British Dyslex!a
Association

Contact
Magazine

October 2021

www.bdadyslexia.org.uk
helpline@bdadyslexia.org.uk
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Advertising:
Eric Cheung
ericc@bdadyslexia.org.uk

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04 Introduction from our guest editor

06 Cultural Perspectives Committee

09 Invisible Dyslexia

16 Exclusion and Neurodiversity: Recognising your confirmation bias

19 Technology is a tool for survival

23 Feature article: In conversation with Yami Löfvenberg

28 Local Dyslexia Association News

30 Helpline

32 Book reviews

34 BDA Training news

36 BDA Fundraising news

38 BDA Events news

23

Feature article

Trailblazer, Yami Löfvenberg, has had an accomplished and diverse career. From Creative Movement Director, to Hip Hop Theatre Maker, Performer, and Lecturer.

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Welcome to an incredibly special October edition of Contact Magazine, with guest editor Marcia Brissett-Bailey, Chair of the BDA Cultural Perspectives Committee and Waltham Forest Dyslexia Association Trustee.

It's an absolute delight to be writing for Contact magazine, and to write for all British Dyslexia Association members across the UK.

Despite my parents being told that I would not achieve academically whilst I was in primary school, here I am as guest editor. That's a statistic that doesn't fit into any equation or status quo!

I grew up in the East End of London on a council estate. I am of African-Caribbean heritage and first generation born in Britain. I was finally diagnosed with dyslexia at 16 years old, and that's when everything changed. For the first time, I no longer felt stupid.

I wish someone had told me back then that dyslexia isn't based on intelligence. All the standard tests at school never highlighted my true potential. I have come to learn that there is so much greatness in dyslexiaeven though it doesn't always feel like that. In a world of words with structure and systems that made me feel like I didn't belong, my well-being was effected. I didn't feel like I belonged in mainstream school. **But I know some amazing dyslexics** - writers, scientists, inventors, artists, actors, athletes, and the list goes on...to all my fellow dyslexics, never give-up!

I had a very traumatic education experience from Primary to Secondary. I loved school, but school just didn't love me back. The education system failed me – I left school with one GCSE A-C grade, which was a B in drama. I re-took my GCSE's at college which included achieving B in English Literature and C in Sociology. These were subjects that I hadn't studied in-depth before, so this inspired me as it showed that I was teachable.

I went on to achieve three degrees. I have been an information scientist, I'm a qualified careers adviser and have an MA in Special Educational Needs. I am passionate that every young person fulfils their full potential, with an inquisitive nature for learning in whichever way works for them.

I could not begin to imagine how many people out there are undiagnosed in the United Kingdom. I have been told by many of my fellow dyslexics that I was lucky, as many of them did not get diagnosed until adulthood (almost all at university). What if you don't go to university? Do you spend your life struggling, not knowing why?

As a teenager, I would never have envisioned myself being connected to the BDA as I am now. I recall not long after my diagnosis that I contacted the BDA as I was seeking a dyslexia community that I could relate to. After putting the phone down, I said this was not for me. Not only were the fees too high for me as a student, but it also appeared to be very middle class and white. I could not see me, or

any representation of me, and it was just not relatable to my lived experience as a dyslexic.

Being in my teens, I was only really beginning to understand about the inequalities of the world. Skin colour cut my opportunities and life chances without even beginning to speak about my dyslexia. The importance of identity, history, culture, and how I fit in to the world and its stories appeared to be negative, or not a true representation.

In my later years after having counselling, I started to understand how the scars of trauma stemmed from my school experience. That included self-sabotage, imposter syndrome, low self-esteem and confidence to name but a few. All of which came from an education system that was supposed to nurture me and enrich my learning.

Being interested in sport and poetry and having a creative imagination saved me when I had self-doubt. It gave me hope to know that I was good at something. There was so much focus on what I couldn't do instead of what I could do, and the strengths and advantages of dyslexia. Whether this was based on environment, class, race, gender, money, education etc. it still came from a place of feeling like I didn't belong. I didn't want to experience this again.

Because of my lived experience of dyslexia and the colour of my skin, I grew up having to protect myself from unkindness in society. Systemic barriers can shape opportunities. Being black, being a woman, and having hidden disabilities had an impact. I did not think an organisation like the BDA was for me as I never saw anyone like me. I couldn't see anyone who represented my story from a diverse viewpoint, who could provide a positive role model that reflected me.

With this in mind, I attended the British Dyslexia Association AGM in 2016 as a representative of the Waltham Forest Dyslexia Association in my role as a Trustee. In that moment I felt like I was transported back in time to my teens. Dyslexia isn't colourless. Yet the lack of diversity and representation of young people in the dyslexic community told me that something was wrong. I spoke to Kate Saunders (then CEO of the BDA), and little did I know that Joseline Porter had also spoken to Kate about her concerns. So that was the day that the Cultural Perspectives Committee was formed.

Since then, the Committee have been working behind the scenes to change the narrative of the BDA and its cultural literacy. We have grown larger since 2016, with three additional members having joined the CPC working as volunteers to champion dyslexia from a cultural perspective. Despite this, we do not expect to be a permanent Committee. We are a Committee of different lived experiences, who have come together with the passion to pioneer change for the next generation. You can learn more about the CPC in the following article.

The BDA is in a new phase. One of exploration, of taking action, and of being accountable in how it shows up. I'm proud to play a part in how the charity will begin to embrace equality, diversity and inclusion. The month of October features not only Dyslexia Week, but also Black History month. The reality is that neither should be just for a week but celebrated throughout the entire year.

I have had the privilege to have a few of my colleagues and friends join me in featuring in these pages. Some are on the cover, and some can be found having contributed to articles. I will be for forever grateful for all your support. I do hope you enjoy the read.

The British Dyslexia Association Cultural Perspectives Committee

The Cultural Perspectives Committee exists with the purpose of promoting equality/equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging, and to break stigma and taboo in order to challenge the narratives and representation of dyslexia.

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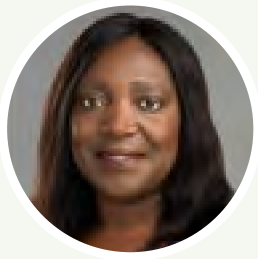
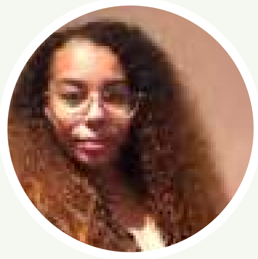
Marcia
Brissett-Bailey



Secretary:
Joseline Porter

Lucita
ComWillis-Paul



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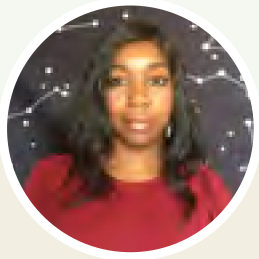
Littlewood



Ruth-Ellen
Danqah

Background

The British Dyslexia Association Cultural Perspective Committee (CPC) was formed during a BDA Annual General Meeting in 2016, to bring more awareness of dyslexia from a cultural perspective and improve representation. Voted in by its members and supported by leader Kate Sunders (then BDA CEO), the founding members were Marcia Brissett-Bailey and Joseline Porter.

The Committee is a living entity that's open, flexible and adaptable. As volunteers we champion dyslexia from a cultural perspective. This means a multitude of things for us as committee members, as we each have different lived experiences and a passion to create change for the next generation.

Today, the Committee is made up of five black women, who are from different ethnic backgrounds of African, Caribbean and mixed heritage.

