

Dyslexia Factsheet

What is dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty affecting how information is learned and processed. It is not related to intelligence or background.

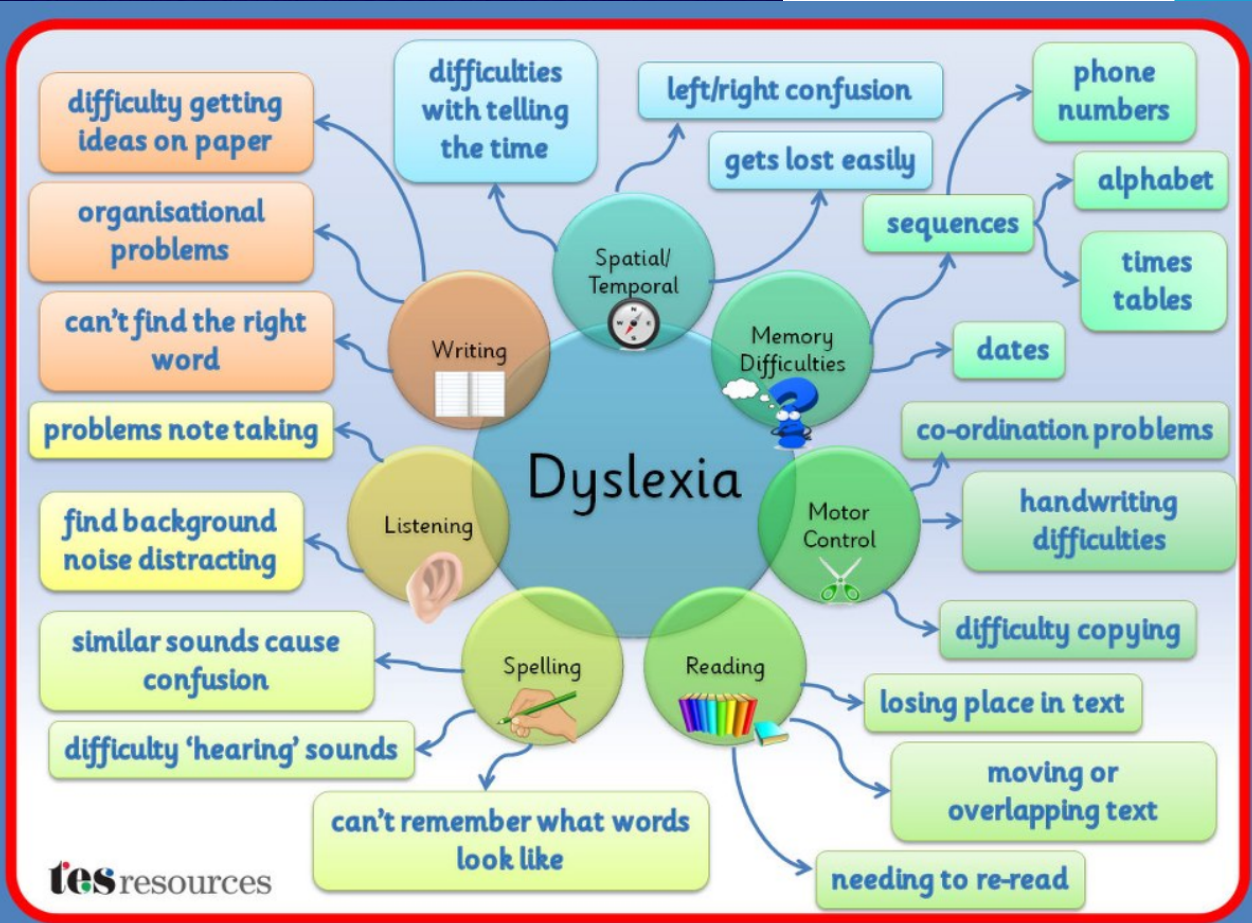
It affects around 10% of the population, and of those who have dyslexia, four out of ten people will be affected moderately/severely.

