

What is Dyspraxia?

The Dyspraxia Foundation definition states: “Dyspraxia is an impairment or immaturity of the organization of movement. Associated with this there may be problems of language, perception and thought”.

Indicators of dyspraxia overlap with some other specific learning difficulties, particularly dyslexia, autistic spectrum disorders and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

About 5% of the UK population continue to have dyspraxic difficulties in adulthood.

The most common characteristics of dyspraxia involve:

- **body movement** – this includes large movements such as walking and balance, and fine motor skills such as writing or using small tools
- **speech and language** – there may be difficulties with pronunciation and articulation. A dyspraxic person may talk continuously or slowly and may repeat things.
- **visual problems** – tracking text when reading or looking quickly and effectively at information.
- **perceptual difficulties** – this involves interpretation by the different senses. There may be heightened sensitivity to sound, light or touch.
- **slowness** in what might be described as **forming a concept of the task**. As with dyslexia, there is no association between dyspraxia and poor intellectual ability, but there may be an appearance of this due to difficulties with memory and attention.
- **emotional difficulties** such as anxiety and depression resulting from these characteristics, are often found.

As with dyslexia, there is a long list of possible indicators of dyspraxia. A person is said to be dyspraxic if s/he experiences a large number of these indicators continuously. The following list is taken from Colley (2006):

Students may have difficulty with the following:

- manual and practical work
- personal presentation and spatial skills
- work and personal organisation
- memory and attention span
- written expression

Many students can have overlapping dyslexic and dyspraxic type difficulties.

How it feels to be dyspraxic.

“...my attention span is my biggest problem... I assure you all that dyspraxia poses plenty of difficulties ... and I'm sure it will continue to, but ultimately these difficulties are in areas that I do not consider to be of great importance. Who cares if I walk into doors and can't sit through a two hour lecture? The strengths that dyspraxia provides me with are an intrinsic part of who I am.”

“When I first found out I had dyspraxia I was annoyed as I thought that it was a disability that would prove to limit my natural abilities and talents, however, the more research I did, the more I realised that my strengths were a direct result of dyspraxia.

The psychologist who assessed me said I had one of the highest verbal IQ's he had ever seen. In my initial despondency, this was the fact that I clung to, as I tried to reassure myself, but it is true, I have always had the highest reading age out of my school classes and I always found great comfort in reading, especially in the idea that we can communicate through literature, so that part of dyspraxia really wasn't that bad, was it?”

Full reference can be found in our [Disability Learning Support Specific Learning Difficulties \(SpLDs\) booklet](#)

Useful links:

- [Further information: NHS Dyspraxia](#)
- [Findings from a national consultation with young people living with dyspraxia](#)
- [Dyspraxia Foundation survey highlights national support needed for teenagers in Awareness Week](#)
- [Liam's story - Beyond Boundaries: Across the Andes](#)

All good practice guidelines are within the framework of the equality act 2010