

Let's Talk Learning Disabilities

EPISODE 17

In this Episode, Laurie and Abbey discuss dyscalculia, what it is, and what it is not. They lay out what the common symptoms and evidence for having dyscalculia are, and how to cope with it.

What is Dyscalculia? (2 min)

Dyscalculia is a math disability that causes students to struggle with basic calculations. Despite it sounding like dyslexia and dysgraphia, it is unrelated. Number related concepts are harder to grasp for someone with dyscalculia.

What are Common Symptoms of Dyscalculia? (3 min)

Recognizing counting concepts, number patterns and math language, are very difficult for students who may have dyscalculia. Adding, subtracting, and counting by multiples of numbers are examples of basic concepts that may be difficult. Struggling with problems involving place value changes, or counting backwards, may be other indicators of dyscalculia. It can be really difficult to recognize dyscalculia because of how common it is to have challenges in math. Sometimes, dyscalculia is not recognized until later in a student's education, which makes it difficult to treat. You have to go back to remedial math concepts, to be sure foundational math doesn't have gaps. That is most likely where the mishap occurs.

Math Anxiety (14 min)

Math Anxiety is a big indicator or red flag to investigate learning disabilities. It so prevalent in students with dyscalculia. They know it is a struggle with basic math calculations, and so the thought of having to solve a problem that involves the need to have simple calculations memorized, or easily solvable without pen and paper.

Coping with Dyscalculia (25 min)

Memorization, rhyming, and acronyms are a few tips that can help someone who has dyscalculia. By memorizing a formula, or knowing an acronym like PEMDAS, or remembering a rhyme like “never eat soggy waffles,” for North, East, South, and West, someone with dyscalculia can improve the likelihood of them performing better in math related subjects. Focusing on fundamental math concepts that were learned in early elementary years, can strengthen those mathematical reflexes and improve skills overall. Also, being able to use a basic function calculator is a very practical way to solve higher level math problems. This is something you can apply to real life scenarios.

Resources

Touch math

<https://www2.touchmath.com>

A few sites for math gap filling and skill building:

<https://www.mathplayground.com>

<https://www.prodigygame.com/main-en/>

Math Problem Solving Mnemonic:

ORDER (Observe the problem, Read the signs, Decide which operation to do first, Execute the rule of order (Many Dogs Are Smelly = x , $/$, $+$, $-$), Relax, you're done!

EQUAL (Examine what is on each side, Question: Is it addition or multiplication?, Use circles and lines for addition; use groups and tallies for multiplication, Answer by drawing the totals for each side, Label equal or not equal.

PEMDAS – Order of operations (Parenthesis, Exponents, Multiplication, Division, Addition, Subtraction)

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