

Dyslexia



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0845 300 1818

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.

The cause is not known with certainty.

Living with dyslexia

You cannot tell that an individual had dyslexia by looking at them. 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 poor responses to instructions during meetings, in particular when these are written.

Individuals may have difficulty in appreciating left from right which will cause some difficulty in understanding direction. 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 unequal to their peers when faced with tasks like reading and writing while they know that they can achieve just as highly orally. Further frustration is caused when others do not appear to appreciate or recognise their difficulty. This then may lead to all sorts of problems including quick temper, aggression, loneliness and unpopularity.

Activities like mapping may be difficult to learn because of all the signs and symbols involved. It is sometimes found that younger members produce written work in mirror image with bizarre spelling.

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 which 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.

Obviously sensitivity needs to be used. A Leader would not, for example, ask a Scout to read a prayer if they have problems with printed text!

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

Support organisations

British Dyslexia Association
London Road
Reading
RG1 5AU
Tel: 0118 966 8271/2
Fax: 0118 935 1927
E mail: admin@bda-dyslexia.co.uk
Website: www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk

The Dyslexia Institute
Gresham Road
Staines
TW18 2AJ
Tel: 01784 463851
Fax: 01784 460474
Website www.dyslexia-inst.org.uk

The Scout Information Centre

Gilwell Park Chingford London E4 7QW Tel + 44 (0)20 8433 7100 Fax + 44 (0)20 8433 7103 email info.centre@scout.org.uk www.scoutbase.org.uk