

What are the signs of dyslexia?

A quick method of determining whether or not a more detailed investigation of possible dyslexia is sensible, is to use an indicator checklist – such as the ones provided below.

- Look at the indicators for the age of the person you are thinking about.
- Also look at the indicators for a younger person. Do these still apply? Did some apply when the person was younger?
- If several indicators are present, further investigation may be advisable.
- A family history of dyslexia makes it more likely that the person you are considering also has dyslexia.

Preschool

A preschool child may:

- have a history of delays in speaking, making sentences or pronouncing words correctly.
- have a history of 'glue ear' or similar early childhood difficulties.
- find it hard to remember the names of familiar objects, e.g. spoon, cup.
- have difficulty learning nursery rhymes.
- have other members of the family with similar difficulties

Primary School

A primary school age child may:

- have particular difficulty learning to read, write and spell.
- have difficulty remembering sequences such as the alphabet and months of the year.
- have difficulty telling left from right.
- have difficulty copying accurately from board or textbook.
- have difficulty remembering and following oral instructions.
- have persistent and continued reversing of letters and figures, e.g. '15' for 51, 'b' for d.
- take longer than average over written work.

- experience lack of self-confidence and increasing frustration.
- in other ways be a bright and alert child.

Secondary School

A secondary school age child may have:

- a tendency to read inaccurately and without adequate comprehension.
- inconsistent spelling.
- difficulty with planning and writing essays.
- difficulty getting started and completing work.
- a tendency to get 'tied up' using long words, e.g. preliminary, philosophical.
- a tendency to confuse verbal instructions, places, times and dates.
- greater difficulty in learning a foreign language.
- low self-esteem.
- frustration which has led to behavioural or emotional difficulties.
- disorganised at home and school.

Adult

In addition to earlier characteristics, some of which may still persist, the following are indicators of dyslexia in an adult:

- difficulty with map reading.
- difficulty filling in forms and writing reports.
- tendency to miss and confuse appointment times.
- concerns about training or promotion.
- difficulty structuring work schedules.
- low opinion of capabilities.
- constantly loses and forgets items and information.

Dyslexia Checklist and Indicators

This leaflet is designed to be a 'loose' list of possible indicators of dyslexia. Even if you tick many of the boxes, this is not an assessment or confirmation of dyslexia, but it might be a useful starting point for people who wonder if they are dyslexic.

There are many strengths associated with dyslexia and they are just as common as some of the weaknesses. People with dyslexia will find some things difficult but often will have other skills to help overcome these difficulties.

Many people with dyslexia will tick lots of these boxes:

- I find it easy to explain a concept or idea but difficult to write it down.
- I read very slowly and might re-read several times before I am sure I understand.
- I lose my place or miss out lines when I am reading.
- I am creative.
- When I write, I confuse words that are similar.
- I often struggle to copy things down accurately.
- I am interested in people and can often see the potential in others.
- I make many spelling mistakes and have difficulty writing things like reports and letters.
- Some days I spell better than others.
- I have problems filling in forms.
- I have difficulty retaining immediate information and I have a reputation for being forgetful or lazy.
- I am good at thinking outside the box and seeing the whole picture.
- I get confused about dates and times.

- I find it difficult remembering telephone messages accurately.
- I find it difficult to organise myself.
- I am good at seeing solutions that other people don't see.
- I dread being given complicated instructions, asked to read out loud or take minutes.
- I find it easy to visualise ideas or concepts.
- I confuse left and right.
- I have difficulty giving directions and following directions.
- I am good at putting myself in someone else's shoes.
- Many of my difficulties get worse under stress.

People who do not have dyslexia might also experience some of these things.

Whilst some of the indicators above might seem negative, it is important to remember that people with dyslexia have many strengths. With the right support, children and adults with dyslexia are capable of reaching their full potential.

Further information

Dyslexia Scotland's website has information about assessment and identification of dyslexia for children and adults.

www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk

Dyslexia Scotland Helpline 0344 800 8484
or helpline@dyslexiascotland.org.uk



Dyslexia Scotland
Charity No: SC 000951
Registered No: SC 153321
Dyslexia Scotland © 01/18

Dyslexia and Self Esteem

Dyslexia is a 'learning difference', which means that the brain can approach things in a different way to other people. Dyslexia can affect the way people communicate and it is different for everyone.

About self esteem and anxiety

Everyone experiences low feelings, anxiety and stress at times. It is when this is ongoing and has an impact on someone's ability to do things that it can become a bigger problem.

Anyone who is experiencing low self esteem or high levels of anxiety should visit their GP in the first instance - the GP may be able to refer the person to counselling or prescribe medication if necessary.

