

What is a Nonverbal Learning Disability?

Nonverbal learning disability or (NLD) is a disorder in which the person struggles to understand nonverbal communication and therefore struggles with performing the correct behavior in context (Thompson, 97).

- Navigation: The employee may have difficulty finding their way around. This may cause the employee to become lost or be late to work.
- Time Management: The employee may struggle with changes in routine and/or transitions.
- Generalization of Information: The employee may have deficits in generalizing previously learned information.
- Complex Directions: The employee may have difficulties with multistep directions.
- Comprehension and Interpretation: The employee makes very literal translations and interpretations.
- Self-direction: The employee may ask too many questions.
- Sensory Integration and Stimulation: The employee may experience heightened reactions to distractions (visual, tactile, auditory, and olfactory).
- Participation: The employee may become easily overwhelmed and may develop emotional reactions.
- Emotional Security: The employee may struggle with stress and anxiety.

What accommodations can be made in the workplace?

- Allow sufficient time; they often CAN do it if given enough time
- Encourage active learning
- Break tasks down into achievable steps
- Most teaching should be verbal
- Encourage use of positive and productive self-talk
- Expand time management and organization skills (ex. Check lists)
- Routine tasks are good
- Emphasize success
- Limit distractions
- Pre-teach, pre-cue, review often
- Employees with NLD often have good short term memory, so use instructional techniques which will capitalize on memory and then slowly work in interpretation or putting ideas into their own words
- Enhance interpersonal communication

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