

Films like Forrest Gump often show people with Learning Difficulties as being eternally innocent.

Types of general learning difficulties differ hugely. Someone with mild difficulties may live independently with some support, whereas someone with severe difficulties may require 24 hour support.

Achievements

People First was formed by people with LD who became self-advocates for independent living.

Films like 'Dumb and Dumber' encourage people to make fun of people with a Learning Difficulty.

Germany 1930s. Poster describing disabled people as a waste of money.

Publicity designed by People First

label jars ...not people

83% of school children with a learning difficulty say they are regularly bullied.



9 out of 10 people with LD experience bullying or hate crime.

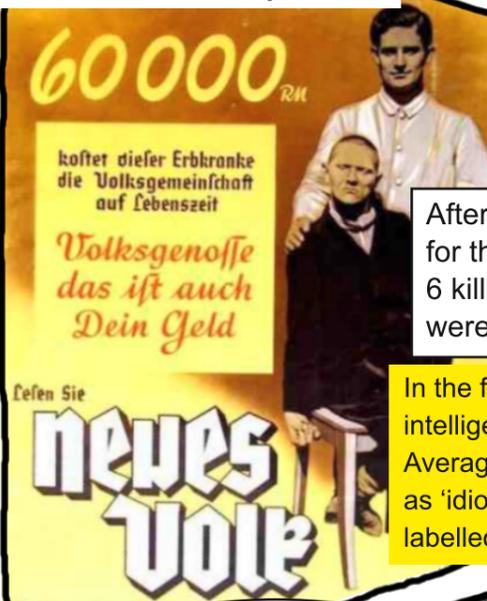
All Equal All Different: people with a LEARNING DIFFICULTY (LD)

Having a learning difficulty means finding it harder to learn certain skills. Each person is different but it can include learning new things, reading, writing, communication and managing money. Some people are born with a condition. Others may develop one as a result of an accident or illness.



Benjamin Zephaniah-Poet, author with dyslexia.

A specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia does not affect thinking. A general learning difficulty is linked to a loss of thinking capacity. 2% of the population have a general learning difficulty and 10% have a specific learning difficulty.



Under Hitler's Third Reich, people with LD were sterilised so they could have no children.

After 1940 a mass killing programme for the 'useless eaters' was implemented in 6 killing centres. 300,000 disabled people were murdered.

In the first part of C20th, it was believed that intelligence (IQ) was fixed and could be measured. Average scores were 70-130. Below 25 were classed as 'idiots', 25-50 were 'imbeciles' and 50-75 were labelled 'feeble minded'. This is not true.

History

In the past, people with LD were often seen as saints or demons. Henry VIII employed 'Natural fools' as jesters who lived in style at his palace at Hampton Court. The Tudors believed 'fools' told the truth, were pure and in touch with 'God'.



'All the King's Fools'- actors with LD play jesters at Hampton Court.



20th Century, Meanwood Park, Leeds. Over 4000 people with LD

19th Century Workhouse- over 50% of residents were disabled.

Before the industrial revolution people with LD were often accepted as the 'village idiot', following the Poor Law (1834) many were locked up in Workhouses and Asylums. Towards the end C19th they were seen as a threat to the purity of the 'British race' and its competitiveness. This false eugenics led to segregation in colonies on the outskirts of cities, strictly divided by gender.



Keira Knightley was diagnosed with dyslexia at age 6.



Swimmer Michael Phelps holds the record for winning the most Olympic medals. He had ADHD and was hyper-active as a child.



Actor Daniel Radcliffe has dyspraxia, which can make it difficult for him to tie his shoes. Handwriting also continues to be a challenge.

In the 1960s it was shown that with the right education and experience people's IQ could be improved. This led to inclusion in schools and the closure of long stay hospitals.