

BDA E-Newsletter March 2009

BDA Launch Mentor Project with Sir Jackie Stewart

The British Dyslexia Association (BDA) is launching a mentoring scheme, in conjunction with Cass Business School, City University London, and Dyslexia Scotland, to link adults with dyslexia with successful dyslexic people who will share the benefit of their experience and knowledge.

Sir Jackie Stewart, President of Dyslexia Scotland and Vice President of the British Dyslexia Association, will be key speaker at the launch event and a mentor. The British Dyslexia Association is delighted to announce other keynote speakers and mentors including Zenna Atkins, Chair of Ofsted and Louis Barnett, founder of Chokolit.

The programme is an informal mentoring scheme, which is designed to be flexible. The emphasis is on two people getting together who share something in common - dyslexia. The aim is for the mentor to share some of their coping strategies and above all instill confidence in the mentee. The scheme is based on the reality that too often the positive attributes of being dyslexic are forgotten and not even recognised by the individual themselves.

The BDA and Dyslexia Scotland feels that the talent and skills of a successful dyslexic person would be invaluable to a similarly like-minded person with dyslexia, who is either starting their career or at a key point in their profession. The mentors will be from a variety of backgrounds from the arts to business to politics. All will be dyslexic or have a good knowledge of what it is like to live with dyslexia.

The launch event is taking place on 11 March at Cass Business School, London, at 6 pm – 9 pm. You can book your place at the launch here:
[http://bunhill.city.ac.uk/media/events.nsf/\(httpAllEvents\)/3E0AA9DCCB9D989780257558005AAE65?OpenDocument](http://bunhill.city.ac.uk/media/events.nsf/(httpAllEvents)/3E0AA9DCCB9D989780257558005AAE65?OpenDocument).

Apply to be Mentored!

To apply to be a part of our scheme, all you need to do is meet the criteria and complete the application form, which are all available at <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/Mentoring.html>. Mentees can apply for group mentoring, individual mentoring or both. Applicants must make their choice known on their application form.

A one-day training programme organised by Cass Business School will be available to mentors.

The minimum age for applying to be a mentee is 18, there is no maximum age limit, and you will receive a minimum of twelve hours time from your mentor.

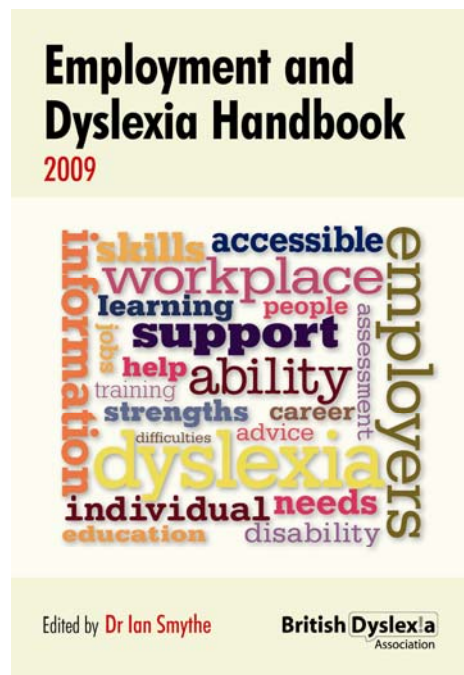
Please send your mentee application form to the Human Relations Manager via email to mentoring@bdadyslexia.org.uk or through the post at the British Dyslexia Association, Unit 8, Bracknell Beeches, Old Bracknell Lane, Bracknell, Berkshire, RG12 7BW.

Please note: Applications will also be acceptable in alternative formats, for example, audio.

If you would like to be involved as a Mentor, we are accepting application forms after the launch on March 11th, an application form will be available on our website in due course. The mentors who are launching the scheme have all been personally invited.

For any questions on the scheme, please contact the BDA on 0845 251 9003 or email mentoring@bdadyslexia.org.uk.

