

rowe



Neurodiversity

2023



What is Neurodiversity?

Autism

ADHD

Dyslexia

Conclusion / Questions

Neurodiversity - Pride

June is Pride Month and the 16th of June is Neurodiversity Pride day. Neurodiversity has its own Pride flag, which is symbolized with the infinity symbol.



Neurodiversity - What Do We Mean by Neurodiversity?

According to multiple sources, there are estimated to be 37 trillion cells in the human body.

That's a lot of information to copy.

It's not surprising that none of us are the same or experience life in the same way.

Neurodiversity - What Do We Mean by Neurodiversity?



When we look around, we can see lots of physical differences



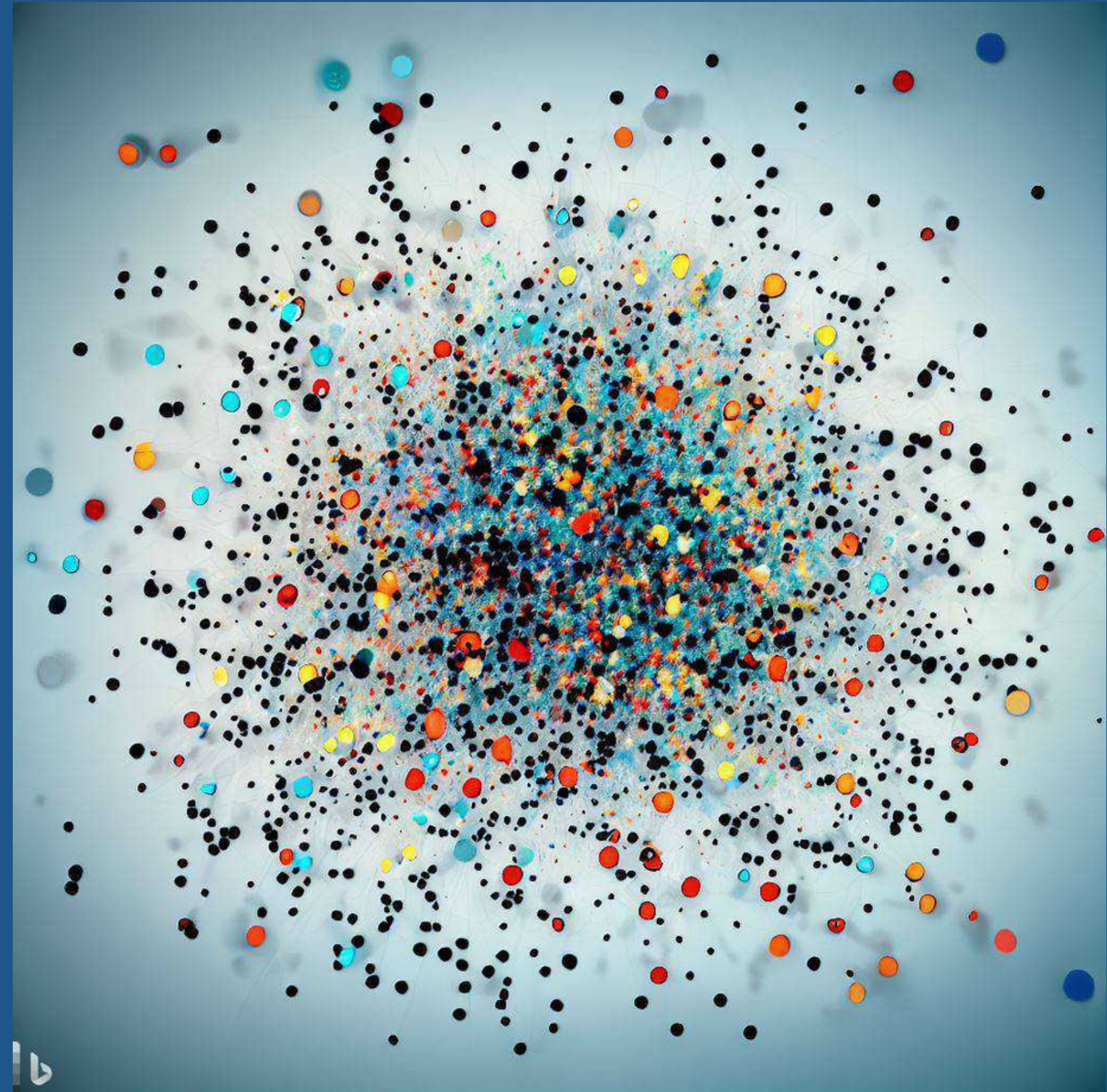
Neurodiversity - What Do We Mean by Neurodiversity?

