

DYSPRAXIA

Guidelines for Employees



Helpline Service: 01462 454 986, 9-1pm Mon-Fri

Email: Via the 'Helpline' tab on the website

Admin No: 01462 455016

Enquiries: info@dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk

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Dyspraxia, a form of developmental coordination disorder (DCD) affects around 3% of the adult population. It is a medically and educationally recognized brain-based condition that affects the coordination of movement.

It occurs across the range of intellectual abilities and can affect any muscle group in the body and so has wide-ranging presentation and effect on the individual. While DCD is often regarded as an umbrella term to cover motor coordination difficulties, dyspraxia refers to those people who have additional problems planning, organising and carrying out movements in the right order in everyday situations. Dyspraxia can also affect articulation and speech, perception and thought.

Every individual with dyspraxia is affected differently and will not experience all of the difficulties listed below. The most important source of information about what will help will be the individual themselves.

It is most likely that as an individual with dyspraxia, you will be covered by the disability provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

Further information for employers is available from the Dyspraxia Foundation.

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DYSPRAXIA AT WORK STRATEGIES - MOTOR CONTROL

CONCERN	REASON	STRATEGIES & ACCOMMODATIONS
Illegibility of text to others and self. Writing speed is slow.	Have not developed consistent automatic movements needed to control pen and paper. Difficulty in consistently forming letters at speed.	Provide non slip mat and / or writing slope Try different pen grips and pen styles Consider alternatives to writing – word processors, iPad/tablets with keyboard. Then print labels to insert into record books Telephone headset to free hands for keyboard Dictation (Speech to Text) software Digital recorder for notetaking, meeting minutes Consideration needed for adjustments at assessment centres/exams
Writing deteriorates in a short time period	Low postural tone Poor shoulder stability, Excessive grip strength or pen pressure Uses whole arm movements	Ensure a DSE assessment is completed Self-monitor sitting position in line with good practice Take breaks and exercise Consider alternatives to writing e.g. dictation or speech to text software, tablet, iPad etc
Cannot control a computer mouse and "click" well	Poor isolation of fingers to click buttons Delayed responses so holds button down for too long or double click too slow. Poor control of extent of movements	Try a range of alternatives including smaller and larger models, left hand models, roller balls, penguin etc. Adjust the repeat button speed Explore alternatives. Visit www.abilitynet.co.uk and www.emptech.info for ideas. Explore ergonomic adaptations (e.g. wrist supports)
Using hole-punch,	Difficulty with activities requiring	Look for use special equipment

stapler etc.

Difficulty in operating complex or infrequently used equipment

use of both hands together Cannot remember how to use equipment

that is helpful e.g.electric hole punch, stapler

Keep clear written instructions about how to use equipment at point of use



DYSPRAXIA AT WORK STRATEGIES - MOTOR CONTROL

CONCERN

REASON

STRATEGIES & ACCOMMODATIONS

Difficulty using job specific tools e.g. spatula, stethoscope, chisel etc.. Difficulty stabilising materials with one hand whilst using equipment with the other Lack of fine motor control Poor co-ordination
Difficulty using fingers individually

Secure or stabilise self and materials where possible

Ensure good lighting

Minimise external distraction

Practice and repeat tasks in trial mode. Request use of equipment for practice outside of usual hours if appropriate.

Consider work allocation, swap with colleague

Difficulty copying text from screen or other documents Difficulty coordinating eye tracking and head movements

Perceptual difficulties – "sees" position differently if looking at them from the side

Difficulty locating work to be copied

Ensure material is facing you, use document holder

Consider twin screens

Check for Visual stress, tint screen and paper

Consider audio read (text to speech)

Consider colour filling spreadsheets to give more differentiation of column and row

Consider automating – scan and Optical Character Recognition (OCR), program scripts





DYSPRAXIA AT WORK STRATEGIES - MEMORY, FOCUS AND CONCENTRATION

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CONCERN	REASON	STRATEGIES & ACCOMMODATIONS
Distracted at work	Auditory and visual sensitivity leads to minor events breaking into short term working memory Fatigue breaks concentration	Position desk away from busy thoroughfares Screen or avoid sightline distraction Listen to music quietly in work if this helps concentration (have a playlist ready to use) Use fidget devices Construct part-filled templates or forms to reduce unnecessary writing Maintain list of key concepts or subject vocabulary and acronyms
Poor memory for pins/passwords	Short term memory issues	Consider your learning style, move to strength e.g. remember pattern (shape) rather than number string Use acronyms for passwords: my mum's name is Alice, her house is 67 - mmniAhhi67 Use password manager software Use memory techniques i.e., peg lists
Becoming overwhelmed	Not completing work on time Falling behind workload Becoming anxious	Look for extra 1 to 1 meetings and help to prioritise work Request clear statement of main tasks and dates as an email Look to supervisor to monitor load and capacity then to schedule work in to suit
Loses focus	Distracted by environmental factors Overwhelmed by variety/volume of work Gets stuck on difficult task Tendency to be stressed when overloaded	Reduce relevant environmental distraction, noise, visual disturbance and lighting Ensure seating and workplace are suitable (Display Screen Equipment) Schedule work in daily, keeping "to do" list short