New for 2009- the Dyslexia and Employment Handbook



The BDA has published its inaugural Dyslexia and Employment Handbook. This is for adults, parents, employers, HR managers, employees- anyone in employment who has dyslexia or has an interest in dyslexia. The Handbook features sections on Understanding Dyslexia, Assessing Strengths and Weaknesses, Using Technology, Dyslexia Friendly Working Practices, Supporting Dyslexic Individuals and Employment.

Here is a taster of what you can find in the Dyslexia and Employment Handbook:

What's hot in technology? By Dr Ian Smythe

Technology is not the solution, but it can be part of a strategy that helps reduce difficulties. At the end of 2008, I made a list on my blog (<http://technodys.blogspot.com>) of what I considered to be some of the most useful software around. Here are the highlights from that list, and a reason why I would recommend them to anybody. (For fuller details, see the blog entry of 1st January 2009.) And it is all free!

Firstly, My Top Three for 2008 were:

1. SearchMe
2. DimDim
3. Soshiku

SearchMe – Do you hate when you have to read all those entries in Google? Would you like to see the websites visually? Then this is the search engine for you – www.searchme.com.

Dimdim – There is nothing worse than trying to get some software support as they shout down the phone “No, it should not be like that. Try the other one!” Dimdim is described as web conferencing. It allows voice and video, text chat, and most importantly, a shared desktop where somebody can look at your working environment – www.dimdim.com

Soshiku – This is an online reminder system. There are many others, but I like the ease of use of this one. You can set it to send emails and text messages ahead of assignment and project deadlines – www.soshiku.com

Others of note were as follows:

KeePass – This is probably my most used piece of software on this list. I keep all my passwords here in one place, so all I have to do is remember the one password to enter it – www.Keepass.com

iSpeech – Simply upload your text document to this site, and you can download the mp3 file. You can also enter a URL or text – www.ispeech.org

IM Translator – This is a wonderful online tool which translates (and back translates) in more than a dozen languages, and with the text being spoken by avatars – <http://imtranslator.com>

Raptor – Plagiarism is wrong. But accidental plagiarism is a real danger when you are trying to track multiple sources. This software will compare your text with what is on the web and highlight where there is common text – www.scanmyessay.com

Mindmeister – This online collaborative concept mapping tool allows team work over distance. Free for a limited number of concept maps – www.mindmeister.com

Reading Survey – This website allows you to identify your preferences for background colour, typeface, font size etc. – www.wdnf.info/colours/en/

Zhorn Stickies – These desktop stickies (desktop visual reminders) continue to be my favourites, despite others arriving on the scene. They also include alarms - www.zhornsoftware.co.uk/stickies/

Dropbox – There is nothing worse than suddenly not having access to information because your computer died. This site provides online storage, and allows you to set the back-up to be done automatically. – www.getdropbox.com

There were also a couple of highlights which do not fall into the free category, but are worth highlighting for their innovation. The first is the ability to enter text into your concept map (currently only MindManager) using speech-to-text, and the other was to use an iPhone to search the web.

You can purchase the Dyslexia and Employment Handbook, priced at £10 including postage & packaging, by calling the BDA Office on 0845 251 9003.

Spellbound Ball 2009



The BDA is holding a Ball to raise funds for those with dyslexia. The Spellbound Ball will take place on the **21st May 2009** at The Brewery in London.

This year the BDA will be offering a spectacular Spellbound night of dining, dancing and decadence! This will include a drinks reception, three course meal, band and auction with an auctioneer from prestigious auction house Bonhams.

The auction will feature top prizes, including a silver ring from Stephen Webster, four times 'Luxury Jeweller of the Year', and a suite at a luxury hotel in Barbados for two weeks.

We would love you to join us at the Ball – tickets are £125 per person or £1250 for a table of ten (including VAT).

To book your place or to find out further information contact Amberley Rainey on 0845 251 9003 or via email on admin@bdadyslexia.org.uk.

