

# Canadian Faces of Learning Disabilities: A Struggle for Identity

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## Conversation Session

*The goal of our roundtable conversation session is to explore a core issue in our work as researchers, practitioners, and advocates for individuals with LD: the **struggle for a clear identity**.*

### Points for Conversation:

- 1. The Shift towards “neurodiversity.”** The current shift toward the term “neurodiversity,” in how we speak about those with disabilities, wherein the specificity of those disabilities becomes lost.
  - Moreover, the majority of individuals with LD prefer the term LD over neurodiversity (Goegan, Delgado & Ayeni, 2025)
- 2. Lack of understanding of LD.** The general population’s lack of understanding of what constitutes a LD, and what does not (e.g., the misconception that ADHD is a LD, or that anything that impacts learning is by definition a LD).
  - This misconception is also found among those with LD themselves.
  - In our CFOLD research this past fall, **22%** of participants initially claimed to have an LD but, when asked to specify their LD (e.g., reading based / dyslexia), identified something that is not classified as an LD (Goegan, Young & Ayeni, 2024)
- 3. Need for Statistics Canada question on LD.** The absence of well-constructed questions in current Statistics Canada surveys that could provide a clearer picture of what LDs look like in Canada.
  - Current questions available:
    - *Do you think you have a condition that makes it difficult in general for you to learn? This may include learning disabilities such as dyslexia, hyperactivity, attention problems, etc. (yes, no or DK)*
    - *Has a teacher, doctor or other health care professional ever said that you had a learning disability? (yes, no or DK)* (Canadian Survey on Disability, CSD)

**How do we best address the need for a clear identity?**



The Canadian Faces of Learning Disabilities (CFOLD) project was comprised of a group of researchers and volunteers from the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada who came together to explore the current experiences of individuals with learning disabilities (LD) in Canada.

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