

Some of the more common conditions associated with learning difficulties are:

#### **ADHD**

Stands for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder; people with ADHD are inattentive, easily distracted, impulsive and hyper active. These characteristics are usually combined to varying degrees in severity.

#### **ADD**

Attention Defecit Disorder without hyperactive and impulsive symptoms.

#### **Autism**

Difficulties in relating to and communicating with others resulting in social isolation. People with autism often live in a world of their own.

#### **Asperger syndrome**

Often referred to as 'high functioning autism'. People with Asperger syndrome frequently have one special interest to the exclusion of anything else and often become obsessively involved in it. They can function adequately on their own but may have difficulties in relating to and communicating with others.

#### **DAMP**

Deficit in Attention Motor control and Perception is the medical term; it may mean having some or all of the ADHD characteristics as well as having motoric difficulties and problems interpreting what you see and what you hear.

Predominately diagnosed by the co-existence of Dyspraxia (DCD) and ADHD.

#### **Dyslexia**

Specific difficulties with reading and writing. Associated difficulties Dysgraphia (poor handwriting) and Dyscalculia (difficulties with math).

#### **Tourette syndrome**

Involuntary movements or sounds which may come and go and vary in severity.

**It is very common for these difficulties to co-exist in various combinations.**

We would like to thank all of those people with learning difficulties who have helped us write these leaflets.

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**mindroom**  
learning without boundaries

Meet Annie  
She is sociable  
She is a lateral thinker  
She can convince you  
She can certainly make you laugh

But she can't always  
make sense of the world  
**Understanding  
DAMP**

# DAMP

## Facts

### Deficits in Attention, Motor control, and Perception

DAMP is a neuro-developmental condition which means that it is part of the make-up of the brain. The condition can be mild, serious or in between. It appears to be more common in boys, but it certainly affects girls too.

DAMP is predominately diagnosed by the co-existence of Dyspraxia (DCD) and ADHD. In addition there will frequently be problems with language, perception and thought.

Dyspraxia: Developmental Coordination Disorder is characterised by impairments in movement planning and the development of motor coordination which interfere with academic achievement or daily living activities. Core problems involve difficulties in planning and carrying out complex, sequenced actions.

Possible features: clumsiness, poor organisation and concentration and can affect communication skills.

This is not the ideal acronym in English, but it's fine in Sweden where it was coined in the early 1980s by the leading practitioners in this field.

People with DAMP tend to be weaker in hand, eye, brain co-ordination and consequently have less well developed motor skills. The attention deficit means that it isn't easy for them to concentrate fully or to follow complex instructions. Difficulties also arise with perception, meaning that they find it hard to interpret clearly what they see and hear.

Only by understanding both strengths and weaknesses can we bring the very best out of others and ourselves

## What can you do to help students like Annie? How to help

A student with DAMP usually needs help with structuring and organisation of day to day work.

- Break assignments down into small tasks
- Ensure tasks are clearly prioritised
- Set short, achievable deadlines for each task.
- Try to make sure 'Annie' does one thing at a time
- Check results often and give encouragement at each stage
- Build in regular short breaks throughout the day
- Plan each day and make simple schedules and lists
- Post-it notes are great for reminders
- Vary tasks to sustain motivation
- Create consistent, reliable routines
- Talk to 'Annie': does she work best in peace and quiet or does she prefer action around her?

## So what can Annie do for you? Creating a mutual benefit

Try to put her in a well structured situation where the challenge is to undertake straightforward routine tasks. Short, planned breaks and task variety are both excellent aids to 'Annie's' focus and attention.

Someone with DAMP generally needs the tasks to be well defined but offer a change of scenery and fresh challenge to sustain interest and concentration. Perhaps Annie would be good at looking after her classmates, handling short term tasks and in computer related tasks which compensate for any motoric weaknesses.

The so called 'norm' would not 'norm'-ally include 'Annie', yet she has plenty to offer and a contribution to make. By working together to understand the strengths and weaknesses of students like her, we create the opportunity to bring the best out of them – and out of everyone they encounter.

We are all unique in our personal make up and in the way we function. So these general guidelines are just that. Please interpret them and adapt them to suit each individual and each situation.