BDA Research Needs You

The internet can be a challenge for dyslexics, but the truth is that it needn't be. With more careful attention to the design of key services, we could all enjoy an improved online experience.

The BDA is undertaking some joint research at user experience consultancy Wilson Fletcher's usability labs. The outcome of which will help them to design some examples of how these services could be improved upon in the future. Publicising these examples will help to raise awareness and hopefully encourage site owners to adopt some of the improvements.

Have you struggled with using an online service? If so, we really need your help with this research. The sessions last about 45 minutes and will be held at Wilson Fletcher's offices in London - and you'll be paid for your time.

If you can help by participating in one of these sessions, please get in touch with rachell@bdadyslexia.org.uk.

Film on Dyslexic Teen Scoops Awards

A new independent film, *Summer*, about a dyslexic teen and his sidekick, has triumphed at the Scottish BAFTA Awards winning best feature and best director, and scooped best actor for Robert Carlyle at the Edinburgh Film Festival.

Released in cinemas in December 2008, the film, by Scottish director Kenny Glenan and written by dyslexic writer Hugh Ellis, features two kids Shaun and Daz growing up in small-town Britain, where their friendships joins them at the hip. The character of Shaun, played by Robert Carlyle, is the charmer and the rebel, he's also dyslexic and frustrated by his inability to make words do as he wants. Daz is his best friend and partner in crime. The film is story of the summer they shared as children, racing bikes, playing by the lake and Shaun's first love.

Summer's writer, Hugh Ellis has dyslexia and based the script on his background, growing up not far from where the film is set.

Hugh talks passionately about the drive behind the film: "I've always wanted to write this script. I've tried to write it several times. But if you write it when you're too young it becomes too angry- and there's anger enough without loading on all the rest of it. The script is based on my experiences at school, and also on meeting a guy I was at school with who was a trigger for one of the characters- it's very much about all of the people you leave behind.

"I was a middle- class kid going to a very working class primary school at a time when things like learning disabilities weren't recognized. I had a very early dyslexia diagnosis- my mother, who was a single parent teacher, was determined that there was something wrong with me. That was all to do with class I think- she just wasn't accepting it.

He continues: "The truth of it is that even now- and I know this because I was a governor at that same primary school for 20 years- working class kids are 'thick' and middle class kids are 'dyslexic'. It absolutely tragic to watch- kids with not very serious learning difficulties who could be helped, losing their self-confidence, knowing they are screwed for life."

BDA's Helpline and Policy Manager Sue Flohr watched the film and says:

For those of us with a knowledge of dyslexia and the difficulties and damage that can be caused when it is not diagnosed or dealt with, this film raises strong feelings and gives a bleak view of exclusion and disadvantage.

We see Shaun struggling with writing and the scene with the spelling test may be familiar to many dyslexics, also the conversations between the Head and his mother. We share his frustration and rage when he cannot do the exam and recognise the effects on his life. It is a powerful and moving film.

You can find out which cinemas are showing Summer at <http://www.summerthemovie.co.uk/>.

This article was first featured in Dyslexia Contact, January 2009.

Dyslexia at Work Conference

The BDA is holding its first ever Dyslexia at Work conference on 9th March in Canary Wharf, London, which will help businesses comply with the Disability Discrimination Act and offer practical advice on minimising difficulties and maximising talent in the workforce.

The conference will feature:

- Minister of State for Employment and Welfare Reform at the Department for Work and Pensions as keynote speaker;
- Sector specific case studies, which provide pioneering examples from various industries including the emergency services, health, care, catering and, banking and finance;
- A technology area;
- Topic based seminars dealing with current legislation, identification and screening, and learning and development.

For further details or to book any of the above Conferences please contact Katherine Dumas via email on katherined@bdadyslexia.org.uk or call the BDA Office on 0845 251 9003, selecting option 4.

