



Health Education England

Dyslexia in Doctors

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Aims of the workshop

- Defining dyslexia
- Possible impacts of dyslexia on study and clinical placement
- What helps – generally
- Wessex research findings
- Scenarios: how medical educators can support dyslexic trainees



Activity

What do you think dyslexia is? Discuss with others and draft a definition.

Definition

The British Dyslexia Association (2007) defines **dyslexia** in the following way:

- Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty which is neurobiological in origin and persists across the lifespan. It is characterised by difficulties with **phonological processing, rapid naming, working memory, processing speed** and the automatic development of skills that are **unexpected** in relation to an individual's other cognitive abilities. These processing difficulties can undermine the acquisition of **literacy and numeracy skills**, as well as musical notation, and have an effect on verbal communication, organisation and adaptation to change.

Dyslexia: main characteristics

Often strong

- Verbal/non verbal ability
- Creative approach

Weaker

- phonological awareness
- short-term auditory (working)memory
- unexpected delay in the development of literacy skills
- processing speeds

Impacts on self-confidence

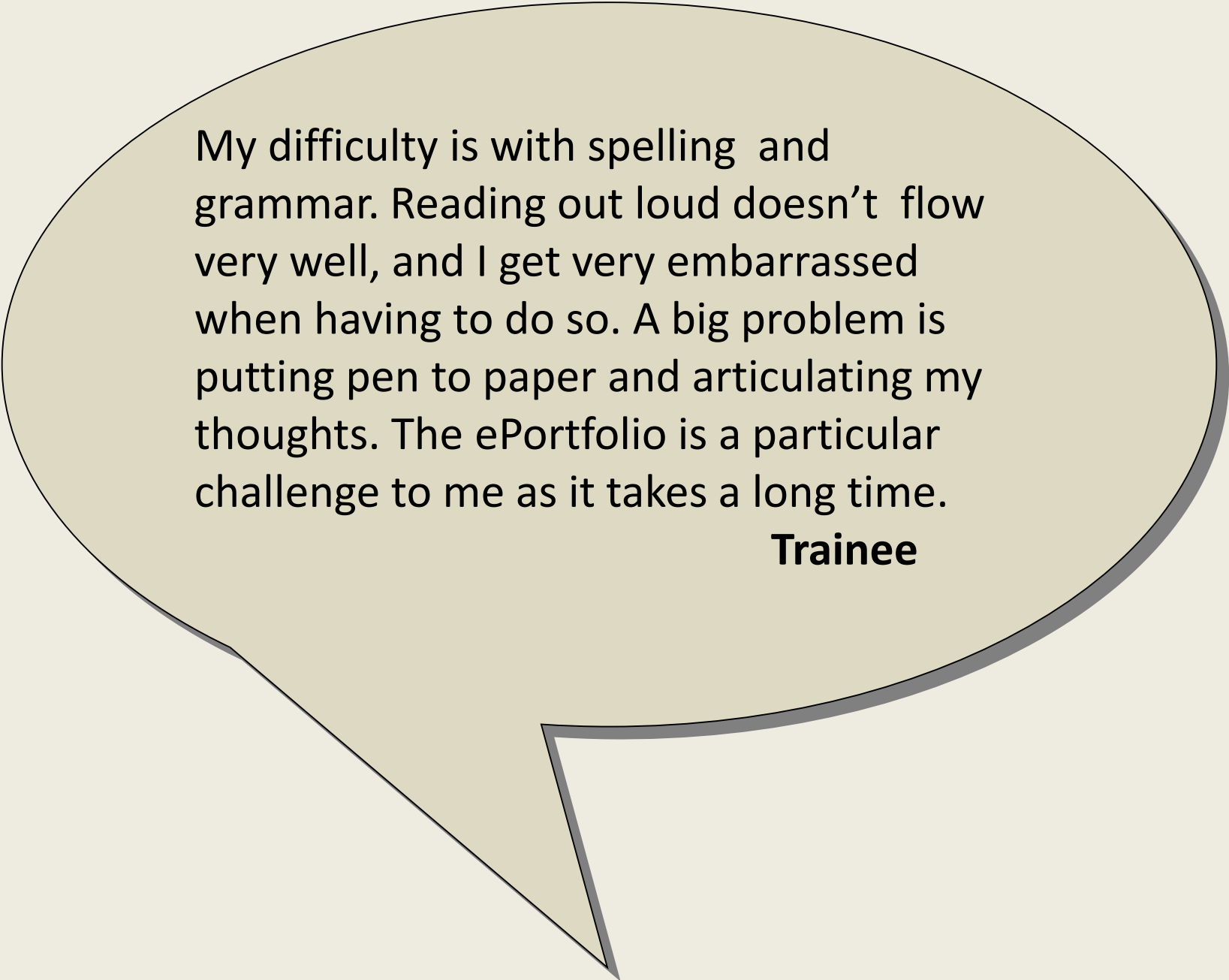




John is an excellent trainee but has unfortunately failed four attempts at passing the MRCP 1. He describes a great difficulty in understanding the questions but has no difficulty responding to the same questions when they are put orally.

Understandably, his confidence has suffered, and there is also a considerable degree of anxiety.

Case manager



My difficulty is with spelling and grammar. Reading out loud doesn't flow very well, and I get very embarrassed when having to do so. A big problem is putting pen to paper and articulating my thoughts. The ePortfolio is a particular challenge to me as it takes a long time.

Trainee

Study challenges

- Revision techniques
- Passing exams
- Structuring essays
- Reading efficiency and recall
- Note taking
- Time keeping
- Reflective writing
- Lack of effective study skills



Clinical challenges



Joint research project involving 14 participants and 5 key informers with experience of dyslexia/dyspraxia

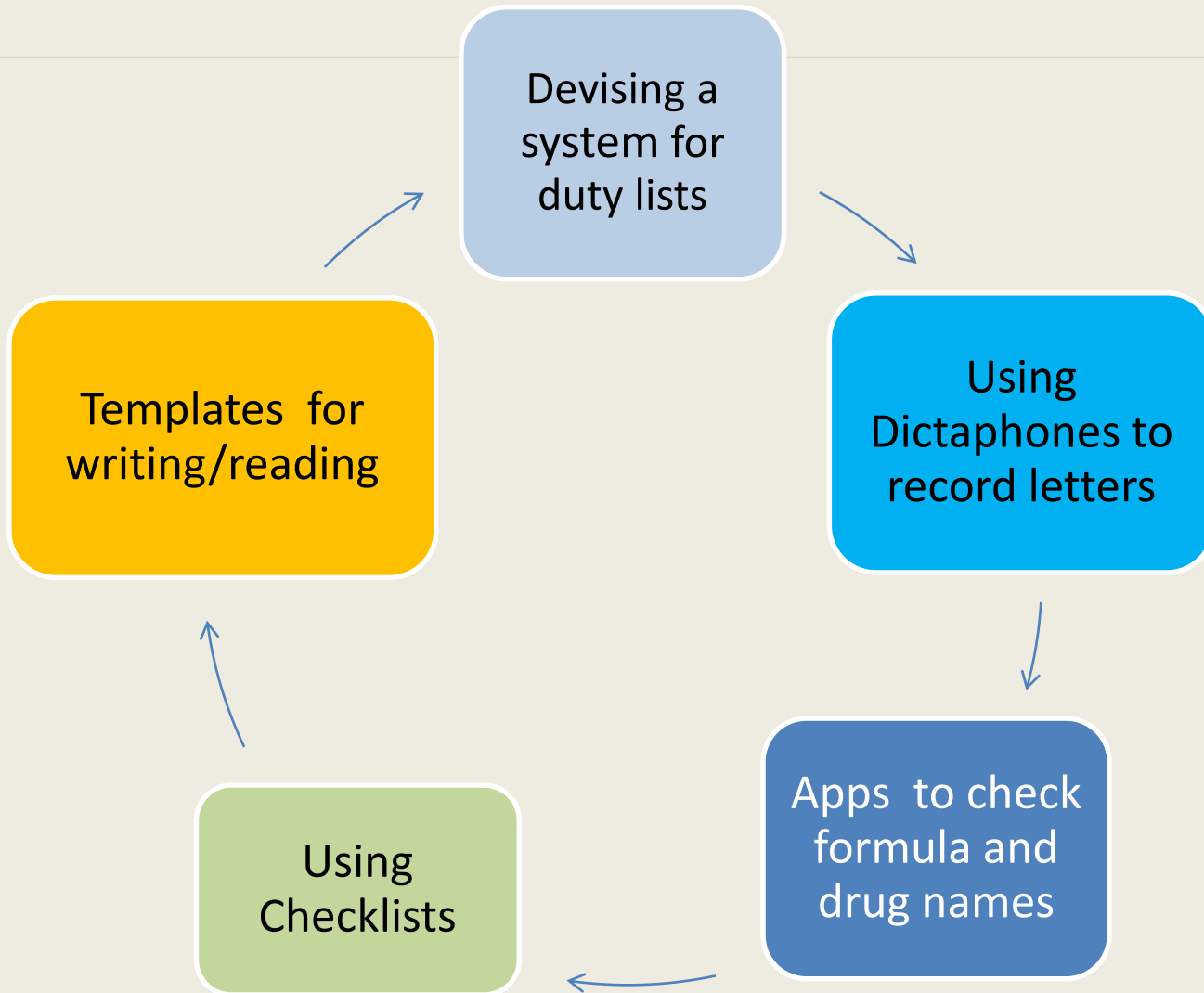
Practice Guidance of strategies by doctors with dyslexia for doctors with dyslexia on:

