

# Jokes about learning differences harmful



**Well, Here We Go**

Sadie Hussung

I am sitting in my sixth-grade class and I have finally gotten back my spelling test. I have studied for hours the night before, determined to make a better grade than last time.

It was the “i before e” list. My teacher puts the paper on my desk... face down. Turns out I switched the “i” and the “e” in six out of 20 of them.

Five years ago, my mom took me to a business in Louisville called Langsford Learning Center. They tested me for

dyslexia, which about 15-20 percent of people have; I am a part of that percentage.

Langsford is a one-on-one tutoring center to help kids with learning issues cope with it in everyday life. I attended in the summer every other day. They would help us sound out vowels, spell out multiple words, write a short story with a prompt, and read a book for 20 minutes daily. Langsford helped me grow and become better equipped to understand my form of dyslexia.

Many people think dyslexia is just switching letters up, but it is more than that. Dyslexia causes more difficulty with reading and

comprehending, sounding out words, and, of course, spelling. I also had trouble with geometry. All the shapes overlapping made it harder to see what was going on and what I had to do first to find an angle.

I have never been a fan of telling people about having dyslexia because of the way people may perceive me after telling them. I do not want to be treated differently even though I do have a 504 plan, which allows me to receive extra time on tests, quizzes, and testing. I rarely use the plan because being different draws attention to this. No one wants to be different; people just want to fit into society. Let us be honest, people say, “I am so cool and different,” or here is a good one, “I’m not like other girls.” Biggest lie ever. People just want to get through the day without embarrassing themselves too badly, but the attention dyslexia or a 504 plan draws to individuals sometimes makes it difficult to evade embarrassing attention.

When I was younger, I went to a Christian school and misspelled Jesus on a quiz. This should have been the easiest word for me, but nope, apparently not. At home I mispronounce words all the time, or while in an argument I might say something wrong and get made fun of by my brothers. For instance, one time I was trying to prove my point and said “discorrect” instead of “incorrect.” They have never let me live it down. I have



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misspelled “what” so many times on my phone that it no longer autocorrects the word anymore.

Getting teased at home and school by friends is normal and easy to tolerate. I say it is fine if they make a joke here and there, and I will laugh with them because I can make some funny mistakes. However, teasing can get old quickly. The continual onslaught of jokes and nagging can become taxing, especially

when I have made a new mistake and feel very embarrassed.

When it is easy to tell people are making jokes and not actually being rude it can be funny, but if someone starts purposely making fun of people who have dyslexia it is not right. Because of dyslexia and what has happened in my past, I hope that sharing my story with those around me will help others who identify with me to feel more comfortable in their own minds.

## How to support someone with dylsexia

- Be patient
- Show someone how to do a task; do not simply tell them
- Ask questions about their condition or what they need, as everyone with dyslexia is different
- Do not treat or speak to a dyslexic person differently
- Encourage them to keep trying when they face difficulties
- Remember that dyslexia is a spectrum, and someone may seem to be great in one area but struggling in another
- Remember that a dyslexia is a neurological condition
- Remind them that it is okay to be who they are