



Transcript: Why inclusive communication is important to me

My name is Tracey Lenthall. I am an HR Director at PwC and I am here to talk about dyslexia.

[Dyslexia and communication]

Growing up with dyslexia can have its own set of challenges, and one of the hardest parts is communication. This includes verbal and nonverbal, communication to others and being on the receiving end of others' communication.

Dyslexia means difficulty with words. As more and more research has been done on dyslexia, what they now realise is the difficulty of words is actually a symptom, not a cause. What they see now is the fact that actually dyslexics have abilities that are out of balance. So, we have difficulties in processing and remembering sounds, and difficulties in putting details in order. This is often balanced by strengths, which are 3D imaging (basically we're very visual, we see the world from a visual perspective), verbal skills, and long-term memory.

The brain of a dyslexic is structured differently to a non-dyslexic; which means processing information is slower which can cause a barrier when it comes to interpreting words, text and speech.

So, it has a real profound impact on people and each person is very different. So how it presents in me will be very different to someone else. I am going to tell you some of the everyday challenges that I face.

[Communicating with me]

So first, if you are communicating with me:

Communications which are too long or very complicated (language or long words) tend to overwhelm me, so I don't tend to read them. When organisations explain things; if they don't provide the overall picture first (ideally visually) and they delve straight into the detail – I get lost and unsure what is being said.

Reading – I am a lot slower at reading and so when people use subtitles on videos, they're often too quick, so it will be much harder to understand the context of what is being portrayed.



If it is verbal communication, it can tend to be too fast which is hard to follow and take in.

A lot of individuals or organisations can tend to use a lot of long words, It can be that I don't understand them or the context of what is being presented. It can tend to be in conversation where I can get lost on what is being said. I am intuitive and use that a lot of the time to understand what is happening in conversations or communications.

If you are sending me something visual or designing something, then I find moving and flashing images or alerts distracting.

[How I communicate]

When I communicate, I find constructions of sentences incredibly difficult. I have this creative brain with lots of ideas, but actually what comes to putting pen to paper, or on to the laptop, is very different. I'm very blocked and it cannot represent what I am trying to say at all.

Spelling can be difficult also as you need to be able to have an idea of how to spell a word to look it up. I find Google excellent in interpreting my spelling. There are many words and letters that sound the same e.g. 'C' and 'S' e.g. 'sealant'. If I cannot visualise the word it is much harder to spell it. So, to look this word up might take a long time as I might start with 'C' instead of an 'S'. Also, homophones, such as the different spellings of 'there', 'they're' and 'their'.

I rely on my intuition hugely, and my brain literally does not stop, which means I think much bigger picture. If I am also discussing something at work, I will instantly see where it needs to go. I don't want to get into the detail. I see the strategy, immediately.

And some of the less obvious things. I have very low concentration and I can be easily distracted. On one level I'm exceptionally organised in planning my work, but on another level, my day-to-day head is incredibly disorganised. I get bored very quickly, as well.

[Communication tips]

So here are some tips on how to communicate with me and other people with dyslexia. You will find more in the other resources in this toolkit.

- Make communication alive. Make it really interesting and not really text heavy as that will put someone off who has a reading disability.
- Show us, don't tell us. Design your communication in the most visual way you can. For example, use animations to show us what you're trying to communicate to us. Use visual pictures, flow charts, pictograms and graphics, which all help to tell the story or break up a text heavy story. This is probably the best advice I could give anyone that's trying to effectively communicate with someone who is dyslexic.
- Remember that people with dyslexia are slower at reading.
- Break up text with bullet points.

- Think about the words and keep it simple. Long words are not needed.
- Keep sentences short.
- Use good colour contrast. Avoid black on white. Use grey on cream instead.
- Use a sans serif font.
- Font size should be at least 12 point.
- Avoid underlining, italics and the use of capital letters for emphasis.

Thank you and I hope you find my experiences useful.



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