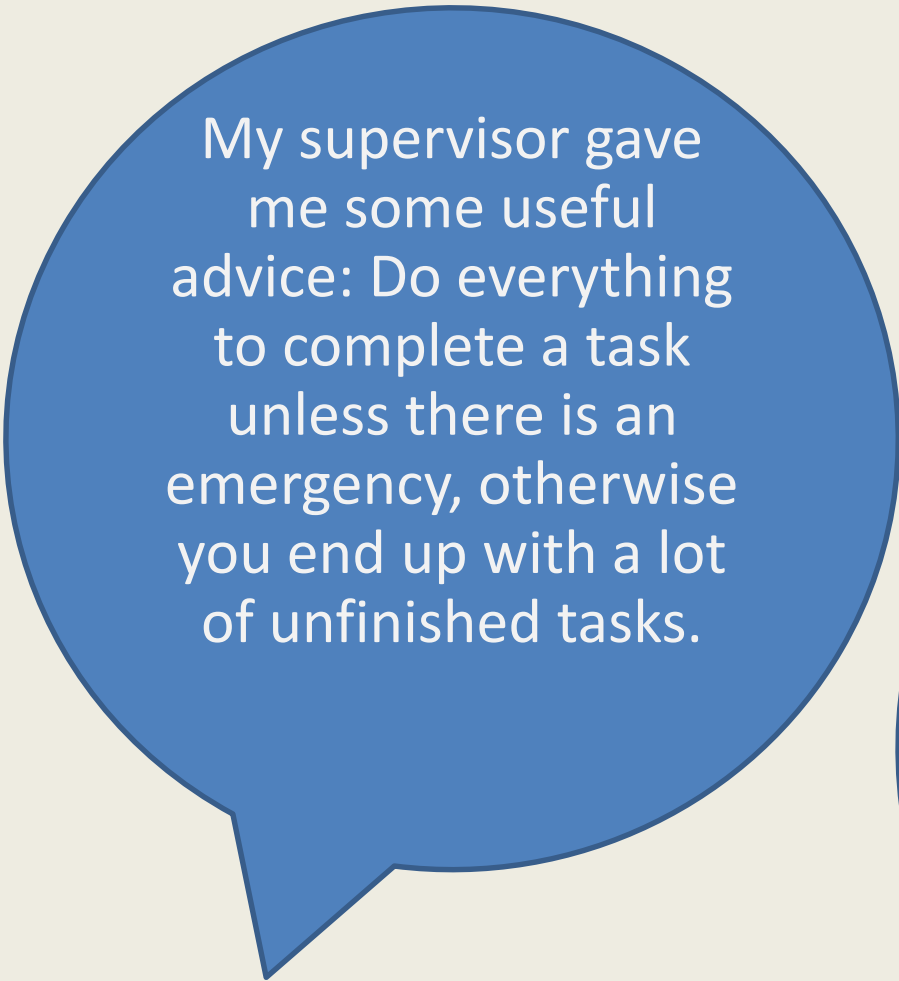
- Revision and exams
- Writing and spelling
- Reading
- Memory, time management and organisation
- Assistive technologies

