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## Autistic Spectrum Conditions

- Field courses in conditions where there is a physical risk; outline the risk and the need to adhere to instructions using plain and literal language and in specific instructions, provided in a written format where possible. Avoid idioms, abstract concepts, sarcasm, irony and ambiguous language. Avoid the use of facial expressions instead of words to ensure a clear understanding.
- Ensure that students have staff mobile numbers to contact in an emergency, both in their own mobile phones and possibly in a written format
- Do not assume that students will be able to transfer their skills and knowledge from previous field courses to the situation you are in now. Give clear and precise instructions about what you expect of the student on this fieldtrip.
- Be clear about boundaries and what your role entails. Make rules and arrangements very clear, including social situations where the student wants to know what to do and what not to do. Explain what behaviour is acceptable and unacceptable, and why.
- Unusual smells, noises, changes in temperature can be distracting and cause anxiety, so limit time in these environments or identify an alternative task and discuss it with the individual student.
- Discuss appropriate clothing for the environment of the fieldtrip with the student and, if possible, monitor its use by their support worker or member of staff whilst on the trip. Ensure students with ASD have appropriate clothing for the weather and their environment e.g. a sun hat is worn if students with ASD are on a sunny beach.
- Communicate any changes to planned student activities clearly communicated and explain why the changes are needed.
- Group work; consider student-by-student individual adjustments around group work, such as formal allocation of group members, closer supervision, identifying a point of contact for queries and concerns and possible alternative.
- Discuss options for 'down time' with students, who may want to socialise or who may want to be alone. Provide students with a point of contact should they have any social concerns whilst they are on the trip.
- Residential Fieldtrips which include overnight shared accommodation will need to be clearly communicated with ASD students. Some ASD students may have specific requirements around accommodation, eating arrangements and bathroom facilities. Ensure that what is usually provided at the venue is clearly outlined and encourage students to communicate any individual requirements they have with you.
- Consideration needs to be given to individual accommodation which can be accessed during the trip if shared accommodation arrangements are not working out.
- Does the student need additional support on the trip from a study assistant, mentor, or staff member? Please talk to the student about any concerns they may have in relation to the fieldtrip and whether they require additional support.
- If 'reasonable adjustments' cannot be met for the proposed trip or the student's concerns are great, then planning needs to be made for an alternative to planned fieldwork day or residential trip which still meets the course learning outcomes.

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## **Developmental Co-ordination Disorder**

Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD), previously known as dyspraxia, is a motor co-ordination disorder affecting fine or gross motor co-ordination. DCD/dyspraxia is distinct from other motor disorders such as cerebral palsy.

- Physical fatigue can set in easily due to poor posture and muscle tone. This may need to be considered for field trips and other physical activities.
- Bumps, spills, breaks etc. are common and this may affect practical work. This needs to be taken into consideration when planning fieldtrip activities.
- Memory is usually poor, especially short-term memory, and there is a tendency to be disorganised and 'cluttered'. Encourage students to record instructions in the field and provide written guidance where possible.
- Ensure that students have staff mobile numbers to contact in an emergency, both in their own mobile phones and possibly in a written format
- There is a tendency for students with DCD to become easily stressed and anxious. This may be heightened when they are away from familiar support networks and surroundings. Provide reassurance, be sensitive to this student's situation and encourage a culture of open communication with the student.
- Consider individual reasonable adjustments around fieldtrips, discuss this at early opportunity with the student, if necessary contact Disability Assist for advice and guidance
- Is the student fully aware of the trip itinerary, travel and accommodation arrangements, weather conditions, fieldwork tasks, arrangements for food, local customs etc.?
- Does the student need additional support on the trip from a study assistant? Mentor or staff member?
- Will the student need alternative travel or accommodation arrangements?
- Does the student need any reasonable adjustments to trip activities?
- Does the student need an alternative to planned fieldwork day or residential trip?

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## **Dyslexia**

The word 'dyslexia' derives from Greek and means 'difficulty with words'. A person with dyslexia will have reading and/or spelling difficulties, but it is not only about literacy. It affects the way information is processed, stored and retrieved, and there may be problems with memory, speed of processing, time perception, organisation and sequencing. Academic self-esteem can be low.

