

STAFF TO SUPPORT CLIENTS WITH DYSLEXIA

Clients with dyslexia can be disadvantaged in the recruitment process depending on the approach taken. The Disability Discrimination Act (2005) covers people with dyslexia, as a support it is important that both JCP staff and clients consider ways to address these needs.

Signs of Dyslexia *(This information is based on the AchieveAbility checklist . This checklist is not definitive and provides only examples of possible indications of dyslexia.)*

Difficulty in memorizing particular information such as instructions or remembering interview addresses.

Poor timekeeping for meetings arranged at JCP and for job interviews.

Poor organizational skills in completing tasks requested by JCP.

Poor writing skills such as difficulty in writing instructions on paper, completing standard forms correctly eg application form or CV; persistent problems with organizing written work; spelling the same word differently in the same document. Ability to explain things orally but not in writing. Difficulty in taking down telephone messages or telephone numbers.

Poor numerical skills for example does the client have difficulty with simple calculations or reverses numbers when completing forms or taking down instructions.

Poor orienteering and co-coordinating skills such as confusing right and left or up and down; following directions especially multiple directions.

Poor comprehension skills such as your client being unable to tell you what has just been said or has heard sounds, words or sentences incorrectly or incompletely.

Poor reading skills and uses diversion tactics when requested to read such as:

The client says they do not have their glasses with them.

The client can not stay focused on the question asked.

The client holds paperwork provided but does not look at them for any length of time.

The client will engage in discussion with you rather than spend time completing paperwork in front of you.



W a l t h a m F o r e s t
Dyslexia Association
Opening doors for dyslexics since 1989

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Ways to help your clients:

Be understanding and supportive: Provide opportunities to discuss their difficulties. Positive communication is likely to reassure your client and lead to them providing their own solutions. Explore technology that may help. WFDA has free help sheets such as **Assistive Technology** (No. 6) available on wfda.org.uk. Don't emphasise 'problems' and 'difficulties' faced by your dyslexic client. Focus on the positive contributions that they could bring to the workplace such as the skills to be a good team player, the ability to come up with creative solutions and innovative ideas to working life challenges.

Online applications can be problematic as dyslexics often like to work on drafts many times over. Being logged on to a recruitment site for a long period isn't always practical. Downloads of application forms in a Word format are preferable.

Encourage your client to be prepared. This can be done by providing as much information in advance of meetings as possible. Take the time to talk through documents is also a help.

Interviews are opportunities for dyslexics to shine, as verbal skills can often be one of their strengths. However, answers may be affected by short term memory issues. Advise your client to allow time to think through questions before answering and encourage them to practice interviews.

Retention of verbal instructions. Due to short term memory difficulties: as soon as information is heard it can be forgotten. Making notes is useful but your client often finds note taking difficult. To be supportive, give instructions in writing as well as verbally. Also ensure forms are clear and legible rather than a poor quality photocopy.

Difficulty retaining information read: Always be clear on instructions that you give to your client and give the client time to understand the instructions. Clarify and reconfirm with the client their understanding of the instructions.

Allow extra time for all procedures particularly as your client may need to read something several times. Providing key points or summaries can be helpful.

Organizational Skills: Recommend that your client uses a diary system as simply remembering dates can be a problem. Providing additional guidance or training in planning, time management could be helpful.

Writing: Poor spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting is commonly a feature of dyslexia. Recommend clients to use computers to minimize the need for handwriting and provide support when needed such as information about local computer classes.

Use a multi-sensory approach: Explain a procedure but reinforce it with written instructions and through visual information such as a diagram. Run a practical session in which the client can practice a task such as an interview and has the opportunity to ask questions. Provide a simple handout that sets out the task visually and includes a step-by-step explanation of what needs to be done.

Screening: Accept the British Dyslexia Assessment screening or an online screening assessment as evidence of dyslexia. Alternatively signpost the client to dyslexia screening assessors at wfda.org.uk. On the site there is a quick questionnaire for adults on the likelihood of them having dyslexia as well as a private screening assessor list and details about the subsidised WFDA screening service.

