

What is Dyslexia?

Saturday 12th March

2016

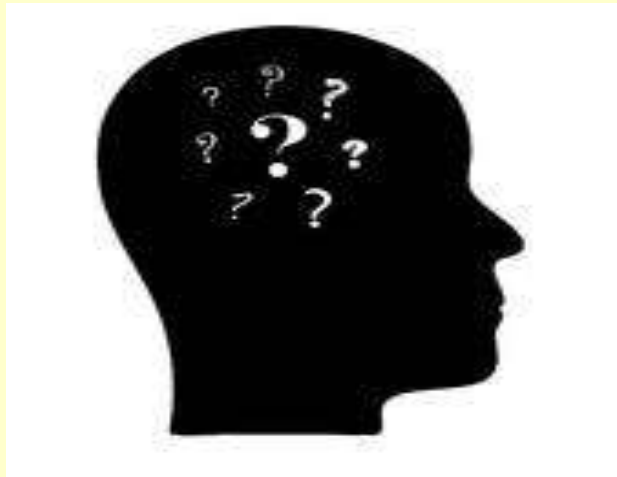


Introduction and Housekeeping

- Amy Smyth – Information Officer
- Short talk – approximately 45 minutes
- Everything on the slides will be read out and hand-outs will be available
- Opportunity to ask questions after

Dyslexia is....

- A Specific Learning Difficulty (SLD)
- Common – roughly 1 in 10 people in Ireland are believed to have some form of it
- Life-long
- Likely to run in families
- Recognised as a disability under equality legislation



Dyslexia is not...

- Related to intelligence
- A barrier to success
- Something to be ashamed of
- A disease or deficiency
- Only about 'reversing letters' e.g. reading b instead of d
- The same for everyone – each person will be effected differently



Understanding Dyslexia

The main effect of dyslexia is to make learning to read, write and spell difficult.....

....but not impossible!



Understanding Dyslexia

- Dyslexia is best understood as a problem with phonics – so, understanding the sounds that go into making up words



Understanding Dyslexia

Dyslexia can affect all areas of literacy, including:

- Reading speed
- Reading comprehension – taking meaning from what you are reading
- Written expression – “I know what I want to say but can’t get it down on paper!”
- Spelling



Understanding Dyslexia

People with dyslexia often have difficulties in other areas including:

- Organisation – for example, remembering appointments
- Sequencing and ordering
- Planning



What causes dyslexia?

Nobody knows for sure, but most experts now agree that dyslexia describes differences in the way in which the brain processes information....



...so it is a difference, NOT an abnormality, disease or deficit!

Indicators of dyslexia in adults

Remember...

- No one will have all the indicators.
- Many individuals will have several of the indicators.
- Some indicators are more common than others.
- The number of indicators observed in an individual does not indicate whether the dyslexia is mild, moderate or severe.

Indicators of dyslexia in adults

Consider the following list of indicators of Dyslexia in Adults:

- Do they dislike reading aloud?
- Is reading new material difficult?
- Does it take them a long time to read a book?
- Do they sometimes pronounce words incorrectly?
- Do they have problems with spelling?
- Did they have difficulty at school and did they do less well in written exams, than they feel they should have?

Indicators of dyslexia in adults

...continued:

- Do they find it much harder to put their thoughts in writing than in words?
- Do they find it hard to write letters, reports, or even to take phone messages clearly?
- Do they have problems with sentence construction and punctuation?
- Do they get phone numbers wrong?
- Do they confuse 'left' and 'right'?

Indicators of dyslexia in adults

- Is their handwriting hard to read?
- Do they find it hard to see the mistakes that you have made in written work?
- Do they find it hard to remember things in sequence?
- Do they find it hard to remember new facts, names etc.?
- Do they get confused with times and dates and sometimes miss appointments?

Indicators of dyslexia in adults

- Do they find it hard to learn by 'ordinary' teaching methods?
- Do they forget quickly rather than learn slowly?
- Does someone else in their family have similar learning problems?
- <http://www.dyslexia.ie/information/adults-and-the-workplace/adult-dyslexia-checklist/>

So what next?



If someone wants to find out for sure if they have dyslexia, they will need to have an educational psychology assessment.

Should someone get an assessment?

Getting an assessment may not be the right decision for everyone.

Some reasons people decide to have an assessment:

- To access supports in college/further education
- To try and get additional supports in work
- Peace of mind



What an assessment can do

- Confirm if student has dyslexia or not
- Identify particular learning strengths and weaknesses
- Possibly provide them with the evidence they need to request additional supports in college and/or work
- Provide recommendations about support strategies to help them manage their dyslexia and things they can do to improve their literacy skills

What an assessment can't do

- Give specific recommendations for a particular job role – it is an educational, not an occupational, assessment
- Tell you how to 'fix' or 'cure' dyslexia



What does an assessment involve?