Learning Languages on a Mobile Phone

By definition, dyslexics struggle in the first language, and learning a second is, at best, problematic. Analysing and synthesising new sound, learning vocabulary, and the new grammar and syntax are just some of the areas of difficulty.

CallDysc is an EU funded project that brings together partners in the UK, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Sweden and Romania to investigate the potential to use mobile phone to help dyslexic individuals learn English. By providing motivational technology, along with games that are designed with them in mind, it has been possible to demonstrate the possibility to make progress in an area previously known to be difficult for dyslexic individuals.

Activities include learning around 150 words of basic vocabulary in ten categories, building adjective-noun combinations, Web 2 social network type activities and learner-developed sentence building games. The games are designed to be played on any Flash-enabled phone as well as the computer, including the very mobile Flash-enabled Linux netbooks.

The project does not claim to teach English, but it does show that a combination of motivational technology and structured, sequential, multisensory games can lead to second language learning often well beyond expectations. If you would like to try these games yourself, please send an email to ian.smythe@ukonline.co.uk.

Dr Ian Smythe

BDA Policy Agenda 2009

With the great many legislative changes being pushed through Parliament such as the Education and Skills Bill, the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Bill and the Health Bill to name but a few, special attention had to be given to analyse the proposed changes to disability support. We began this task by tackling the issue of the Access to Work scheme and took our questions to the House of Lords for debate during parliamentary question time. The BDA, together with an overwhelming number of supporters in the Lords, wanted to know the extent to which the service providers of the Access to Work scheme were trained in dyslexia support. The overall message that the Access to Work scheme must be more informed to meet the practical needs of adult dyslexia was clearly delivered to the House. We are now looking more closely at the issues relating to the new diploma, apprenticeships and changes to the powers of local educational authorities and their impact on dyslexia support.

The BDA is monitoring the extent to which the new 'duty to participate', introduced under the Education and Skills Bill, will actually help the more disadvantaged learners to participate in Higher Education. The BDA continue to encourage changes to the way in which children are screened and assessed for learning difficulties; as this is pivotal to their ability to participate in Higher Education. Early intervention can also prevent children from becoming disaffected in schools and develop behavioural problems. In relation to this issue, the BDA is now working in the criminal justice system to ensure that the Youth Offending Teams trying to keep juvenile offenders in education recognise and understand dyslexia and can subsequently provide the specific learning support they need.

This work, together with the rest of the work we plan to undertake this year, reflects the BDA's overall intention to monitor the disability duty and we are working with the Government to help them deliver the most effective learning support.

Zahra Afshar

BDA Parliamentary Officer

National Family Week

Britain's first National Family Week will be held on the 25th to 31st May. Backed by the Prime Minister and Ed Balls MP (Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families). Lots of inspiring events and fun activities will be taking place around the country during the week.

This is a great opportunity for all those touched by dyslexia to get involved, to raise awareness of dyslexia and show how supportive families can make all the difference for dyslexic children. Schools could run training days for parents during National Family Week, to help them understand how best to support their children's needs. Dyslexic children could really benefit from the focus and fun that the week will inspire.

To find out more, visit www.nationalfamilyweek.co.uk.

No to Failure Regional Roadshows

The No to Failure Project, led by the leading voluntary sector organisations, including the BDA, Dyslexia Action, the Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties (PATOSS) and Xtraordinary People (XP), is moving into its final stages.

The project began in January 2007 and was funded and supported by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCFS). Its key aims were to raise awareness of the importance of early identification of pupils at risk of Dyslexia/SpLD as well as to demonstrate the outcomes of early screening and support for those pupils alongside the provision of training for teachers.

The 'No to Failure' project is now drawing to a close and the results are about to be published. Why not attend one of our three Regional Roadshow events and see the project outcomes for yourself?

The events are taking place at which to share and disseminate the results and findings of the 'No to Failure' project. Whilst all results will be downloadable from the No to Failure website by mid-Spring, why not come along and see the presentations by key contributors to the project in person?

