

Jack, 20 years old from North West England



How does dyspraxia affect you?

Dyspraxia has affected my motor skills to a degree where it impairs on my ability to carry out a lot of regular activities such as writing, getting dressed, brushing my teeth etc... It's also affected me mentally, often being a catalyst for periods of anxiety, low self-esteem and similar issues

When were you diagnosed?

I was first diagnosed in Year 6 of Primary School I was then tested again at University because I needed a Post 16 Diagnosis to apply for a DSA and for special arrangements in exams.

What is your experience of seeking a diagnosis as an adult?

I had the advantage of having a University supporting me through seeking the diagnosis. This was incredibly useful as they have a SEN department who were able to put me in contact with the appropriate people and I was able to get tested and diagnosed on campus. The only difficulty I had was financial, as I was charged for my appointment with the educational psychologist, the University subsidised the cost but it still cost me £152, which seemed expensive to be given a diagnosis for a disability I had already been diagnosed with as a child.

What does having a diagnosis means to you?

It's stability, it helps me understand that I'm not clumsy or careless, my brain and body just work differently to everybody else's, I spent a lot of my childhood being called "Messy", "Unorganised" and that if I could apply myself and "Neaten up" I could be successful. Being able to explain that most of the issues I've had have been due to my dyspraxia has helped through a lot of my academic life.

That's not to say however that having a diagnosis has always been a good feeling, in lower times I've often wished I could just be "normal" and not require the extra support I need at work/home/Uni.

Have you received any support? (if yes, please include brief details)

Academically I've received a lot of support from High School and currently I receive support from my University, that support being use of a laptop and 25% extra time in examinations.

What are the most difficult aspects of living with dyspraxia?

There's a lot of day to day stuff, trying to make my handwriting legible when I need to fill in forms, taking care to make sure I'm putting clothes on the right way around, but I face my most difficult challenges while I'm working, I work as an actor in a horror maze, which involves a lot of quick costume changes, putting masks and makeup on very quickly. Obviously with my lack of motor skills this is difficult and while I get a lot of help and support from management and my co-workers there have been occasional slip ups when I haven't taken the time beforehand to make sure everything is where I need it.

How would you like to see things change for adults with dyspraxia?

I think a lot of what needs to change is around awareness. I still get asked today when I tell people "So is that like dyslexia?" I think, certainly employers need to be more aware of hidden disabilities in general, not just dyspraxia. Which is why I think awareness weeks are so important in talking about the problems and challenges that people face.