



Not  
Everyone  
Needs To  
Know  
Everything

# Telling People About Dyslexia

## Be Strategic

it is important to be strategic in the way we discuss dyslexia. In reality, we shouldn't have to, and it isn't acceptable that we have to be the ones holding ourselves back. I would rather give you advice based on the reality of our world, not on the way the world should be.

Most people don't understand dyslexia, and that is ignorance, not malice on their part (don't get me wrong, some people will be rude, but that is a statement on them - not you). That ignorance can sometimes have a detrimental impact on us.

*People don't realise how deep a comment like 'please double check your work' hits us due to all the other comments we have had in the past.*

- Natalie

## Oversharing or secret keeping?

I often see that dyslexic people either don't talk about being dyslexic or overshare their dyslexic challenges. For example, saying... *'oh sorry, I am useless at that because I am dyslexic,' 'I am so disorganised, and it's so hard for me because I am dyslexic,'* or, *'I am so bad at doing that task because of my dyslexia.'* If these sound familiar, then keep reading.

In the past, when I acted this way, people started seeing me in a negative light. For example, I would get colleagues making jokes about how I was quite scatty, which really upset and hurt me, but I had actually made precisely the same comment.



dyslexia  
IN ADULTS

This is where the concept of not everyone needing to know everything comes in:

- Yes, you may occasionally forget a meeting,
- Yes, you may accidentally make a spelling mistake in an email
- Yes, you may be bad at particular tasks

But you do not need to tell people these things or point them out.



## When do you mention the dyslexic challenges?

So, of course, it is up to you and what you feel comfortable doing. Many people don't like shouting about their dyslexia to people, and that is totally fine.

However, if you are going to open up, here are three questions that I would suggest thinking about.

### 1 Will it help you to open up?

Will talking about dyslexia at that moment help you get some additional support or help?

If you are just off the cuff commenting on how you are bad at something, maybe think... do they need to know this?

### 2 Can you talk about challenges & strengths?

When you talk about dyslexia, the rule should be, never just say the negatives, always mention a positive

If you are talking about how you are bad at writing reports, you can say the good side of dyslexia is that you like reports to be simple. Who doesn't want reports to be simple and easy to digest?!

### 3 Do you trust them to listen?

Some people are ignorant; once they know your experience, that can change. Think about if the person you want to talk to will take the time to hear your dyslexic reality and help.

If they aren't, see that as a statement on them and don't view yourself as the problem.

# What to do if you have a dyslexic challenge but don't want to talk about it?

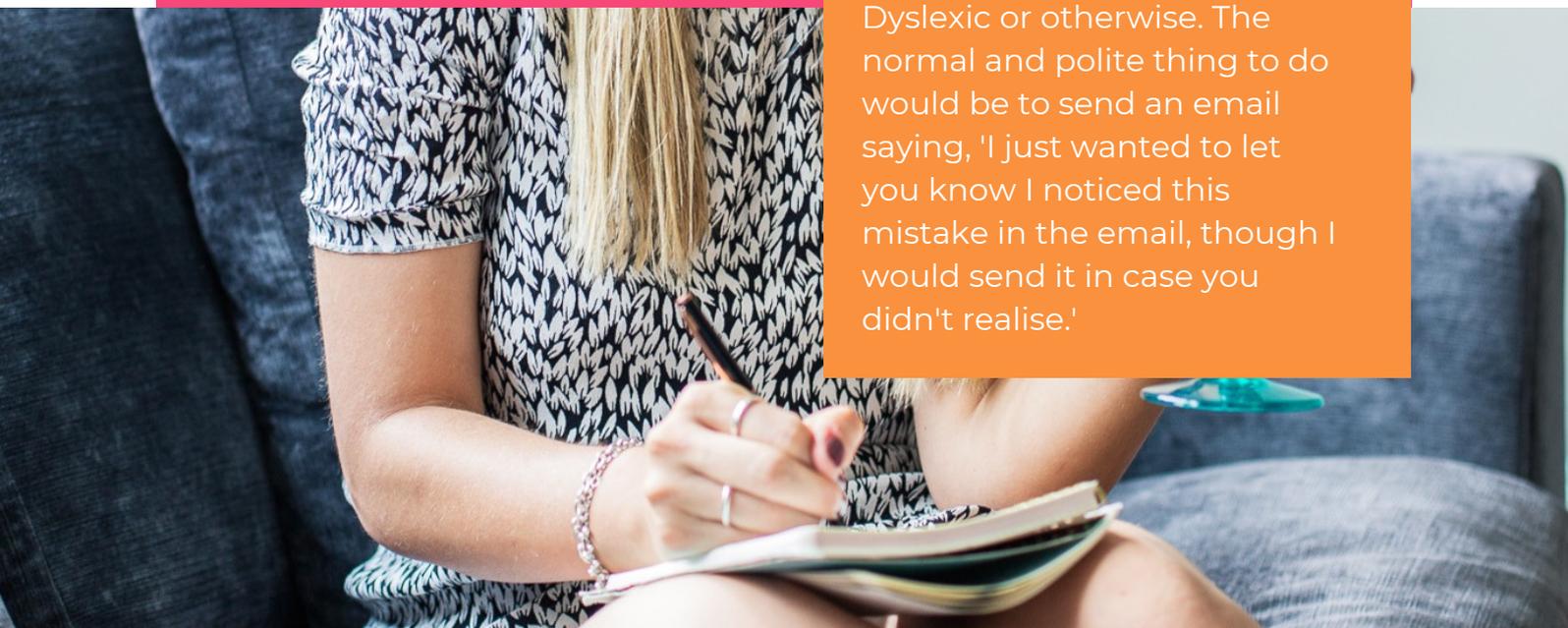
Not everyone needs to know everything! If you have a problem due to your dyslexia but don't want to say, 'I am struggling because I am dyslexic.' Here are some tips and advice.

How you say, something goes a long way in how it is perceived. For example, there are many things dyslexics find challenging. We worry about explaining our dyslexia and maybe even accidentally highlighting a problem. The same person who does not have dyslexia and doesn't have the challenges and trauma would happily say, 'oh, sorry, do you mind if I do it this way? It's just easier for me.'

An example we had from a community member recently highlighted this dyslexic problem. A colleague sent an email highlighting a typo saying 'oops, typo' but not providing an example of where the mistake lay.

As dyslexic people, we think it's our fault for not being able to see the mistakes and are crumbling inside when someone notices an error. The Hive member who received this email messaged me, worried about dealing with the situation; she didn't want to reveal her dyslexia.

In this situation, the person who sent the email is in the wrong. It's incredibly common for typos to happen, and it's hard for us to check our work. Dyslexic or otherwise. The normal and polite thing to do would be to send an email saying, 'I just wanted to let you know I noticed this mistake in the email, though I would send it in case you didn't realise.'



## Tips for talking about dyslexic challenges without mentioning dyslexia:



### 1 Say it with confidence

This is the reality of the situation, and you aren't embarrassed by it. Confidence goes a long way in how we and others perceive a situation.

If you go in with 'less than energy,' you will be treated with a 'less than' response.

### 2 You care about your work being the best

Dyslexic people care; we want to reduce our challenges more than most, which you should be proud of. Many other people don't care as much as dyslexic people, don't be ashamed of that.

People commit to the committed if you care about your work and show that. People will commit to helping you.

### 3 Lead with a solution vs. highlighting the problem

If you are struggling with something, try and come up with a solution to fix the issue. That way, the problem doesn't feel as significant.

*Remember*

Your difference  
doesn't make  
you a failure