

## Emotional Support for Dyslexic Students

A recent Survey by Manchester Metropolitan University interviewed dyslexic students in primary and secondary schools. In his discussion of the results of this study, Psychologist Mike Johnson concluded:

**"It is interesting that the underlying theme is the emotional climate in the classroom rather than any specific techniques or special methodology..... It is the way teachers go about teaching and organising classrooms that are seen as facilitating or frustrating. The key comes in understanding how each pupil thinks and feels."**

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## Devon SpLD (Dyslexia) Service Information

Please contact Deborah Lynch or Ann Atherton if you have any queries or concerns.

- What is Dyslexia?
- Assessing for dyslexia
- Emotional Support for Dyslexic Students
- Reading at home
- Supporting Dyslexic Students in the Classroom
- How can I help my child?
- Helping with homework
- Helping your child with spelling
- Visual Stress
- Working Memory Difficulties

Ann and Deborah are part of a Secondary Dyslexia Network ; these materials were produced by this group of teachers and educational psychologists.

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## Emotional Support for Dyslexic Students

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(Dyslexia)  
Service

## Emotional Support for Dyslexic Students

Staff working with students who are struggling with literacy must:

- help them understand their literacy difficulties.
- help improve their self-esteem and confidence.
- help them look ahead with a more positive attitude.

When you are talking with a student who is struggling to develop literacy skills, try to get them to understand some of the following points:

- Everybody is different.
- Everybody is good at something. Some students are very good at reading and writing. Others have strengths in other areas.
- Quote from personal experience if possible, as it can be helpful e.g. "I was awful at sport and ball games. I longed to be good enough to be in a team. I even went to hockey and netball practices. All I ever ended up doing was preparing the drinks and refreshments for half-time and the end of the match. Unfortunately in school so much of our learning involves reading and writing., but this is less true in life outside school. Remember, your literacy skills do

Help them to identify their areas of relative strength.

- Sometimes people who struggle with literacy are able to think in a different way from other people. Lateral thinking may be a real strength, or the ability to visualise in three dimensions. They may be really creative or excel at sport.
- Many successful adults struggled with literacy at school. Mention names of famous people. Some of the most brilliant scientists and artists in history and today have been/are dyslexic.
- Quote from your own experience. "Some of the students I have worked with have been determined to succeed. One girl gained a first class honours degree in photography and was the first woman to gain a special bursary (scholarship) from the BBC for wild-life filming. I have also worked with several students who have become highly skilled mechanics and others who are successful in ICT."
- Even though literacy is a struggle, do not use this as an excuse. You can achieve success as long as you keep motivated.
- It is OK to make mistakes - that's how we learn. If you only do work you can do easily, you are not learning.
- Help is available within school. Our network has ReadWrite Gold which will read anything on the screen and help with proof-reading written work. You will probably always find spelling tricky, but remember the reason we write is to communicate information. So as long as your

writing can be understood this will usually be good enough.

- Laptops are currently available for University students with Specific Learning Difficulties.
- It will be easier to manage when you have left school. For example, if you are working in an office you likely to use a spellchecker on a computer.

Emphasise: There is no reason why you can't be as successful in life as anyone else. However, poor literacy skills will not be overcome without hard work.

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