The world is geared towards our brains all functioning in a roughly similar way.

This is generally referred to as being Neurotypical.

This leads to the majority of people being able to easily utilise things like:

- Language
- Maths
- Concepts
- Society
- Human interaction
- And many more...



Neurodiversity - What Do We Mean by Neurodiversity?

We tend not to use the term neurotypical anymore because there isn't such a thing as normal.

Historically, neurodiversity has been painted in a negative light, but now some of the benefits of thinking differently are being embraced.

Some companies now recognise and utilise the benefits that come with neurodiversity.

<https://www.kornferry.com/content/dam/kornferry-v2/pdf/institute/kfi-neurodiversity-the-little-known-superpower.pdf>

<https://dfedigital.blog.gov.uk/2022/02/11/podcast-s1-ep7/>

Neurodiversity - What Do We Mean by Neurodiversity?

In order to accommodate neurodiverse employees, some adjustments to the working environment might be required.

It's similar to me having to wear glasses to drive... although they don't improve my parking skills.

Many neurodiverse people cover up their difficulties, which is referred to as Masking.

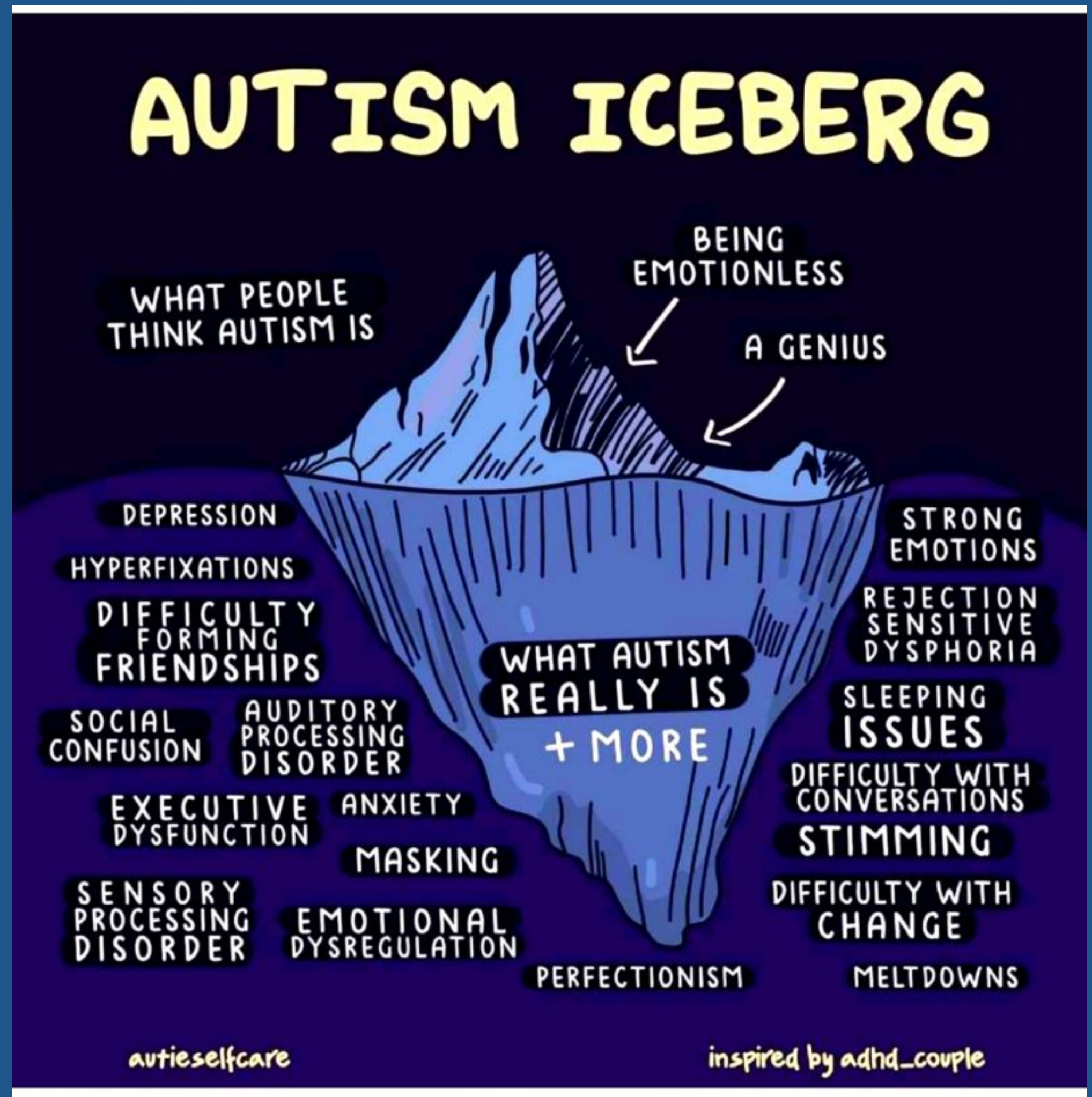


Autism

People only see what's on the surface.

In order to cope with a world where it's hard to fit in, they must work harder.

