



# DYSLEXIA: CHALLENGE OR OPPORTUNITY?

## SMALL CHANGE MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE!

Dyslexia is widespread in New Zealand, affecting an estimated one in ten people. It is often misunderstood as just a problem with reading and writing. In reality, it can affect a spectrum of skills from auditory and visual perception, planning and organising, and motor skills, through to short-term memory and concentration.

However, dyslexia can also bring creative gifts – like innovation, big picture thinking, enhanced spatial understanding and out of the box problem solving. Many dyslexic individuals excel in engineering, design, building and trades; arts; mathematics; science and entrepreneurship.

Often, dyslexia's greatest difficulty is self-esteem – it only becomes a disability if not appropriately addressed. And that's where everyone can help, because recognising dyslexia and making small changes to accommodate this way of thinking is simple when you know how!

The key to understanding dyslexia is to recognise that the dyslexic mind works in a different way, using the 'pictorial' right side of the brain and turning thoughts into pictures rather than the sounds of words. This thinking preference means dyslexics often prefer to receive, process and present information orally or visually rather than via the written word.

So the small changes that make a big difference can be anything from encouraging verbal reporting, picking up the phone rather than sending email; and drawing a diagram to explain a page full of words! Small changes in attitude and in action are all it takes.

Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand is committed to greater recognition, understanding and action on dyslexia. Find out more at [www.dfnz.org.nz](http://www.dfnz.org.nz) You can also visit our 4D webspaces for great information on how small changes can help in the classroom and work environment at [www.4d.org.nz](http://www.4d.org.nz)

  
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Recognition • Understanding • Action