People with dyslexia are affected in different ways, with no two individuals identical. Possible effects:

- Ability to plan and to meet deadlines
- Memory
- Slower reading pace
- Difficulty reading aloud
- Transferring oral information to written
- Difficulty with written communication, e.g. spelling
- Perceptual, spatial and motor skills, e.g. telling right from left
- Self-confidence

View videos by a psychologist and individuals with dyslexia: [Here](#)

Dyslexia and some of its effects:



What some people with dyslexia say:

- "I have the right ideas but I can't put it down on paper"
- "I have loads of ideas racing round my head"
- "I can't take in what is being said to me"
- "When I read, the words jump from the page"
- "I was always told I was stupid at school"

Some people with dyslexia see this when they read:

Read Regular is created without copying or mirroring shapes. Therefore the frequency of repeated shapes in a text is decreased. This results in a minimum chance of visual distortions (swirl-effect). The aim is to create interesting typography that will maintain the readers' interest and will prevent them from getting bored or frustrated. Diversity in text knows many variations. We must understand the fact that typography for a novel is different from a magazine or a publication for education. Even so a novel has the potential to be clear and interesting. This can be achieved in any level of creativity, thinking on type size, leading, the amount of words on a sentence and the character/paper combination.

Some people with dyslexia see this:

Whilereadingdisorientationcancauseapersonwithdyslexia toperceivethewordsonapagestrungtogetherwithnospaces makingitimpossibleto decipherwordswithinasentence.Asdisorientationincreasestheworsedisorientationbecomes.

NB: These effects can increase with fatigue, and can cause headaches, eye ache and disorientation.

Positive Effects

According to the British Dyslexia Association, "It is important to remember that there are positives to thinking differently. Many dyslexic people show strengths in areas such as reasoning and in visual and creative fields."

Some positive effects:

- ☐ Highly creative
- ☐ Intuitive
- ☐ Can excel at hands-on practical tasks
- ☐ Three-dimensional problem-solving

Did you know that these people have dyslexia?



Making adjustments

Making adjustments which are tailored to each person's abilities and challenges is vital to ensure that every individual can reach their potential. Listening to the person with dyslexia, as well as getting an expert assessment will help identify which adjustments will help. In addition, a dyslexia coach may be useful to help identify strategies and learn skills.

Common adjustments:

- Making things multi sensory, eg. use pictures, symbols and colours
- Making use of memory aids, eg wall charts, "to do" lists, personal organisers, text reminders, email to confirm actions/timescales
- Allowing extra time if needed, e.g. 25% extra for tests
- Access to a quiet room to aid concentration
- Specialist software to make information and communication more accessible, e.g. TextHelp
- Extra time and/or training to learn skills and adjust to change
- Coloured paper or overlays: most common is green, but depends on individual