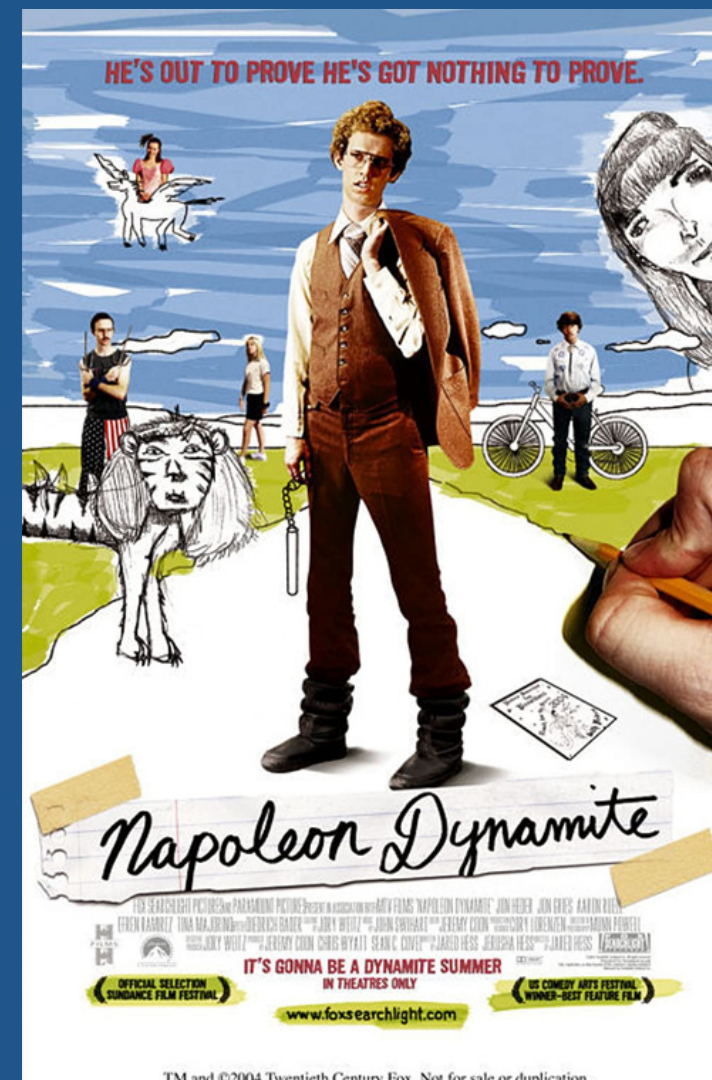
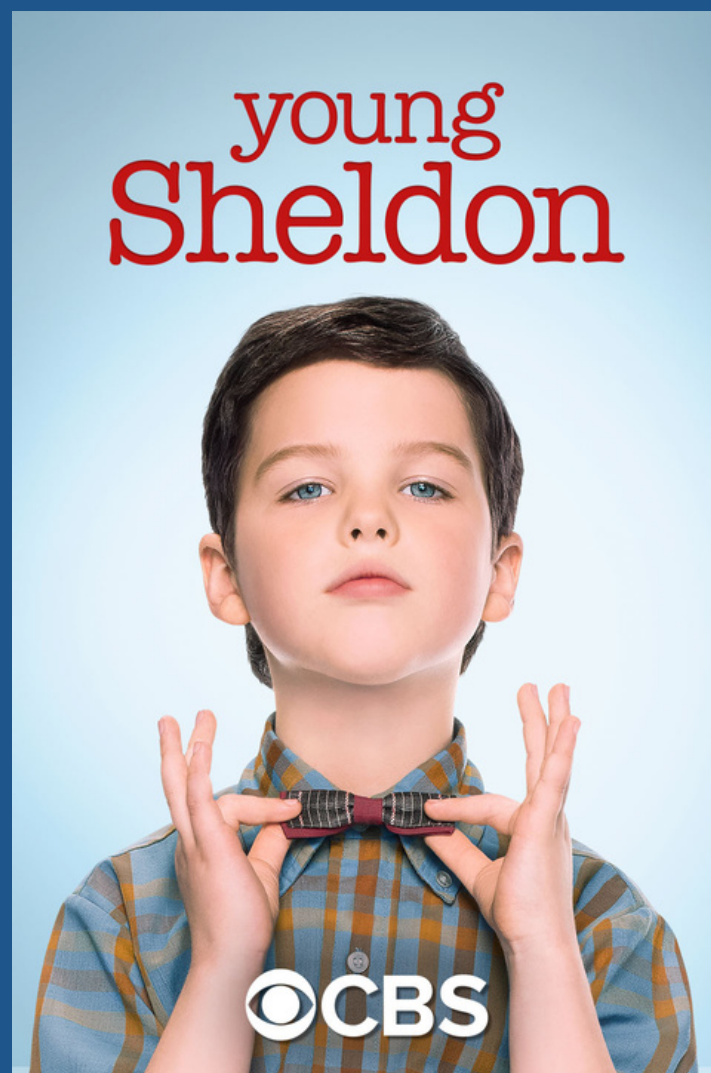
Autism affects about 1-2% of the population.



Stereotypes of Autism: What People Think It Looks Like

Can anyone think of any Films, TV series, characters that are based around an autistic character?

Stereotypes of Autism: What People Think It Looks Like



Autism affects people's lives in many ways but there is no one way to be autistic.

Autism - Symptoms



A few common autistic traits:

- Social difficulties:
 - Difficulty making eye contact
 - Expressing emotions
 - Being very blunt
 - Not understanding "social etiquette"
- Fixation on subjects and interests
- Noticing patterns, textures, or smells that others don't
- Having to plan things in minute detail

Autism - Types

Like other aspects of human characteristics, it exists on a spectrum referred to as Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

Low functioning - This term is used to describe individuals for whom autism severely affects day-to-day living.

