes if the person's family, carers or teachers are concerned.



Then the person can be referred for a psychiatric assessment. If they are then diagnosed with a mental health disorder they can start treatment.



With the right treatment, the person can lead a good life.



There are organisations with help and advice.
These include the **NHS** website **www.nhs.uk**

Also **MIND** for anyone with mental health problems

www.mind.org.uk

Infoline 0333 123 3393

Also **Mencap** for people with learning disabilities

www.mencap.org.uk

Helpline 0808 808 111



Stacey lives in Barry in the Vale of Glamorgan. Stacey has a learning disability and mental health problems. To see a short film about Stacey and her life click on the link below.

[About my mental health - Stacey - YouTube](#)