- An Educational Psychology Assessment consists of a series of activities to determine levels of literacy, numeracy and other relevant cognitive skills
- Relevant background information will also be taken by the psychologist
- The assessment takes about 2-3 hours in total



How to get an assessment

- No state provision for adults in Ireland

There are 3 options:



- At Dyslexia Association of Ireland
- With a private psychologist
- Through the Disability Support Service if you are in college – but this is pretty unlikely

How to get an assessment

At Dyslexia Association of Ireland:

- The usual fee is €490
- Reduced rates available for people on social welfare and low incomes
- Waiting time is about 3 months if you can pay the full fee and 5-6 months if you require the reduced rate

BUT:

- We try never to turn anyone away! We can offer other options like paying in instalments



How to get an assessment

With a private psychologist:

- A list of names and numbers are available from the Psychological Society of Ireland – 01 472 0105 - <http://www.psychologicalsociety.ie/find-a-psychologist/>
- Make sure the psychologist will assess adults
- Fees vary from €500-€800 on average
- You may be seen quicker than with DAI

How to get an assessment

Options for financing:

- Sometimes colleges may contribute to the cost of an assessment
- St Vincent DePaul



After the assessment

So if it turns out that someone has Dyslexia, what happens next?

This is up to the individual – they may decide to take no further action. For some people, just knowing is all that matters.

After the assessment

If they do decide that they would like to work on literacy and other related skills:

- One-to-one tuition from a trained tutor – lists available through DAI. Costs €30-35 per hour on average
- Career Paths course in Leixlip – run by DAI and SOLAS
- Additional supports available through colleges/Further Education centres
- DAI can also advise on technology that can help and run tablet technology workshops



DAI Information Team are available to provide information and advice on dyslexia related issues:

- Phone: 01 877 6001 – 9 am -1 pm and 2 pm- 5 pm
Monday to Friday
- Email: info@dyslexia.ie
- Drop-in service: Wednesday afternoons between 2 pm – 4 pm

The Information Team can also help you if you want to put your name on our assessment waiting list.



Sources of Further Information

- “**Dive In**” guide from Dyslexia Action – available to download free from:
www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/files/dyslexiaaction/dyslexia_friendly_book_guide_webcopy.pdf
- Barrington Stokes are a UK-based publisher who publish books specifically for those with reading difficulties. They use features like a cream background, clear fonts and good spacing. They will deliver to Ireland and a lot of their publications would be available in Irish bookshops as well:
www.barringtonstoke.co.uk
- And don't forget your local library!

SOS Spelling



SOS Spelling is a simple and well-evidenced technique that tutors can try at home to help students with spelling.

Follow the routine described for each word:

1. Write the target word out or form it with plastic letters.
2. Tell student how to say the word and what it means if they don't know.
3. Ask them to copy the target word and to say the name of each letter as it is being written.
4. Ask them to look at what they have written and to say the whole word.

SOS Spelling

Continued...

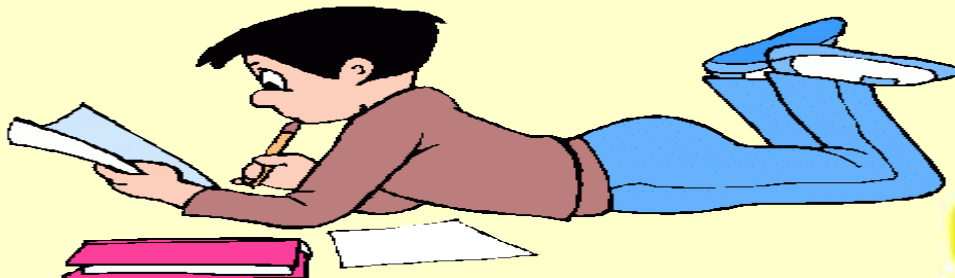


5. Ask student to check that what they have written is the same as the target word. This checking is done letter by letter from the target to the copy
6. The student should then try to write and say the target word from memory. If he or she makes any mistakes, identify the mistake and then continue once the mistake has been rectified
7. Repeat Step 6 until the word has been written correctly three times

Exam Preparation and Study Skills

There are many different study skills and revision techniques. Different things work for different people. Some to try include:

- SQ3R Method (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review). More on next slide
- Using Mnemonics – e.g. Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain (colours of rainbow)
- Mind-mapping – free software and apps available for this also
- Visualisation – making a mental image of text



Exam Preparation and Study Skills

SQ3R Method:

- **Survey** the text by looking at title, headings, pictures, opening and closing paragraph
- **Question** what you expect to know after reading the selected text
- **Read** actively looking for answers to your questions
- **Recite**. See if you can answer the questions raised. Make it multisensory – say it out loud, write it down, ask someone to read it to you
- **Review**. In the following days and weeks check you can still answer the questions

Exam Preparation and Study Skills

- Have a well-planned revision timetable
- First thing in the morning is better than last thing at night!
- Allow regular breaks
- Set targets and goals – motivation grows in success
- What are the markers looking for? Marking schemes are available for viewing at www.examinations.ie under Examination Material Archive

Sources of Further Information

- “**Dive In**” guide from Dyslexia Action – available to download free from: www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/files/dyslexiaaction/dyslexia_friendly_book_guide_webcopy.pdf
- Barrington Stokes are a UK-based publisher who publish books specifically for those with reading difficulties. They use features like a cream background, clear fonts and good spacing. They will deliver to Ireland and a lot of their publications would be available in Irish bookshops as well: www.barringtonstoke.co.uk
- And don't forget your local library! They can be a particularly good source of information and some libraries have a great selection of audio books available to use.

Assistive Technology and Dyslexia

- Huge range of devices, software and apps now available and more being developed all the time
- Very hard to make specific recommendations – much down to individual preference
- No such thing as an assistive technology ‘expert’
- Aim of this session is to give you an overview of what products are available and what they can be used for
- We don’t recommend or endorse specific products
- Anything I talk about, there will be a YouTube demo video!

Organisation, Exam Preparation and Study Skills

Tablets and Smartphones

In-built calendars and reminders on tablets and smartphones can be used to plan studying and homework.



Apps

- Popplet is a brilliant mind-mapping app for iPad;

Mindomo is an Android alternative

- Notability is an audio note-taking app which allows you to write or type notes and record a lecture/lesson. Your written notes then link with the audio recording



OCR (Optical Character Recognition)

This allows you to take a photo of a page of text and it transforms it into an editable format.

General tips for using OCR:

- Very good lighting is essential
- Camera must be held steady and paper must be completely flat
- Try and avoid capturing diagrams, pictures etc
- Most apps allow you to 'crop' the photo so you only have text
- Doesn't work well on matt paper (novels) – need glossy paper for best results



Apps

- AppWriter, Text Grabber and Picture Speech (Apple) and Text Fairy, OCR Instantly Free, Mobile OCR and Smart OCR: Text Miner (Android)



Spelling, Grammar and Vocabulary

Specialist software

Some examples of features of commercial packages that you wouldn't get in Microsoft Word spellchecker:

- More sensitivity to phonetic, 'dyslexic' misspellings – e.g. 'Preshis poseshin' for 'precious possession' – correct spellings not suggested by MS Word but are suggested by Ghotit
- Picking up of grammatical errors, e.g. "Six people lost their life in the accident" – not picked up by MS Word but corrected by Ginger (lives)
- Picking up punctuation errors e.g. "The pen is on the table she is next to the phone" – not picked up by MS Word, changed by Ghotit – "The pen is on the table. She is next to the phone".

This blog entry compares and contrasts various spelling softwares:

www.briteblog.wordpress.com/2014/02/04/spellchecking-software-some-initial-findings/

Spelling, Grammar and Vocabulary

Specialist software

- Ginger is a widely used one – free trial available and then a monthly subscription – www.gingersoftware.com
- Grammarly – Very well liked and easy to use software, free basic software available – www.grammarly.com
- Ghotit has been found to score highly on comparisons between different softwares - www.ghotit.com - \$199
- Read and Write Gold and Claro also have spelling and grammar in their packages

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Typing skills

- Various commercial options available including Nessy Fingers, Type to Learn, EnglishType Junior and Senior, and Mavis Beacon
- Touch-Type Read and Spell (TTRS) is a typing tuition programme aimed at dyslexic learners – packages available for home and school and courses with trained tutors available also – www.readandspell.com – you can find a tutor in Ireland by selecting Tutoring → Find a Tutor and then select the Ireland flag at the bottom of the page
- www.typingweb.com has free online typing lessons



And Finally....

You will find links to some very comprehensive demo videos below:

<http://www.ucc.ie/en/dss/callouts/resources/videos/>

www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLeyOuYfC9DN1SJM68Oy00i6kryag-V--z

Any Questions?

