




YOU CAN'T SEE DLD

By Shelbi Annison – lived experience

A voice that should be heard! 

I wish to child whose voice was never heard,
A child who struggled to use their words,
A child who was "misread" or "diagnosed",
A child who asked you others to advocate for me,
A child that others always thought,
A child that was always left out,
A child who others would tease,
A child who only wanted to please,
A child who battled with daily difficulties,
A child that with resources,
A child with missed opportunities,
A child with hidden disabilities,
A child they thought would never get far,
A child who is still healing from this war,
A child who still has abilities,
A child filled with possibilities,
A child who has so much to say,
A child who communicates in their own way,
A child who looks and wants to play,
A child who learns in a different way,
A child whose ideas were brilliant,
A child who learns how to be resilient,
A child who is capable and so "highly",
A child who deserves to be included,
A child who you should fight for,
A child who you should treat gently,
Every child should be seen and heard!

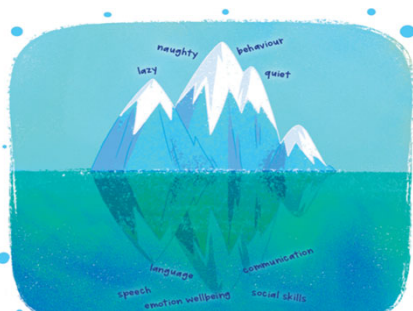
By Shelbi Annison
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DLD: Who can't see our best friends



INTRODUCTION

- Adult with Dyslexia, DLD, & short-term memory ☹️
- CLASS Practitioner
- RADLD Ambassador
- Afasic Ambassador
- Author





More than just "behaviour" you see; further unpicking is key.

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WHAT WAS I LIKE AS A CHILD...

Sweet and innocent



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I WAS...

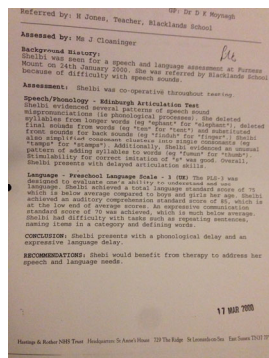
- Cheeky & full of energy
- Mumble my words
- Point to things that I wanted
- Stomp my feet when people did not understand me
- Confused
- Gullible



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SLT REPORT ...

- Phonological & Expressive language **delay**
- Understanding & use of language = **below**
- Auditory comprehension = **low end**
- Expressive communication = **below**
- Difficulties repeating sentence, naming items in categories and defining words



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GROWING UP MISUNDERSTOOD...



Primary School



Secondary School
Dyslexia



College & University
Dyslexia, Short term memory



NOW
DLD

PRIMARY SCHOOL

I do not remember too much but...

- Low level reading books
- People couldn't understand me
- Speech book – working on sounds
- Speech and language therapy – did stop.
- Look what others were doing



SECONDARY SCHOOL

- Transition difficult
- Notice my difficulties more
- Low confidence
- Wanted to 'fit' in
- Unkind comments/friendships
- Extra English - spelling groups
- GCSE Star School - Saturdays



COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY

- Transition difficult
- Anxiety & panic attacks
- Full dyslexia assessment and said '**possible underlying language**' difficulties.
- Full equipment
- Extra tutoring support & study skills



DIAGNOSED AS AN ADULT

- Private SLT assessment
- Mixed emotions but relieved!
- Working on self-esteem & confidence
- Positive impact of diagnosis
- I still struggle but coping with my strategies & extra support at work!



How it's feel when your needs are NOT diagnosed...

- I am stupid
- I'm a failure
- No one understands
- Confused
- Hopeless
- Low self esteem + confidence
- What is wrong with me?
- Alone
- Lost / forgotten about
- Fear of the future
- Isolated
- No one listens
- Dislike yourself/ self hatred
- Misunderstood
- Struggles to regulate your emotions
- I struggle everyday!
- Avoidance
- Affects your mental health!
- Challenging behaviour
- I can't do the job I want
- I can't do that!
- No motivation
- All behaviour is a form of communication!


@dlldwhycantyouseeeme

Positives to receiving a diagnosis...

- All my needs are identified!
- Feel listened to!
- You finally understand me!
- Self-belief
- I am CAPABLE!
- Reasonable adjustments
- Improvements in your mental health
- Excited about the future
- Improves self-image / how you view yourself
- Self-acceptance
- You are no longer alone!
- Improves self-esteem & confidence
- You can finally relate to someone else!
- Motivation! goal settings
- I can now receive the right support to help with my difficulties!
- Reassurance that nothing is wrong with you or it was all in your head!
- MORE Positives experiences
- Talking to someone else who has the same struggle as you is so IMPORTANT!