View at

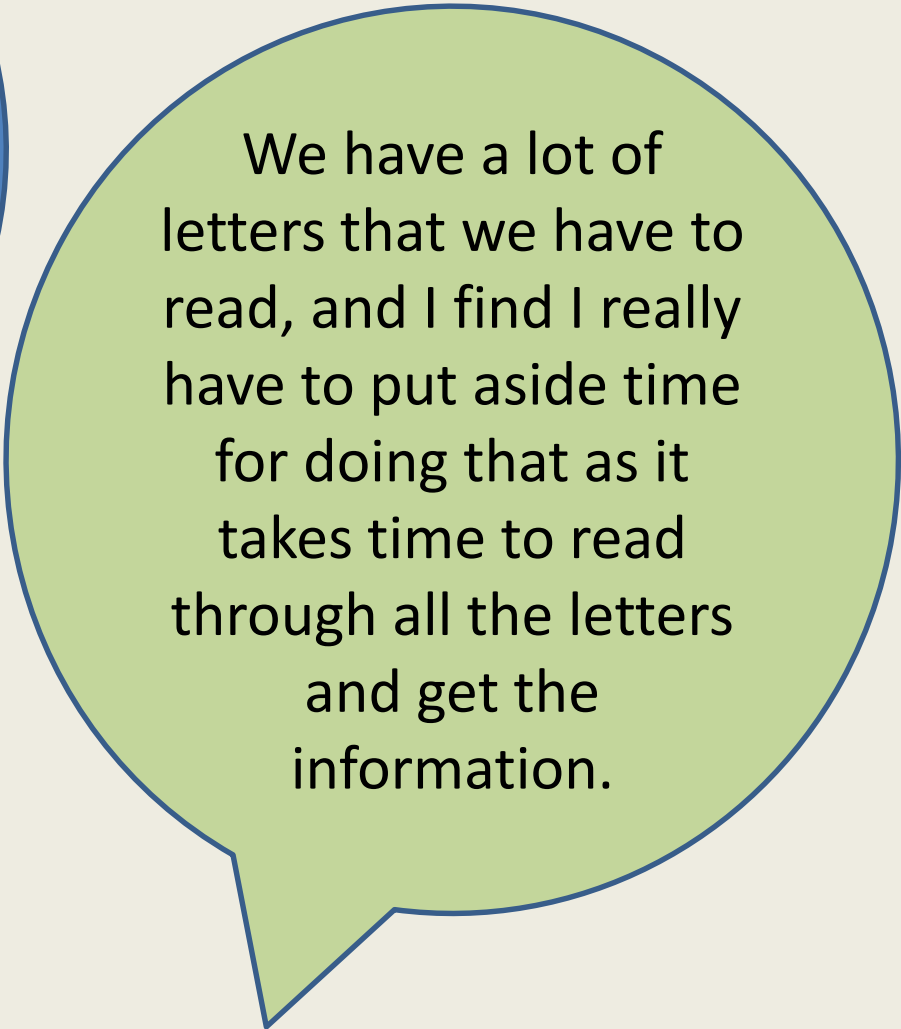
http://www.wessexdeanery.nhs.uk/guidance_recourses/professional_support_unit/virtual_support_group_area/dyslexia_information.aspx

Clinical placement: What helps?