DYSPRAXIA AT WORK STRATEGIES - PERSONAL ORGANISATION

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CONCERN	REASON	STRATEGIES & ACCOMMODATIONS		
Poor organisation of ideas	Extra concentration required for the physical writing process means individuals lose thread of arguments Difficulty in sequencing	Blank pages can be threatening, use templates with headings to help structure activity Use mind-maps, spider diagrams, lists Consider separation of planning, creation of ideas then re-order to give framework for writing		
Poor organization of work/diagrams	Poor visual motor integration Poor spatial relationships	Obtain/make templates and exemplar documents Use mind map software Prepare a template for reports/letters They usually follow a format which can be used time and time again		
Work is not completed on time	Work requirements not written down correctly Forget to deliver or the desired deadline Do not start in sufficient time Do not know what delivery method is expected	Obtain clear time frames at the start of the task allocation, agree the priority of the task Request an email of work requirements to add into your planner/diary Set up a timetable to show when milestones should be achieved Consider progress checks/ milestones, e.g. submission of outline, first draft - each with due date		

Work completed at home is of a higher standard than in the office

Less stress Individual is less distracted at home so finds it easier to focus Environment suits individual Individual works for longer than contracted

Find out what causes distraction at work and look to reduce to match home environment. Visual, auditory and/or temperature change could be

Review milestones with supervisor as part of a regular routine Use technological apps/calendars

etc. as reminders

Consider increasing proportion of home working

Check how long you are spending on work

Consider suitable time limits

CONCERN	REASON	STRATEGIES & ACCOMMODATIONS
Telephone and verbal messages for others do not get delivered	Misses key content of message Individual loses pieces of paper Forgets to hand message to recipient	Make message template including key data fields. Consider electronic form to forward as email Deliver notes to colleagues desk at end of each call. Consider tasks checklist at end of shift to include checking message delivery
Individual struggles with diary management, is late for meetings and misses' special appointments	Does not retain verbal messages Uses multiple notes and lists Has a weak "internal clock" so is unaware of time passing Is easily distracted	Use electronic diary, integrated with phone. Set alarms Work with a day book Set up regular planning sessions Consider daily review of timetable morning and/or evening A range of freeware can be found here http://bdatech.org/what-technology/freewareproducts/#plan
Mislays work or equipment	Rushes to leave at the end of meetings & leaves stuff behind Poor filing skills	Try and build meeting "set" of material Allow time for movement between tasks Use one day book, perhaps with sections for each project. Consider colour coding (folders, labels, day book sections) to help keep items together
Work space is disorganised	Is disorganised Loses equipment Forgets equipment	Make an equipment checklist to list what is needed for the task, ensure tasks are clear on diary/task list Use sets of equipment stored in container/bag with contents list Arrange time to pack the equipment away into the set where possible Keep a spare set of equipment at base Mark your equipment or ensure it is distinctive Consider preparing items required the evening/shift before
Paperwork is confused, cannot find relevant documents	Difficulty managing more than one task at a time. Poor organization skills.	Consider colour coding different folders and ringbinders for each project/activity Use colour coded notebooks Match physical and electronic organization structure



DYSPRAXIA AT WORK STRATEGIES - PERSONAL AND RELATIONSHIPS

CONCERN

REASON

Concerns about personal hygiene

Individual has difficulty using a shower or bath at home
Stress increases perspiration
Individual may be reluctant to use communal facilities because of embarrassment
Individual may have difficulty with detailed practicalities of personal care

Does not seem to make good relationships at work Difficulty picking up non-verbal cues so appears tactless to peers

Communication difficulties
Difficulties understanding
humour and sarcasm
Clumsiness and

Have unusual interests & sometimes use inappropriate language

embarrassment



Consider a referral to help to develop independent skills (HR or welfare/ Occupational Health may help)

Referral to social services may be possible Consider use of accessible toilets for more space and privacy

Consider disclosure of condition, celebrate individuality

Look to raise awareness among colleagues about dyspraxia/DCD & other Neurodivergent profiles

