

Dyslexia and Working from Home

Technology:

- Reasonable adjustments and the usual workplace support must be in place while colleagues are working from home. The first step is to ask the employee what additional support they think will help.
- Because of the need to now work online, laptops with an additional large screen are likely to support people with hidden disabilities; having multiple documents open for cross-referencing is one way of supporting the user's working memory.
- If the colleague's usual specialist software is temporarily unavailable, they may find a free temporary download for their software via the software company's website. This link has a free temporary download of Read and Write Gold so employees can try it out: www.texthelp.com/en-gb/products/read-write/read-write-for-work/ This YouTube video also has a good demonstration: www.youtube.com/watch?v=YxUwQMm_Lmw
- Microsoft has dictation and screen-reading features built-in (as do smartphones) assigning a trusted colleague/mentor for support with activating and using these tools is a quick way of providing help to employees with dyslexia.
- Virtual meetings: it is helpful to use a video platform that enables attendees to record the content, thus freeing up the need to take notes and enabling neurodiverse employees to review information at their own pace. However, employees with hidden challenges may require additional training on these web-based platforms, a named and trusted colleague is a quick way of providing this.

- Many neurodivergent individuals process information differently and like to have verbal information in bitesize chunks with additional time to process and digest it.
- Be sure to email agendas and handouts early so employees with reading difficulties have time to process the information and to prepare their contributions. Be aware, that many individuals with reading challenges prefer information presented visually (charts, diagrams, colour coding) as well as with specific fonts and layouts (this Dyslexia Friendly Style Guide is useful for creating materials:
www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/advice/employers/creating-a-dyslexia-friendly-workplace/dyslexia-friendly-style-guide

Staying Organised and Focused:

- Endeavour to be as organised as possible, use folders, colour co-ordination, 'to do' lists etc to ensure that day-to-day tasks and targets are clear and achievable.
- Have a designated work zone at home, to ensure that there is a chance to decompress.
- Ensure that breaks are taken away from the work-zone, to maintain perspective and to reduce stress.
- Endeavour to link together with the work team for informal chats, as well as formal meetings; it is important to use technology to reach out to colleagues to ensure wellbeing.

General:

- Whilst working remotely, has the team ensured that there are clear channels of communication if a colleague is struggling to cope and remain focused?
- A Workplace Needs Assessment involves an assessor identifying specific workplace support for individual employees. This can include software and IT, no cost/low cost solutions, 1:1 workplace coaching, awareness training for employers:
<https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/services/assessments/workplace-needs-assessment>
- Need help and advice? Reach out to us here at the British Dyslexia Association: helpline@bdadyslexia.org.uk