



**Kent and Medway**  
NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust

# LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT MY ABILITY...

Challenging stigma associated with  
learning disabilities through creative writing



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## Welcome to Let me tell you about my ability...

Approximately 1.5 million people in the UK have a learning disability and this figure is increasing. However, many people without learning disabilities (LD) do not know what a LD is, or how it impacts the lives of people who are considered to have one. The aim of this project is to amplify the voices of adults with LD offering a platform to share their valuable insights and experiences and raise awareness and tackle misconceptions.

A learning disability affects the way that people learn new things, understand information and communicate but there is no “singular” profile of learning disability – each person has their own strengths and challenges.

For many people there is no known cause for their learning disability but there are some better-known conditions that may feature learning disability e.g. Down's syndrome and Turner's syndrome. Some people with LD may also have an Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) or epilepsy, but not all.

We are using creative writing and artwork by those with lived experience of LD as a vehicle to fight stigma and offer their valuable insights. We will be sharing with you the benefits that creative writing can have and most importantly inspiring pieces created by adults with lived experience of LD.

## The benefits of creative writing

Poetry and literature has been demonstrated to have many therapeutic benefits and can help in the treatment and management of many psychological conditions, such as anxiety, depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), bipolar disorder and eating disorders. It can even help to combat day-to-day stress.

Writing poetry allows us to:

- Express our thoughts and feelings
- Gain insight into our emotions
- Deal with stress
- Consider other perspectives
- Problem solve

Writing also has a number of personal benefits, including:

- Increased self-esteem and confidence
- Improved self-awareness
- Emotional regulation
- Empowerment

In addition to the impact on individuals, poetry and creative writing can provide a vehicle to challenge stigma and misconceptions.

To find out more about the project, please email: [kmpt.mhld.communitypsychologyproject@nhs.net](mailto:kmpt.mhld.communitypsychologyproject@nhs.net)

## Did you know?

I've got Down's syndrome but did you know...

**I go ski race training boot camp once a month, I have two ski coaches and train for the special Olympics.**

I have Down's Syndrome but did you know...

**That while some children watched cartoons, I would watch countdown on TV and learn how to write numbers and letters.**

I've got Down's syndrome but did you know...

**I learnt a Shakespeare monologue from Romeo and Juliet in roughly one week. I'm still waiting for my Romeo...**

Yes, I've got Down's Syndrome but did you know...

**I make a bloomin' good Chilli Con Carne; it's the cleaning up afterwards... I'll do it but I don't love it.**

I've got Down's Syndrome but did you know...

**I started to walk at 18 months and learnt to read at the age of 4.**

And yes I've got Down's Syndrome but did you know...

**I'll often get up early on a Sunday and go for a 15 mile bike ride with my Mum and Dad.**

Yes I have Down's Syndrome but did you know...

**That I like a challenge.**

*Written by Alison*

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## **This is me**

Stood silent at the door clutching a hand,

This wasn't the shopping experience I had planned.

I can feel people staring at me all the time,

It's not very nice, it's out of line

Little children looking up at me

Unable to understand my disability.

Just give me a smile or a wave

This can help me feel so brave.

All it can take is a smiley face

To change the world to a happier place.

*Written by Victoria*

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## The animal does not judge

Animals don't judge my Autism, they don't judge my epilepsy. You can feel safe and secure around an animal.

The dolphin swimming in the sea, makes me smile

The way a butterfly lands on your head, makes me feel relaxed.

The sound of a woodpecker in the park, it goes tap tap tap.

Animals make you feel like you can achieve anything. You can be yourself around an animal.

I like animals, they're good. I'm happy with animals.

As long as it's not a snake.

*Written by Nikki*

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## I may not have words

I may not have words, but I feel

I may not have words but I know when you are hurting

When you need a hug, a smile or a hand slipped into yours

I may not have words, but I feel the cold stare that lingers too long

That probes and questions my differentness

I may not have words but I feel the intensity of separateness- of sadness

I may not have words but I have love

And can teach you to radiate that warmth unconditionally and without limit

I may not have words

*Written by Greer*



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## If I had that magic wand, if I had that genie and three wishes, a

## chance to change perceptions...my magic wand moment would be...

For people to stop and think, for people to be shown the way and to be educated.

To look past what things look like on the outside and see the beautiful and good things on the inside.

Where all abilities unite as one.

For people to not be scared to help someone with a disability.

To help young people to understand and to learn so they can educate their parents.

For people to be patient.

For kindness to people with disabilities to be a habit they just can't shake.

One magic wand moment... I'd wish for a car

*Written by Ian, Nikki, Victoria, Steven and Becky*



*All paintings by Ann*

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[Take a look at our project information](#)

[Take a look at our participant](#)

[Take a look at our easy read](#)

[sheet](#)[information sheet](#)[participant sheet](#)


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## Acknowledgements

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If you have lived experience of a learning disability and would like to submit a poem or piece of artwork for a future publication, please contact us at [kmpt.mhld.communitypsychologyproject@nhs.net](mailto:kmpt.mhld.communitypsychologyproject@nhs.net)

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Albion Place Medical Centre, 23-29 Albion Place, Maidstone, Kent ME14 5TS

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If you have any feedback about econnect that you would like to share, please contact the learning disability team at [kmpt.mhld.communitypsychologyproject@nhs.net](mailto:kmpt.mhld.communitypsychologyproject@nhs.net)

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Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust, Farm Villa, Hermitage Lane,  
Maidstone, Kent, ME16 9PH

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