



A Guide for Adult Dyslexic Learners

Principles for developing as a dyslexic learner

Knowledge

Understand dyslexic learners have different combinations of dyslexic characteristics.

Each dyslexic person has a unique perspective on the world, this is a strength not a limitation, find yours and celebrate them.

Recognise

Identifying and building dyslexic strengths is the key to dealing with dyslexia.

Using and developing your dyslexic strengths diminishes the other effects of dyslexia, encourages creativity, resilience, and resourcefulness.

Acknowledge

There are emotional impacts of being dyslexic in a non-dyslexic world.

Everyone needs to hear more affirmation of what they are good at to build persistence and self-advocacy. Take time to reflect on your dyslexic experiences and acknowledge all you have achieved. This helps to build persistence.

Advice from Tertiary Dyslexic Learners:

“See the label as a gift, not a handicap – see it as a way to stand your ground rather than not belonging. Don’t give up and don’t be ashamed. Don’t let it hold you back. You can still do things just in a different way and with some support.”

Help Yourself

Trust yourself, build up your self-belief – you are the expert on yourself and your dyslexia. You know, or can discover, what works and doesn’t work for your learning.

Persevere in pursuing your goals, consider what interests you, drives you and gives you joy.

Be unashamed – seek the help that you need to be successful. Self-advocacy (seeking what you need to be successful) and self-determination are the path forward.

Focus on and use your strengths rather than focusing on perceived weaknesses. For example: in assessments use visual or oral strengths, in group work volunteer for the work that matches your strengths. See – [The Many Strengths of Dyslexics | Dyslexia Help at the University of Michigan \(umich.edu\) \(2024\)](#)



Strategies for Learning

Find learning methods that suit your style – dyslexia is not related to intelligence. For example, use a white noise App or music to block out external sounds. Work in surroundings that don't distract you, or that offer the right sort of distraction for balancing your study.

Experiment with different techniques. For example, run a visual story in your head for the information you need to know. Chunk material into main ideas and key points. Create symbols or doodles as keys to help you remember things. Watch videos, listen to podcasts, and audio record your thoughts before writing them down. See: [The Dyslexic Collective | Mysite \(ruth-gibbons.com\)](http://ruth-gibbons.com)

Give yourself time to work slowly and clearly. Learning with dyslexia takes time – don't crowd your study program. Study-rest-relax-study. Your brain needs time to process all the ideas floating around in it.

Manage the tasks you need to do, work out how long it will take to do the task and how long to do the writing and checking. Use a time management planners. See: [Stay Organized & Manage Your Time | Dyslexia Help at the University of Michigan \(umich.edu\)](http://umich.edu)

Don't do more than you have to – finding new information can be fun but overwhelming – stick to your plan and become knowledgeable in the areas that you can relate to.

Connect with others

- Being dyslexic is being different, connect with others who celebrate difference.
- Start a Community of Practice for dyslexic learners in your study place or online. A space where you can share your experiences, swap approaches to study and support each other.
- Find teachers, trainers, tutors who understand and have empathy for learning differences, and provide real resources for learning.

Educate others

- In our research participants encouraged the sharing of stories for increased understanding of dyslexia and dyslexic strengths, and to build more supportive learning communities.
- They emphasised that people need to understand that dyslexia extends beyond school and affects all aspects of life, but with the right strategies, it can offer unique advantages.
- Overall, they encourage you to not let being dyslexia hold you back.

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Find out more:

- View the full report and resources on Ako Mai Me – Adult Dyslexic Learner Journey project page
- Read the different dyslexic tertiary learner profiles in the Ako Report.
- Look at others' dyslexia stories: Sarah Platt Artist [Palmerston North artist Sarah Platt writes book on being dyslexic – NZ Herald](#)
- Find out more about your dyslexic strengths: <https://portal.neurolearning.com/surveys/mindstrengthsnew>

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Go to <https://ako.ac.nz/knowledge-centre/ako-mai-me-the-adult-dyslexic-learner-journey-and-experience/> to download resources and the report free.