High functioning - Used to describe those with minimal disruption but who experience challenges that affect day-to-day life such as:

- Social interaction
- Fixations
- Planning

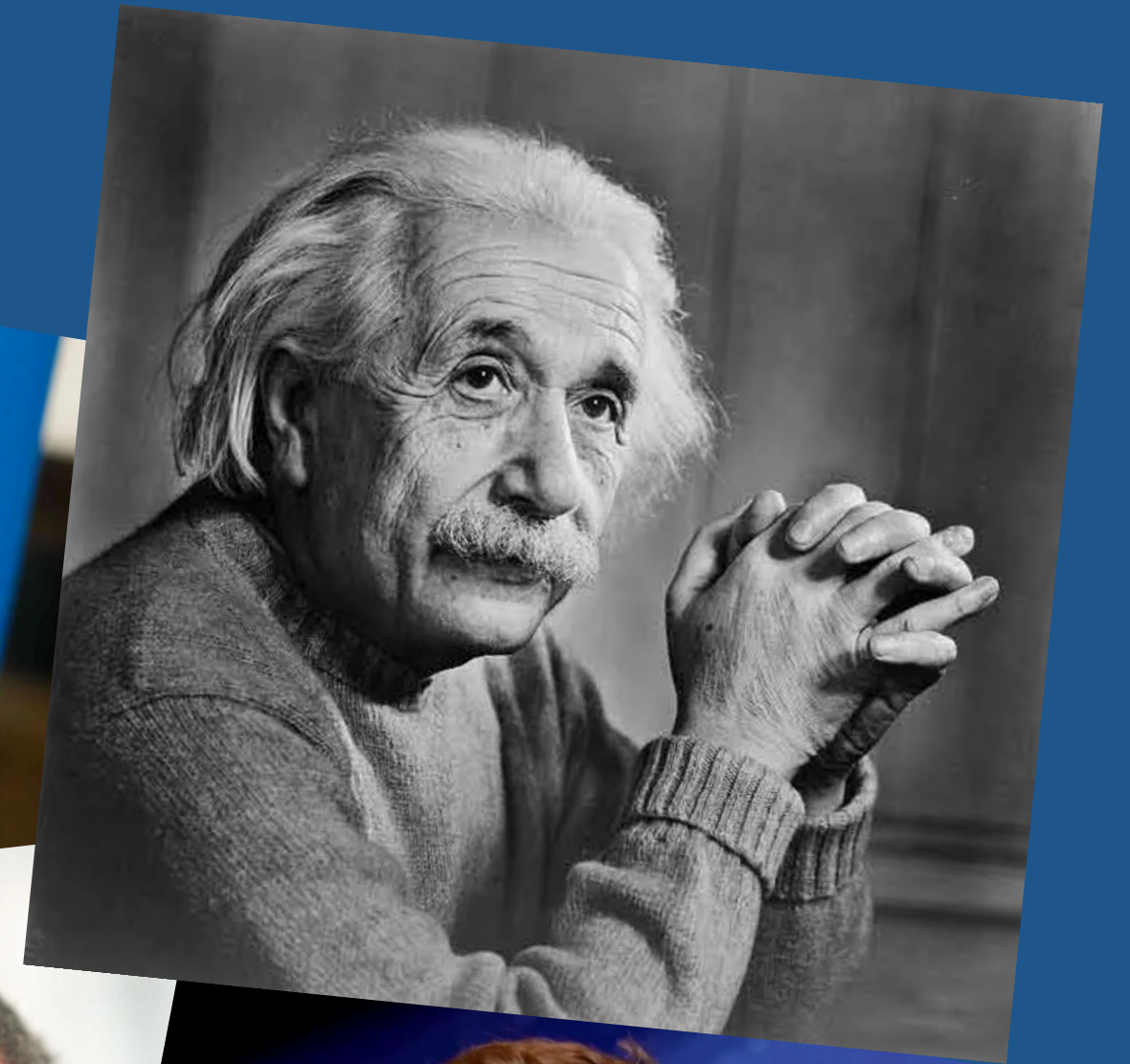
What was previously referred to as Asperger's Syndrome is now officially categorised as 'ASD - without intellectual impairment or language impairment'.

Autism - What Does It Actually Look Like?

There are many famous people with ASD:

Eminem
Einstein
Elon Musk
Steve Jobs

and many more!



Autism - Superpowers

Savant - These people have an exceptional skill or ability in a particular area.

