

Overcome Learning Difficulties

When Nili Raviv's son returned from a 3-month surfing holiday at the age of 20 and read the book 'Catcher in the Rye' within a week, she was amazed. Barak, her son had severe learning difficulties all his young life and was never able to read.



Nili realised that there must be a way to help correct learning and attention skills in children and adults. Nili came up with the Raviv Method – a neuro cognitive approach to achieve this. Here, Jane Wexelstein-Oliver, Raviv Practitioner explains more on the method.

"After Nili's revelation, she spent the next 5 years researching how surfing helped her son overcome his difficulties. With the work of Sally and Bennett Shaywitz, (researchers at Yale University and co-directors of the Yale Centre for Learning and Attention) they found that people with reading difficulties have not properly developed the neurological pathways in the brain that are responsible for reading.

The brain contains 100 billion neurons. People with a learning difficulty have neurons that are not making a full connection between the 2 brain hemispheres -left & right. The 2 sides of the brain must crossover so that information can flow from left to right and right to left.

Nili's programme is focused and effective. It includes a figure of eight walk, which enables the left and right side of the brain to continually crossover and this creates new neural connections in the brain. Over a period of 4-6 months, with a 1:1 session for one hour per week, supported with 20 minutes of figure of eight walk at home, new neurons are created and the old neuron connections that were not working will eventually breakdown.

The method also involves fun exercises suited to the age and ability of the client. Exercises include breathing techniques such as blowing up balloons, blowing candles, and cotton wool ball races. To breathe correctly and centre ourselves, we need to exhale all the old air so that we can breathe in lots of fresh air.

Try This:

Lie on the floor and place your hands on your stomach
As you breathe in feel your stomach expand.
As you exhale feel your stomach contract and empty out all the old air.
Control of breathing enables us to control learning.

The raviv method that Nili created helps particularly with dyslexia (reading), dyscalculia (mathematics), dyspraxia (co-ordination), dysgraphia (handwriting), ADHD(attention), memory and organisational skills. It is suitable for 6 to 70 year olds.

My nephew has dyslexia and successfully followed the Raviv programme. With 2 young school age children of my own, I found that my son was having some difficulty with reading and writing. My sister had trained in Raviv and her enthusiasm and success with the

programme lead me to explore the method. I took redundancy from my job in Edinburgh last year, and went on to complete my training as a Raviv practitioner. My son has had great success with the raviv programme – he now has neat, joined up handwriting and passes weekly spelling tests with 10/10. His coordination and concentration have greatly improved his skills in sport and learning ability at school. He now wants to read bedtime stories to his younger sister!

People with learning difficulties can be faced with many obstacles and challenges throughout their life. "Dyslexia affects 10% of the population in the UK: 4% severely" (British Dyslexia Association). In fact, in education, children with difficulties may need to attend learning support all through their school career and still leave unable to read or write. 40% of 11 year olds leave primary school still struggling with reading, writing and arithmetic, (House of Commons Hansard Debate 23 Feb 2010).

Living with a learning difficulty can be a nightmare; it can be a constant battle to take yourself to school each day. Many children are victims of bullying and considered "lazy and stupid" by their peers as they are unable to read or write. Concentrating in class is hard – whilst teachers need to question students, it may cause a lot of pressure for a child who's brain works more slowly. Friends are nowhere to be seen, confidence is rock bottom and children believe "I can't do it anyway, so what's the point".

Negativity at school and at home cuts learning in half. Being positive and non critical is so important to a person with a learning difficulty. People with a learning difficulty need to be given additional aids and help to learn in a different way so they are able to learn and realise their full intellectual potential.

Let's encourage children to embrace their individuality and recognise their strengths.



Jane Wexelstein Oliver is a Raviv practitioner based in Edinburgh and Galashiels, Scotland. Jane has actively been involved in working with children of all abilities, in schools, brownies and coached her own relaxation classes.

For more information on the Raviv method contact Jane on 07512311317, e-mail jane.wexo@virgin.net or visit www.ravivmethod.com