

Handout for our video

Could It Be Dyslexia?

Research-based definition of Dyslexia:

Dyslexia is one of several distinct learning disabilities. It is a specific language-based disorder¹ of constitutional origin², characterized by difficulties in single word decoding³, usually reflecting insufficient phonological processing abilities⁴.

These difficulties are often unexpected in relation to age and other cognitive academic abilities⁵. They are not the result of generalized developmental disability or sensory impairment.

Dyslexia is manifested by variable difficulty with various forms of language⁶, often including, in addition to problems reading, a conspicuous problem acquiring proficiency in writing⁷ and spelling.

¹ Dyslexia means you have difficulty processing printed language and spoken language.

² Dyslexia is inherited. You are born with dyslexia. It is not the result of bad teaching or bad parenting. It cannot be cured, but people with dyslexia can be taught to read, write, and spell at or above grade level.

³ Decoding means reading a word by sounding it out.

Most people with dyslexia read by memorizing the *shape* of a word—not by looking at each and every letter, translating it into a sound, and then blending the sounds together.

⁴ Phonological processing abilities: the ability to identify, manipulate, and remember strings of speech sounds, such as counting words in a spoken sentence, clapping syllables in a spoken word, or saying each sound in a spoken word.

Phonemic Awareness is the ability to identify, remember, and manipulate each sound in a spoken word.

Children with dyslexia usually lack phonemic awareness.

National Institutes of Health researchers have proven that phonemic awareness is the *core and causal factor* separating normal readers from disabled readers.

⁵ People with dyslexia are bright in many areas. That's why their language processing difficulties are unexpected. They have an unexpected weakness amid a sea of strengths.

⁶ Language difficulties can include: auditory discrimination difficulty, extremely limited auditory memory, slow auditory processing, word retrieval difficulty when speaking (dysnomia), mixing up syllables when saying long words, low vocabulary, poor grammar, difficulty reading, terrible spelling, and extremely poor written expression.

⁷ If you have dyslexia, reading is hard, spelling is worse, but putting your thoughts onto paper in an organized, concise, and grammatically correct manner nearly impossible. You communicate verbally much better than communicate in writing.

Warning Signs of Dyslexia

The biggest warning sign of all is a close relative with dyslexia.

If someone has 3 or more of these warning signs, their difficulties are probably due to dyslexia, and you should get that person tested as soon as possible.

In Preschoolers:

- delayed speech
- mixing up the sounds or syllables in long words.
- chronic ear infections
- severe reactions to childhood illnesses
- constant confusion of left versus right
- late establishing a dominant hand
- difficulty learning to tie shoes
- trouble memorizing his address, phone number, or the alphabet
- can't create words that rhyme

In Elementary School:

- dysgraphia (the slow, non-automatic handwriting that is difficult to read.)
- letter or number reversals continuing past first grade
- extreme difficulty learning cursive
- slow, choppy, inaccurate reading:
 - guesses based on shape or context
 - skips or misreads prepositions (at, to, of)
 - ignores suffixes
 - can't sound out unknown words
- terrible spelling
- often can't remember sight words (they, were, does) or homonyms (their, they're, and there)
- difficulty telling time on a clock with hands
- trouble with math
 - memorizing multiplication tables
 - memorizing a sequence of steps
 - directionality
- extremely messy bedroom, backpack, and desk
- dreads going to school
 - complains of stomach aches or headaches
 - may have nightmares about school

In High School:

All of the above symptoms plus:

- limited vocabulary
- extremely poor written expression
 - large discrepancy between verbal communication and written communication
- unable to master a foreign language
- difficulty reading printed music
- poor grades in many classes
- may drop out of high school

In Adults:

Educational history similar to above, plus:

- slow reader
- may have to read a page 2 or 3 times to understand it
- terrible speller
- difficulty putting thoughts onto paper
 - dreads writing memos or letters
- still has difficulty with right versus left
- often gets lost, even in a familiar city
- sometimes confuses b and d
 - especially when tired or sick