We are:

- Marcia Brissett-Bailey, Chair and observer of the BDA executive board
- Joseline Porter, Secretary and member of the BDA HR committee
- Lucita Comwillis-Paul
- Ruth-Ellen Danquah, also member of the Adult Committee
- Zoe-Jane Littlewood, the newest member who joined in 2020, and is a proactive young person with dyslexia directed towards the CPC when she first contacted the BDA

The first CPC event was organised at City of Westminster College's Paddington campus on 5 October 2017. The aim of this event was to raise dyslexia awareness to the "BME" communities, with focus on breaking the silence, tackling the stigma surrounding dyslexia and addressing barriers to disclosure. We have since organised three other events with Waltham Forest Dyslexia Association, with Dyslexia Success, and an open event in Old Street. Those who attended left inspired with a goal to motivate others in finding their voice, and having their voices heard in the dyslexic world and beyond.

The CPC believe that the BDA is in a new phase. As an organisation they are exploring what it means to take action. They are in a period of reflection, by taking accountability and having some of those uncomfortable conversations, as well as being transparent to their members and communities.

We have been working with the BDA on internal structures to improve the narrative of the charity and its cultural literacy for the following purposes:

- To influence and contribute to change within the British Dyslexia Association to make it more inclusive and better serve the diverse dyslexia community of Britain
- To influence the equality/equity, diversity and inclusion agenda with a view to foster a sense of belonging in the communities which feel excluded
- To influence and contribute to policies taking into account lived experiences and cultural perspectives of Britain's diverse communities
- To support research around cultural diversity and work in partnership with other external partners within and outside of the sector
- To break stigmas and taboos around dyslexia and raise awareness within ethnic minority communities
- To raise awareness of the different impact dyslexia has on ethnic minority communities in addition to other barriers they face

The CPC have used these areas to inform their current work with the BDA, who are helping to facilitate internal changes by drafting and presenting a white paper which will address the inclusivity potential of the charity. The recommendations from this paper will soon be able to be viewed on the BDA website.

The CPC is continuing to push the lines of convention and think laterally. We aim to foster a space for those that are often neglected. We also remain conscious of the current climate and acknowledge the coronavirus and its impact on young people's futures.

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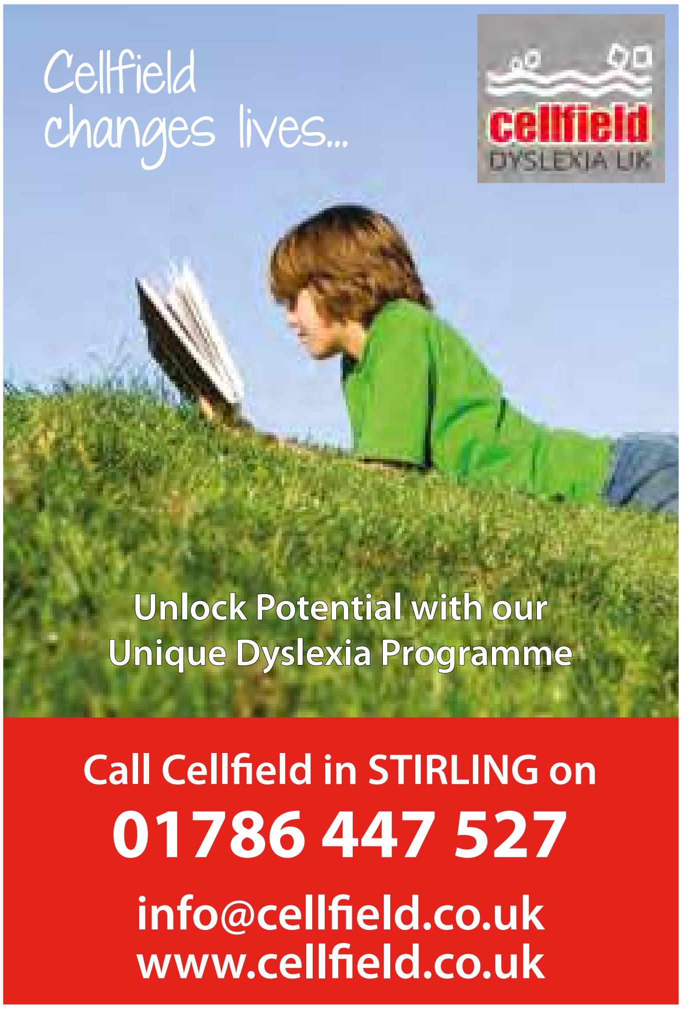

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Invisible Dyslexia

Dyslexia Week: 4 - 10 October 2021

Increasing visibility of under represented groups, mental health and dyslexia in education, the workplace, and in life.

We know that dyslexia comes with many challenges, but many people in our community feel like their struggles are unseen. Because dyslexia itself isn't visible, individuals with dyslexia often feel unsupported, unwanted, invisible. From the child at school struggling to keep up with the rest of their friends, to the office worker feeling like they don't belong.

Dyslexia also too often goes hand in hand with other invisible challenges. People can struggle with their mental health. There can be discrimination in the workplace. Legislation fails to consider the dyslexic perspective.

Under-represented groups become lost.

That's why this dyslexia week we chose to focus on Invisible Dyslexia, to explore the entire theme of visibility within our community.

We highlighted the importance of mental health, increase visibility of under-represented groups, and raise serious issues of dyslexia being overlooked within education and the workplace.

Across the next few pages you will find a selection of just some of the incredible, talented, and beautifully dyslexic individuals who make up our community.

From entrepreneurs to artists, dancers, actors and CEO's to NHS Nurses, Doctors and PhD researchers, our community is filled with talent, drive and determination.

Keisha Adair Swaby

Inspirational Speaker,
Radio Presenter

Alice Aggrey-Orleans

Private
Professional Chef

Aquayemi-Claude Garnett Akinsanya

Student, Author, Youth Delegate,
Campaigner, Disability Advocate,
Philanthropist

Elizabeth Arifien

Dancer, Co-founder &
Co-director of Move
Beyond Words

Gary Baron

MA, Child Adolescent &
Family Therapy,
Dip in Sandplay Studies,
PG Dip, Psychosynthesis
NLP Diploma, MBACP,
Advanced EFT Practitioner, AAMET reg, Reiki
Master

Jannette Barrett

Author
Poet
Actor

Ann-Marie Bennett

Retired NHS
community nurse,
Full-time grandparent

Sue Bowerman

Director of
Beneath the Blanket,
Senior lecturer in
Creative Industries in
Higher education

Lisa Braithwaite

DAL Global-Community
Engagement Manager

Marcia Brissett-Bailey

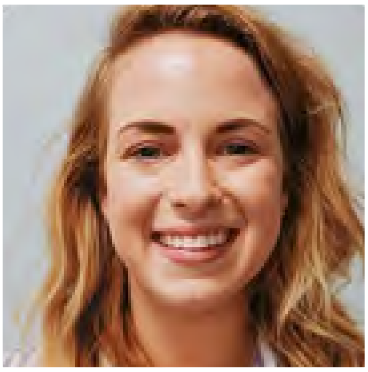
Neurodiversity narrative changer,
Forbes featured, blooming Author,
Co-founder of BDA Cultural
Perspective Committee, WFDA
Trustee, Advisory Board Member
of Centre for Neurodiversity
at Work

Pat Bruce-Browne

Entrepreneur
Business women
Radio DJ

Antoinette Cameron-Pimblett

Innovation Project,
Coordinator at Open
Medical ltd,
Neurodiversity speaker



James Carter William

Fulbright Scholar,
PhD Student in Political
Geography at the University of
California, Berkeley

Atif Choudhury

Chief Executive of Diversity and
Ability, Co-founder/Director
of Zaytoun CiC, Trustee for
Disability Rights UK

Lucita Comwillis-Paul

BA JNC qualified youth, community
development worker, Cultural
Perspective Committee member,
Youth Division

Karen Cousins

Music and Dyslexia specialist
teacher and coach, Author
of Dyslexia and Success: The
Winning Formulas

