

Learning Disability Special Interest Group



LDSIG - E-zine

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the PSI – Learning Disability Special Interest Group’s e-zine. The purpose of the e-zine is to facilitate communication between Committee members and Group members. More specifically in relation to what the Group is doing, on current and future trends in service provision, to provoke discussion and debate on topical issues, to provide a resource of useful websites, and information on research by Group members and whatever else fits in.

The LDSIG hopes to produce the e-zine quarterly and the editor will be grateful for any comments, suggestions for material for inclusion. The e-zine will be sent to all members via email and will be placed on the Group’s webpage on the PSI website at www.psihq.ie

History of the LDSIG

The PSI Learning Disability Special Interest Group was founded in 1974 after the idea had been discussed at the PSI annual conference in Limerick in 1973.

The founding members were David Kenefick, Stephen Kealy, Dymphna Walsh, Sally Jackson and Seamus McLoone. It was the first special interest group to be formed within the Psychological Society of Ireland and the first Easter workshop was held in 1975 and received approval from the Department of Health. By 1981, the aims of the group were,

- promoting good practice,

- charting a course for service development in a climate of changing models of service provision
- providing support to psychologists often in departments that were just developing.
- providing information based on best international research and practice.

Over the years, the Learning Disability Special Interest Group has provided psychologists working in the field of learning disabilities with a forum to share professional skills and expertise and access best practice of the time, therefore playing a key role in continuing professional development. Through conferences, workshops and seminars, many international experts have been brought to Ireland to share their research findings and challenge the profession to take a leading role in influencing the delivery of services to people with learning disabilities and their families.

The group has provided and continues to provide a means of support on ethical and service issues and plays a leading role in advocating for better lives for children and adults with developmental disabilities whether in education, residential services or the work place. Through this dynamic, the learning disability special interest group have produced a number of significant position papers and policy documents, including an influential policy document on challenging behaviour.

Aims of PSI Learning Disability Special Interest Group:

The aims and vision of the group have remained consistent and can be summarised as follows:

Learning Disability Special Interest Group

- To promote good practice in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities
- To facilitate high standards of competence in assessment and intervention in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities
- To educate the public on issues relating to intellectual and developmental disabilities
- To support continuing professional development for Psychologists working in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities

Structure and functioning of the LDSIG:

The group has a committee with a chairperson, secretary, treasurer and committee members. The chairperson, secretary and treasurer are elected for two years at an annual general meeting, which takes place in April each year. New committee members can be elected annually. There are usually four meetings in a year with an annual workshop, which usually takes place in the ancestral home of the Group (the City of the Tribes – Galway). Subgroups/working parties may meet more regularly if working on a particular issue. Membership is open to qualified Psychologists and Psychologists in Training who are working in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities and who are members of PSI. There is no membership fee

The current LDSIG committee for 2005/2006 is;

Margaret Farrelly, Chairperson
 Seamus Feehan, Chairperson elect
 Rosemary O’Connell, Secretary,
 Aoife Moran, Treasurer
 Committee Members:

Isabelle O’Donoghue, Mark Quinn,
 Niamh Whyte, John Buttimer, Suzanne
 McHugh, Ciara O’Keefe, Kathy
 O’Grady, and Pat McCourt.

source: *LDSIG homepage on the PSI website*
www.psihq.ie

Multi-element positive behaviour management: Creating a new policy for the future

The LDSIG in keeping with its aims recently held a meeting of interested members on the 3rd of February to discuss the PSI policy document on challenging behaviour. Given, that it is almost ten years since the paper was published and twenty since the work began, the Committee felt it was an opportune time of plan for the future.

Three well-known and respected psychologists gave varied but interesting and topical papers under the banner of ‘*Multi-element positive behaviour management: Creating a new policy for the Future.*’ Dr. Brian Mc Clean (Brother’s of Charity – Roscommon) presented on developments in knowledge and practice in relation to challenging behaviour, Dr Michael Reen (Brother’s of Charity – Clare) spoke on community models of positive behaviour management and Dr Pete Walsh (Galway Community Association) presented on the physical management and related challenges relevant to challenging behaviour.