@dlldwhycantyouseeeme

Developmental Language Disorder



AS AN ADULT NOW...

- I still need support;
- Instructions & Vocabulary explaining
- Maps & directions & numbers
- Repeat & write information down
- Modelling work / tasks
- Speech issues
- Struggle to express myself



What I wish teachers knew...

Developmental Language Disorder Edition



Sometimes the classroom can be too ...
Developmental Language Disorder

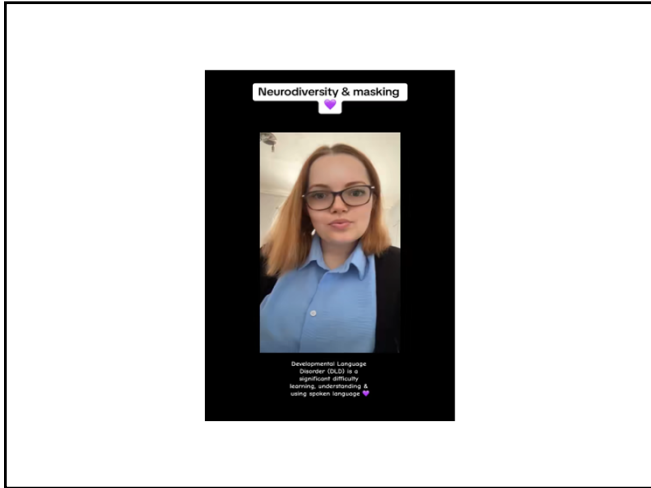
1 in 14

DLD: anxiety, emotional well-being & mental health
Those with Developmental Language Disorder are at greater risk of experiencing anxiety, emotional difficulties and mental health difficulties.

@didwhycantgouseme

MASKING

- Internalising emotions
- Hiding unmet needs
- Sensory overload
- Emotional overload
- Fatigue & burnout
- Anxiety
- Fear of judgement, rejection, isolation



I WISH I HAD THIS SUPPORT...

Resources shown include: Weekly timetable, Social narrative cards, Task Plan, 'The Zones of Regulation' book cover, and 'Teaching Vocabulary Across the Day' book cover.

STRATEGIES...

- Use of visuals, individual timetable, now and next, task board, word banks etc.
- Simplify language into smaller chunks – one step instructions
- Model – show how to do tasks
- Repeat & rephrase
- Extra time
- Scaffolding writing
- Movement breaks

LANGUAGE LINK AND SPEECH LINK ASSESSMENTS

- Early screening & intervention is key!
- Able to screen all children, EALS too!
- Intervention, plans, sessions, track, monitoring, resources.
- Live Help Desk



RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES

- Association pictures
- Odd one out cards and game
- Describing cue cards, Describe it game, Descriptors cards
- Guess what cards
- Sage Questions and Inference cards
- High Quality Teaching Strategies



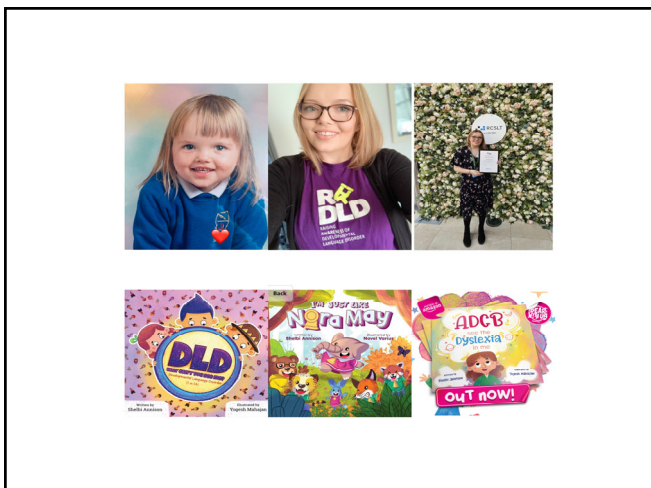
TODAY YOU CAN...

- Communication friendly environment
- Use of visuals, write down and simplify information
- Observations in different social environments
- Language Link assessment?
- DLD advocate in school?
- RADLD + Afacis
- **Friday 16th October 2026**









SUMMARY

- People with DLD are talented
- People with DLD can succeed
- You can make a difference!
- You play an important role!
- Keep raising awareness of DLD!





THANK YOU!

Shelbi Annison
