



**ABOUT LET'S TALK LD  
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***Let's Talk LD addresses critically important social justice and equity of educational opportunity issues faced by those in the neurodiverse community. It is our mission to meet learners with special needs where they are, at critical periods in their development and learning, in an effort to implement innovative programs that can support these learners in living productive and fulfilling academic, social, and professional lives defined by self-sufficiency, self-determination, and purpose.***

The voices and perspectives of 'neurodivergent' individuals are often underrepresented in decision-making impacting instructional practices, classroom management, and assessment of learners. The personal histories, experiences and individual differences of each learner matters and should be taken into consideration as we apply instructional, assessment and classroom management approaches. As educators, how we treat a learner because of their neurodiversity can either assuage or aggravate the challenges these learners face.

A Social Justice framework for addressing neurodevelopmental challenges allows us to improve outcomes for learners who are neurodiverse. Advancing social justice and educational equity for all learners will allow educators to implement instructional, assessment, and classroom management practices that are responsive and relevant to redressing systemic inequities faced typically by learners with Specific Learning Disabilities, AD(H)D, and/or on the Autism Spectrum (who may or may not be Twice Exceptional).

## **OUR COMMUNITY**

Let's Talk LD places families at the center of all that we do. It is our hope that, through Let's Talk LD's work, caregivers and service providers in the neurodiverse ecosystem will feel empowered to lead and assume a significant role in improving the lives of children that are considered neurodiverse due to diagnoses that include mild to moderate learning, social-communication, and/or attentional differences. Learners outside of these diagnostic criteria will be referred to appropriate agencies or service providers. By sharing concerns, identifying problems, and deepening our knowledge and expertise about how best to address the needs of special needs learners, the hope is that an authentic Community of Practice will evolve that will be self-sustaining.

A Community of Practice is a systematic, but informal manner of managing knowledge. Etienne Wenger (2002) said it best when he stated, "Because communities of practice are voluntary, what makes them successful over time is their ability to generate enough excitement, relevance, and value to attract and engage members. Although many factors, such as management support or an urgent problem can inspire a community, nothing can substitute for this sense of aliveness. Communities of Practice are groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis."



## ABOUT LET'S TALK LD

Let's Talk LD families have rich and varied experiences. It is our hope to profile those journeys as a means of building community and building understanding. Let's Talk LD VLOGs (video logs), SLOGs (sound logs), BLOGs (web logs), and podcasts provide interesting insights into the lives of real families navigating the complex realities of children with neurodevelopmental challenges. LET'S TALK LD Webinars, On-Demand, and Live Streaming events provide additional opportunities for our members to learn from each other.

Let's Talk LD's work, like many grassroots organizations, began with a group of like-minded visionaries sitting around a dining room table, identifying a set of problems, and hatching a plan. Its stakeholders are committed to empowering and to improving the lives of youth that are neurodiverse and have a formal diagnosis of a specific learning, social-communication and/or attentional 'disability'. Let's Talk LD is a social impact 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. The Let's Talk LD organization is built on a collaborative model, both in terms of organizational structure and culturally. We work through strategic alliances and partnerships with educators, education specialists, service providers, and community and social change organizations in the Greater Los Angeles, the Southern California area, and throughout the State of California to create and to promote meaningful opportunities for enriching the academic, social, and extracurricular lives of youth with learning differences. We produce youth-oriented academic, social, and vocational enrichment events and programs, K-12 through post-secondary. We strengthen parent education by sharing concerns, identifying challenges, and deepening knowledge and expertise about how best to serve the holistic needs of special needs learners. We structure constructive and conciliatory strategic partnerships and alliances with educators, education specialists, service providers, community agencies and organizations, and other social impact organizations to create and to promote meaningful and impactful opportunities for enriching the academic, social, extracurricular, and post-secondary lives of youth and young adults who are neurodiverse.

While we value all our members, our **Advisors** play a particularly important role. Our Advisory Board serves as our compass, keeping us true to our mission and vision and always challenging us to remember that our value proposition is that Let's Talk LD was built for social impact. As such, we seek to:

- Catalyze change movements (disrupt);
- Level playing fields;
- Create inclusive economies;
- Make pathways where they are obstacles;
- AFFECT SYSTEMIC CHANGE FOR THE GREATER SOCIETAL GOOD.