There was lively debate and discussion during the breaks and afternoon session. There was overwhelming

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interest from group members in starting a process of review. The tone of the meeting was encapsulated by the opening comments of Brian Mc Clean when he asked the group – ‘*How radical do you want to be?*’

All three speakers agreed to form part of a core group that would tackle reviewing the existing policy document with a view to making it current and relevant not only to clinicians but also for the people we work with and for, those individuals with intellectual disability and challenging behaviour.

If you would like to send comments or indicate interest in working on specific aspects of the review document please contact a member of the committee, as your input would be gratefully appreciated.

Representation on groups

A number of requests were made for members of the LDSIG to represent the interests of people with an Intellectual Disability e.g. the Informing Families Project initiated by the Federation of Voluntary Bodies, a focus group addressing issues on people with an Intellectual Disability who offend and a nomination was forwarded in response to a request from the National Council on Special Education.

The Committee occasionally gets requests from the President or CEO to respond on issues pertaining to disability issues. Please let any member of the committee know if you have an area of expertise that can be drawn on.

LDSIG EASTER WORKSHOP Learning Disability, Mental Health and Treatment issues in practice.

This year’s Easter Workshop has kept its name but has a change in date (6th and 7th of April) and venue (The Galway Bay Hotel). While this may come as a shock to many traditionalists we can guarantee the same quality of speakers, lively debate and late night craic as before.

The experience of people with intellectual disabilities with mental health difficulties and our role as psychologists in supporting them are central to this year’s workshop theme. There will be an emphasis on the practical aspects of clinical practice as well as the service issues including the legal dimension and ability to consent. The workshop promises to be lively, informative and challenging with speakers from a variety of fields contributing, including Valerie Sinason, Patricia Richard-Clarke, and Laurence Taggart.

At lunch time on Thursday there will be the launch by: The Institute of Psychotherapy and Disability-(Patron Joan Bicknell), affiliated to the British Council for Psychotherapy.

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Useful Websites ?

There are possibly thousands of websites available to browse and download relevant to intellectual disability. The question often is – are they any good?

In this e-zine we hope to review a number of websites each edition to give a flavour of what's available nationally and internationally.

www.oireachtas.ie is an essential starting point for anyone who wants to read first hand current legislation and policy documents published by the Government. This can be an at times frustrating experience as relevant researches might need to be carried out under different Departments from Health, Justice, Education, Finance and Social and Family Affairs to name but a few. However, the site is generally up-to-date with official publications, reports and legislation available for download.

<http://www.disability-federation.ie> Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) is the national support organisation and advocate for voluntary organisations in Ireland who provide services to people with disabilities and disabling conditions. DFI represents and supports over 150 voluntary disability organisations and groups, of which 73 comprise its National Council, and 23 of which are Associate Members. Allied to this it works with and supports over 200 organisations and groups around the country that have a significant and growing disability interest, mainly coming from the statutory and voluntary sectors. The website has a specific sites for a newsletter, publications, and

current issues. The site is updated regularly and well worth a visit.

www.intellectualdisability.info/home.htm

The main aim of this site is to provide up-to-date information for practitioners and students about the health needs of people with intellectual disabilities. It covers a broad focus. Articles include not only subjects such as prevention and diagnosis, but also social care issues, family issues, and the perspectives of people with intellectual disabilities themselves.

If you have found a particular website, book or article, useful, interesting or just awful please let us know so we can let others know.

Have your Say!

If you have any comments, suggestions or items for inclusion in future issues of the e-zine please contact us by email at info@psihq.ie

If you would prefer not to receive the e-zine in future please let us know by email at info@psihq.ie

Please mark all correspondence care of LDSIG e-zine.

We look forward to hearing from you!