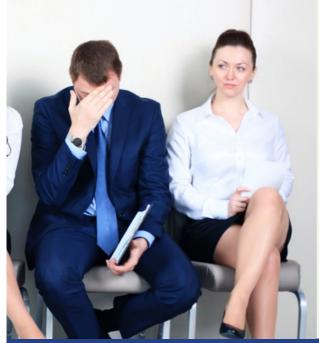
Pair up with a supportive peer/buddy or mentor

Share examples of good communication, be specific about instances of difficulty

Look to participate in work activities that match your interests, such as club/activity groups

Request choice to participate in social events or not

Discuss appropriate involvement in team building activities with supervisor



CONCERN

Difficulty adapting to new

situations

REASON

Stress increases emotional responses, such as fears,

Emotional outbursts. obsessions

Individual is slow to pick up social cues or unwritten rules of a workplace or team.

STRATEGIES & ACCOMMODATIONS

Take time to settle, don't take on too much variety too soon

Understand rules and expectations, confirm by repeating back in unambiguous language

Ask about unwritten rules and conventions e.g. visitors cups on second shelf

Make written notes of routines etc.

Consider asking for a specific buddy or mentor to help during change or when additional support is required

Immature behaviour

Difficulty picking up non-verbal cues so appears tactless to peers

Dislikes being touched

Communication difficulties

Difficulties understanding humour and sarcasm

Have unusual interests & sometimes use immature language

Social skills training

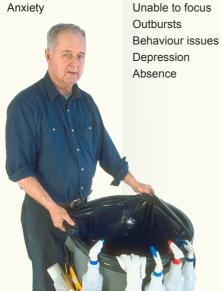
Consider disclosure and awareness training among staff about dyspraxia and other learning differences

Celebrate individuality

Share examples of good communication

Pair up with a supportive peer or buddy





Employ a 'safe code' or word which alerts your supervisor to distress

Discuss 'time out' periods

Focus on what you do well and what has worked for you before, share with supervisor



DYSPRAXIA AT WORK STRATEGIES - COMMUNICATION AND MEETINGS

CONCERN

REASON

STRATEGIES & ACCOMMODATIONS

Does not follow key points in meetings and difficulty taking relevant notes Difficulty combining thoughts with physical aspect of writing

Memory overload

Has not understood the content before point moves on

Loses sequence of conversation

Prepare note framework beforehand

Chair ensures meeting follows agenda

Chair ensures points are summarised before moving to new topic

Audio record meeting content (index topics)

Does not contribute in formal meetings or contributes at the "wrong" time Processing is slower than pace of meeting.

Overloaded by notetaking/ minutes

Make note of point to be made

Chair to ask for comment at summary

Excuse from formal note or minute taking

Record meeting

Copy colleagues notes

Only note specific instructions

Has difficulty contributing in team briefings, either inappropriately voluble or says nothing Difficulty picking up non-verbal cues so appears tactless to peers

Dislikes close proximity of others

Communication difficulties

Difficulties understanding humour and sarcasm

Have unusual interests & sometimes uses inappropriate language

Provide precise, clear instructions

Allow extra time to process information and provide an answer

Encourage individual to ask questions, or specifically request response

Allow recording devices

Be empathic/supportive

Agree protocol for questions and meeting management

Encourage the individual to write down questions that could be asked at end of topic or after the meeting





DYSPRAXIA AT WORK STRATEGIES - ENVIRONMENT AND JOB ROLE

CONCERN

REASON

STRATEGIES & ACCOMMODATIONS

Difficulty with hot desking in open plan offices Sensory sensitivity

Change in location disrupts patterns

Equipment needs set up

Consider fixed desk

Consider location of desk with regard to distraction

Label chair to be left at settings

Health and safety concerns e.g. Difficulty pouring and measuring, difficulty carrying liquids Poor control of force/extent of movements

Gross motor coordination issues

Tendency to lean forward over the table for extra stability affects fluency of arm movements

Poor balance means some people struggle when sitting on high stools

Conduct risk assessment after risks have been considered

Consider work allocation as to who will pour, move and measure

Consider alternatives e.g. syringe, prepared packs

Make sure there is space around coffee station

Ensure gangways and aisles are kept clear, benefits all staff with access issues

Consider lidded cups, washing up bowl as tray

Difficulty with travel, arrive late or avoids travel Difficulty planning journeys, allowing sufficient time and navigating new routes

Get lost easily

Use satellite navigation in the car and when walking, smart phone apps

Before the visit use computer journey planner and put travel time in diary before event





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