My supervisor gave me some useful advice: Do everything to complete a task unless there is an emergency, otherwise you end up with a lot of unfinished tasks.



We have a lot of letters that we have to read, and I find I really have to put aside time for doing that as it takes time to read through all the letters and get the information.

Study support: revision and exams what helps?

Linking theory with
real situations

Summarising a
passage in a few
words

Working with a variety
of learning styles

Maintaining a healthy
balance between book
work and practice
questions

**USING ACTIVE
LEARNING
TECHNIQUES**

Devising a revision
timetable/shorter
revision sessions

**Teaching what you
have learnt to a real
or imaginary person**

Reading every word in
MCQs

Testing recall/ building
in overlearning

Activity

Choose one or more case scenarios and discuss:

- The issues
- What would you advise
- What support could be put in place?

Reasonable adjustments

- Additional time in exams
- Coaching support
- An understanding and aware supervisor
- The opportunity to shadow others
- Time and space to complete paperwork
- Help in feeling comfortable about disclosing
- Challenging negative assumptions and promoting awareness

Disclosure: advice from a dyslexic GP trainee to a medical graduate

If you're slow it will frustrate the team. He could record, if not he could ask not to be the key person and offer to do other tasks like job lists. I suffered a lot at first but as I developed I became more honest and colleagues appreciated this; I learnt to say I'm not very good at X but I can do Y.

GP trainee

Final thoughts



- Simple adjustments are often all that is needed
- Dyslexia can impact in different ways and at different times throughout training
- Every one with dyslexia has an individual profile
- Be flexible in your approach: ask what might help?
- Give practical help: introduce structures: show them; allow hands-on practice; repeat information; provide over learning opportunities
- Build upon the doctor's strengths

Resources

Health Education Wessex *Practice Guidance: Strategies for dyslexic doctors*

http://www.wessexdeanery.nhs.uk/guidance_recourses/professional_support_unit/case_management_area/dyslexia_information.aspx

Locke R, Scallan S, Mann R, Alexander G. Clinicians with dyslexia: a systematic review of effects and strategies. *The Clinical Teacher* 2015; **12**: 1-5

Newland F, Shrewsbury D, Robson J. Foundation doctors and dyslexia: a qualitative study of their experiences and coping strategies. *Postgrad Med J* 2015; **91**: 1073, 1-6

Shrewsbury D. Trainee doctors with learning difficulties: recognizing need and providing support. *British Journal of Hospital Medicine* 2012; **73**:6, 345-249.

<https://www.patoss-dyslexia.org/SupportAdvice/InformationSheets/2014-01-20/Information-for-Doctors-Psychotherapists>

GMC http://www.gmc-uk.org/doctors/plab/reasonable_adjustments.asp

http://www.gmc-uk.org/accessibility/assistive_technologies.asp

Resources 2

Dyslexia and Dyspraxia: Information for doctors

<https://www.patoss-dyslexia.org/assets/Documents/Dyslexiainfodortherapists.pdf?1390236174>

Dyspraxia

Dyspraxia Foundation

https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/?gclid=Cj0KCQiA84rQBRDCARIsAPO8RFwJ6ZiyRmunHQsRNe2o0ydMP7DpffQXp4s11Ji-MLoC3ZkTkg1uyklaAjzIEALw_wcB

Dyspraxia Checklist (Kirby)

http://psychology.research.southwales.ac.uk/media/files/documents/2014-04-04/ADC_Guidelines.pdf

The Equality Act

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/85041/equality-duty.pdf

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