**Danielle
Cudjoe-Michalski**

**Project Manger Vaccine,
PMP & PRINCE2,
Coach,
Neurodiversity
Champion**

Ruth-ellen Danquah

Member of The BDA
Cultural Perspective
Committee,
DEI Trainer,
Delivery Lead for
Exceptional Individuals

Dee Davis

**EFL/ESL Tutor,
Events Organiser**

Antonia Douglas

Cybersecurity

Winsome Duncan

Book Confidence Coach
CEO of Peaches
Publications,
Number 1 Best-selling
author

Sandra E Carter

Princes Trust programme
executive,Director of a
Bodysymphony CIC,
Author for a trilogy fantasy
sci-fi books ‘Kettorah and the
Autom Scrolls of Light’,
Campaign for dyslexia as the
Dyslexic Godmother

Charlotte Edmonds

Dancer,
Co-founder and Co-
director of Move Beyond
Words

Asma Elbadawi

Sports Inclusivity
Consultant,
Successfully Camaigned
FIBA to Allow Hijab,
Spoken Word,
Ambassdor at Adidas

Seán Fay

Co-founder of
The Context Factory,
Entrepreneur

Kathy Forsythe

Graphic designer,
Author of The Bigger Picture
Book of Amazing Dyslexics
and the Jobs They Do

Charles Freeman

Economics
Development Officer,
Creative Industries
Business Advisor

Natasha Gooden

Professional Dancer,
Actor

Jon Holloway

Photographer /
Storyteller
Full-time dyslexic

Asher Hoyles

Learning Practitioner,
Author and Poet

Sandra Iris Wolo

CEO of African
Dyslexics United

Vivienne Isebor

Founder Director of
ADHD Babe,
Trainee Clinical Associate
in Psychology,
Performing Artist

Maria Israel

Private Nanny

Yvonne Jeffrey

Actor

Antoinette Johnson

My Girls, Young Women
Violence and Exploitation
Specialist Worker

Stefan Johnson

Founder of SJ Cycles
Bicycle repair service

Maddie Kamara

Podcaster,
Retail store Manager

Andrée Kenny
Front of house
receptionist,
Rehabilitation
practitioner

Razia Labiba

Student - Computer
science

Angie LeMar

British comedian, Actor,
Writer, Director, Producer

Leslie Lewis-Walker

People Lead
(Civil Servant)

Zoe Jane Littlewood

Sports Therapist
Works full time for NCS
(National Citizen Service)
as a Recruitment and
Delivery Officer

Tara Martin

Maternity Voice
Coordinator

Inezilona Maselio

Built Environment,
Construction,
Infrastructure

Leila McKenzie-Delis

Founder and CEO of
DIAL Global,
Author,
Speaker

Sadia Mirza

Waltham Forest Dyslexia
Association Trustee

Siobhan Moore-Lynch

Primary school teacher,
Waltham Forest Dyslexia
Association Trustee

**Raheem
Mu Khepera MBE**

Founder at Brothers Safe
Space and Prime Unltd

Jennifer Offord

Senior Planning and Enabling Manager

Alex Onalaja

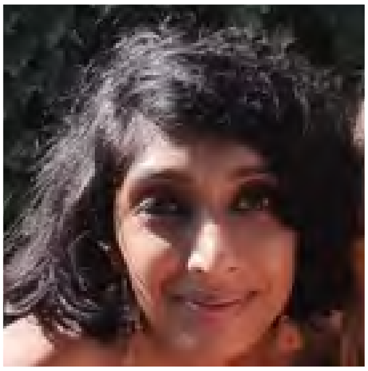
Co-founder and MD of TAD360, Entrepreneur, Author, Mentor, Chair at KYSO Project CIC, Senior consultant at Alex O. Consulting

Becky Oxley

Construction Sector

Shabira Papain

Currently studying a Masters in Public Health at Kings College



Maxine Pitt

Works for the City of London

Joseline Porter

Secretary and member of the BDA HR committee

Kate Power

Author of The Bigger Picture Book of Amazing Dyslexics and the Jobs They Do.

Works in a Contemporary Art Gallery

Daisy Powponne

Style Consultant Concession Manger

Remi Ray

Neurodivergent coach, Entrepreneur

Sandra Rigobert

Teacher and author

Makonnen Sankofa

Author of The Rise of Rastafari and Life in Gambia,
Radio Presenter,
Organiser of the The Black Books webinar,
Entrepreneur

Donald Schloss

Founder of Adult Dyslexia Orgnisation

Sukbinder Singh

Swimmimg teacher,
full-time Dad

Solomon Smith

CEO of Brixton Soup
Kitchen

Elizabeth Takyi

CEO of A2i Dyslexia

Dr Helen Taylor

Working to prove the
importance of dyslexia-associated cognition,
Speaker, Consultant, Coach

Onyinye Udokporo

CEO and founder of
Enrich learning, EdTec
entrepreneur, Educator,
public speaker, Author,
Pioneer of Social
Mobility, Top 150 Future
Leader

Lennie Varvaides

Award Winning Artist,
Writer, Founder of
DYSPLA

Jacqui Wallis

Director at
Genius Within

Karinna Williams

SEND Emerald
Consultancy

Tahirah Yasin

Nour Domestic
Violence
Senior
Pyschotherapist

**Christien
van Yzendoorn**

CDO at Rohlik-Group and
dyslexic mentor

To read the full stories from a number of people featured across the previous pages, please visit our website:

https://bit.ly/2Wu1U39

EXCLUSION AND NEURODIVERSITY

Recognising your confirmation bias

Professor Amanda Kirby

Confirmation bias is the tendency to process information by looking for, or interpreting, information that is consistent with one's existing beliefs. This biased approach to decision making is largely unintentional and often results in ignoring some information. Existing beliefs can include one's expectations in a given situation and predictions about a particular outcome. People are especially likely to process information to support their own beliefs when the issue is highly important or self-relevant.

When we see a young person in school or the community and they are having challenges with learning impacting on their behaviour, we can draw conclusions which may come from a limited set of information. How we view the young person may also be influenced by training and experiences that we have had.

Time pressures and a lack of knowledge has been cited by teachers as factors which negatively influence the ability to support pupils, for example with ADHD.[1] In one study where referrals of 'Children in care' and adopted children were referred to a specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) team, they found under-diagnosis of common Neurodevelopmental Disorders (NDDs) and mental health conditions but over-diagnosis of attachment disorder.[2]

There had been an assumption because they were in care their challenges were all related to attachment, and Neurodevelopmental Disorders had been overlooked. Overall, the data and research review suggest that Black Caribbean represent the most excluded group of pupils in British schools. They have been noted to be more than three and a half times as likely to be permanently excluded as pupils overall. The only ethnic group that had higher rates of permanent exclusion nationally were "Gypsy/Roma," a relatively small ethnic group. [13]

Understanding a young person's profile.

If we use an analogy of balls in a bucket which represent different strengths and challenges in the young person's life, we can view balls of a certain colour through different professional and personal lenses. Each child will have an individual profile of needs and abilities which may also be influenced by different local and social factors that may lead to different pathways to diagnosis (or not). Intersecting and

compounding forms of discrimination and disadvantage create these different outcomes. and, following that, voicing the obvious first and then addressing more abstract answers with a phrase, such as, "another interpretation could be…" can help add more structure to the answers.

One child may get an EHCP for neurodevelopmental conditions and another a label of SEMH. Poverty can influence outcomes e.g.; Middlesbrough has four times the level of Free School Meals compared to a town like Marlow.[6] Socio-economic status is linked to longer term outcomes and increasing impact as children progress. It also relates to parental resources, the locality of the school and quality of teaching and a disconnect between home and school.[8]

Why do children get a diagnosis of SEMH and end up excluded?

