

Disability awareness

Dyspraxia

Dyspraxia or Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) is considered to be an impairment of the organisation of movement. Someone with dyspraxia may also have associated difficulties with language perception and thought. Dyspraxia is thought to affect up to five per cent of the population and occurs across all intellectual abilities.

Dyspraxia is considered to be a specific learning difference along with Dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Autistic Spectrum Condition. These conditions can overlap or co-occur, meaning individuals **may** have one of these other conditions alongside their dyspraxia.

Dyspraxia affects individuals differently so it is important not to assume someone with the condition is affected with all of the potential difficulties below. The individual is the expert in their condition so they should be your number one source of information about how it affects them. Over the page is a list of a range of strengths individuals with dyspraxia may have as well as some simple adjustments you can make.

Movement and coordination

- ⦿ Poor balance/hand-eye coordination or clumsiness
- ⦿ Lack of dexterity/grasp/ability to manipulate things.

Concentration and memory

- ⦿ Difficulty with attention and focus/easily distracted
- ⦿ Poor short-term memory/Forgetting or losing things.

Organisational skills

- ⦿ Difficulty with planning, prioritising and meeting deadlines/targets
- ⦿ Struggling with multi-tasking or returning to tasks after interruptions
- ⦿ Poor sense of time and direction.

Speech, language, reading and writing

- ⦿ Slow reading pace tendency to misunderstand information
- ⦿ Slow or illegible hand writing
- ⦿ Difficulty with pronunciation of words.

Vision, perception and thinking

- ⦿ Difficulty focusing on information, copying or proof reading
- ⦿ Issues with spatial awareness/Poor sense of speed, distance or weight
- ⦿ Trouble interpreting information from different senses.

Sensory sensitivity

- ⦿ Heightened sensitivity to light, temperature, sound and/or touch.

Communication and social skills

- ⦿ Difficulty making conversation or answering questions quickly
- ⦿ Struggling in groups/team activities
- ⦿ Misunderstanding humour and sarcasm.

Confidence and self-esteem

- ⦿ Struggling with/avoiding social situations
- ⦿ Doubting their abilities – especially in work
- ⦿ Difficulty coping with change and fear of trying new things.

Often when we learn about different disabilities and health conditions there is too much focus on the difficulties not abilities. Having dyspraxia can also give the individual valued skills and qualities such as those below:

- ⦿ Creativity, imagination and original thinking
- ⦿ Good holistic/strategic thinking
- ⦿ Problem-solving – alternative and innovative solutions
- ⦿ Visual thinker/explainer
- ⦿ Able to identify patterns, links and inter-relationships
- ⦿ Analytical and observant with an eye for detail
- ⦿ Thorough and methodical
- ⦿ Determination, resilience and motivation
- ⦿ Open-minded, considerate, patient with others and empathetic
- ⦿ Able to develop their own strategies to overcome difficulties.

Whether you have a friend, customer, colleague or employee with dyspraxia there are some simple things you can do to make their life easier:

Environment

- ⦿ Move/remove any potential trip or spill hazards – such as chairs, wires or drinks
- ⦿ Consider light, temperature and noise – natural light and quieter places are good
- ⦿ Open spaces might be difficult – try to find some private space or minimise distractions.

Learning

- ⦿ Use a variety of methods – eg. written and verbal instructions as well as demonstration
- ⦿ Learning in a group may be ideal but if necessary follow it up one-to-one
- ⦿ Notes, lists, diagrams and handouts might help.

Using technology

- ⦿ Is emailing and texting better than calling or speaking?
- ⦿ Could they use text-speak software on computer or phone? Can they type rather than write?

Organisation/Time management

- ⦿ Write down any important information or appointments – highlight the important bits
- ⦿ Encourage them to use diaries, alarms and checklists – you might need to do some reminding
- ⦿ Try not to interrupt them and suggest focusing on one thing at a time
- ⦿ Encourage to be tidy and organised with a clear place for everything
- ⦿ Routine, regularity and structure can help.

Teamwork, communication and social skills

- ⦿ They might prefer not to write or speak in front of others
- ⦿ Allow plenty of time for them to give answers to questions – avoid repeating the question
- ⦿ Support them to integrate into a new team or group - do they need a specific 'buddy'?

Remember the individual with dyspraxia is the expert – if in doubt, check with them!

Contact us:

If you would like further information on how we can help you, please get in touch with us:
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If you require this information in an alternative format, please email communications@remploy.co.uk quoting ref. R93- Nov17

