

# Disability awareness

## Dyscalculia

Dyscalculia affects a person's ability to understand, recall or use numerical information. Some people may feel anxious when having to undertake any mathematics related tasks and so may avoid situations where they have to do this, such as paying bills or avoiding specific jobs. Dyscalculia can also affect the way numerical information is processed which can mean people can also have difficulty with memory, speed of thinking, organisation and sequencing.

### Mathematics skills

- ⦿ Weak mental arithmetic skills
- ⦿ Struggling with 'simple' mathematics tasks
- ⦿ Tending to be slower to perform calculations
- ⦿ Confusing mathematical signs eg. +, -, or x and formula
- ⦿ Difficulty interpreting charts or measurements
- ⦿ Forgetting mathematical procedures
- ⦿ Avoiding difficult tasks that likely to result in a wrong answer
- ⦿ High levels of mathematics anxiety.

### Number skills

- ⦿ Difficulty with accurate recording of numbers
- ⦿ Confusion with dialing telephone numbers
- ⦿ Inability to understand financial information eg. budgeting
- ⦿ Tending to reverse numbers eg. 117 read as 171
- ⦿ Difficulty reading long numbers eg. telephone or bank numbers
- ⦿ May get confused or forget pin codes, security numbers
- ⦿ Struggling to count backwards.

### Other

- ⦿ May struggle to tell the time
- ⦿ Difficulty with time management and awareness of time passing
- ⦿ Inability to estimate distance
- ⦿ Difficulty with navigation and direction or left/right confusion
- ⦿ Finding it hard to read bus numbers or timetables
- ⦿ Struggling with using money and budgeting
- ⦿ Difficulty with completing sequences of tasks in order.

**People with dyscalculia are likely to have a range of strengths in other areas including:**

- ⦿ Good verbal communication skills
- ⦿ Innovative problem solving and trouble shooting
- ⦿ Creative, intuitive and lateral thinking
- ⦿ Stronger in the areas of art, music, design, architecture and engineering
- ⦿ Seeing the bigger picture – strategic thinking and ability to take a holistic approach.

Whether you have a friend, customer, colleague, employee with dyscalculia there are some simple things you can suggest that may make their life easier:

## Help with mathematical and data tasks

- ⦿ Supply scrap paper for rough working
- ⦿ Provide handheld or even speaking calculator
- ⦿ Give additional time to complete mathematics tasks
- ⦿ Provide the figures before a meeting or training session
- ⦿ Set aside some one-to-one time afterwards to review the material just presented
- ⦿ Present only essential data – remove all unnecessary words or figures
- ⦿ Provide a written copy of figures
- ⦿ Use where possible visual representations such as pie charts
- ⦿ For calculations suggest they write steps down and talk them through
- ⦿ Use technology such as excel spreadsheets.

## General use of numbers

- ⦿ Give help to remember codes and passwords
- ⦿ Consider alternative passwords and codes not requiring numbers
- ⦿ Set up speed dialing of telephone numbers
- ⦿ Use examples and templates of forms involving numbers.

## Other

- ⦿ Flexible working to avoid busy times to help concentration
- ⦿ Quiet area or screening around the desk
- ⦿ Headphones to reduce noise distractions
- ⦿ Support with navigation or someone to come on first visit
- ⦿ Help with planning and prioritising
- ⦿ Setting alarms and alerts to help with timings.

It is estimated that up to half of all people with dyscalculia have some other neurological difference such as Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, Dyspraxia, Autistic Spectrum Condition and/or Attention Difference. So it is worth reading the other factsheets and 'How to' guides to gather some additional tips and advice.

## Contact us:

If you would like further information on how we can help you, please get in touch with us:  
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