**Dyspraxia** **(Developmental Co-ordination Disorder)**

Dyspraxia is a common disorder that affects movement and co-ordination. It is also known as developmental co-ordination disorder (DCD).

Dyspraxia/DCD is often spotted at a young age but there may be many emerging adults with dyspraxia who remain undiagnosed.

Dyspraxia affects co-ordination skills such as tasks requiring balance, kicking and throwing a ball and fine motor skills (such as writing or using small objects carefully) in children and adults. It is a condition that will last for life and is recognised by international organisations, including the World Health Organization.

**Symptoms of dyspraxia (DCD)**

* The symptoms of dyspraxia can vary between individuals and may change over time.

**Co-ordination difficulties**

* The co-ordination difficulties associated with dyspraxia can reduce the person's ability to participate and function in education and employment.
* Difficulties with self-care, writing, typing, riding a bike and playing may start in childhood and continue into adulthood. An adult may also experience new difficulties, for example with driving a vehicle or DIY.

**Other difficulties which can affect a person’s education**

**Communication**

* Words can be muddled.

**Organisational**

* Planning difficulties.
* Memory difficulties.
* Understanding rules.

**Classroom Difficulties**

* Difficulty getting ideas down on paper.
* Poor listening skills.
* Affected by background noise.
* Difficulty in copying from the board.

**Concentration**

* Poor memory.
* Limited time focus/can be distracted.

**The student might benefit from**

* The use of visual reminders.
* Breaking down of tasks into shorter doable blocks.
* Feedback sessions at the end of tasks.
* Acknowledgement and praise.
* Practicing skills.
* Given one direction at a time.
* A system for checking off tasks as they are completed.
* The use of different coloured pens when doing multiple aspects of a task.
* Mind maps.
* Handouts relating to board notes.
* Access to word processing facilities.
* Large print text.
* A diary to record set homework.
* Support with file organisation
* A buddy system to make sure all notes are up to date and homework.
* Much examination preparation, including relaxation, practice under exam conditions as well as further concessions (reader, prompt, scribe, extra time required).

Emerging adults with dyspraxia may also have social and emotional difficulties, as well as problems with time management and personal organisation.

Dyspraxia does not affect intelligence, but may make learning new skills more difficult. Adults with dyspraxia may have developed coping strategies to find ways around everyday tasks they find difficult.

**Treating Dyspraxia (DCD)**

* There's no cure for dyspraxia, but a number of therapies can make it easier for young adults to manage their problems. These include:
* Being taught ways of carrying out activities they find difficult – such as breaking down larger tasks into much smaller parts and practising doing this regularly.
* Adapting tasks to make them easier – such as using special grips on pens and pencils so they are easier to hold.
* Although dyspraxia doesn't affect how intelligent a learner is, it can make it more difficult for them to learn and they may need extra help to keep up at school/college.
* Although the physical co-ordination of a young person with dyspraxia will remain below average, this often becomes less of a problem as they get older.
* However, difficulties in school/college – particularly producing written work – can become much more prominent and might require extra help from parents, teachers and support. workers.

**Dyspraxia or DCD?**

* While many people in the UK use the term dyspraxia to refer to the difficulties with movement and co-ordination that first develop in young children, the term is used less often by health professionals nowadays.
* Instead, most healthcare professionals use the term developmental co-ordination disorder (DCD) to describe the condition as dyspraxia, in later life, can be used to describe movement difficulties as a result of damage to the brain, such as a stroke or head injury.