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Specific Learning Disorders

DESCRIPTION OF SPECIFIC LEARNING DISORDERS

Definition

In the (), the American Psychiatric Association (2013) categorizes specific learning disorder (SLD) as a neurodevelopmental disorder. Combining the diagnoses of reading disorder, mathematics disorder, disorder of written expression, and learning disorder not otherwise specified, SLD is a broad diagnosis that acknowledges deficits that impact academic achievement. SLD specifiers include:

- reading (fluency, accuracy, and comprehension);
- written expression (spelling, grammar, punctuation, organization, clarity); and
- mathematics (memorizing, calculating, reasoning).

The term is frequently used in reference to individuals who have received a - diagnosis of specific learning disorder, but not all people who have SLD qualify as having a learning disability. Learning disability is a term typically used when referring to a category of school-age students who are eligible for special educational services under the ().

Resource: <http://www.nclld.org/images/content/files/stateofd2014/2014%20State%20of%20LD%20FINAL%20FOR%20RELEASE.pdf>

Adults with specific learning disorders might experience functional limitations related to communication, interpersonal skills, cognition, work skills, and other areas that impact employment outcomes. For detailed information about the impact of specific learning disorders on employment see:

http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/current_provider_information/vocational_rehabilitation/policies_procedures/technical_assistance_briefs/learning_disabilities.htm#Impact_of_Learning_Disabilities_on_Employment

Prevalence

According to the , specific learning disorders are typically found in 5%-15% of all school-age students. Adult prevalence rates of specific learning disorders are estimated to be 4%. Males are more frequently diagnosed, at rates 2–3 times that of females.

IDENTIFICATION/ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

The initial diagnosis of specific learning disorder typically occurs in school-aged children. Diagnosis requires a comprehensive evaluation (i.e., family, educational, medical, and developmental history) as well as teacher observations, responses to academic interventions, and standardized test scores.

Resource: <http://www.dsm5.org/Documents/Specific%20Learning%20Disorder%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>

No one assessment is used to assess specific learning disorders, and individual counselors have discretion to choose which assessments they want to use. The National Center for Learning Disabilities provides a sampling of common assessments used in diagnosing specific learning disorders.

Resource:

<http://www.ncld.org/parents-child-disabilities/ld-testing/types-learning-disabilities-tests>

For adults with specific learning disorders, situational assessments are often used by counselors to identify cognitive or behavioral factors that might affect job performance.

Resource: _____