Social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs has been defined as a type of special educational needs in which children/young people have severe challenges in managing their emotions and behaviour. They often show inappropriate responses and feelings to situations. Some characteristics of children with SEMH may include:

- Disruptive, antisocial, and uncooperative behaviour
- Temper tantrums
- Frustration, anger and verbal and physical threats / aggression
- Withdrawn and depressed attitudes
- Anxiety and self-harm
- Stealing
- Truancy
- Substance misuse

Some children are excluded from mainstream school because of a series of 'behaviours' which are often assumed to be more associated with the external factors than potentially considering neurodiversity in the mix. We often don't consider the full picture and end up drawing the wrong conclusions.

Forty percent of children who are in local authority care have Special Educational Needs (SEN), 20% have an Education, Health and Care Plan. Children in care also have much higher rates of exclusion. However, when we look at data from children who have an Education, Health Care Plan and compare those 'in care' from the mainstream population we can see significant differences in the diagnosis given. [4,5]

Alongside this there is good evidence of higher rates of neurodiversity among children excluded from school but usually no routine screening for these traits. In one study of excluded children the rate of ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) was 20 x the national average[9]. In the large-scale longitudinal study in Avon ALSPAC cohort of those excluded by age 8 years, 19% had ADHD and 23% had language development in bottom 10%.[10]

In an older study a sample of pupils who had been permanently excluded pupils from thirty-three Sheffield secondary schools found that 76% were ≥2 years behind their peers in reading.[11] Despite extensive evidence of co-occurrence

	Children in care with EHCP[4]	All children
Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder	12%	29%
SEMH	40%	12%
Speech, Language, communication Challenges	9%	15%

between conditions and this also interlinked with adversity we often still seek single diagnoses for children who have intersecting challenges.[12]

The biases we see in both misidentification leading to exclusion can be the start of a school to prison pipeline where children have not had their needs either identified or met. This usually results in lower self-esteem, poorer educational and employment outcomes and potentially becoming one of the one in three people in prison likely to be neurodivergent.

Breaking the cycle upstream with accurate identification of support needs can mean we have a big impact not only in the short term but longer term in not wasting talent. As Demi says in the important study: 'Policy makers and schools need to recognise the disproportionate exclusion of Black Caribbean pupils'. There is a clear need to develop targeted initiatives to tackle overrepresentation and to reduce Black Caribbean exclusions in English schools.

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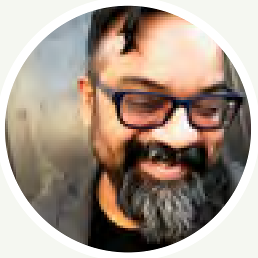

Technology is a tool for survival. Let's make sure everyone can access it.

Atif Choudhury and Ellie Thompson

While technology was central to our lives back in 2019, the last few years have shown more than ever that access to technology isn't a privilege, it's a necessity for survival. One of the many devastating effects of the COVID pandemic is the widening of the digital access divide. On one side of the chasm, use of digital technology increased tenfold[1] as we adapted to home working, studying and socialising, and with it, use of assistive technology (for example, spelling and grammar checkers and closed captioning in online meetings). But on the other side, for people and communities that experience marginalisation[2], the shift online and closure of in-person resources[3] has meant complete exclusion from the world and exacerbation of existing inequalities. A society that's digital by default needs to also be inclusive by design. This is a collective challenge with a national urgency.

To understand the origins and extent of the digital divide, we need to recognise that we're not just talking about digital devices. Technology must be presented as a human centred solution to a human centered need. A solution that doesn't talk about technology in isolation but rather focuses on what that technology may be able to do if it's made socially, economically and psychologically accessible. Recognising the socioeconomic inaccessibility of technology, and assistive technology in particular, is our first step in identifying the barriers that need to be broken down. Accessing assistive technology is easy when you have social capital, but for the millions of us that experience marginalisation and disablement, it's a different story, with hurdles at every single stage.

> Access to technology isn't a privilege, it's a necessity for survival

The first barrier is the very understanding of what we mean by assistive technology[4]. For many, the term 'assistive technology' conjures up images of highly intelligent adaptive tech that is used by disabled people, such as speech-to-text tool Dragon[5]. Dragon software is truly life-changing, for both me and many of the over 20,000 students we've supported through my social enterprise: Diversity and Ability. But plenty of other technologies, just as life-changing, are far more commonplace, and often free: map and navigation softwares, to-do list and project management tools, and spelling and grammar checkers are just a few of the assistive technologies that so many of us access on a daily basis. There are so many more assistive technologies[6] that could make a difference to people's lives, if only they knew the option was out there.

> There are so many more assistive technologies that could make a difference to people's lives.

What's more, even if a person decides they want to use assistive technology, how would they go about accessing it? Assistive technology is still widely reserved for disabled people. But if such a label is gatekept by diagnosis, then we're not just restricting non-disabled people's access; we're restricting everyone for whom diagnosis may not be easy, or even possible. Access to a diagnosis is affected by race, ethnicity, cultural background, gender, sexuality, disability, mental health, class, location, and so many more factors. All these aspects influence how someone may be marginalised and their understanding of, and access to, healthcare affected.

For example, my own experiences in school as a young Bangladeshi with dyslexia were marred by racism and what I now acknowledge was disableism. I spent my childhood filled with feelings of shame, confusion and isolation, not knowing why I found written work so hard, or why I seemed to think differently than a lot of my classmates, or what I had done wrong when I was repeatedly sent to the Deputy Headmaster.

Although things have changed somewhat since I was growing up, it's still the case that dyslexia is rarely picked up in working class or migrant BAME communities, and there are still plenty of people in the UK for whom a learning difference seems to jar with one's cultural heritage and class. For me, it wasn't until I dropped out of university due to struggling with written work that someone finally suggested I might have dyslexia. The diagnosis marked a new beginning for me, and one which I wish had come much earlier in my life.

Even for those who manage to break through this barrier, there are plenty more still to be faced. It's possible to access technology when you're in higher education, through the Disabled Students Allowance, or stable employment, through Access to Work. Although it's important to note that even these options present their own barriers and challenges.

We must also ask, what about those who aren't in education or employment? There are, of course, grants available, but those are only available to people who know they exist and are able to submit convincing applications. It's challenging to apply for support with digital devices and assistive technologies without access to the very tools you're applying for.

Finally, for those who manage to gain access to the devices and technologies they need, how confident will they be in using them? The digital divide isn't just about access to the technologies themselves, but also lack of interest in technology[7] and lack of skills or confidence in using it. Delivering technologies in isolation has limited use without providing accessible, strategy-focused training and support that allows for sustainable understanding and use of it.

The risk of this exclusion is profound, on both an individual and societal level. It affects individual wellbeing[8], community engagement[9], access to quality education and chances of employment[10], and therefore affects wider social mobility and national economies. A long side increased and free wifi Assistive technology has been identified as a powerful tool for social and economic participation with the possibility to reduce global poverty, by the likes of UNICEF[11] and the World Health Organisation[12]. There's a clear global need.

Acknowledging the many barriers individuals face is the first step to removing them.

There's also a clear solution. Acknowledging the many barriers individuals face is the first step to removing them and creating a better approach in their place. We need to recognise those who can access technology, and those who can't, and use this knowledge to formulate an anticipatory position. At Diversity and Ability, this is the position we've held since our inception. We are a social enterprise made up of the very experiences that have been at risk and excluded from participation.

The richness of shared lived experiences is priceless, and precisely why we continue to successfully foster change through socioeconomic access, measured through self-agency. It's here that we anticipate the intersectional barriers that individuals will undoubtedly face, and proactively make available the technologies, tools, strategies and support so people can overcome barriers before they even reach them.

The richness of shared lived experience is priceless.

