

Success Stories of People with Intellectual Disabilities

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Background

- Despite the significant prevalence of people born with ID, they are still faced with inequalities and stigma.^[1]
- People with ID have made inspiring achievements and substantial contributions to society which are often overlooked. This creates an unsupportive environment, further exacerbating negative attitudes towards them.^[1]
- To expand on their learning from the student selected component “Changing Attitudes to people with learning disabilities”, two year 2 medical students from Barts carried out a narrative review to explore the success stories of people with intellectual disabilities (ID).

Aims

To explore and highlight the success stories of people with ID.

We discuss how their promotion can change the general public's perception of them and increase their inclusion in society.

Methods

We carried out a narrative review exploring published journals, news articles and online websites. The search was conducted using PubMed, Google Scholar and Google. Keywords included “learning disabilities” and “success stories”.

Results

ID affect many human beings across the globe. Below we provide examples of people with ID that have excelled in different industries. They all had to face many obstacles but their perseverance, self-advocacy and their determination have made them prominent figures in their society and examples of inspiration for others with ID.



Chris Nikic^[2]

He is the first person with Down syndrome (DS) to finish an Ironman triathlon.^[3]



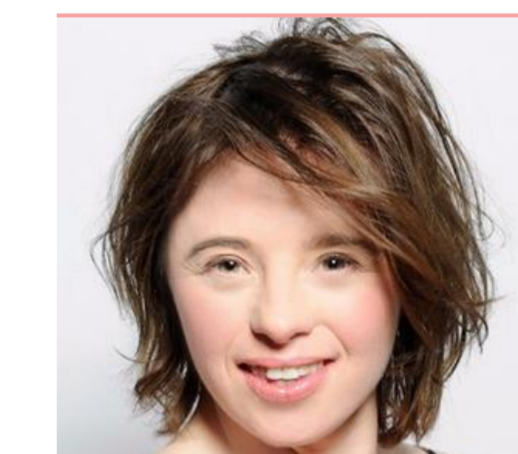
Judith Scott^[4]

She was an internationally renowned American abstract fiber sculptor, born with DS and deaf.^[5]



Collette Divitto^[6]

She founded Colletley's Cookies, a baking business creating jobs for people with ID.^[7]



Sarah Gordy^[8]

She is an actor, dancer and model and has received an MBE for her campaigns for people with ID.^[9]



Shaun Webster^[10]

Although he was a victim of domestic abuse, he is now an author and activist for people with ID. His efforts have been awarded with an MBE.^[11]



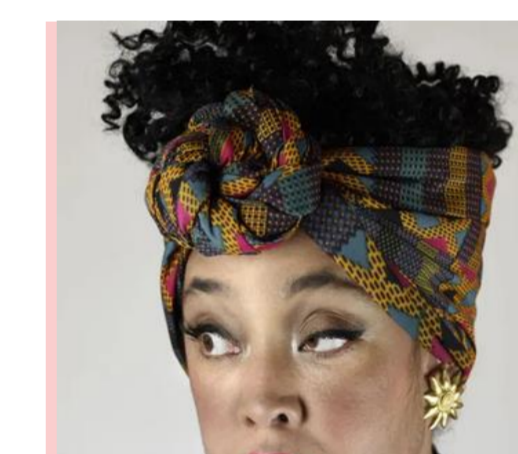
Madeline Stuart

She is a model and has walked for over 100 designers, appearing in fashion weeks from New York to Dubai.^[12]



Zack Gottsagen^[13]

He is an actor and in 2020 he became the first person with an ID to be a presenter at the Oscars.^[14]



Lizzie Emeh

A singer and songwriter who has left behind a musical legacy. She was also the first solo artist with an ID.^[15]

Conclusion

- There are many examples of people diagnosed with ID that have excelled in society, made significant contributions and paved inspiring pathways for others.
- These individuals did not see their disability as a limitation but instead took advantage of their skills and talents to reach their goals.
- Evidence has shown that increasing direct and indirect contact with people with ID via media can have positive effects on attitudes towards them.^[1]
- It is vital to share these examples more widely, sensitise and inspire the general population.

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