Adult Dyslexia



Dyslexia Ireland

SOLAS
learning works

“As far as I’m concerned, the way your brain thinks from a dyslexic point of view, makes you achieve things much easier than other people.”

John Brennan, Hotelier and Entrepreneur



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What is Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a learning difference that can cause difficulties with learning and work. It affects approximately 1 in 10. It occurs on a spectrum with some people mildly affected and others more severely. With the right understanding, accommodations and support people with dyslexia can achieve success in education, the workplace and in wider society.

Everyone with dyslexia is different but there is a commonality of difficulties with reading, spelling and writing and related cognitive/processing difficulties. Dyslexia is not a general difficulty with learning, it impacts specific skill areas. The impact of dyslexia can change according to the environment (i.e. what a dyslexic person is being asked to do and under what circumstances).

While people with dyslexia may develop strengths due to their dyslexia such as determination, problem solving and resilience, dyslexia does not automatically bring specific gifts or talents. Dyslexia Ireland recognises and respects the individual variation that all human beings display, including those with dyslexia.

Watch this video to hear dyslexia adults share their reflections on dyslexia: First signs of Dyslexia

Language, Recognition and Rights

Some people prefer the wording 'a person with dyslexia', while others prefer the term 'a dyslexic person'. When working with individuals it is important to use the terminology that the person is most comfortable with. When communicating with a wider audience the terms may be used interchangeably to reflect the variation of preference that exists.

Dyslexia is a recognised disability under Irish and EU law (such as under equalities, accessibility and disability legislation). However, many dyslexic people do not consider themselves 'disabled' and the individual's view should be respected.



Adult Dyslexia Assessment

Watch this video to hear adults with dyslexia reflect on the impact of having their dyslexia identified:
Impact of assessment video

Why get an assessment?
The reason an adult may go for an assessment for dyslexia could be down to a number of factors. This video looks at issues to consider before having an assessment:

Considering an assessment

- You may have often had the sense that you learn differently to others.
- You may have had difficulty at school and did less well in written exams than you feel you should have.
- You dislike reading aloud and find reading new material difficult.
- You find it hard to put your thoughts into writing, or have problems with sentence construction, spelling and punctuation.
- You find it hard to see the mistakes that you have made in written work
- You sometimes might pronounce words incorrectly or find it hard to recall people's names when meeting them for the first time.
- Someone you know may have gone through the assessment process themselves and you can relate to their experiences.
- It may be that a workplace or college has suggested that you get an assessment and/or require a formal assessment to access reasonable accommodations.

No matter the reason behind getting an assessment, it is important to remember that you have a choice. Being assessed for dyslexia enables you to learn about your own profile, identify your needs and access guidance to empower your next steps. The decision of when to get an assessment depends on individual circumstances.

The Assessment Process
This video walks you through what to expect when getting an adult dyslexia assessment. The Assessment Process

The process requires an emotional, psychological and financial investment in yourself. Ensuring that you are aware and informed in these areas will help guide you.

An assessment for dyslexia should reflect an individual's needs and reinforce the responsibility of a workplace or educational institution to support those needs. These needs can be made clear through your communication and what you choose to disclose.

Dyslexia Ireland has a team of psychologists who provide assessments for dyslexia at our national office in Dublin city centre and online. Dyslexia Ireland takes a contextualised approach to assessment and takes account of relevant background information from family, schools, colleges, employers or any other relevant sources.

The assessment takes approximately 2 hours. The fee for an adult dyslexia assessment is currently €300.00 (as of autumn 2024). Following the assessment, the psychologist gives a brief verbal report of findings. A written report with results and recommendations is then sent to you within four weeks. For more information see our website where you will also find details on how to book an assessment with us: https://dyslexia.ie/assessment/

There are also educational psychologists in private practice who offer assessments. The Psychological Society of Ireland maintains a list. www.psychologicalsociety.ie

The Emotional Rollercoaster of Dyslexia Identification
This video looks at the emotional rollercoaster that adults might feel after a dyslexia assessment:
The Emotional Roller Coaster after Assessment



"If you have any inclination at all that you might have dyslexia go and get tested. The outcome of the process is always positive."
Dave

There are a lot of emotions that may go hand in hand with a Dyslexia assessment. 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. 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.

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.

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. Having an assessment done may help you feel validated but it does not immediately "fix" or change anything else.

- Don't beat yourself up for mistakes .
- Don't waste your time thinking about lost opportunities/time missed.
- Focus on things that are within your control.
- Maintaining a growth mindset (Use mistakes as opportunities for learning).
- Explore mindfulness apps.
- Reach out for support.
- Be kind to yourself.