This is about opening up conversations that amplify the experiences of disabled people, especially those who experience multiple forms of marginalisation, strengthening their voices and agency and choices. With an approach that has the lived experiences of disabled people as its very foundation, and uses the negative or challenging experiences individuals may have had as a roadmap for making the shifts that matter, we will not only reduce the digital divide; we'll be on our way to a society that's more equitable and accessible for everyone.

Campaigning for choice, access, training and free assistive technology is more than an aspiration. It's one of the very necessities behind addressing inclusion and disabling impact. And with it is a shared journey to showcase that technology, strategies and tools can be physically and emotionally made no longer available just to a chosen few, but to all.

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Feature article

Written by Kristl Kirk, MA

In conversation with Yami Löfvenberg

Trailblazer, Yami Löfvenberg, has had an accomplished and diverse career. From Creative Movement Director, to Hip Hop Theatre maker and Performer and Lecturer.

Yami is also dyscalculic, and not ashamed of it. Her courage in disclosure has empowered others to step forward and identify themselves as neurodiverse. In this issue, she is interviewed by Kristl Kirk, PhD researcher in the field of music and neurodiversity and member of the BDA music committee.

Read on to find out about Yami's journey to understanding dyscalculia, the positive and negative effects on her life, the importance of mentors and her extraordinary creative work in bridging the knowledge gap between dyscalculia and the arts.

Yami 'Rowdy' Löfvenberg was born in Colombia, adopted by Swedish parents and is now based in the UK. She is the recipient of a number of awards, including awards from the British Council and Arts Council England, Howard Davies Emerging Directors grant, One Dance UK DAD Trailblazer Fellow and the Marion North Mentoring Award. She was also part of the creative choreographic team for the 2012 Olympics Opening Ceremony and a member of performance collective Hot Brown Honey.

Today, she lectures at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance after previously Lecturing at University of East London and the Irie Dance Theatre.

In 2014, Yami created a piece of hip-hop theatre about dyscalculia called S.T.U.P.I.D. which stands for Someone That Unreservedly Pursues Inspirational Defiance. She says:

"Dyscalculia has affected my life in so many different ways. I've been fired from so many different jobs because of it. But I never let it define me. Since I was young, I had the mindset that you can't tell me what to do and you can't stop me. The one place you cannot tell me what to do is in my art. Talking about my dyscalculia is almost like sticking it up to people who wanted me to be ashamed of it. You want me to be ashamed of being 'rowdy', okay, I'm going to name myself 'rowdy'. It's about flipping the script on people."

How did you make the choice to 'own' the identity of being a person with dyscalculia?

I thought 'What if I make a piece about the fact that I can't count?' I was super nervous about making this piece. The first time I performed it, it was just a solo. And I had grown men crying and saying, 'I can't believe you are talking about something that I've experienced'. I was shocked how kind everyone was when my whole life I have been bullied for it. More and more dancers told me about their own hidden disabilities and this sparked the idea of creating this bigger piece about dancers battling these internal fights that we don't know anything about.


© Camilla Greenwell

Describe some of your other achievements.

Becoming a lecturer was a big deal to me. I never went to uni and didn't do well in school. It's thanks to my art form and to the advancement in my art form that I have been able to get to that position. It's also a huge thing for me as a black woman to be in these spaces.

The strange juxtaposition of all this is that I am now an educator despite horrendous experiences in school. I want to have open conversations about dyscalculia.

I'm thankful for the opportunity to share this message and hope my story is a vessel for that to happen.

What was your reaction when you first realised that you may have dyscalculia?

Well, it was Sweden in the eighties, there wasn't any information about learning disorders or ADHD. It was not something people spoke about. The teachers were actually lying to my parents and saying that I was doing fine. I didn't want to tell them the truth either. Because of low grades, I was only able to get into pastry chef school, which is obviously all about measurements. I failed really badly and didn't know why.

When I was nearly 18, I remember reading a news story about a person with dyscalculia. It felt like finally there was an answer to why I had these problems. School kept telling me that I was just lazy and being difficult, but this was the pure evidence that I needed to show that this is real. I'm not imagining this - I really can't understand these numbers! And it was proof for my parents. I could say, 'Look, this is exactly how I feel'. I felt like a massive weight finally got released. It literally felt like a stone falling from my heart.

How did your parents respond?

My dad's first comment was, 'I think this is all made up'. Finally, I managed to convince him that I needed help. He realised that it was unusual for someone my age to be struggling with an analogue clock and with money in shops.

I think my parents also had a fear of me not graduating. This led to a horrible meeting with all the teachers, me and my dad. It was like an investigation. I was seventeen years old, trying to explain to all these people why I was struggling. No one had heard about dyscalculia. Finally, after some reluctance, they chose a teacher to help me.


© Robert Alleyne

After years of having teachers who had been very aggressive and negative, this teacher was the first to be nice and caring. She asked 'You actually can't see how many notes or coins there are and you can't see the difference?' And it was interesting for her as a challenge. She asked me how I learn things and she listened to me. I explained to her; I'm very practical, hands-on, I learn by watching people and by doing. She took me out to the store and said, 'Why don't we just show you what it looks like?' By taking me out and counting the money, that's what made the difference. That was what no one else had done before.

Can you describe how dyscalculia has impacted you as a dancer?

What we do rhythmically is something that comes naturally from the body. Dance started, not by counting, but by responding to music. When I went to dance school, something I would have done naturally was then taken away from me. So, learning to dance, which is something I love and do naturally, meant I had to restructure my thinking in order to learn other people's movements. I had to recalculate in my brain, 'Okay, this person is doing this move on a 'one'. But, if I don't know naturally when the 'one' is, I would miss it. I realised 'Counting is just not going to happen for me'.

It takes me a long time to pick up choreography routines because my brain is working on so many different levels; thinking about the movement, the music and the space. However, when I teach choreography, once it's out of my body, I tend to forget it. I've never fully retained anything.

I think my body and mind have a rebellious spirit that no matter what I learn, I will always do it my way. This has affected how I teach. I know how I learn and I know I learn differently, so I provide options for anyone who comes to my classes. There are so many ways of learning.


© Dan Lowenstein

You describe a dance teacher who berated you in class, saying 'You are so rubbish, you are so off-beat, you might as well not try, you will never be a dancer!'

After that kind of experience, how did you continue? Have there been any positive mentors?

Because of the bullying at school, I was used to people talking to me like that. He was just another person who was mean to me. I grew up in Sweden where everyone around me was white. Then I met Damon Frost, also known as Mr Rubber Band Man. I was drawn to him because we had the same skin colour; he exuded warmth and confidence and did hip-hop which I really thought was the coolest thing ever.

He told me "You are really good, you have this raw natural talent!".

He celebrated that I did not conform, was different to everybody else and a little bit 'quirky'. He was a good teacher because he was able to suss out when someone was struggling, but unable to say they were struggling. He never made you feel different. Instead, he would make you feel like he would never give up on you.

Everything I learned about teaching was from his blueprint and my early teaching was a copy of how he taught me. To this day, he's my hero.

You've described challenges with dancing, has dyscalculia affected you in other ways?

I've always called what I have a 'hidden disability'. I do struggle at times with a low attention span. I also believe that the pain and suffering that I had growing up in the school environment has caused me a lot of trauma around tests and learning. I can't do my own taxes. Figuring out bank accounts, remembering PIN codes and phone numbers is difficult.

Dance helps me. I remember my PIN code by the choreography I have to do with my hand to put in the numbers. But if the number order on the keypad is changed around, I'm in trouble! I remember my phone number in a rhythm and I make up songs to remember birthdays.

What do you consider your strengths to be?

I come across with a very tough, super-cool exterior and I'm very good at 'chameleoning' my weaknesses. But I care so deeply about people and their journeys. I'm a good mentor in that sense.

