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dispelling myths and prejudices

- Epilepsy is not selective. It can affect anyone at any time.
- Epilepsy is not contagious. It never has been and it never will be.
- There is no correlation between epilepsy and levels of intelligence. Some people with epilepsy are extremely clever, others are of average ability and there are some who have learning difficulties.
- Epilepsy is not a mental illness. Seizures are merely symptoms of a physical problem within the brain.
- Epilepsy is not necessarily an inherited condition. It is true that it can be genetically inherited but more commonly there is no family history of epilepsy. In the majority of cases inheritance only plays a limited role.
- Epilepsy does not have to be a bar to success. There are many people with epilepsy who enjoy highly successful lives.
- Epilepsy is not always a lifelong condition. Many people who have been free of seizures for three or four years have their medication withdrawn, under close medical supervision, and remain seizure free for the rest of their lives. Surgery can sometimes be successful in eliminating certain types of epilepsy.
- Seizures do not necessarily cause brain damage. There is no evidence to suggest that short single seizures cause permanent brain damage. Certain types of seizure of long duration (over 30 minutes) can, however, injure the brain.