

The Emotional Rollercoaster of Dyslexia Identification

Congratulations you took the first step and applied for an educational psychology assessment to find out if you have Dyslexia or not. Perhaps this is something you have been wondering about for a long time. Or perhaps, this is something that was only recently suggested to you. Either way, there are a lot of emotions that may go hand in hand with the assessment process. This handout is to prepare you for what may come and to help you feel less alone in your response. Please also know that everyone is different and so too will their responses be different. Not everyone will experience the same emotions, and not everyone will experience them in the same order. By preparing ourselves for what MIGHT come, we may recognise it sooner and feel more equipped to deal with it.

Common feelings before the assessment

It is normal to feel worried or anxious about the assessment process. One fear that is often expressed is the worry that it might not be dyslexia and what that means instead. Try to keep in mind that either way, the assessment process will answer your questions about whether it is dyslexia, and will offer a starting point for any follow-up support.

Reactions after the assessment

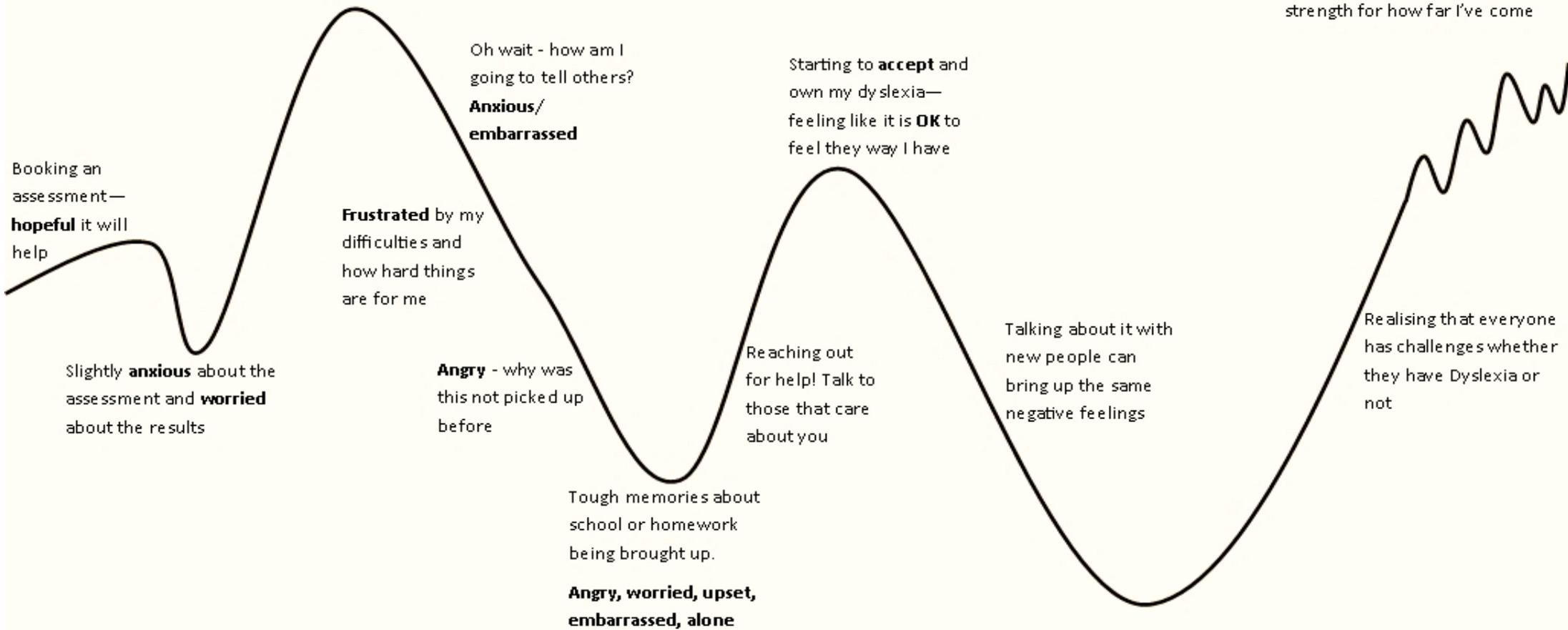
The most common reaction to receiving a diagnosis of Dyslexia is one of relief. It is the initial feeling that you finally have an answer and that there is an explanation for your struggles or experiences with learning. However, not everyone will feel the same way. You may feel confused, unsure of what this means going forward or even angry that this was not identified sooner.

We have put together an illustration to show some of the common emotional responses after an assessment. It is important to remind yourself again that this is not necessarily the same for everyone. You could start at a different point, go back at any stage and have more of a circular experience. Reactions will also be linked to environmental factors and circumstances. Things could be manageable until there is a change in circumstances, such as remote working, a new line manager or a promotion. These changes generate new demands which may emphasise dyslexic challenges. This would be the same for anyone, even those without Dyslexia. Everyone experiences challenges in life, they are not your fault and not everything is related to or caused by Dyslexia.

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WOOHOO - I have DYSLEXIA! It's not just me, and I'm not stupid or lazy! There's a reason I've been struggling. This feels like such a **relief!**

I have Dyslexia but I am still ME this has made me stronger and I am **proud** of myself and my strength for how far I've come



Your mindset matters

While we know that everyone will have a different emotional experience – one thing that you are in control of is your mindset. Being hard on yourself, beating yourself up for mistakes or thinking about all the opportunities/time missed are sure ways to prolong the negative emotions. Having an assessment done may help you feel validated but it does not immediately “fix” or change anything else. Focusing on things that are within your control, maintaining a growth mindset and using mistakes as opportunities for learning are all important factors to improve your emotional experience. You could explore mindfulness apps such as Headspace or Calm if you want to develop these skills further.

This may seem difficult at first but reaching out for support and choosing to focus on your self-awareness and growth are important first steps. Be kind to yourself and embrace the journey of self-reflection that lies ahead.

Where to go for support

- **Dyslexia Association of Ireland** – we have an information team that is available for questions specifically related to managing your Dyslexia. Contact us at info@dyslexia.ie
- **Student Support Services** – if in college/further education
- **Workplace Supports** – such as your Employee Assistance Program
- **GP** - for onward referral if needed
- **Registered Psychologist or Counsellor** – the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) has a database of psychologists that you can access at their [website](#). The Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP) also has a [find a therapist](#) service. The American Psychological Association has an [article](#) with things to keep in mind when choosing a psychologist.
- In addition, further information for **Promoting And Managing Positive Mental Health** can be found at:
 - www.spunout.ie – specifically for teens and young adults.
 - www.alustforlife.com – their mission is to “empower future generations” in their mental health, but their articles apply to all age groups.
 - www.aware.ie - Aware provides support services to individuals experiencing depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety, or other mood-related conditions as well as to people who are concerned about a loved one. All three support services are offered free of charge. They also offer programmes on a variety of mental health topics.
 - www.mentalhealthireland.ie – articles, programmes and information about accessing mental health services in Ireland for all ages.
 - [Your mental health](#) from the HSE – articles and advice.