

Common Neurodiverse Conditions

Dyslexia

Dyspraxia

Asperger/Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)

A Toolbox for Managing Neurodiversity (ND)

Supporting ND Employees: Getting the Right Balance

Everyone has strengths and weaknesses and most people, whether ND or not, would rather be known for their strengths not their weaknesses.

Recognising the strengths as well as the weaknesses of an ND employee is one of the most effective supports an employer can provide.

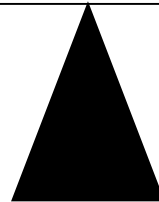
Dyslexia: Strengths and Weaknesses

STRENGTHS

**VISUAL SHORT TERM MEMORY
GETTING THE BIG PICTURE
LATERAL THINKING
QUESTIONING RULES**

WEAKNESSES

**VERBAL SHORT TERM MEMORY
GETTING THE DETAILS
FOLLOWING SEQUENCES
FOLLOWING RULES**



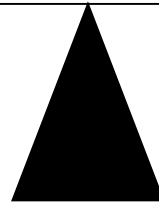
Dyspraxia: Strengths and Weaknesses

STRENGTHS

**LONG TERM MEMORY
EFFORT & TENACITY
ARTISTIC AND EXPRESSIVE
WORKING IN ISOLATION**

WEAKNESSES

**SHORT TERM MEMORY
TIME MANAGEMENT
HAND-EYE CO-ORDINATION
WORKING IN BUSY ENVIRONMENTS**



Asperger/ASD: Strengths and Weaknesses

STRENGTHS

MEMORY
ACTIVE LEARNING
ATTENTION TO DETAIL
DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS

WEAKNESSES

EMPATHY
PASSIVE LEARNING
WORKING TO APPROXIMATIONS
INDIRECT COMMUNICATIONS

ADD: Strengths and Weaknesses

STRENGTHS

**ENERGETIC
IMPULSIVENESS
MULTI-TASKING
TALKING**

WEAKNESSES

**TIME KEEPING
IMPULSIVENESS
MAINTAINING ATTENTION
LISTENING**

The Whole Organisation Approach: An ND Friendly Work Environment.

Union officials, managers and HR personnel have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of ND employees.

Policies, procedures and practices exist that fully support ND employees, i.e. they address all the characteristic behaviours – positive and negative.

What ND Employees Need.

- Inclusive work environment (pro and re-active adjustments)
- Adjustments implemented in a timely fashion
- Support in self-understanding & guidance on how to disclose
- Training in cognitive skill development
- Support managing primary & secondary characteristic behaviours
- Management & Union understanding of their needs
- Management & Union recognition of special ND issues

Special Cases: High Ability ND's.

Because they appear able their condition can go unrecognised

Performance failures interpreted as ability issues

No support can result in missed opportunities and inappropriate actions such as performance improvement programmes

Special Cases: High Ability Dyslexics.

Many dyslexics suffer chronic self doubt

The higher they rise the more significant it becomes

They get anxious and depressed and often quit!

Special Cases: High Ability Dyslexics.

10% of employees are dyslexic but...

35% of entrepreneurs are dyslexic.

Source: Julie Logan (Professor of Entrepreneurship,
Cass Business School, London)

Special Cases: Dyslexic Women

Research indicates they are less likely to be diagnosed

They are therefore less likely to get support

Which means they will have more difficulty achieving success

Special Cases: High Ability Dyslexic Women

Successful dyslexic women experience chronic self-doubt for two reasons...

1. For the same reason successful as men do
2. Because at senior levels many work environments are male dominated and provide little opportunity for women to compare themselves to similar others.

What Unions can do.

- Be pro-active in creating inclusive work environments e.g. distributing accurate information about ND, negotiating for improvements in policy and practice and publicising support for ND employees.
- Liaise with Line-Managers/HR as necessary e.g. to secure diagnostic and/or workplace needs assessments.
- Follow-up on assessments e.g. to secure further action and/or timely implementation of adjustments
- Challenge misunderstandings and negative stereotypes

Making Adjustments: The Business Case

Adjustments enable employees to succeed

When employees succeed the employers return on investment (the investment made in the employee) is maximised

Making Adjustments: The Business Case

Adjustments enable employees to flourish

When employees flourish they are happier and happier employees are more productive.

Making Adjustments: The Business Case

Adjustments enable employees to realise their potential

When employees realise their potential they have more to offer their employer

Making Adjustments: The Business Case

Adjustments reduce the likelihood of things going wrong and avoid the considerable costs involved in putting things right!

Case Study: Jane.

Well qualified, ambitious and dyslexic 29 year old Jane joined a large IT firm disclosing her dyslexia immediately.

Her manager took a 'wait and see' approach, concluding after 3 months that her work was excellent and no action was needed.

Jane's excellence was achieved by over-working and at 6 months she started to show the strain taking more and more time off.

At 9 months stressed, depressed and exhausted she contacted her Union Rep who secured a workplace needs assessment.

Over a period of months some, but not all, recommendations were implemented.

No recommendations were made to address Jane's workplace stress; her deteriorating health led to more time off work and she was eventually disciplined.

She took out a grievance and eventually quit suing for constructive dismissal.

Jane's story – what went wrong?

1. The organisation had nothing in place to respond effectively to ND.
2. The Manager failed to take effective action when Jane disclosed her condition.
3. It took too long to have the Workplace Needs Assessment (WNA) completed.
4. The psychologist who completed the WNA failed to recognise that stress was an issue and failed to identify that Jane was over working to compensate for her condition.
5. The Manager and HR failed to consult with Jane on the adjustments and failed to implement the adjustments in full and in a timely fashion.
6. The Union Rep failed to follow-up on the adjustments issue.
7. The organisation and the Union failed to tie-up absences and under-performance issues with the failure to make adjustments.
8. The employer took inappropriate disciplinary action precipitating an avoidable legal action that was costly for both sides.

Case Study: Anne.

Well qualified, ambitious and dyslexic 26 year-old Anne joined a large clothing manufacturer disclosing her dyslexia immediately.

Her manager, having received neurodiversity awareness training as part of an organisation wide initiative, arranged for a work place needs assessment (WNA) to take place within a couple of weeks of her joining.

On receiving the report and recommended adjustments the manager took note of her over-working coping strategy and agreed to a reduction of work load while other adjustments were implemented.

Once adjustments were in place and after allowing time for them to bed-in Anne's work load increased in stages over a period of 6 months and within c1 year of joining she was completing her full work load within normal working hours.

Anne's story - why it worked.

1. Key personnel (managers, HR personnel and Union officials) had all received ND awareness training as part of company policy and were all aware of the characteristic behaviours (including over-working) associated with ND employees.
2. The Union promoted positive images of ND and provided ND information leaflets with advice on disclosure to new recruits and applicants.
3. The company had a clear policy statement detailing the steps to be taken to support ND employees and the Manager/HR followed these guide lines.
4. Once Anne disclosed her condition action to secure a WNA was fast.
5. Managers/HR discussed recommended adjustments with Anne and the adjustments were implemented in a timely fashion.
6. Action to address over working as an adjustment was taken seriously and stress issues avoided.