



**URBAN
SAINTS**

RESOURCE

Dyslexia

Effective Support for
Young People with
Additional Needs

Dyslexia

Young people with Dyslexia can experience a wide range of problems related to processing language. These problems are usually specifically linked to reading and spelling, but are sometimes also linked to problems with organisation and sequencing and can even include short term memory difficulties.

Current thinking suggests that these difficulties are related to inefficiencies in language-processing areas in the left hemisphere of the brain. There is evidence that suggests that these inefficiencies are linked to genetic differences.

Young people with Dyslexia are affected by it for life, but its impact can be minimised by targeted literacy intervention, technological support and adaptations to ways of working and learning.

The effects of Dyslexia vary in severity and it is not uncommon for young people with this condition to also have Dyspraxia or Attention Deficit Disorder, which, along with Dyslexia are categorised as 'Specific Learning Difficulties'. **Dyslexia is NOT related to intelligence.**

Approximately 10% of the population are affected by Dyslexia to some degree.

def: dyslexia

A specific learning difficulty which primarily affects reading and writing skills. However, it does not only affect these skills.

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Key issues

- Difficulties with processing language – usually related to reading and spelling.
- Organisation and sequencing difficulties.
- Short term memory problems.
- Possibly linked to **Dyspraxia** or **Attention Deficit Disorder**.

Support strategies for your group

- **Provide written materials in a clear and easy to view way:**
 - This means using a clear font such as Arial or Verdana.
 - Not cluttering the print with background pictures or watermarks.
 - Not using long paragraphs or sentences, but using shorter bullet points.
 - When using colours, use strong contrasts.
- If projecting something onto a screen or wall, **use strongly contrasting colours** so that text is more easily visible. Use a Dyslexia friendly (sans serif) font, and don't overlay text on top of an image or video, but keep them separate.
- **Some young people with Dyslexia may use coloured plastic overlay sheets or wallets** which documents can be placed in to help them with their reading. Increasingly they may use an electronic tablet to allow them to set up text in a way that they can read. Be understanding in the use of these so that it helps the young person without drawing undue attention to them.
- **In some cases, young people can have problems using coloured or shiny paper with text on.** Pastel shades are usually suitable but other, stronger, colours should be avoided.
- **When giving out notice sheets etc.** make sure you also read important notices out so that those who struggle to read the notices are still able to understand them. Make sure you check with young people with Dyslexia (privately, not in the group setting) that they have all the information and understand it.
- **Do not unexpectedly ask a young person with Dyslexia to read out loud.** They may be able to do this with preparation and practice, however, so don't entirely disregard them from doing this either. Young people with Dyslexia are often accomplished at covering up their reading difficulties, so get to know them and their parents to establish what they can be helped to do. Be sensitive when doing this, as many young people will be embarrassed about their condition.

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Thanks to **Dyslexia Association** for much of the material used in writing this article.

Further Information: British Dyslexia Association: bdadyslexia.org.uk

Research shows that young people with additional needs are more likely to be abused than their peers (NSPCC) This increased vulnerability is due to a number of factors including communication differences, increased dependence on caregivers, social isolation and a higher likelihood that warning signs would be missed or misinterpreted. As a youth leader it's therefore important to be especially alert to changes in behaviour and wellbeing and discuss any concerns with a safeguarding lead at the earliest opportunity.



**This resource is just one
of the many ways we're
here to walk with you!**

Discover more free tools, training
and resources to equip you in
discipling young people.

urbansaints.org

This resource has been adapted from our Invited to Belong Team Training Kit.



If you're interested in helping your team become more aware and welcoming of young people with additional needs, you can explore our Invited to Belong Team Training Kit at urbansaints.org/resources

The original content of this resource was created in partnership with **Youthscape** as part of the Invited to Belong resource.