Our mission is simple: Let's Talk LD exists to serve as a beacon for young people with learning, social-communication, and attentional differences, and the caregivers and advocates who support them. We do this by serving as a Community of Practice for strategically managing knowledge (through knowledge creation, curation, and sharing) about best practices for addressing the needs of youth who are neurodevelopmentally atypical. We recognize that our mission is best realized through the embodiment of



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core values that center around coalition building, acceptance, collaboration, transparency, and valuing differences.

Let's Talk LD envisions a world where youth with learning, social-communication, and attentional differences are empowered to release their gifts into the world, create opportunities for themselves, and realize their fullest human potential.

### K-12 EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

#### Speakers' Series

*"If you ignite passion within you...the external world has a miraculous and magnificent way of rearranging itself to suit the new person you are becoming." - Tina Su*

At LET'S TALK LD (LTLD), we recognize the value and importance of thought leadership. Thought Leaders are not only authorities in their field, but also, they move and inspire people to embrace innovation and change as a means of advancing their organizational mission and vision.

At LET'S TALK LD (LTLD), we are committed to empowering and to improving the lives of youth that are neurodevelopmentally atypical due to learning and/or attentional differences. LET'S TALK LD(LTLD) Speakers' Series will feature thought leaders who, simply put, have demonstrated experience and success placing innovation and fresh ideas at the center of the work that they do.

Denise Brosseau of Thought Leadership Lab states it best when she says, "They [thought leaders] create evolutionary and even revolutionary advancements in their fields not just by urging others to be open to new ways of thinking, but when they create a blueprint for people to follow - they provide a method, process, guidelines or a set of best practices."

LET'S TALK LD (LTLD), through its Speakers' Series, seeks speakers who are disrupters, those who are literally uprooting and changing how we think, behave, perform our work, learn, and go about our day-to-day, and in the end, produce something new, more efficient, and worthwhile.

LET'S TALK LD (LTLD) hosts Speakers' events, highlighting the work of thought leaders in areas, to include Child Find, Social Emotional Learning, parent effectiveness for caregivers of children with special needs, FAPE, educational placements, special education and IEPs, Individualized Transition Planning, educating twice-exceptional learners, and education reform in the context of IDEA and other legislation impacting youth with learning differences.

LET'S TALK LD (LTLD) workshops, seminars, symposia, and conferences are designed to ensure that our members have actionable and impactful opportunities to affect real change in empowering and improving the lives of youth that are neurodiverse and have been diagnosed with mild to moderate learning, social-communication and/or attentional differences.



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### **POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION/POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION TRANSITION PROGRAMMING**

College, Vocational and Resource (including Assistive Tech) Fairs

As an organization with roots in the progressive education movement, that appreciates the value of constructivism as an approach to meet the educational needs of youth with learning differences, LET'S TALK LD™(LTLTD) understands that our work must include creating opportunities to better prepare young people for post-secondary life.

LET'S TALK LD (LTLTD) offers several college, vocation, and resource fairs, to that end. For instance, our members have expressed interest in understanding how assistive technology tools can create opportunity and allow students with learning differences to minimize the impact of the neurodevelopmental challenge and leverage their strengths and affinities.

LET'S TALK LD (LTLTD) hosts an annual College Planning and Transition Conference for Neurodiverse Learners that includes college admissions, academic support services, financial services, residential life, and other relevant college life professionals. In addition, we also host our annual Partners in Career Success (PICS) Conference and Resource Fair for Neurodiverse Learners that includes career and employment development and career technical education professionals. Additionally, we intend to also host an assistive technologies fair that will feature companies who have created cutting edge digital tools and other assistive technologies that are designed to support neurodiverse individuals.

Finally, we are also developing summer program offerings that are focused on supporting leadership development and high school-to-work and high school-to- college transitions.

