



Your Voice

MY LIFE AND WORK WITH DYSPRAXIA

5 MINUTE READ

BY KAYLEIGH - EXPERT BY EXPERIENCE



Having dyspraxia has made life harder for me. It is a variable condition, it often gets confused by others as dyslexia which is a different condition all together. Or minimised as someone who might have an issue with their speech or be a bit clumsy. There's so much more to it than that. And if that's all it was I would still be labelled with unexplained difficulties and even more misunderstood.

Trying to process information is a real struggle. Getting my brain and body to match up is so hard it's a real victory when it happens or when I find a tool to counteract it. When it doesn't happen some of the issues are being too slow to process what you're seeing or hearing or feeling and being accused of lying. Being over or under sensitive to the environment and not being able to focus. Not being able to do more than one thing at a time.

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FINE MOTOR SKILLS

Everyday tasks take longer to do and ones that require extra concentration for a person who doesn't have these issues would take even more from me. Tasks that require the use of fine motor skills are really hard and even impossible on a bad day. For example, some days turning a key to open and lock the door is impossible and every other time it is hard.

Using utensils is hard, thicker handles help. Doing up buttons is really hard, it takes ages. Opening packaging is hard, some packages require aids and some are achievable with a lot of effort. I'm not able to peel potatoes with a knife or peeler as it's too unsafe. I can't get the knack. Potatoes are too round and slippery and I can't manipulate my fingers correctly.

MANAGING EMOTIONS

Also, having dyspraxia makes it really hard to control your emotions which can be a social barrier and it has been for me, although at the same time it has helped me really empathise with others.

However it can be so strong that you take on other people's emotions in addition to your own. Or you can confuse it with your own emotion and it gets mistaken for you making a situation about you or cause confusion for yourself and others.





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MANAGING THE ENVIRONMENT

In terms of being clumsy, well I'm just used to it. With age I have learnt to avoid certain hazards and recognize the need to control the environment I'm in where possible. This can also be a social barrier as well as limiting but with this in place it is safer and better for functioning and avoiding major injury.

Most of the accidents I have on a daily basis now are dropping things, spilling things, minor burns, walking into furniture which in turn leads to a lot of clean ups, sore fingers, little cuts and scratches etc. That's a sacrifice to live a more independent life and better than when I was younger. I would have frequent falls, a lot of sprains and trips to A&E. I still have falls and some more serious accidents but thankfully not as often. However my feet are now permanently damaged and have caused a secondary condition.

IN THE WORKPLACE

Having dyspraxia has limited the type of work I am able to do and having reasonable adjustments is so important. I love to be useful and helpful and reach my potential and cannot do this without the right support. I need to be given extra time and not too much information at once



Tasks need to be broken down simply, step by step, one at a time. Some visual aids can help like pictures. There needs to be a good balance as I am easily distracted and need help to focus and/or re focus at times particularly when something triggers me as I have sensory issues and struggle with not letting my emotions get in the way of my work. However they can help me too as my passion is a real strength to the nature of the work I do.

Plans need to be stuck to as it can really upset my whole thinking and doing, and cause great distress. Breaks are so important so I can recharge and focus and get the fuel I need in order to concentrate. Or I will just be thinking about how tired or hungry I am. I also need to sit down a lot because the pains in my body especially my feet, can get too overwhelming.

