



Disclosing your Dyspraxia/DCD



**Dyspraxia
Foundation
Youth**

INCORPORATING DEVELOPMENTAL
CO-ORDINATION DISORDER (DCD)

Information Sheet

Disclosing your Dyspraxia/DCD (Developmental Coordination Disorder) to family and friends

Disclosure- Disclosure means informing someone or to make information known

So you have dyspraxia/DCD! Maybe this isn't new and you have had your diagnosis a long time or maybe you have just found out. Either way coming to terms with this 'label' is as individual as your dyspraxia/DCD.

It may be a case of hiding it away from others, not wanting them to know, whereas for others, embracing it wholeheartedly is the choice that they make!

For many people living with dyspraxia/DCD is a journey and through each stage of life how you feel about your dyspraxia/DCD may change, so at school many people may just want to 'fit in', not be different etc. For this (and other) reasons you may choose to hide your dyspraxia/DCD from others but at other times such as the other side of school days, you may crave the individuality and feel more comfortable with your dyspraxia/DCD and all the ways it affects you and your life.

One youth member describes just that:

"I've adopted the policy of 'honesty' but that's only as I've got older and haven't worried about what people think as much. I've decided if in an employment situation my disclosure causes a problem, then I don't want to work for that kind of organisation anyway. Similarly in friendships, if a disclosure causes problems for them then their friendship isn't worth the hassle. It's taken me years to get to this 'no rubbish' policy, and I wouldn't advise it as a strategy for everyone."

Whenever you are ready to disclose to others that you have dyspraxia/DCD the decision is a choice only you can make. There are of course times when informing various establishments like school, work etc. is going to be beneficial to you and your learning or supportive to you in a job interview etc. The Dyspraxia Foundation has factsheets and Information specific to this area of disclosure.

Please do also note that in these cases you do have legal protection in relation to discrimination and harassment. It's against the law for employers to discriminate against you because of a disability.





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The Equality Act 2010 protects you and covers areas including:

- application forms
- interview arrangements
- aptitude or proficiency tests
- job offers
- terms of employment, including pay
- promotion, transfer and training opportunities
- dismissal or redundancy
- discipline and grievances



See link for more information.Gov.UK:

www.gov.uk/rights-disabled-person/overview

The Dyspraxia Foundation has also produced guidance on this subject; please see the following link to find out more:

dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Dyspraxia-in-the-Workplace-for-Employees.pdf

What will be discussed here is the disclosure of dyspraxia/DCD to your friends and family or if you wish to disclose it to a group that you belong to etc. So in other words *social situations*.

You mean Dyslexia right??

Sadly dyspraxia/DCD is still poorly understood or not even heard of by many, though awareness is increasing. It therefore means that as well as telling someone you have dyspraxia/DCD you may find it helpful to be ready with a definition of what it actually is and how it actually affects you.

If you want to learn the full definition of dyspraxia/DCD that's fine, but keeping things easy and straightforward probably is a better starting point, and if people want to know more you can always point them in the direction of the Foundations website!

dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/

Dyspraxia/DCD is a lifelong condition affecting gross and fine motor coordination in adults and children. In addition many may experience difficulties with organisation skills, memory, processing speed and, in some cases speech.

Or to keep things simpler you could say something like;

'Dyspraxia, it's a condition affecting movement and for me it affects my fine motor skills, that's why my handwriting's not so good and why I get to use a laptop in class/work.'

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You could go on to say how it also affects other aspects of your life that are individual to you e.g. organisation skills, sequencing or timekeeping.

One youth member explains;

"I tend to go for a complete honesty policy, but I will often avoid it unless someone really pushes it because of either preconceptions that "It's not that bad, you just can't balance" or just not knowing what it is and not being able to explain simply. The awareness of the population does seem to be improving, sadly they just get lots of misinformation"

Another goes on to say;

"It's weird because although I blog about dyspraxia and talk about it on social media, disclosing it is something I often struggle with. I think it's due to knowing that it's very likely that they've never heard of it before.

I think I've usually tended to wait until it comes up in the situation, if it's just to a friend. For example, when I started Uni a friend asked where I got my voice recorder from. I explained it was through DSA (Disabled Student Allowance) and mentioned my dyspraxia. I then went into a bit more detail about it a few days later when she was asking about my blog and was asking what dyspraxia is. I always try to emphasise that it affects such a variety of things too."

What you choose to disclose will depend on **why** you are disclosing and to **whom**. Preparing yourself for different situations is a great idea so that you are never caught on the back foot.

Some reasons why you may want to disclose

- So you get the best and right support
- To start relationships off with honesty
- To raise awareness



You may want to have different ways of explaining it depending on who you are telling, e.g. how you tell a youth leader to how you tell a friend may need slightly amended explanations.