In this video dyslexia adults reflect on [Mental health and Dyslexia]



Where to go for support:

- Student Support Services **–** if in education.
- Workplace Supports – such as your Employee Assistance Programme.
- 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 www.psychologicalsociety.ie. The Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP) also has a find a therapist service www.iacp.ie. The American Psychological Association has an article with things to keep in mind when choosing a psychologist. www.apa.org/topics/psychotherapy/choose-therapist

In addition, further information for **Promoting And Managing Positive Mental Health** can be found at:

- 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. https://www2.hse.ie/mental-health/

Literacy

Adults with dyslexia may want to get help with and improve their reading and writing. If this is you, there are a number of options available.



In the Republic of Ireland, the ETBs (Education and Training Boards) run free adult learning classes. They can help with reading and writing as well as maths, technology and computers. www.etbi.ie

You may prefer to work on your literacy skills at home and at a time that suits you.

At **Dyslexia Ireland**, our Adult Dyslexia Hub www.adultdyslexiahub.ie offers a free video-based programme for reading and spelling starting from the basics of literacy.

We also recommend the **Shannon Trust's Turning Pages programme**. You will need to purchase a set of manuals to use. https://shop.shannontrust.org.uk/

NALA, www.nala.ie the National Adult Literacy Agency, in conjunction with the Education and Training Boards (ETBs) offer free local adult literacy classes (both one-to-one and group classes) nationwide. NALA also offers some free online training.

The Adult Education Guidance Initiative delivered by the ETBs offers nationwide guidance for learners before, during and after they participate in adult literacy and community education programmes. Contact your local ETB for information.

Local libraries are involved with supporting literacy in the community as part of the Right to Read campaign. Some also offer access to assistive technology for dyslexia.

AONTAS www.aontas.com is the national adult learning organisation in Ireland and works to works to highlight the voice and experiences of adults learners.

Local Intreo Offices www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/fb84c0-intreo/ provide information and advice on vocational training and work opportunities.

Qualifax www.qualifax.ie and the CareersPortal www.careersportal.ie provides comprehensive guidance on available courses, as well as study options. Careers Portal also provides guidance on seeking employment.



Dyslexia at Third Level

Watch this video where dyslexia adults reflect on their experience of education and lifelong learning

Colleges and Universities are required to make reasonable accommodations to prevent disadvantage that may arise from a disability or learning difficulty such as dyslexia. It is advisable that all students with dyslexia make contact with their Student Support Service early in the academic year to ensure all provisions are planned for and accessed promptly.

If you have an identification of dyslexia, you are entitled to register with the disability office for reasonable accommodations and supports during your studies.

The Fund for Students with Disabilities supports the provision of services and reasonable accommodations to eligible students. Currently, an educational psychology assessment report (of any age) is required as evidence of dyslexia, as well as an assessment of need conducted by the college.

There are many examples of reasonable accommodations, including but not limited to:

- Extra time in examinations.
- Provision of a reader for exams (person or technology).
- Scribe in examinations (person or technology).
- Learning materials provided in advance via learning management system (e.g. Moodle or Blackboard).
- Assistive technology (software or hardware).
- Spelling and grammar waiver.
- A request not to read aloud during a class.
- Advance notice of required participation in class (e.g. emailed discussion topics in advance which offers an opportunity to prepare).

For information on financial supports available for those going to college see the HEA website - www.hea.ie.

Applications for undergraduate courses are made through the CAO system - www.cao.ie.

The Disability Access Route to Education www.accesscollege.ie/dare/ (DARE) is an admissions scheme which offers places in certain colleges on a reduced points basis to school leavers with disabilities, including dyslexia. Evidence of dyslexia has to be provided as well as evidence of impact.

AHEAD the Association for Higher Education Access and Disability, provides an information helpdesk and runs the annual Better Options Fair which provides information and advice on services and supports in higher education for people with disabilities, including dyslexia. www.ahead.ie

Check out the Education section of our Adult Dyslexia Hub for videos on accessing education as an adult with dyslexia.
https://adultdyslexiahub.ie/education/

Dyslexia in the Workplace

Navigating dyslexia in the workplace can, at times, be challenging, but with the right information and support, you can succeed professionally. This section of the booklet explores the support available to you.

Listen to dyslexia adults reflect on their experiences of dyslexia at work in this video where they also share advice for both employers and employees on how to make the workplace more inclusive.
Dyslexia at Work video

Disclosure at Work
Disclosure is very often, a real dilemma – how, when or even if you should disclose your dyslexia to an employer is your choice. If you choose to disclose, do so with confidence and without apologising. The best disclosures are well-planned, balanced (highlighting both strengths and challenges), and, most importantly, focused on solutions.

If you are unsure about whether or not to disclose, **AHEAD's Guide** on How to tell Employers about your Disability can help you make an informed decision. www.ahead.ie/disclosure

Our **Voices of Dyslexia** participants reflect on their experiences of disclosure in the workplace in this video.

Their experiences range from fears about disclosing their dyslexia to the positives of sharing it with others.

