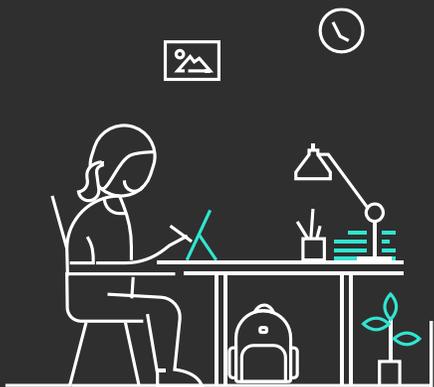


The Emotional Impact of Dyslexia

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Three student scenarios

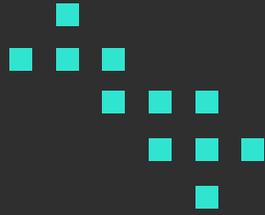


6-year-old - Increasingly disruptive behavior, separation anxiety, can't identify all the letters of the alphabet, required to practice leveled readers at home, which allow him to memorize patterns and guess at words. His single mother doesn't know what to do.

14-year-old - Refuses to attend class, is socially isolated and depressed. He still can't read well despite parents paying for a private reading program. Parents think he is lazy.

17-year-old – Disengaged, socially isolated, worried about his future. "I just want to be normal and learn how to read like everyone else."

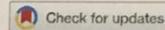




Emotional consequences of Dyslexia

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Developmental dyslexia: emotional impact and consequences

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ABSTRACT

Learning disabilities are associated with mental health, behavioural and social difficulties. Developmental dyslexia is a particularly salient example of a learning disability that is associated with social and emotional consequences that are not considered primary features of the disorder. These issues can remain and, in some cases, escalate in adulthood. Practitioners should be made aware of the consequences of the emotional impact of such learning disabilities. The following is a comprehensive review of over 100 journal articles investigating the emotional consequences of developmental dyslexia. Articles published between 1980 and 2018 were found using keywords “dyslexia” and “emotion” or “internalizing behaviour”, “externalizing behaviour”, “depression” or “anxiety”. This review provides an overview of the literature investigating the emotional

ARTICLE HISTORY

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- Review of over 100 articles
- Variability of impact
- Association with both disruptive and depressed/anxious behavior
- Lasting impact into adulthood for some
- Increased risk for negative outcomes: emotional, social, educational and occupational domains



Impact on Well-being and Mental Health

- Feelings of anxiety and sadness have negative impact on well-being and quality of life
- 60% meet criteria for at least one psychiatric disorder (Margari et al, 2013)
- Children with dyslexia susceptible to becoming withdrawn, anxious and depressed due to their academic underachievement (Willcutt & Pennington, 2000)
- Adolescents with LDs are found to be at twice the risk of emotional distress, including risk for violence and suicide attempts (Svetaz, Ireland, & Blum, 2001)





Stigma

- Many educators hold negative attitudes about learning disabilities (Lisle & Wade, 2014)
 - Less intelligent
 - More difficult to teach
 - Lazy
- Contributes to school phobia and fear of being tested (Lodygowska & Czepita, 2012)
- Individuals underestimate their actual abilities
- They experience less life success due to a self-fulfilling prophecy (Lisle & Wade, 2014)
- Further challenged by society's celebration of ability and ostracizing differences (Leitao et al, 2017)





Trying to compensate

- Students and employees with LD have been reported to work themselves to exhaustion and even physical illness to compensate for their difficulties (Siegel, 2013, 2016)
- Others do not see the amount of hard work they must put in to accomplish the same task (Nalavany et al, 2011)
- School experiences are frequently described as negative and traumatic
- Children doubt their intelligence and lose motivation as their learning difficulties remain unexplained (McNulty, 2003)





Increased behavioral problems

- Three times more behavioral disorders
- Increased association with ADHD
- Likely influences ability and willingness of parents and teachers to help
- Affects school and relationships



Social problems and Dyslexia

- Poor social skills: self-regulation, social interaction, social anxiety
- Peer rejection across age groups
- Bullying and victimization
- Problems finding friends
- Fear of LD being exposed, or being thought of as stupid

Emotional impact on learning

- Anxiety, depressed mood and poor self esteem further affects...
 - Attention span
 - Executive function
 - Increased minor mistakes
- Intensification of learning difficulties
- Increased dropout rate (Davis, 2009)



Severe outcomes and implications

Youth with poor reading more likely to experience suicidal ideation and attempts (Daniel et al, 2006)

Adolescents who commit suicide more likely to have been diagnosed with LD (Siegel, 1997)

Female adolescents with LD had twice the risk of suicide attempt (Svetaz, 2001)

Risk of poor adult outcomes

Employment

- Increased unemployment
- Increased work anxiety
- Lower job satisfaction

Housing

- Increased incidence of LD in homeless population

Criminality

- 52% of adolescents in a shelter had dyslexia (Barwick & Siegel, 1996)
- Twice the rate of violence involvement in female adolescents with LD (Terras et al, 2009)
- Overrepresentation in prison populations

What does the research say about reading problems and mental health diagnoses in adults?

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Reading problems and major mental disorders - co-occurrences and familial overlaps in a Swedish nationwide cohort

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ABSTRACT

Reading problems often co-occur with ADHD and conduct disorder. However, the pattern of occurrence and familial overlap between reading problems and other psychiatric disorders has not been systematically explored. We conducted a register-based cohort study including 8719 individuals with reading problems and their siblings, along with matched comparison individuals. Conjoint regressions estimated risks for ADHD, autism, obsessive-compulsive disorder, anorexia nervosa, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression, substance use disorder, and violent/non-violent crime in individuals with reading problems and their siblings. Diagnoses of psychiatric disorders were physician-assigned and ascertained from the Swedish National Patient Register, and crime

- Swedish cohort of 8719 individuals with reading problems and their sibs
- Most at risk for ADHD and Autism
- Also in risk of OCD, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression, substance use disorder and criminality
- Siblings also at significant risk of most of these, suggesting a genetic link

Back to our three student scenarios - How to help?

6 y/o – Intervention for reading challenges, consider co-occurring conditions such as Language impairment, ADHD, support social engagement, have someone read to him daily

14 y/o – Psychoeducational testing if not already done, needs intensive program to address reading, consider mood disorder/anxiety, parents and teen need education about LD, help connect to peers

17 y/o – Consider alternative learning environment/adult education, encourage coop experiences, rule out mental health conditions, counselling to address self esteem and feelings of failure