Ideas to help self esteem in children and young people

- Talk to them to make sure that they understand properly what dyslexia is. Emphasise that it does not mean that they are stupid and that they will get help.
- Encourage them to focus on something they are good at (such as a sport or another hobby) as well as working on the things they find difficult.
- Use the things they are good at to help with the things they find difficult.
- Praise them for effort and don't always point out mistakes.
- Show them resources such as Dyslexia Scotland's Young People's Hub (www.unwrapped.dyslexiascotland.org.uk)
- Look at Dyslexia Scotland's leaflets (www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk/our-leaflets) for ideas about how you can help them with things like organisation, study skills, coping with change (such as moving from primary to secondary school) and what dyslexia is.

Ideas to help self esteem in adults

- Speak to other dyslexic people - Dyslexia Scotland Adult Networks are a good way to do this - go to www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk/our-adult-networks to find out more.
- Some people find things like meditation or mindfulness helpful.
- Record your successes and don't just focus on the negatives.

Some people whose dyslexia has not been recognised may have feelings that cause them emotional and physical distress. Feelings that people may recognise are:

Confusion - about their mixture of abilities. They don't fully understand dyslexia and why they experience difficulties. They believe that they are 'stupid'.

Anger - from frustration that they, and others, do not understand dyslexia.

Negativity - they feel their efforts make no difference and it is only luck if they succeed.

www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk



Dyslexia - a guide for students

Students should start making arrangements for support and reasonable adjustments as soon as possible and before the course has started.

The university or college should have:

- Information about the Student Disability Advisory Service
- Information about the College/University policies for Reasonable Adjustments and Additional Arrangements for assessments and examinations.

Arriving at University/College

Within the first two weeks students should see:

- The Head of Year
- Their mentor/supervisor/Senior Lecturer
- The Disability Advisor, who might be known by a different title.

Students should discuss with these people what has helped in the past and ask them to help arrange support and additional assessment arrangements.

Reasonable adjustments

'Reasonable Adjustments' is the legal term for changes that can be made which will help students to fulfil their potential without extra stress. It could include:

- Study skills support
- Assistive technology
- One to one training in assistive technology
- Copies of lecture notes/slides in advance, if available
- Note takers
- Permission to record lectures
- Extended library loans.

Any provision put in place is based on individual need, so students who register with the Student Disability Service will be given an individual needs assessment interview. This will determine what the personal support requirements are.

It is advisable to make an appointment with the advisor as early as possible. Students should take any valid supporting evidence to their initial appointment – usually a full Educational Psychologist or appropriately qualified professional report using approved and standardised adult tests.

Examination support might include:

- Extra time to complete exams
- The use of a scribe and/or a reader
- The use of a computer instead of handwritten exam scripts.

A week after the meeting with the Disability Advisor, students should check that all the agreed arrangements have been put in place. Another meeting should be arranged to discuss this and whether there have been any difficulties.

Disabled Students' Allowance

Students might also be able to apply for the Disabled Students' Allowance, through Student Award Agency Scotland (SAAS). This is a grant, not a loan, to purchase extra equipment and/or software. Disability Advisors will be able to help with this. An up-to-date Educational Psychologist's assessment, or one by an appropriately qualified professional, will be needed – this can be arranged by the Disability Advisor if the student does not have one.

Dyslexia Screening and Assessments

You might not have a report which meets the criteria, because:

- you have not received a full written report in the past
- you have never been assessed for dyslexia
- English is not your first language but you are experiencing more difficulties than you anticipated.

If you suspect that your difficulties might be dyslexia related, you should make an appointment to speak to the Disability Advisor who might be able to carry out a diagnostic screening test free of charge and then refer you to a Educational Psychologist or appropriately qualified professional who is experienced in assessing adults in Higher Education.

More information

- 'Dyslexia - a Guide for Lecturing Staff', Dyslexia Scotland (www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk/our-leaflets)
- 'Study Skills for Students with Dyslexia' (Sheffield University audio advice) www.dyslexstudyskills.group.shef.ac.uk/
- 'Understanding Dyslexia' a Glasgow School of Art publication, useful for any course: www.gsa.ac.uk/media/782517/understanding-dyslexia-for-print-and-web.pdf
- Students Award Agency for Scotland (SAAS) Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) www.saas.gov.uk/forms_and_guides/dsa.htm
- Dyslexia Scotland Helpline 0344 800 8484 or helpline@dyslexiascotland.org.uk



Dyslexia Scotland
Charity No: SC 000951
Registered No: SC 153321
Dyslexia Scotland © 01/18