Only 1% of people with autism are Savants

Skills include:

Artistic skills in things like music and art

Outstanding knowledge in specific topics ie maths, history, navigation etc

Attention to detail

Excellent at things like proofreading or testing

Finding patterns

Good at repetitive work

Autistic brains aren't so reliant on Dopamine

<https://www.ssmhealth.com/treffert-center/conditions-treatments/savant-syndrome>

<https://embrace-autism.com/autism-strengths-and-challenges/>

Autism - Making life easier

Stability

Detailed instructions & Patience - The instructions need to be unambiguous

Quiet location - an autistic person can become over-stimulated

Stimming can help calm an overstimulated mind

Quiet room/location

Light - certain colours, intensities, flickering

ADHD

People only see the fidgeting and focus issues.

Due to the nature of ADHD, it leads to many other problems.

It affects about 3-4% of the population.

WHAT PEOPLE THINK ADHD IS:

trouble focusing

fidgeting

WHAT ADHD ACTUALLY IS:

difficulty maintaining relationships

depression

difficulty following and maintaining conversations

inability to focus even if there are no distractions

forgetting to eat, sleep, go to the bathroom

problems focusing on things even if they are of interest

executive dysfunction

poor impulse control

uncontrollable fidgeting

hyperfixations

mood swings

difficulty switching tasks or inability to stick to one

choice paralysis

sensory processing disorder

anxiety

sleeping problems

rejective sensitive dysphoria

losing items relentlessly

poor sense of time

'all or nothing'

trouble recalling commonly used words

auditory processing disorder

trouble regulating emotions

chronic unemployment

forgetting thoughts 0.2 seconds after having them

ADHD - Stereotypes: What Do People Think It Looks Like?

When someone mentions ADHD what springs to mind?

ADHD - Stereotypes: What Do People Think It Looks Like?



ADHD affects people's lives in many ways and to different extents.

ADHD - Types

Dopamine dysregulation is one of the factors associated with ADHD.

Three different types:

ADHD-I - Inattentive

ADHD-H - Hyperactive

ADHD-C - The intersection of the two and the most common

ADHD - Symptoms

"Emotional dysregulation - Moods tend to be extreme, e.g., extremes of happiness, sadness, and frustration.

Inattention:

- Short attention span
- Easily distracted
- Difficulty listening to others, which can come off as rude

Impulsivity:

- Interrupts others
- Has difficulty waiting for their turn
- Risk-taking

Hyperactivity:

- Constantly "on the go"
- Fidgets and has trouble staying put
- Constantly losing things
- Constantly switches between tasks"

ADHD - What does it really look like?

There are many famous people with ADHD:

Walt Disney

Will.I.Am

Emma Watson

Johnny Depp

and many more!



<https://adhdembrace.org/famous-people-with-adhd/>

<https://www.additudemag.com/slideshows/famous-people-with-adhd/>

ADHD - Superpowers

Hyper-focus - Learn things quickly

Higher energy levels than those without ADHD

Creative thinking - good for innovation - their brains are always thinking

Risk tolerance - Sometimes this is a good thing!

