

## **British Dyslexia Association Employer/Training tips**

[www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/employer/training-tips](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/employer/training-tips)

### **General Considerations**

- Where an individual has disclosed dyslexic difficulties, discuss the format of the training and the accommodations the individual may require in advance of the start of training.
- Individual dyslexic learners will have different needs. These should be organised at the outset of training if effective learning is to be achieved.
- Be aware that some people may have not disclosed their dyslexia and others may not understand that they have dyslexic difficulties.
- Where an individual trainee performs poorly, undiagnosed or undisclosed dyslexic difficulties should be considered.
- Dyslexic people often take longer to master new tasks, but once mastered they are well and truly learnt.
- Adopting best practice in training for dyslexic people will also be of benefit to all learners.
- Give reminders of when training is to take place by text message, email or telephone call.

### **Dyslexia Learning Styles**

- Dyslexic people tend to be big picture thinkers, but may be less adept at processing and remembering detail. Give an overview of the training programme first and also at the start of any new section of the training.
- Dyslexic people tend to be visual and kinaesthetic learners (practical, hands-on) rather than auditory learners and learn more efficiently if they are using all sensory pathways. Sitting for long periods just listening is not one of them! Weighting should be towards the visual and hands-on rather than the auditory mode.
- For IT training, one-to-one support at a slower pace may be required, and also over a longer time period than for other trainees. To aid memory, a checklist of key training points should be introduced during 'hands-on' training for quick referral after the training.
- Provide information/instruction in a structured systematic way to enable the learner to become familiar with the structure and system: this allows them to work things out for themselves after training has finished.

### **Materials**

- Colour code all materials relating to different sections/aspects of the training.
- Make sure all written material and PowerPoint slides are presented in a dyslexia friendly way: <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/about-dyslexia/further-information/dyslexia-style-guide.html>.
- Give notes rather than expect individuals to write things down.

- Give notes and handouts in advance to allow the learner to time to read and digest information, available in electronic form if requested.
- Be prepared to provide an audio file of training points for MP3 or PC.
- Allow the learner to use a digital recorder.
- Ensure that access to computer use is fully available to dyslexic learners who may require it.
- Some dyslexic learners find mind-mapping techniques helpful in organising and learning information (see <http://www.mindmapping.com/> )

### **Teaching Style**

- Teach one thing at a time in bite size chunks.
- Be prepared to demonstrate and give examples.
- Allow time for over-learning – practice, practice, practice.
- Be prepared to work to the learner's learning and working style: it might be different from yours!
- Make your training as multi-sensory as possible and be creative. If a learner just can't retain a point use humour, put it into a funny or ridiculous story. Or get them to associate a smell or taste with the action; you can do this by asking them what their favourite smell or taste is and get them to close their eyes and imagine doing the task whilst smelling or tasting their favourite thing: this really works.
- For kinaesthetic learners give them something to hold in their hands whilst listening to instruction: this will improve their listening skills.
- Get learners to visualise doing the task or demonstrate it to them; then get them to say what they are doing whilst doing it. This gives the memory more to latch on to, to embed learning.

### **Reasonable Adjustments**

- If something is to be read out aloud, ask for volunteers. Never pick someone at random; they may be dyslexic and be mortified by their lack of fluency in reading aloud. Similar allowances should be made for writing things on flipcharts, recording information for teamwork activities or making presentations.
- Explanations may need to be expressed in more than one way if someone appears to have trouble grasping the point.
- Watch out for slower processing speeds, difficulties with verbal fluency and word recall. Be patient. Give the learner time to respond.
- Never belittle a learner for poor spelling, poor memory or slow processing speed.
- Avoid using acronyms, metaphors, complex language or phrases open to misinterpretation.

## **Practicalities**

- Make sure that the learner uses the same note book for all the notes they take down themselves. Encourage them to use Post-it tabs to index learning points, making it easy to find at a later date.
- Create breaks during the learning process to help with concentration levels.
- Give a summary at the end of each learning point and an overview of the next session following the break.

## **Positive Reinforcement and Feedback.**

Work with the learner as an equal: dyslexic individuals are very sensitive to authority figures and this can impede learning or they may have a 'learned helplessness' attitude as a 'left-over' emotion from their previous learning experiences at school.

Discuss with the learner what they think they have done well and what they think they have not done so well. Identifying what they have done well and what strategies they used can give them and you clues as to how to improve the parts that didn't go so well.