

People with dyslexia can bring unique strengths and advantages to the workplace

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Credit: AI-generated image ([disclaimer](#))

Dyslexia is the [most common learning disability](#) in the world, and up to [15 to 20% of the population](#) has a language-based learning disability. If you don't have dyslexia yourself, you likely know someone who does.

Dyslexia is characterized by difficulties with reading, writing and

spelling. Like other learning disabilities, people with dyslexia [process information and learn differently](#).

Though learning disabilities are often characterized as a childhood issue, they are lifelong conditions that follow people into the [workplace](#). People with dyslexia [find it harder to find jobs](#) and they often experience challenges once they are hired because of their [learning disability](#).

Dyslexia can result in challenges with [organization, time management](#), reading and writing, [effective communication](#) and comprehending complicated instructions. These challenges can be compounded if companies don't have accommodations in place for people with disabilities.

But people with dyslexia often [bring unique strengths to the workplace as well](#). Employers miss out on untapped potential when they overlook or discount their abilities in the workplace.

Misconceptions and stigma

Under the [Canadian Human Rights Act](#), individuals are protected from discrimination based on disabilities, including learning disabilities such as dyslexia. However, misconceptions and stigma can often make it difficult for people to disclose that they have dyslexia.

While there can be [positive impacts from self-disclosure](#), such as receiving accommodations like text-to-speech software or [dyslexia-friendly fonts](#) at work, there can also be [negative impacts](#).

Self-disclosure can result in [workers feeling isolated](#), discriminated against and receiving lowered expectations from managers and co-workers.

Some of this can be attributed to the stigma surrounding dyslexia. Even though dyslexia is the most common type of learning disability, it is widely misunderstood. There is [more discussion about mental disorders and physical disabilities](#) than learning disabilities, so [people tend to know less about them](#).

One of the most common misconceptions about learning disabilities is that [having one makes you less intelligent](#). But this isn't true; many people with learning disabilities have [average or above-average](#) intelligence.

This harmful stigma can lead to [lower self-esteem, stress](#), shame or isolation. It can also result in people with dyslexia [being seen as liabilities at work](#).

Because of this, [many people with dyslexia choose not to disclose their condition](#). This can discourage people from seeking accommodations or help in the workplace, and prevent them from reaching their full potential.

Those that don't self-disclose must instead find ways to manage their learning disability without the company's help. For most people with dyslexia, knowing their learning style can help them [adapt and compensate for their learning disability](#).

It's crucial for people without dyslexia to learn more about it so they can better understand and support individuals who have it. This knowledge can empower people to advocate for those with dyslexia, reduce the stigma associated with it and create better, more inclusive workplaces.

Advantages of dyslexic workers

Because people with dyslexia process information and think differently

than others, they can bring distinctive advantages to the workplace.

People with dyslexia tend to be visual thinkers and can often see the [big picture](#). This can help them visualize complicated scenarios and come up with [new, original solutions to problems](#).

People with dyslexia also have above-average [problem-solving skills](#), and are skilled at [thinking creatively](#) and coming up with [abstract and unique ideas](#)—all of which results in a more innovative work environment.

In addition, people with dyslexia are often [resilient and persevering](#) because of their experience overcoming challenges and barriers. This can lead to a strong work ethic, determination and motivation towards accomplishing their goals.

Building inclusive workplaces

Canadian employers have a duty to provide reasonable accommodations for employees with learning disabilities to ensure they have the supports needed to perform their jobs well.

[Workplaces can be more accommodating](#) by providing employees with assistive technologies like spellchecking tools, allowing flexible work schedules, modifying job tasks and [training methods](#), and providing instructional materials in a variety of formats.

Support is an ongoing commitment, not a one-time effort. Employers should be ready to provide continuous assistance to their employees and be understanding and supportive towards their needs and preferences.

People with dyslexia can bring a great deal to the workplace. Establishing an inclusive and accommodating work environment for people with learning disabilities like [dyslexia](#) can foster a diverse

workforce and improve productivity, innovation and performance. Doing this ultimately creates a more supportive and productive work environment for all.

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