- Provide precise information in clear language – spoken and ideally written. Encourage the use of recording devices. Provide an overview of a fieldtrip at the beginning and sum up at the end.
- Allow additional time for the processing of information, including in oral work on a fieldtrip.
- Consideration needs to be given to a student who needs access to MAP's whilst on a fieldtrip
- Consider individual reasonable adjustments around fieldtrips, discuss this at early opportunity with the student, if necessary contact Disability Assist for advice and guidance:
- Is the student fully aware of the trip itinerary, travel and accommodation arrangements, weather conditions, fieldwork tasks, arrangements for food, local customs etc.?
- Does the student need additional support on the trip from a study assistant? Mentor or staff member?
- Will the student need alternative travel or accommodation arrangements?
- Does the student need any reasonable adjustments to trip activities?
- Does the student need an alternative to planned fieldwork day or residential trip?

## **Students with hearing impairments**

- Students who are deaf may use a BSL interpreter, Communication Support Worker (CSW), note taker to help interpret sessions. If the student is using communication support:
  - Always remember to talk directly to the person you are communicating with, not the interpreter
  - There may be a delay in completing the translation, try to monitor the pace of discussion to ensure the support user has opportunity to contribute.
  - Provide as much information in advance of fieldtrips as possible; the CSW may need to prepare specific terminology.
  - Articles for discussion in seminars etc. should be forwarded to all students ahead of time to allow for preparation.

- Verbalise any information you write, draw or show during a fieldtrip.

### **Mental Health Diagnoses**

There are a wide range of mental health conditions which include mood-related disorders, anxiety-related disorders, psychosis, eating disorders and personality disorders.

- Social situations may be particularly difficult for an individual experiencing mental health illness. Therefore, fieldtrips may be particularly challenging as social interaction and development of peer relationships may sometimes, but not always, be difficult. Discuss options for 'down time' with students, who may want to socialise or who may want to be alone. Provide students with a point of contact should they have any social concerns whilst they are on the trip.
- Any comments or questions from the group repeated by the presenter before their response is given. During group discussions, encourage ground rules. For example: group faces each other so that they can all see each other, only one person can speak at a time - person raises hand if they wish to speak.
- Consider individual reasonable adjustments around fieldtrips, discuss this at early opportunity with the student, if necessary contact Disability Assist for advice and guidance.
- Is the student fully aware of the trip itinerary, travel and accommodation arrangements, weather conditions, fieldwork tasks, arrangements for food, local customs etc.?
- Does the student need additional support on the trip from a study assistant? Mentor or staff member?
- Will the student need alternative travel or accommodation arrangements?
- Does the student need any reasonable adjustments to trip activities?
- Does the student need an alternative to planned fieldwork day or residential trip?
- The student may not be able to attend full contact hours of the fieldtrip, or find early morning sessions difficult. This may be due to additional fatigue or anxiety caused by their illness, or because of the effect of medication. Consideration needs to be given as to whether the student is able to attend the fieldtrip or may need an alternative form of assessment/fieldtrip. Please talk to the student about what the fieldtrip entails.
- Be aware of deterioration in health which can manifest in decreasing concentration and memory, fatigue, worry, lack of engagement, avoidance, absence and altered self-perception. Sometimes physical symptoms may also manifest – some of these such as sweating, irritability, lack of self-care may be visible. Support student in seeking help from support services when necessary or appropriate  
<https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/services/learning-gateway/counselling/support-in-times-of-crisis>
- Please refer to appendix A for further information

- Changes to agreed fieldtrip routines and assessment tasks can cause confusion and anxiety. Changes should be clearly communicated, ideally in writing, and it helps to explain why the change is needed.
- Is the student able to identify warning signs that their MH is deteriorating, what triggers anxiety, what helps them cope, what to avoid and what would be helpful for others to do? Discuss this before the trip and formulate a plan of action with them.
- Suggest downloading the Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) app [https://www.wrapandrecoverybooks.com/store/the-wrap-app\\_moreinfo.html](https://www.wrapandrecoverybooks.com/store/the-wrap-app_moreinfo.html)
- Consider individual reasonable adjustments around fieldtrips, discuss this at early opportunity with the student, if necessary contact Disability Assist for advice and guidance:
- Is the student fully aware of the trip itinerary, travel and accommodation arrangements, weather conditions, fieldwork tasks, arrangements for food, local customs etc.?
- Does the student need additional support on the trip from a study assistant? Mentor or staff member?
- Will the student need alternative travel or accommodation arrangements?
- Does the student need any reasonable adjustments to trip activities?
- Does the student need an alternative to planned fieldwork day or residential trip?

