

Health - Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Autism Spectrum Disorder

Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty that affects memory and processing speed which impacts on literacy development, mathematics, memory, organisation and sequencing skills to varying degrees. It is a spectrum disorder, with symptoms ranging from mild to severe. People with dyslexia have particular difficulty with:

- phonological awareness
- verbal memory
- rapid serial naming
- verbal processing speed.

Dyslexia is thought to be one of the most common learning difficulties. It's estimated that up to 1 in every 10 people in the UK has a certain degree of dyslexia. It affects people of all ethnic backgrounds, only affects some skills and abilities, and is not linked to a person's general level of intelligence.

The symptoms of dyslexia in older children and adults can include:

- poorly organised written work that lacks expression; for example, even though they may be very knowledgeable about a certain subject, they may have problems expressing that knowledge in writing
- difficulty planning and writing essays, letters or reports
- difficulties revising for examinations
- trying to avoid reading and writing whenever possible
- difficulty taking notes or copying
- poor spelling
- struggling to remember things such as a PINs or telephone numbers
- struggling to meet deadlines.

www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/about-dyslexia

Dyspraxia

Dyspraxia is a form of developmental coordination disorder (DCD). This is a common disorder affecting fine and/or gross motor coordination, in children and adults. While DCD is often regarded as an umbrella term to cover motor coordination difficulties, dyspraxia refers to those people who have additional problems planning, organising and carrying out movements in the right order in everyday situations.

Dyspraxia can also affect articulation and speech, perception and thought. Although Dyspraxia may occur in isolation, it frequently coexists with other conditions such as Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), Dyslexia, language disorders and social, emotional and behavioural impairments.

Co-ordination difficulties include:

- a reduction in the person's ability to participate and function in education and employment
- difficulties with self-care, writing, typing, riding a bike and playing may start in childhood and continue into adulthood
- an adult may also experience new difficulties, for example with driving a vehicle or DIY

Other difficulties - Adults with dyspraxia may also have social and emotional difficulties, as well as problems with time management, planning and personal organisation. These may affect the person's education or employment. Symptoms of Dyspraxia are many and varied and can change over time.

www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/dyspraxia-adults

Autism Spectrum Disorder

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability that affects social interaction, communication and behaviour. In the UK, it's estimated that about one in every 100 people has ASD. The exact cause of ASD is unknown. In the past some people believed the Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) vaccine caused ASD but after extensive investigations globally, researchers have found no evidence of a link between MMR and ASD. There is no 'cure' for autism, but a wide range of treatments – including education and behaviour support – can help individuals with the disability.

ASD can cause a wide range of symptoms, which are often grouped into two main categories:

- problems with social interaction and communication – including problems understanding and being aware of other people's emotions and feelings; it can also include delayed language development and an inability to start conversations or engage effectively
- restricted and repetitive patterns of thought, interests and physical behaviours – including making repetitive physical movements, such as hand tapping or twisting, and becoming upset if these set routines are disrupted.

Autism features can often be recognised in children before the age of two or three years. However for many, the signs will often only become more noticeable as they get older. See your GP or health visitor if you notice any of the symptoms of ASD, or if you're concerned about your child's development. Once your GP or Health visitor has assessed your child's difficulties, your child should be referred for a formal assessment.

www.nas.org.uk