Creativity comes out in so many interesting ways for me. People will ask me 'How did you make this dance routine out of nothing?' But I also use creativity to solve problems in everyday life. In the world of academia, having a 'result' means creativity. But we have to think 'How did this make someone feel? Did they feel freaking amazing after seeing this?' It's the result of a creative mind and space that you feel like that. We can't measure those things with numbers.

© Robert Alleyne

Local Dyslexia Association News

Like most charities, the Adult Dyslexia Centre has faced challenges because of COVID-19. Yet, the pandemic has also presented the charity with unexpected opportunities.

ADC has provided its services using online methods and has developed a future-resilient strategy using a blended approach which will allow it to extend its reach and help more adults with dyslexia, locally and across the UK.

Over the past year, ADC has provided three 'Understanding Dyslexia' courses, via Zoom. This long-established and successful course brings together parents of dyslexic children to learn from guest speakers and to share experiences with other parents.

ADC continues to offer an assessment service and is now able to provide them remotely or at the assessor's home office. In February 2021, the charity set up a new adult support group who meet online for weekly sessions to learn from experts and build their confidence.

Katrina Cochrane of Positive Dyslexia has joined as a trustee to oversee professional services. To learn more visit the Adult Dyslexia Centre website: www.adc.org.uk

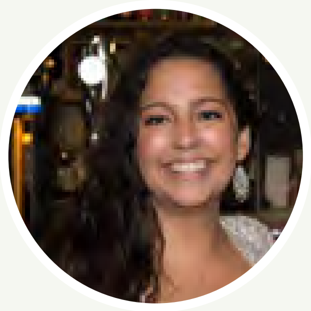
Dyslexia Cornwall is a partner in the Who Dares Works project, led by Active Plus. It is a Building Better Opportunities project in West Cornwall and Isles of Scilly, funded by ESF and Big Lottery. It aims to build the confidence of participants and motivate them to take steps towards training and work. The project engages with wounded and injured military veterans, alongside specialist neurodiversity support provided by Dyslexia Cornwall's Outreach Worker, Miriam Kennedy. So far, over 1200 people have gone through the project.

Our participants are all unemployed or economically inactive often **with issues that prevent successful return to work or training.** We offer them support guided by mentors with knowledge of neurodiversity, mental health and addiction.

Participants attend a course over six sessions. This includes a one-hour interactive dyslexia awareness presentation, which covers information on diagnosis, disability law, benefits and available support for those with dyslexia and other neurodiversity's. One-to-one follow-up support is then offered, which gives participants strategies and information about assistive technology. When a participant feels ready to apply for work, we offer them a dyslexia screening if appropriate.

Many course participants, whether they were previously aware of dyslexia or not, learn a lot. Many of them report improved confidence and independence after being taught methods of accessing information and communicating with others. Dyslexia support is also routinely offered to every participant, and awareness of dyslexia is raised with every course.

Some of our courses have helped 70% of the attendees recognise the difficulties and strengths of dyslexia. This support is offered to everyone, including the staff involved. This has strengthened confidence and self-belief and will continue to do so for the duration of the project.



Dyslexia North East: Rachel is a full-time Carer living in the North-East of England. Here, she tells us her story.

Our daughters aged 18, 13 and son aged 9 all have complex additional needs. I found out I was dyslexic when I was 28 and studying at college. My eldest daughter had recently been diagnosed as dyslexic at her school, and I also fit the criteria. It was a relief to finally understand my learning style and why I struggled at school.

Being a full-time carer for three children brings challenges. I'm inundated with letters, emails, reports, phone calls, meetings and complex medical and legal documents. I found the sheer amount of paperwork and the use of complex language and ever-changing abbreviations incredibly overwhelming, but I have since learned coping strategies.

I'm never asked by any of the teams supporting my children if I understand the paperwork, or if I need extra time. Everybody just assumes I have no challenges. Dyslexia is truly my hidden disability. Had I been diagnosed at school, I believe my attainment would have been higher, but lack of funding for childhood assessments is still a problem today. I'm so proud of my children and all the battles they have overcome. I'm also proud to be part of a supportive dyslexic community in Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

A celebration of neurodivergent adult participation

Dr Katherine Hewlett and Liz Gentilcore

Set up in 2012 the adult services were about delivery by neurodivergent (ND) experts for ND participants. Since December 2020 these services have been running within an entirely voluntary and participatory mode of delivery. The goal is to develop the confidence and skills in Communications and Technology for our ND adult participants, to the point where they themselves will deliver talks and workshops for other ND adult participants.

This is an inclusive model of provision that really understands the issues in our ND society for ND adults. Participants are coached and supported to participate in discussion, provide talks and workshops on a range of topics that reflect this lived in experience. The positive experience of this work empowers ND voices to reach out to those who have had limited access or not accessed the services. In this way we support the development of skills to access systems to enable economic welfare and career opportunity, but most importantly this approach lessens isolation and promotes improved well-being.

Taking place three times a month on Zoom, and the sessions are short ten minute TED style talks on a subject speakers feel passionate about. All sessions are on Zoom, reaching many across the UK. Sessions are recorded with consent and the film is then circulated with any presentation slides. As we have many enquiries for our recordings, these are then transferred to either Youtube or Vimeo. The screening can be a powerful experience for our participants as the information revealed means gaining much greater knowledge about who they are.

British Dyslexia Association Helpline

Call us on
0333 405 4567

The British Dyslexia Association Helpline is a national helpline service for people with dyslexia and dyscalculia and those who support them. It offers free, confidential, impartial information and signposting. We receive calls and emails from parents, students, adults with dyslexia, teachers, employers and professionals from a range of organisations.

Our helpline is the only national, free helpline service for dyslexic people of all ages and those impacted by dyslexia. Run by volunteers with the support and guidance of our experts and specialists, it helps us influence policy changes.

You can also email your enquiries to:
helpline@bdadyslexia.org.uk

Phoneline opening hours:

Tuesday: 10am to 1pm
Wednesday: 10am to 1pm
Thursday: 1pm to 3pm

Whether you're supporting someone with dyslexia, or have dyslexia yourself, our Helpline is here to support you. Here are just some of the relevant questions the Helpline team have answered over the past few weeks. We hope you find them useful.

Anxiety at Primary School

Dear Helpline,
My child (9) is becoming increasingly anxious about school. We think that she is falling behind and we are wondering if we should arrange a diagnostic assessment for her?

Dear Parent,
If your daughter is worried about any aspect of school, it is important to share her concerns with the class teacher. If she

is worried about class work, the teacher can share any support strategies which the school has put into place and can direct you to activities you can do at home.

If the school has support in place they may not feel that a diagnostic assessment is necessary. In that case, they should be able to share any targets with you and review them regularly so that you and they can monitor any progress being made and revisit the decision about having a diagnostic assessment if necessary.

If your daughter is very anxious about her work, you may wish to discuss having an assessment directly with her. Some children respond really well to a diagnostic assessment and feel comforted by the fact that there is something causing them to find work challenging, whereas others do not want to feel different to their peers and are very reluctant and anxious about having an assessment. In those cases, it is sometimes helpful to give the child some time to process the idea and then revisit it.

A diagnostic assessment can point directly to significant areas of weakness in a child's learning profile and can highlight strategies and resources which can be put into place to support a learner. For further information visit the British Dyslexia Association website: https://bit.ly/2X7ddOK

Isolated at University

Dear Helpline,
I've been studying online from my room at university for the past year. The pandemic has meant I feel additionally isolated and I don't think my tutors understand my additional needs.