### **Physical Disabilities**

- If a personal helper or enabler is present, make sure all communication remains directed at the student and not through the third party, unless at the specific wish of the student.
- If the student is a wheelchair user or has a mobility aid, try and be at the same level as the student when conversing with them (nobody likes a crick in the neck). Do not lean on the wheelchair or aid as it is likely to form part of the student's personal space.
- Consider individual reasonable adjustments around fieldtrips, discuss this at early opportunity with the student, if necessary contact Disability Assist for advice and guidance.
- Is the student fully aware of the trip itinerary, travel and accommodation arrangements, weather conditions, fieldwork tasks, arrangements for food, local customs etc.?
- Does the student need additional support on the trip from a study assistant? Mentor or staff member?
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## **Sight impairments**

Students who have a total absence of vision are a minority; many more students have low vision or partial sight. The type of assistance required by students with sight impairment will be different according to the degree and nature of their impairment. Some students have gradually lost vision over a number of years; others may have been blind since birth. Some may have no vision at all, but most people who advise that they are blind have some vision and may be light-sensitive, may experience blurred or distorted vision, others may have a restricted field of vision having less side vision, central vision or may see only half the field of view. The best guide to the student's condition and how it affects them is the student themselves. Additional provision may have to be made for students with sight impairments on field trips.

- Schools organising, field trips for students with sight impairments will need to consider, ideally alongside the students themselves, the differences between studying on campus and being on a fieldtrip.
- Be flexible and talk through the possible options and solutions with the student well in advance to avoid problems.
- Some equipment or support may not be easily used whilst on a fieldtrip and individual considerations will need to be considered.
- Consider individual reasonable adjustments around fieldtrips, discuss this at early opportunity with the student, if necessary contact Disability Assist for advice and guidance.
- Is the student fully aware of the trip itinerary, travel and accommodation arrangements, weather conditions, fieldwork tasks, arrangements for food, local customs etc.?
- Does the student need additional support on the trip from a study assistant? Mentor or staff member?
- Will the student need alternative travel or accommodation arrangements?
- Does the student need any reasonable adjustments to trip activities? Does the student need an alternative to planned fieldwork day or residential trip?

## Appendix A

### Anxiety Symptoms

Anxiety symptoms are generally the precursor for the onset of many different mental illnesses and can also be a sign that there may be some deterioration relating to physical disabilities.

Please refer to 'advice about specific conditions; top tips for academic staff on the Disability Assist website: <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/services/learning-gateway/disability-and-dyslexia/advice-about-specific-conditions>

| Physical Symptoms   | Emotional Symptoms   |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shortness of breath</li><li>• Dizziness</li><li>• Choking sensation</li><li>• Palpitations</li><li>• Trembling</li><li>• Sweating</li><li>• Dry mouth</li><li>• Decreased appetite</li><li>• Nausea / vomiting</li><li>• Diarrhoea</li><li>• Elevated blood pressure</li><li>• Hyperventilation</li><li>• Blurred vision</li><li>• Increased frequency / urgency of urination</li><li>• Sweaty palms</li><li>• Dilated pupils</li><li>• Tightness in chest</li><li>• Flushing of skin</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Terror</li><li>• Dread</li><li>• Sense of impending doom</li><li>• Apprehension</li><li>• Panic / panic attacks</li><li>• Fear</li></ul> |

| Behavioural Symptoms   | Cognitive Symptoms   |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exaggerated startle reflex</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Decreased interest</li></ul> |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Motor tension (foot tapping, restlessness)</li><li>• Irritability</li><li>• Nail biting</li><li>• Altered sleep pattern (too much / not enough)</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inability to concentrate</li><li>• No responsiveness to external stimuli</li><li>• Decreased productivity</li><li>• Preoccupation</li><li>• Forgetfulness</li><li>• Orientation to past rather than present or future</li><li>• Rumination</li></ul> |
|---|--|