The project is the largest of its kind in this country to date and has contributed to the founding of the new Dyslexia-SpLD Trust by members of the above organisations together with The Helen Arkell Centre. The Dyslexia-SpLD Trust will be formally launched at each of these events.

Please note that attendance at any of the Roadshows is by invitation only but there are places available at:

- Calderdale Roadshow - Wednesday, 11th March at the Heath Training Centre, Halifax, West Yorkshire.
- Westminster Roadshow - Monday, 16th March at the Central Methodist Hall, Westminster, London.
- Cornwall Roadshow - Friday, 20th March at the Lanhydrock Hotel, Bodmin, Cornwall.

If you would like to request an invitation, please email the No to Failure Project Office at info@notofailure.com or call 01344 381565 indicating which event you would like to attend. They will be happy to send you an invitation together with a full programme for the day. For more information on No to Failure visit www.notofailure.com.

BDA Training for Spring 2009

Practical Solutions for Dyslexia

This is a supportive workshop, which recognises and communicates the issues facing schools and parents in supporting their dyslexic children. It includes the five key roles for practical tips on supporting your child at home and in school. There is a morning session for parents, governors and an afternoon session for teachers and teaching assistants (T.As).

£35 parents and £69 for teachers

[Manchester \(Cheadle\)](#) - 5 March 2009

[Derry](#) - 10 March 2009

[Crawley](#) - 12 March 2009

[Luton](#) - 19 March 2009

[Basildon](#) - 24 March 2009

[Southampton \(Eastleigh\)](#) - 26 March 2009

[Preston](#) - 29 April 2009

[Enniskillen](#) - 05 May 2009

Practical Solutions for Dyslexia (A.M for teachers) and Dealing with Dyscalculia (P.M)

The morning dyslexia workshop, for teachers, will cover:

- A sensory experience of what dyslexia feels like and how it affects the learning process;
- Theories of learning which suggest that multi sensory activities are the best way to teach all children.
- Practical ideas on teaching strategies, multi sensory lesson plans, and assistive software solutions

The afternoon dyscalculia workshop, for parents and teachers, will cover:

- An appreciation of what dyscalculia is;

- How to approach the teaching of children with dyscalculia;
- Where the specific problems are in acquiring arithmetic skills;
- Where to go for a range of free resources.

£69 for an individual course or £120 for both courses.

[London](#) - 5 March 2009

[Watford](#) - 10 March 2009

[Chester](#) - 25 March 2009

[Birmingham \(Solihull\)](#) - 7 May 2009

[Manchester \(Cheadle\)](#) - 14 May 2009

Dealing with Dyscalculia (P.M only)

This workshop, for both parents and teachers, will cover:

- An appreciation of what dyscalculia is;
- How to approach the teaching of children with dyscalculia;
- Where the specific problems are in acquiring arithmetic skills;
- Where to go for a range of free resources.

£69 for an individual course

[Woking](#) - 25 March 2009

[Swansea](#) - 20 May 2009

Screening for Dyslexia

This is a one-day course for teachers to enable them to screen for dyslexia effectively and develop their understanding of the key issues associated with screening.

The training is suitable for anyone working within an educational setting who has responsibility for identifying individual learning needs including; class teachers, SENCOs, teaching assistants, and head teachers.

By the end of the course learners will be able to:

- Use a selection of dyslexia screening tools
- Critically assess and evaluate a range of dyslexia screening tools
- Demonstrate through discussion understanding of the principles and key issues associated with screening for dyslexia
- Analyse the results of a selection of dyslexia screening tools

£120 per day.

Reading - 3 March 2009

Swansea - 26 March 2009

Bournemouth - 30 April 2009

Practical Solutions Plus

Each day of this 3 day course for Teachers and T.As takes a different theme – one day on a variety of reading schemes, one devoted to spelling and another on different writing strategies and study skills. Come to one or all three days to give you the specific tools to teach your dyslexic pupils, literacy.