> ***"It's so beneficial because it gets you those supports that you need."***
> Cara

Reasonable accommodations

Reasonable accommodations are supports given to employees with disabilities so that they can effectively perform their job role and enjoy equal employment opportunities. Reasonable accommodations are most effective when customized to the individual's needs, specific role, and work environment. The majority of reasonable accommodations for dyslexia are either no cost or low cost.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Extra time to work on tasks.
- Information provided in advance of meetings.
- Flexible work hours.
- Information provided in alternative formats.
- Assistive technology.

> ***"One of the most important accommodations for me is a supportive work environment that understands my need to work differently."***
>
> Ben

Work and Access

The Department of Social Protection's Work and Access programme can cover some or all the costs of reasonable accommodations in private-sector workplaces.

The programme is a set of financial supports that help individuals with disabilities secure and maintain employment by removing or reducing workplace barriers.



> ***"There's amazing supports around, that you can avail of if you link in with the right organisations, and I think, don't be afraid to tell anyone."***
>
> Dave



Individuals (employees, employers and self-employed persons) can apply for one or more support at the same time, depending on their needs. The following financial supports are available through the Work and Access programme:

- Workplace Needs Assessment.
- Communication Support.
- In-Work Support.
- Personal Reader.
- Work Equipment.
- Workplace Adaptation Support.
- Disability, Equality and Inclusion Training.

To find out more about these supports, i.e. who can apply; how to apply; and what is covered, visit the government's Work and Access website.

- EmployAbility Services (www.gov.ie/en/service/8578c4-access-the-employability-service/) support people with disabilities to access and retain employment. The service is open to people with disabilities, including dyslexia, who are "job ready" and need job coach support to obtain and/ or retain employment. A referral is made from your local INTREO office.
- Towards Work (www.towardswork.ie) helps individuals with disabilities, neurodiversity or health conditions find and keep jobs by offering personalised support, including career coaching, job search assistance, and workplace adjustments.
- AHEAD's WAM programme (Willing Able Mentoring programme - www.ahead.ie/wam) which connects employers with skilled graduates who have disabilities or neurodiversity (like dyslexia), offering them paid work placements that match their qualifications.

Workplace Guidance

The Workplace Section of our Adult Dyslexia Hub provides employees and employers with the tools and knowledge to navigate dyslexia in the workplace. There are videos there covering Disclosure, Reasonable Accommodations and Strategies to Manage Tasks at Work.

> ***"At the end of the day, dyslexic people have so many skills, that other people mightn't have, and they can bring their own spin to the project or to the job."***
>
> Jane

Tips for Managing Tasks at Work

Many forms of communication can be dealt with by **creating a template** or form letter.

- **Organise your day**, chunking your day into sections based on energy levels can be helpful. (high energy equals more complex tasks, low energy equals routine, everyday tasks).
- **Plan extra time** for each task
- **Learn the language of your business,** all areas of business have their own language.
- **Charts and diagrams** can be useful when preparing written work or presentations, as they can assist in generating and organising your ideas into a more coherent structure.

Technology

Although it can take a bit of practice, technology is a fantastic resource.

Text-to-speech technology can read aloud everything from an email to a website page to a book. You can simply listen, or you can follow along with the text as you are listening.

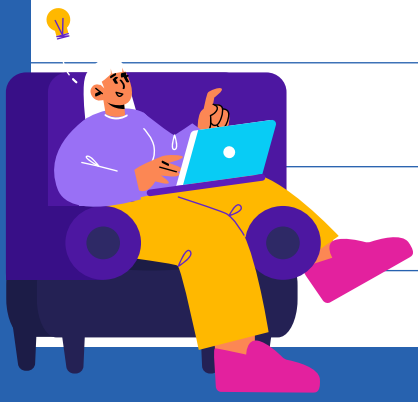
Speech-to-text technology allows you to transform your spoken words into text, speeding up and simplifying the writing process.

Tools like **predictive text**, **autocorrect** and **spelling/grammar assistants** are often built in to devices and applications that we are already using. These can help to ensure that writing is error-free but are also useful for improving writing/spelling skills over time.

Note-Taking and Recording Information: Software programmes and apps can be used to record lectures or workplace meetings, rather than trying to take notes/minutes in real time if spelling and writing are a challenge. This can also be useful for recording notes and reminders or to-do-lists.

For more info on technology check out:
Dyslexia Ireland's website (Technology section)
www.dyslexia.ie/info-hub/assistive-technology
AHEAD's AT Hive www.ahead.ie/The-AT-Hive
Dyslexia Ireland YouTube Playlist (Technology)
www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLy0l0HZyprd3YixjBxgpZYIT4fu2oaB10
CALL Scotland poster iPad apps for learners with dyslexia
www.callscotland.org.uk/downloads/posters-and-leaflets/ipad-apps-for-learners-with-dyslexia/

NOTES



If you would like further information, advice or support, please contact Dyslexia Ireland at:

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