Impulsivity & spontaneous makes them fun to be around

ADHD - Making Life Easier

Tasks need to be short

- Break big tasks into shorter tasks with deadlines

- If someone is in Hyperfocus then less-interesting tasks might get ignored

ADHD brains hate routine

Time blindness - ADHD brains have a weaker perception of time

- Over committing

- Lateness / Too early / Not at all

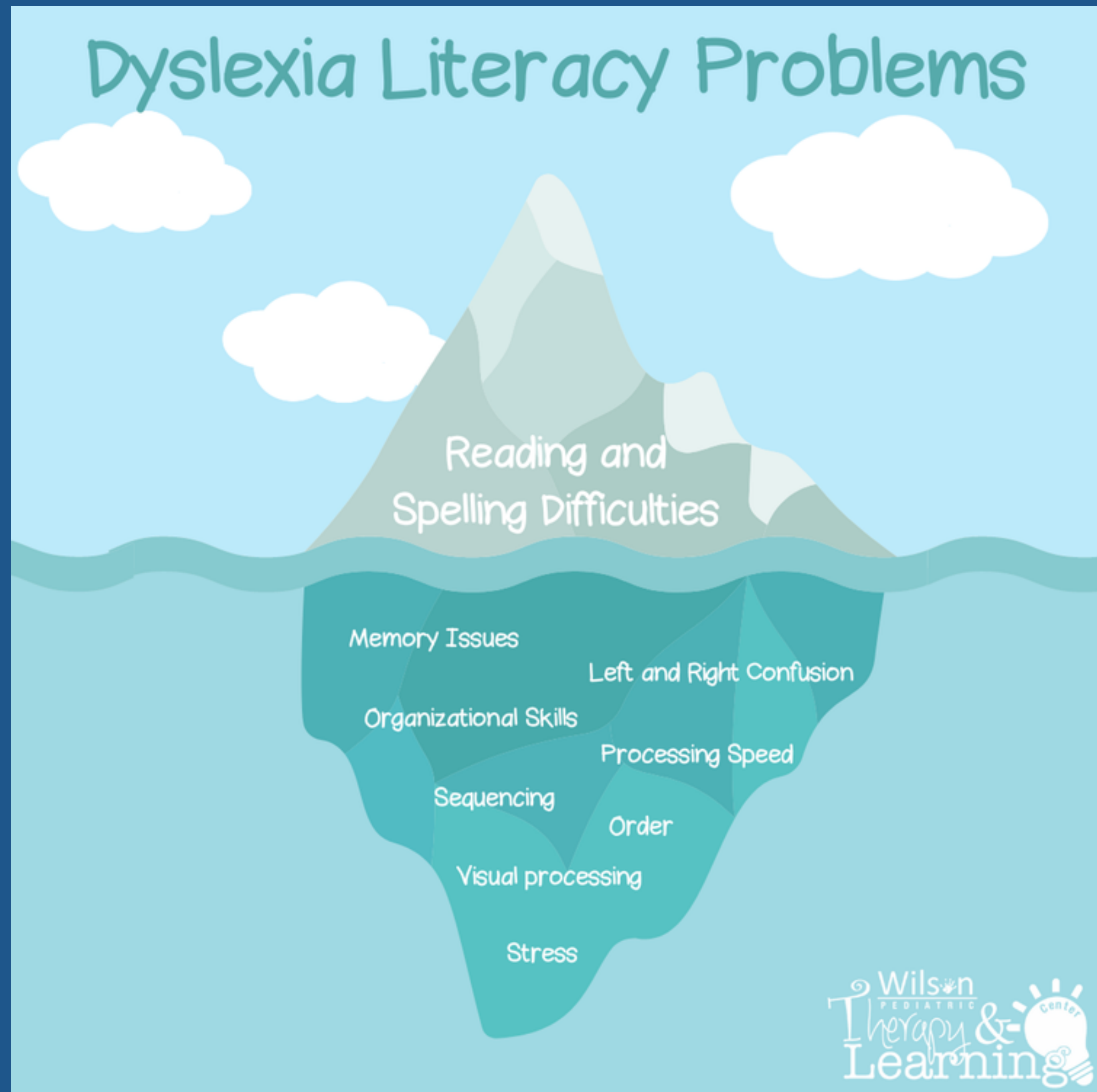
Long documents can be problematic - take time to discuss what's in there or highlight key points

Dyslexia

When most people think of dyslexic people, they only see the reading and spelling difficulties.

However, there are lots of other difficulties that the person experiences.

It's estimated up to 1 in every 10 people in the UK has some degree of dyslexia.



Dyslexia - The Problems They Face

- Confuse the order of letters in words
- Read and write more slowly
- Be confused by similar-looking letters such as “b” and “d”, or “p” and “q”
- Understand verbal information, but struggle with written information
- Have poor spelling
- Struggle with planning and organising



Dyslexia - Other Common Difficulties

- Following sequential instructions
- Learning and following rules and procedures in the right order
- Following travel directions (reading maps, telling right from left, up from down)
- Learning to tell the time
-

Dyslexia - Superpowers

They see the big picture without getting caught up in the detail.