£120 per day

Derby - 4 and 18 March 2009

Cardiff - 10, 17 and 24 March 2009

Winchester - 28 April, 5 and 12 May 2009

Middlesbrough - 13 and 20 May and 3 June 2009

ADHD, Asperger's and Autism (Hidden Difficulties)

A three day accredited course for Teachers and T.As. Pupils with difficulties on the dyslexia or autism spectra can display challenging behaviour due to their frustration. We show you how to teach them most efficiently in the classroom and how to channel their behaviours. Three courses can lead to an OCN Level 2 accreditation.

£120 per day

London - 24 April, 8 and 15 May 2009

Dyscalculia Plus (In association with Unicorn Maths)

A two- day maths development programme for the remediation of dyscalculia, for Teachers and T.As. This is a detailed, structured, cumulative, multi-sensory mathematics development programme for the remediation of dyscalculia.

£235 per day.

London - 6 and 14 March 2009

London - 6 and 12 June 2009

Practical Solutions for Dyslexia for Higher and Further Education

The course has been designed for all those involved in post 16 education, including Needs Assessors.

Sheffield / Rotherham - 5 March 2009

Birmingham - 12 March 2009

London - 17 March 2009

Liverpool - 19 March 2009

BDA Workshops for Employers

Dyslexia Awareness

This one-day course is designed for employers and others interested in the employment issues for dyslexic individuals. It covers awareness of dyslexia, how to make your workplace dyslexia friendly, the law and recent employment tribunal cases and includes practical tips for employers.

By the end of the day's programme, participants should have:

- An awareness of what it means to be dyslexic including subtleties of the condition;
- A sound knowledge of the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act and the recent case law in this area;

- Considered the macro issues underpinning the ability to be a dyslexia friendly employer;
- Learned about lots of potential reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

Cardiff - 20 March 2009

London - 30 March 2009

Southampton (Eastleigh) - 21 April 2009

Leeds - 22 April 2009

Making Reasonable Adjustments for Dyslexia

This course is aimed at managers, personnel managers, training managers and occupational health experts. It goes beyond a basic appreciation of dyslexia and the coexisting conditions and into the specifics of making reasonable adjustments.

By the end of the workshop, participants should be able to:

- Understand why adjustments need to be made and what is regarded as being “reasonable”;
- Design changes to their policies re recruitment, training, managing performance and communication to meet legal requirements;
- Solve basic problems and implement minor adjustments;
- Know where to go for further advice on work assessment and adjustments;
- Produce a prioritised list of actions to undertake back in the workplace.

Dartford - 1 April 2009

Milton Keynes - 2 April 2009

Bristol - 22 April 2009

Manchester (Cheadle) - 23 April 2009

London - 28 April 2009

Nottingham - 11 May 2009

Screening for Dyslexia

Screening for dyslexia can be a useful activity where the employee is experiencing difficulty with a part of their work and the employer wants to provide appropriate support. It can be more cost effective to do this in-house and can be part of a positive and joint approach to resolving difficulties.

By the end of the training, learners will be able to:

- Use a selection of dyslexia screening tools;
- Critically assess and evaluate a range of dyslexia screening tools;
- Demonstrate through discussion understanding of the principles and key issues associated with screening for dyslexia;
- Analyse the results of a selection of dyslexia screening tools.

Liverpool - 30 March 2009

Middlesbrough - 2 April 2009

Crawley - 24 April 2009

Birmingham (Solihull) - 15 May 2009

For further information or to book any of the above courses, contact Paul Brackley on 0845 251 9004 or via email paulb@bdadyslexia.org.uk.

For further details about any of the information in the BDA March 2009 E-Newsletter contact Rachel Lawson on 0845 251 9003 or e-mail rachell@bdadyslexia.org.uk.