

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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learning without boundaries

# Meet Mike

He is a visual thinker

He is sociable and a good talker

He can be highly creative

He can achieve impressive results

But he can't always make sense  
of letters or words  
**Understanding  
Dyslexia**

# Dyslexia

## Facts

### Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a neuro-developmental condition – which means that it is part of the make-up of the brain. It is the most common cause of reading, writing and spelling difficulties and affects men and women in almost equal proportions and tends to be hereditary.

It is characterised by specific problems in learning to read and write. Dyslexia is best described as a combination of abilities and difficulties that affect the learning process in one or more of reading, spelling and writing.

Associated difficulties – Dysgraphia (poor handwriting) Dyscalculia (difficulties with math).

The word dyslexia is derived from the Greek language and literally means 'difficulty with words'.

Although dyslexia often causes significant problems in the classroom – especially if it is not spotted early in life – it does not hinder the development of intellectual talents. People with dyslexia are often high achievers in maths, music and creative walks of life.

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 Mike?

### How to help

Capitalise on 'Mike's' social, visual and creative talents and minimise his reliance on text and documents.

- Take time at the start to discuss the best ways of working
- Try to use as much visual information as possible
- Rely on personal instruction rather than the written word
- Go through new assignments and tasks face to face
- Be direct and to the point
- Use his social skills and creative capacities
- Make lists – but try to keep them short
- Avoid 'paper work' as far as possible
- Let him use a computer
- Allow for breaks – Mike needs to recharge his concentration
- Provide a scribe

## So what can Mike do for you?

### Creating a mutual benefit

'Mike' will achieve most in a position that capitalises on his energy and his sociability. He is very good at engaging with people; he enjoys varied tasks and has a capacity for lateral thinking.

He is unlikely to be able to perform well in a purely academic situation – but he likes working with computers and is comfortable with technology.

Take advantage of 'Mike's' creativity and don't hesitate to put him in charge of whole projects. He has the capacity to do this – just don't try to make sense of his notes.

Try to remember that although he may have acute difficulty with simple writing challenges, he probably has many compensatory strengths. These are incredibly valuable if you work with him to profit from them.

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