Some do not like information with grid lines or in table format

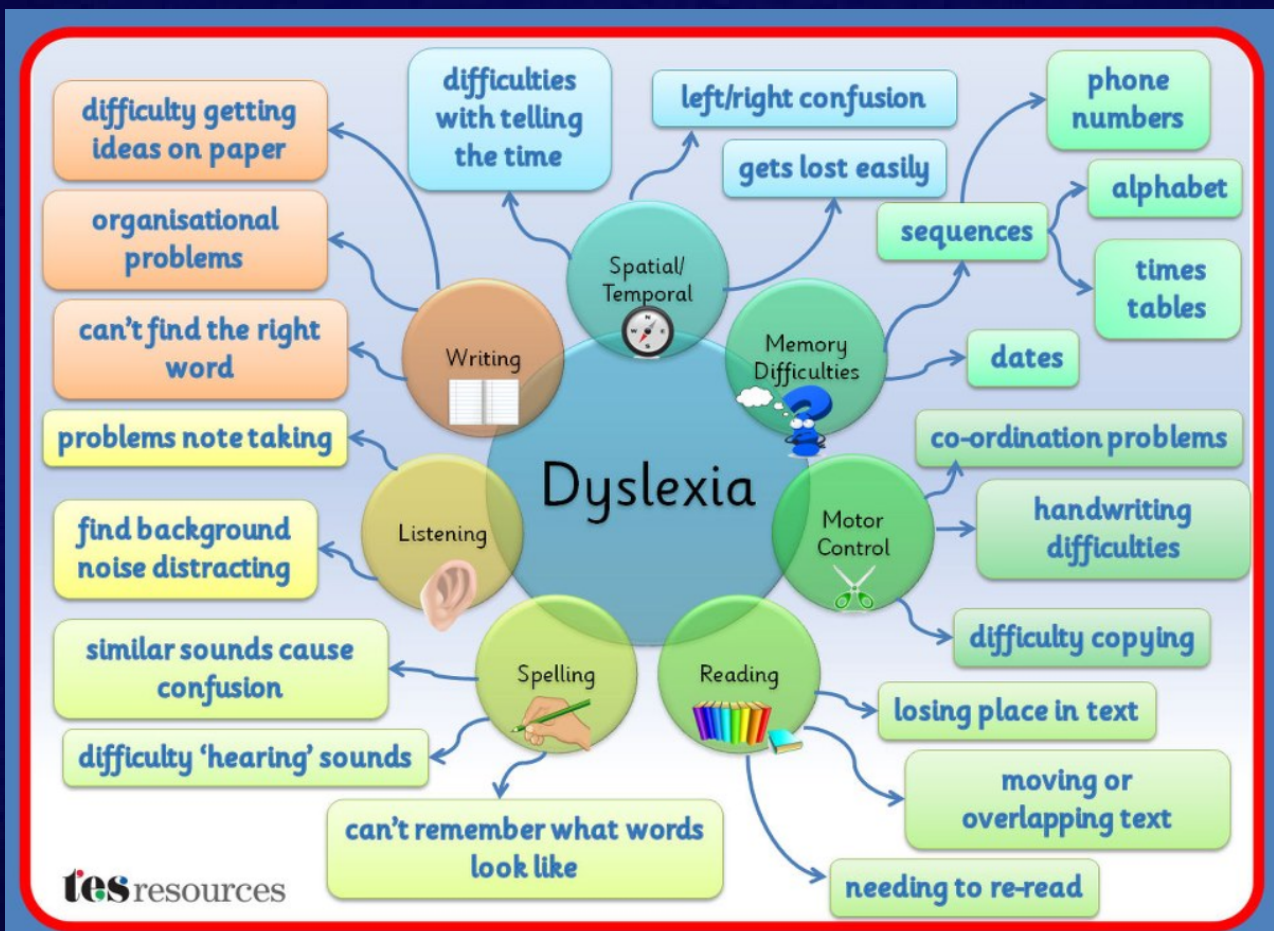
May prefer information verbally or via email so they can take time to absorb it or use software to enhance accessibility

Special font, e.g., "Open Dyslexic Font":

- Specifically developed for people with dyslexia
- Letters have heavy weighted bottoms to indicate direction
- Helps to quickly figure out which part of the letter is down
- Weighted bottoms can also help reinforce the line of text
- The unique shapes of each letter helps prevent confusion through flipping and swapping

This Is an example of the Open Dyslexic Typeface

Some people with dyslexia prefer producing information in a visual format, e.g.:



Real life stories:

Amy

Amy was a seven year old child who struggled with spellings. It was hard for her to call them out in front of her classmates. She had an assessment which confirmed she had dyslexia. Amy was happy to find out she wasn't 'stupid', which some people had called her, and to understand the cause of her difficulties. Her parents attended classes to find out how best to help her and her dyslexia tutor suggested Amy get weekly spellings on Friday to learn at the weekend, rather than on a daily basis, and that she should be tested by writing the spellings rather than calling them aloud. The class teacher was happy to implement these simple changes and reported Amy's increased confidence.

Jack

Jack found out he had dyslexia when he was 56. His new manager recognised some of the signs of dyslexia and suggested he should have an assessment. He was told at school that he was "a bit slow" and "not too bright". He left school when he was 16 and got a job in a warehouse, where he worked happily and successfully doing the same job in the same way for 40 years. He was not good at writing, so when he was doing stock control, he read out the information on the label and his manager recorded it. They had a successful working arrangement until his manager retired, however, his new manager, although supportive, did not believe it was feasible to continue with the previous arrangement as it was inefficient, therefore time consuming and costly given modern demands and technology. The new manager

began to make plans for the introduction of a computerised system and assured Jack he would be given the time and training needed to come up to speed with the new system. However, Jack was very anxious and doubted his abilities. He was offered support from his employer, including access to software designed to support people with dyslexia, training and equipment.

