

5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on

# Mental Health and Human Resilience

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## I am just a kid with an IEP LLC

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I believe I have a strong and inspiring message for young students with learning disabilities. My story is geared towards 8th grade to high school students their parents and teachers or anyone that has ever struggled in school or in life. My life has been a roller-coaster with this "Learning Disability" and I let it control my confidence and outlook on life for the first 18 years. I let it define me - it became a permanent label stuck to my shirt every day. I will give you an idea of what I mean. You know when you are attending a conference and they give you a name tag to pin to your shirt? As far as I was concerned, I had a permanent name tag. But mine said "You're not as smart as everyone else. You can't do this". This happened to me because of my experience in school and it grew roots into everything I did.

I would feel helpless in class. I struggled to understand why I couldn't just pick up information like everyone else. I remember sitting in class telling myself I am going to try really hard to understand everything in class today just like everyone else and be a normal student, but I just couldn't grasp it! I was made fun of because sometimes I had to have special lessons. Other students, even so-called "friends" called me dumb.

I let this problem control me until I graduated in 2008. I was accepted into a life changing program called Step Ahead at Centenary University. I remember moving in filled with fear and anxiety. I went into the bathroom looked at myself in the mirror and promised myself I was going to change. I knew I couldn't let this label last forever. After that I started building a foundation of confidence and belief in myself brick by brick. It has brought me to where I am today. This journey has just started for me but now I believe it's time to help young students that can relate to my story. My objective is to create the foundations of the belief, the confidence, the work ethic and everything that you need to become the best you can be now and not let anything ever get in your way.

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