They process visual information differently and tend to think in pictures rather than words. This leads to:

- An above average ability at remembering images
- Extremely good at spotting complex patterns in images
- Enhanced spatial awareness and can easily manipulate images in their mind

There is a well-established link between dyslexia and creativity.

The advantages that dyslexics have has led to the term “Dyslexic Thinking”

Dyslexia

Dyslexic thinking definition:

noun

an approach to problem solving, assessing information, and learning, often used by people with dyslexia, that involves pattern recognition, spatial reasoning, lateral thinking, and interpersonal communication.

Dyslexia

GCHQ takes dyslexics' keen eye for patterns very seriously.

Charlotte an information analyst at GCHQ

"I'm often looking through a lot of data and I find that my dyslexia helps me to see the bigger picture and spot patterns that aren't always obvious to everyone else around me. I also find that my approach to finding solutions is very different."

<https://www.gchq.gov.uk/news/dyslexic-thinking-skills>



The image shows a screenshot of the GCHQ website. At the top, the GCHQ logo is visible, featuring a crown and a globe. To the right of the logo are the words "LATEST NEWS" and "CURRENT". Below the logo is a navigation menu with links for "Home", "Mission", "Careers", "Culture", "Locations", "History", and "Governance". A "Home" link with a house icon is also present below the navigation menu. The main content area features a "NEWS" tag and a large headline: "Dyslexic thinking skills are mission critical for protecting the country". Below the headline is a sub-headline: "GCHQ intelligence analysts reveal the thinking skills that make them excellent at their jobs". At the bottom of the screenshot, there is a graphic with the words "D SPOT" in large, colorful letters (D in pink, S in blue, P in green, O in red, T in orange) on a black background with a pattern of pink dots.

Dyslexia - Making Life Easier

Use simple English and avoid using long words or sentences.

Certain background colours and fonts can be problematic, especially in emails.

Reading long documents can be challenging.

Creating several shorter ones or just meeting up and discussing the content can be beneficial.

Software to a reading:

- Like wearing a pair of glasses

- Text-to-speech

- Highlight / filter text

- TextHelp

<https://www.gemmllearning.com/blog/dyslexia/dyslexia-hacks/>

Dyslexia - What Does It Really Look Like?

There are many well known people that are dyslexic:

Richard Branson
Cher
Robin Williams
Whoopi Goldberg

And many more!



<https://journal.imse.com/12-famous-people-who-struggled-with-dyslexia-before-changing-the-world/>

Conclusion

There are many more conditions than the 3 mentioned here:

- Dyscalculia: 3-7% of the population - affects maths and number skills
- Dysgraphia: 2-10% of the population - affects the ability to write

Some of the things we discussed might resonate. The links for more info are at the bottom of each slide.

If you ask a colleague, friend, or relative to do something and it doesn't happen as expected, consider whether you are asking the right question.

Consider:

- Is the task achievable or too long?
- Can the document be smaller, or can you discuss the contents?
- Avoid long words and sentences.
- Be concise and unambiguous.
- Does the task have a deadline?

A white line-art illustration of a computer keyboard and mouse is positioned on the left side of the image. The keyboard is depicted with several rows of keys, and the mouse is shown to its right. A series of white lines connect the keyboard and mouse to a central green rectangular box. The box has a thin black border and a small semi-circular handle at the top center. Inside the box, the word "Questions?" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font.

Questions?

A red lifebuoy with blue rope is shown in the foreground on the left side of the image. The background is a soft, out-of-focus sunset or sunrise over a cityscape, with the sun low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The sky is filled with soft, horizontal bands of light and color.

Everyone you meet is fighting
a battle you know nothing
about. Be kind. Always.

Brad Meltzer

A decorative graphic consisting of several colored rectangles and white lines. A white line starts on the left, loops up and then down, ending near a teal square. Above the teal square is a green rectangle. To the right of the teal square is a large yellow rectangle containing the text 'Thank you for being you'. Below the yellow rectangle is a red rectangle. To the right of the red rectangle is a purple rectangle. A white line starts from the top of the purple rectangle, loops down and then up, ending on the right side of the image.

Thank you for
being you