Before disclosing it could be a good idea just to run these questions found below through your head (taken from National Collaboration on Workforce and Disability (NCWD) for Youth <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/about>.)

- Do I have respect for and trust in this person's keeping my disclosure confidential?
- Is disclosure essential to our relationship?
- Does this person have the power to determine how reasonable a request for an accommodation is?
- Can the person provide the required accommodation(s)?
- Is this person going to use information about my disability to support me or harm me?

Once you have made the decision to disclose try to keep the conversation positive and remember just an overview is maybe all that is needed in the first instance. Don't feel you have to divulge lots of personal aspects of your dyspraxia/DCD straight away, and until you fully trust and respect someone it might be best to start with general information about your dyspraxia/DCD.

It may be worth telling the person why you have chosen to disclose that you have dyspraxia, like 'I value our friendship and just want to be upfront and honest with you from the start'?

When to disclose is also a personal choice. It could be as you are

- Meeting new people, starting new relationships
- Going on a date
- Meeting your tutor
- Joining a new activity or group



Make sure you choose a good place to disclose and have plenty of time for the person to absorb the information and ask questions should they want to.

When it doesn't go right



Hopefully most people will be receptive and supportive to the information you tell them, however if they are not it may just need some time to process the information.

If they take the information you have shared and turned it against you or are unkind /abusive tell a trusted adult. Try not to react, be the bigger person.



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Youth member talks about turning a negative into a positive:

"For me I'll be honest I've always struggled with disclosure and finding the confidence to trust people and if I feel comfortable with the people. I've had mixed experiences with disclosure in both friendship, relationships and the workplace. I find it a lot easier to blog about dyspraxia and anxiety and mainly in day to day life if it's brought up by others. I would love to say I don't care what other people think but I'm quite a sensitive person and social anxiety makes that hard, but I think finding the right people who have empathy and understanding really does help! When it came to my boyfriend I disclosed on the first chat we ever had a year before we properly became a couple and he was open and said he didn't know very much about dyspraxia.

Also I just thought I would add, that negative experiences about disclosure can be turned into a positive by awareness raising and education. Even though some of my experiences haven't been positive, I've learnt a lot of ignorance stems from lack of education, fear, and understanding. I've found a lot of people will assume we need looking after or need lots and lots of help out of fear. Given how poorly understood dyspraxia is it's understandable that people may not know what it is it's finding people who want to know more. I always say if everything had gone right for me I wouldn't be doing the awareness work I do, doing the job I do or have met half the people I know. I will be always honest about my anxiety etc but we all have things to work on. It's easy for people to think when things go wrong as I once thought people will never understand you but it's shaped me and my values in helping others be understood and that can be applied to jobs, relationships and friendships."

Remember you have the right to:



- Be treated fairly and in a non-discriminatory fashion.
- Have information about your disability treated confidentially and respectfully.
- Work together with others to identify necessary supports for your success.
- Obtain information about disability support services.

You have the responsibility to:

- Investigate and fully understand your disability and disability-related needs and how they impact on community living and social activities.
- Find out about options for accessing the community areas or activities of your choice.
- Advise community members and friends in good time of your accommodation and support needs.
- Understand that community members and friends may not be able to address your needs effectively if you do not inform them with enough time.



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(Ref National Collaboration on Workforce and Disability (NCWD) for Youth <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/about> The 411 on Disability Disclosure: a workbook for youth with disabilities.

Below are some great blogs, vlogs, and information on the subject:

Eben Fletcher, dyspraxic activist, has written a blog on explaining Dyspraxia/DCD, take a look here:

dyspraxiactivist.blogspot.co.uk/2017/01/explaining-dyspraxia.html

Blogger Natalie Williams writes on Disclosing Dyspraxia here:

<https://theblogwithonepost.wordpress.com/2017/03/13/disclosing-dyspraxia/>

Here is another read of young lady called Jane and her experiences of disclosing her Dyspraxia:

www.xojane.com/relationships/terrified-tell-people-disability

To watch vlogger Krystal Bella Shaw talk on the subject click here:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=wT65sMEdXFY

Visual Knowledge Vlog on Dyspraxia and Social Intelligence can be watched here:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_GLkp5yhN8

Disability Rights UK:

www.disabilityrightsuk.org/telling-people-you%E2%80%99re-disabled-clear-and-easy-guide-students

References:



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National Collaboration on Workforce and Disability NCWD for Youth

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/about> The 411 on Disability Disclosure: a workbook for youth with disabilities.

Gov.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/rights-disabled-person/employment>



Further information available from:

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