

Dyslexia



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What is dyslexia?

The word literally means 'difficulty in reading'. It is sometimes called 'word blindness'. Individuals with dyslexia are usually of average or above average intelligence, but tend to have specific learning difficulties with reading, spelling and writing, in addition, arithmetic and musical notation are sometimes affected.

The condition is more common in boys than in girls. The incidence is about 10% of the population, although the degree of severity varies considerably.

A definite cause is not known.

Living with dyslexia

A Leader may only learn of the condition when they hear that the young person is not managing very well at school, or they notice that there is a poor response to instructions during meetings, in particular when these are written.

Individuals may have difficulty in appreciating left from right that will cause some difficulty in following directions. Some have problems with 'handedness' and can be awkward or clumsy. There are others who experience little problem with reading etc., but nevertheless have difficulty with some physical activities as they are unable to co-ordinate movement easily and may drop and break things.

Individuals can often become frustrated when they feel less able than their peers when faced with tasks like reading and writing when they know that they can achieve just as highly in an oral task. Further frustration is caused when others do not appear to appreciate or recognize their difficulty. This then may lead to all sorts of problems including quick temper, aggression, loneliness and unpopularity.

Practical Tips

By providing patience and tolerance and by spending more time on a one to one basis with the individual concerned, the Leader can provide a more realistic framework of expectations than might otherwise be available.

Encouragement to develop particular abilities and the resulting praise will lead to an increase in confidence. Scouting experiences can provide an opportunity for success that will break the vicious circle of failure, frustration and dejection.

There should also be the option at all times for directions or instructions to be given verbally rather than depending on the written form and conversely those who have difficulty with literary skills should have an alternative form of taking part in any activity which requires reading or writing, for example drawing pictures or working in pairs to allow dictation.

Obviously sensitivity needs to be used. The type of activities undertaken by the group should be carefully considered as mapping, for example, may be difficult to learn because of all the signs and symbols involved. Also a Leader would not, ask a Scout to read a prayer if they have problems with printed text.

Discuss with the individual and/or their parent/guardian/carer the extent to which help is needed and learn any practical tips they may have to offer.

Support organizations

Dyslexia Action

Dyslexia Action is a national charity and the UK's leading provider of services and support for people with dyslexia and literacy difficulties.



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www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/

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