Dear Student,
We are always sorry to hear about students feeling isolated and alone with their difficulties. If you have not done so, we would reccomend speaking to your personal tutor about your difficulties. They may make suggestions as to how you could be better supported. On these pages are lots of ideas that may be helpful for you to suggest to your tutors: https://bit.ly/2XgNnYZ

There will also be a learning support department at your university. You could check whether they run support groups for students with disabilities. There may also be a Local Dyslexia Association where you could meet other people to discuss any challenges or concerns you have. You can do a post code search on this web page: https://bit.ly/38WEAOe

Returning to the office

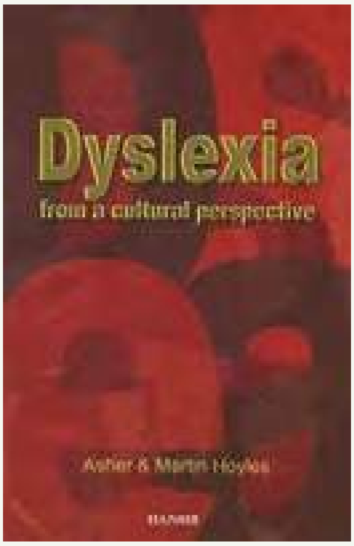
Dear Helpline,
I have recently returned to the office after having been working from home. We are now hot-desking and I'm really distracted by my colleagues talking around me; they interrupt my focus and I can't get my attention back on my tasks. Also my desk is often by the kitchen which is a really noisy area. What can I do?

Dear Office Worker,
Lots of neurodivergent people have challenges with concentration. Hot-desking can be an added problem as you don't always get a desk situated in an area that suits your needs. You are entitled to reasonable adjustments to support your hidden disability which you can read about on this web page: https://bit.ly/2YE8RiN

You could request a 'priority desk' that is situated away from distractions, this would give you first choice on the desk. Wearing noise-cancelling headphones or taking a laptop to a quiet area for focusing on work that requires a high degree of concentration can also be useful strategies. Working at home for parts of the week is also an adjustment that some workplaces can accommodate.

Dyslexia from a Cultural Perspective
By Asher Hoyles

Book review: by Gillian Austen



First published in 2007, this was perhaps the first accessible book to tackle the intersections between race, culture and dyslexia. But with the exception of some books for children, there is still little that celebrates our black dyslexic role models. This book makes a start on that, mentioning Muhammed Ali, Whoopi Goldberg, Danny Glover, and others.

A recurrent theme is that hidden dyslexia creates a greater burden on young people from non-white cultural backgrounds. They are even more likely than their white counterparts to face stereotyped assumptions that their literacy problems are a matter for discipline rather than a hidden or invisible difficulty such as dyslexia.

The best part of this book is the interviews, all with highly intelligent, gifted people, who were written off as lazy or stupid because of their dyslexia. The hugely popular poet and actor Benjamin Zephaniah was permanently excluded from school at 13, illiterate and undiagnosed, but having memorised the Bible, most of the writings of Marcus Garvey and hundreds of traditional Jamaican songs and poems.

Late diagnosis is a recurrent theme. Donald Schloss was a chess champion at school but unable to spell the word "chess". Yet it wasn't until he was 31 that he was diagnosed. As Donald says, even in the dyslexia community, it is still largely seen as a white, middle class condition, and this needs to change. Donald established the Adult Dyslexia Organisation, which helped another interviewee, Carole Miles, who is now a specialist counsellor. Marcia Brissett-Bailey is another interviewee who became an effective advocate for dyslexic people, while Sandra Fox and Asher Hoyles provide specialist support to dyslexic students.

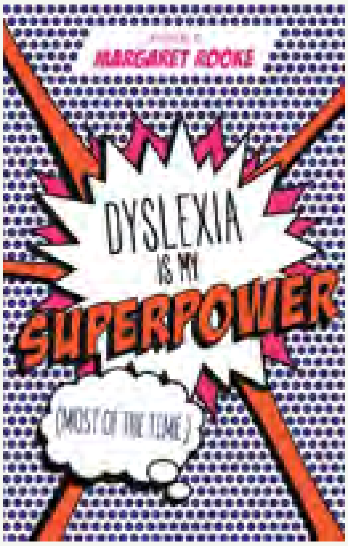
> The best part of this book is the interviews, all with highly intelligent, gifted people.

Race and dyslexia have been recognised as needing more research since at least the mid-1990s. The authors of this book went on to publish an influential academic paper on the subject in 2010 but, as recently as January of 2021, an American blog lamented that "the confluence of race and dyslexia is almost non-existent in research". It is high time that more research is done in this area, to feed into teacher training and raise awareness among educators.

There is also a pressing need for more accessible outreach work – books, or maybe videos, performances, and podcasts – which will help to raise awareness of dyslexia among minority and under-represented communities.

Dyslexia is My Superpower (Most of the Time) Interviews by Margaret Rooke

Book review: by Sue Lilley, Specialist Teacher and Assessor



This book is based on 100 interviews that Margaret Rooke conducted with young people with dyslexia, from seven different countries (UK, Ireland, USA, Canada, Australia, Singapore, India and the Caribbean). Margaret took the content from the interviews and divided it into 12 themed chapters. This makes the book more useful, so it is possible to dip in and read about how the young people felt dyslexia made them more compassionate (chapter 2), or made them stronger (chapter 5), or made them work harder (chapter 10).

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book. I felt the young people's voices and personalities came through loud and clear.

As a teacher of students with dyslexia, but not having dyslexia myself, it was valuable to immerse myself in the experiences of these young people growing up and experiencing the pros and cons of dyslexia. The cover and title are very positive in tone, but the content does also reflect the difficult times the interviewees had been through.

I discussed this book with a friend of mine and her dyslexic son James, aged 10. He is working hard with lots of support at home and at school to improve his reading, spelling and maths, and he is making progress. But he cannot see the "superpower" yet - only how much harder he has to work than his friends.

James and his mum said that they wouldn't choose the book based on its cover and title as the positivity does not reflect where James is at this stage in his journey. However, I have recommended this book to them as I think it will help James' mum to see that there is light at the end of the tunnel. It may also help James to feel less alone in his struggle.

I think it could be a very powerful and motivating read for many.

It is great when students can feel that dyslexia is a superpower, but that belief can take time to develop and the journey to that point can feel quite long and hard. I hope this book will get to the students who need encouragement to keep on striving to reach that point. I think it could be a very powerful and motivating read for many.

British Dyslexia Association Training

As part of our ongoing commitment to raise awareness of dyslexia and neurodiversity, the British Dyslexia Association offers a comprehensive training programme. We deliver eLearning, Open and Onsite training courses aimed at everyone. Our courses are aimed at everyone from parents wishing to find out more about dyslexia to professional practitioners looking to gain a Level 7 accreditation.

To book, visit **www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/training**
or email: training@bdadyslexia.org.uk

Practical Solutions: 1 day virtual courses 9:30 am - 3:30pm

These courses are designed to up-skill you in specific areas to support dyslexic learners. They will provide you with lots of useful information, tips and resources needed to support dyslexia at home or in the classroom to provide a dyslexia-friendly learning and teaching approach.

These sessions can be used towards the completion of our accredited courses, so are great for anyone wishing to go on to complete one of our accredited courses at Level 2 and 3.

Practical Solutions Plus - Reading

Upcoming dates:
3 November or 9 December
Location: Virtual

Practical Solutions Plus - Spelling

Upcoming dates:
4 November or 13 December
Location: Virtual

Practical Solutions Plus - Writing

Upcoming dates:
5 November or 8 December
Location: Virtual

Empowering your workforce

We offer lots of courses and resources enabling organisations to empower their employees and colleagues.