### **PUBLIC/COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND MEMBER ENGAGEMENT**

#### **Parent and Caregiver Community Groups**

LET'S TALK LD™ (LTLTD)'s Parent Advocate Support System (PASS) is a way to pay homage to our beginnings. Our PASS program allows us to build supportive communities, throughout the Greater Los Angeles area, that are more geographically specific. Greater Los Angeles is geographically dispersed and that presents some unique challenges to community-building. PASS create opportunities for LET'S TALK LD™ (LTLTD) members to meet informally and provide support to each other in addressing more pressing issues related to parenting and family dynamics that are unique to families with children with learning differences. Member families in the San Gabriel Valley (Pasadena, Glendale, La Canada), the San Fernando Valley (Burbank, North Hollywood, Sherman Oaks), the West San Fernando Valley (Encino, Tarzana), West Los Angeles, and Central Los Angeles (Downtown Los Angeles, Silverlake , Echo Park) will host monthly meetings focused on addressing psychosocial dynamics within families. We are, of course, open to supporting families in other areas in the Greater Los Angeles area and throughout Southern California.

#### **Institutional Community Groups**

Institutional Pods are comprised of communities of educators, paraeducators, resource specialists, therapeutic professionals, advocates, and other specialists, who we partner and work with to build

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constructive and conciliatory strategic partnerships. These individuals are drawn from educational, community and social change organizations in the Greater Los Angeles area.

We believe that what makes LET'S TALK LD (LTLD) different, is that it recognizes that by welcoming educators, education specialists, service providers, and community and social change organizations to the table, an opportunity is created for real and transformation change to occur in classrooms.

At LET'S TALK LD (LTLD), we sincerely believe that by exposing communities of professional educators and specialists to fresh, innovative, and research-based peer-reviewed ideas and approaches to addressing the needs of the special needs learner, our work is strengthened. We work to create unique training and development opportunities for professional educators and specialists, to develop a new paradigm for improving teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes for children with learning differences.

### **NON-PROFIT MANAGEMENT**

Let's Talk LD is a social impact 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, and it is uniquely positioned to provide services and supports in any ecosystem where neurodiverse learners are served.

While the Let's Talk LD organization is itself young, make no mistake, it is a reflection of its Founders collective experiences: as parents of children with unique learning needs; as organizers and advocates, for two decades, within the learning difference community; as entrepreneurs who for well over two decades have built successful practices by leveraging strategic partnering to maximize organizational outcomes; as educators who drive innovation, and recognize the importance of being able to both adapt and scale in the execution of our very important work, and; as human beings who place compassion, understanding and humanity at the center of all that we do. Let's Talk LD is led by its Executive Director, KD Harris. As an educator, media psychologist, and organizational development (OD) consultant by profession, her work embodies core values that center around coalition-building, acceptance, collaboration, transparency, and valuing differences. KD has guided the Let's Talk LD organization from Start-Up to the Growth and Development stage of its current business life cycle. She is a competent and seasoned social impact entrepreneur with demonstrated leadership and substantive understanding of both the operational side and the strategic side of business. Her complex work as an advocate, training and development professional, and coach is particularly well-suited to service in this role. In addition to her practical business experience, she is a seasoned educational researcher, curriculum designer, and instructor, and the parent and advocate for two twice-exceptional (2e) children. While having a robust understanding of the business climate has been critically important to Let's Talk LD's success, her ability to negotiate healthy and productive relationships have defined an approach that has allowed Let's Talk LD to scale rapidly as a business and enjoy a strategic advantage over its competitors. These factors have also enabled Let's Talk LD to exist as a very lean organization, that is both agile and scalable organizationally.

As a leader, transparency is critically important to KD. As such, she is committed to building understanding about the tenets that guide her approach to social impact non-profit leadership.

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**LET'S TALK LD VALUE PROPOSITION**

LET'S TALK LD
Decentralized business operations; local/ grassroots; flat hierarchical structure
Decision-making power and assignment of accountability and responsibility for results, accompanied by delegation of commensurate authority rests with our Board of Directors, with the advice and counsel of the Founders and Board of Advisors
100% of Membership Fees and donations collected will be committed to underwriting costs related to the development and implementation of programs developed for Let's Talk LD stakeholders
The organization is privately funded. Decision-making power and assignment of accountability and responsibility for results, accompanied by delegation of commensurate authority rests with the Board of Directors, with the advice and counsel of the Founders and Board of Advisors
<p>Let's Talk LD is built for social impact. As such, we seek to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catalyze change movements (disrupt);</li> <li>• Level playing fields;</li> <li>• Create inclusive economies;</li> <li>• Make pathways where they are obstacles</li> <li>• AFFECT SYSTEMIC CHANGE FOR THE GREATER SOCIETAL GOOD</li> </ul>