He initially could not overcome his lack of confidence in his own abilities and was so stressed he took sick leave. HR and his manager met with Jack to reassure him of their support and he was put in touch with a disability organisation which offered mentoring and CBT therapy. He had held on to a belief since his school days that he was “stupid” and his therapist worked with him on this issue to challenge its authenticity. At times he was tempted to take early retirement, but his work was important to him. He lived alone and so he particularly valued the social aspect of his workplace. It took several months, but eventually he took the fearful, tentative steps back into the workplace and began to retrain, learning about all the help and resources available and developing new skills through his dyslexia coach and specialist software.

Jack is fully integrated into his role again and is managing, with supportive supervision and mentoring by his manager.

McAllister v Derry City Council

Mr McAllister worked as a Fire Crew/Airport Hand at City of Derry Airport. He has dyslexia and finds spelling difficult. He applied for the post of Crew Commander and was invited to complete a spelling and comprehension test. Due to his dyslexia, a psychologist recommended that, where reading and writing were necessary, he should be allowed 25% extra time to complete assessments and offered access to a reader and a scribe for assessments. His employer allowed extra time but did not provide a reader or scribe. Mr McAllister failed the test and was not allowed to progress further. He lodged a case against his employer who admitted that the reasonable adjustments were insufficient. The case was settled and Mr McAllister was paid £17,000 compensation.

Huskisson v Abbey National

Mr Huskisson was a Trainee Financial Adviser with the Abbey National. He was successful at stage 1 of training at his employer's training centre and, therefore, progressed to stage 2 - putting it into practice in the workplace. His manager noted he had product knowledge but could not interact with clients to turn his knowledge into advice and appeared not to listen to clients.

Mr Huskisson's confidence was badly affected by this assessment. He had further training, supervised by a manager and during this time his interviewing skills improved. However, this manager left and was replaced by a new manager who accepted Mr Huskisson had improved but not enough. He instituted a "performance improvement plan" with more challenging targets, which disheartened Mr Huskisson, further denting his confidence. He was dismissed six weeks later as his new manager believed "further training was of no use". Mr Huskisson lodged a case against his employer, who argued his failure was "nothing to do with dyslexia". However, at no stage did the employer get advice or offer help to Mr Huskisson. A psychologist explained to the tribunal that dyslexia involves difficulty in reading and writing, can affect speed at which information is processed and memory, can create difficulty changing strategy during difficult tasks, may impair ability to plan and organise workloads and has an important effect on self-confidence and self-esteem so a person would be anxious and nervous in new situations.

The tribunal found a striking similarity with Mr Huskisson's difficulties. He was awarded £77,488 (loss of earnings) and £10,000 (injury to feelings).

Mr Arthur, who has dyslexia, applied for graduate trainee post. Psychometric tests determined who would be interviewed. He got 20% extra time to complete this test, which was taken in relaxed conditions. However, he was not invited for interview as he was ranked 230 out of 446. He lodged a case against the NI Housing Executive, citing that the organisation's disability code of practice states, "testing will only be applied to disabled candidates where appropriate". Therefore, he believed the test should have been waived. The tribunal found that the adjustments made by the NI Housing Executive put Mr Arthur on equal footing with other applicants and that the organisation was not required to treat him more favourably by waiving the test.

The Court of Appeal subsequently agreed as Mr Arthur was no longer at a substantial disadvantage as appropriate reasonable adjustments had been put in place.

Summary: How to be Supportive

- Become more dyslexia-aware
- Listen to the individual to find out their strengths, weaknesses and needs
- Be understanding, non-judgemental and sensitive
- Be patient and encouraging
- Look for solutions – identify, implement and review adjustments by liaising with the person with dyslexia, taking on board expert advice and seeking support from Disability Services/Organisations

Further Information

Contact Employers for Disability NI:
Banbridge Enterprise Centre
Scarva Road Industrial Estate
Banbridge
BT32 3QD

Tel 028 4062 4526 Mobile 07811267688 info@efdni.org