Practical Solutions for Employers

Upcoming dates:
1 December 9:30am - 3:30pm
Location: 1 day virtual course

Making Reasonable Adjustments in the workplace

Upcoming dates:
3 December 9:30am - 3:30pm
Location: 1 day virtual course

Level 5

Accredited Level 5 - Certificate in Dyslexia; Literacy, Support and Intervention

Upcoming dates: 3 x intakes per year - September, January, and April. You will need to book your place on the course.
Location: Virtual

Suitable for individuals who have a professional interest in dyslexia looking to become informed practitioners and teachers. The course is flexible and can be undertaken part time, through online learning.

This Level 5 certificate holds BDA Approved Teacher/Approved Practitioner (BDA ATS/APS) accreditation. This means that candidates who have successfully passed the Level 5 certificate can apply to the BDA for ATS or APS status and professional membership.

Accredited Level 5 - Certificate in Dyscalculia and Maths Learning Difficulties; Support and Intervention

Upcoming dates: 3 x intakes per year - September, January, and April. You will need to book your place on the course.
Location: Virtual

Suitable for individuals who have a professional interest in dyscalculia in order for them to become informed practitioners and teachers. The course is delivered in the form of eLearning and can be undertaken full time or part time.

Level 7

Accredited Level 7 - Diploma in Dyslexia Assessment and Intervention

Upcoming dates: We are now taking applications for our January 2022 intake.
Location: Virtual

Suitable for individuals who already hold ATS/APS (or equivalent) and have a professional interest in assessment for dyslexia. The course is modular and flexible and can be undertaken part time, through online learning. The course is suitable for assessing all age groups.

Candidates will need to complete and submit an application form prior to booking any elements of the Level 7 diploma.

British Dyslexia Association Fundraising

Hi, I'm Nicki and I joined the British Dyslexia Association earlier this year as the Fundraising Officer. My job involves looking after all our wonderful supporters and fundraisers. It's been so lovely to get to know some of you over the past seven months and hear about why supporting the British Dyslexia Association is so important to you.

Whether you're interested in taking on a challenge - like the London Marathon, jumping out of a plane, or holding your own fundraising coffee morning or bake sale - I'd love to have a chat and support you in your fundraising!

Whether fundraising alone, or doing it as part of a team, there are lots of different ways to get involved. On the following page you'll find some fundraising activities that you can get involved with next year. There are lots of other ways you can get involved too, like holding your own event such as a cake sale, quiz night or pamper party.

If you'd like to find out more about fundraising for the British Dyslexia Association, or have a chat about how you can get involved, you can either call me on 0333 405 4555 (extension 610) or email me at fundraising@bdadyslexia.org.uk.

Best wishes,

Nicki

To find out more, or to sign up for your 2022 fundraising challenge, visit: www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/support-us/challenges

London Marathon 2021

We'd love to give a shout out and say a massive thank you to our London Marathon runners who between them have taken part in the historic London route and virtually across the country and wider Europe! You can find out more about how our team got on, and meet some of our 2021 team members by visiting: https://bit.ly/teamBDA2021

Fundraising events for 2022

Edinburgh Marathon Festival

28 – 29 May 2022, Edinburgh

There's something for all the family at Scotland's biggest running festival, with stunning views of Holyrood to views of Edinburgh Castle and the East Lothian coastline. Whichever distance, from the 5K to the full marathon, you'll be treated to some picturesque views and Edinburgh's most iconic landmarks.

There's even the Hairy Haggis Marathon relay for a team of four to take on together, with each team member taking on a leg of the route – perfect if you've dreamed of running a marathon but want to share the miles! The junior races are a fantastic way to get children active and encourage them to get involved in running. With different distances, ranging from 1K – 5K, for children aged 3 to 17, there's an event for all junior fundraisers.

https://bit.ly/2Yxj7K4

Easter 50 Challenge

9 April 2022, Windsor

Walk, jog or run either the 50k or a historic 25k – and make it an active Easter! From the Windsor Racecourse base camp, join other adventures as you head out on a looped route through the Great Park with fantastic views of the Castle, on to Runnymede, along the Thames Path, and take in some wonderful countryside. You'll get full support all the way, a few post Easter surprises, a celebration finish at base camp, and a BBQ meal. https://bit.ly/3qu3te3

Chiltern 50 Challenge

24 September 2022, Henley

Whether you choose the full 50k looped route, or the 25k option, you will be treated to some of the best of the Chilterns countryside, with historic trails, rolling hills, nature reserves, and fantastic views. Starting and finishing at the base camp in Henley, there's a Saturday night celebration BBQ and entertainment with extensive on-site camping and parking options. Easily accessible from London, it's a route with real variety and some wonderful scenery - and with options to walk, jog or run, there's a Chiltern Challenge for everyone! https://bit.ly/3omULvI

London Marathon

2 October 2022, London

Have you dreamed of crossing the finish line of the world's greatest marathon? As part of our 2022 London Marathon team that dream could become a reality as you run the world-famous route that has remained largely unchanged since the inaugural race in 1981. Starting at Blackheath, the route encompasses many of the capital's most mesmerising landmarks, old and new – before finishing at The Mall.

More events will be added soon, so do keep an eye out on the website:

fundraising.bdadyslexia.org.uk/home

British Dyslexia Association Events

2021 Events Round-Up

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic we have continued to adapt and engage with our audiences digitally; ensuring resources were available to the teachers, parents, children and professionals who continued to need our support through the uncertainty and change.

Thanks to funding from the JJ Charitable Trust, we were also able to provide advice to parents supporting dyslexic learners from home through a series of Free Parent Webinars throughout 2021. Reaching an astonishing audience of over 10,000 people across the country – entirely remotely, these webinars took the format of online panel Q&A events held with experts in their fields, proving to be a vital resource during the pandemic, and so demand was high.

Due to their success, we will be continuing to run similar webinars throughout 2022. These will cover a wide range of topics, from mental health to assistive technologies, as well as continue to provide support and raise awareness of dyslexia and co-occurring SpLD's.

In June 2021 we held another successful and well attended International Conference, but this time with a difference – it was virtual for the first time ever. Thanks to its digital nature, this event was truly international, providing a platform which could be logged into at any time of day, from anywhere in the world providing access to huge amounts of important resources and academic research to event attendees. Over 100 leading experts presented on dyslexia and dyscalculia over the two days and hosted over 60 live interactive sessions. For those who missed the 2021 International Conference, our next one will be held in 2024.

2022 will see our special 50th Anniversary Gala Dinner, which will be held at the prestigious Twickenham Rugby Stadium on June 10 2022. During this event we will be paying tribute to all of the incredible individuals who have supported the BDA and people with dyslexia over the past 50 years with a time-honoured tradition: a ball. Having been unable to hold in person events for well over a year, we are extremely excited to welcome you to this event and see all of our supporters in person once again. We're sure it will feel just like a fairy-tale.

Keep an eye on our website to find out about all of these events:

www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/events

Festive Celebrity Special

Date: 3 December 2021, 7pm - 9pm
Location: Virtual

Join us for **free** a festive celebration as we give thanks to our fantastic ambassadors and supporters.

To thank you for your support throughout 2021 we're offering you the opportunity to get to know our dyslexic celebrity ambassadors better.

Joined by our fabulous host Ollie Winiberg, famous presenter known for his time on BBC Radio One and BBC Music Introducing.

Come along to hear our celebrities' festive tales, dyslexia tips and inspirational stories as we look back over 2021 and look forward to the future.

For more information and to book your place, please visit the events section of our website:

www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/events

2022 Events

Gala Dinner 2022

Date: Friday 10 June 2022
Location: Twickenham Rugby Stadium

We're in the process of planning our next fabulous Awards Gala Dinner. We will be making announcements on our website shortly, so be sure to stay tuned!

Leading Revolutions and Creating Solutions:
Exploring the individual experiences of dyscalculia and maths learning difficulties.
Thursday 14 October 2021

#MyDyslexiaStory

Visit our website to hear from more amazing individuals:
https://bit.ly/2Wu1U39