



The Guerrilla Guide to Dyslexia Awareness

Powered by Decoding Dyslexia NJ & Decoding Dyslexia TN





I am fun, I am smart, I do Jiu Jitsu, I am an artist. My favorite things to draw are dragons and mythical creatures. I work with a special friend, Callaghan, who helps me read. I always go to summer camp at the Bessie Coleman Center. I have lots of friends and I enjoy talking around. I have dyslexia.

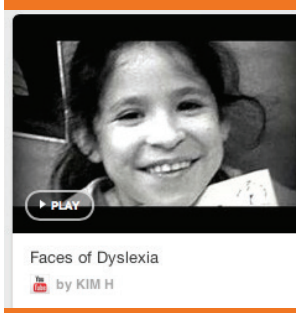
Dyslexia is real. MRIs show differences in brain function between dyslexics and non-dyslexics.

www.decodingdyslexia.org #DecodingDyslexia

Guerrilla Campaigns

While difficult to define exactly, guerrilla campaigns are unexpected and unconventional, potentially interactive, with consumers targeted in unexpected places. The objective is always to generate a buzz.

Reading disorders like dyslexia are the most common type of learning disorder. 20% of American elementary school children have significant, continuing difficulties with learning to read, reading fluency, and/or reading comprehension, yet only about 5% are referred for special help in reading.



Top: Decoding Dyslexia - OR organized a traveling art show with posters and postcards celebrating their kids and highlighting dyslexia facts.

Bottom: The Dyslexia Project out of Arkansas created an emotional video showcasing the faces of dyslexia.

Cover Image: Activists from across the country convened on Capitol Hill for the #SayDyslexia Rally in 2016 .

You've downloaded this guerrilla guide because you care about this issue. We hope you will employ some of your own creative guerrilla marketing tactics to engage people emotionally, and frequently enough, to turn a dyslexia awareness campaign viral.

An Important Message to Share

Research suggests that dyslexia is often inherited. The general conclusion is that the brains of people with dyslexia have both anatomical and functional differences than those without the disorder and that this difference results in less concentrated and efficient analysis and processing of the written representation of letter sounds into meaningful information.

There is no cure for dyslexia, but dyslexic individuals can learn to read and write with educational support. Dyslexia occurs in people of all races and income levels and it is not linked to low intelligence (low IQ). Many people with the disorder have average or above average intelligence.

If it's important to you to share this message then this guide is made for you. Together as guerrilla marketers we can set out to devise unconventional ways to promote and maintain the public's interest in dyslexia. There are so many ways we can raise awareness from small steps to huge ones... so let's get started!



Baby Steps:

Tips for easing in to the awareness arena

If you want to start slow, there are a bunch of things you can do today to get started. The tips below are relatively easy to accomplish but can go a long way to building your confidence, expanding your current networks and laying the groundwork for future activities.

Join a dyslexia advocacy or awareness group.

There are many organizations out there that exist to support individuals and to advocate for systemic change. Reach out and get involved. Find a group that's active in your city or state and learn what you can do to contribute to their mission.

Wear a dyslexia awareness t-shirt.

This small act alone can bring such a sense of pride and purpose. You will be amazed at how many conversations you'll spark by hitting the streets with a clever slogan on your back. You never know who may be standing behind you in line at the grocery store! You can purchase shirts from local dyslexia organizations or design your own.



Top: This T-shirt was designed for a joint conference by Decoding Dyslexia Ontario and The Ontario Branch of the International Dyslexia Association in Canada.

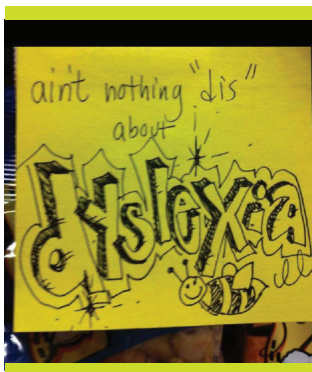
Middle: These cool T-shirts were designed by the Dyslexia Training Institute.

Bottom: One mom from VA even created a dyslexia awareness jewelry line!

Get creative - make your own or support an awesome existing campaign!



Decoding Dyslexia volunteers in TN and UT showcase their state movement T-shirt designs!

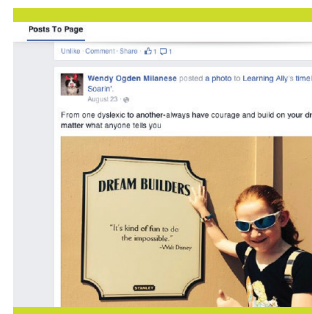


These various photos were posted by activists during "March is National Reading Month" social media campaigns.

Share status updates from Facebook and Twitter

Social media is a great channel for sharing information and resources quickly. Join a few dyslexia related groups or follow some dyslexia experts and help spread their messages to your friends and followers. Feeling inspired? Try your hand at creating a meme... a fun graphic and a well researched quote could be a social media hit!

Use social media to expand your reach and inspire others!



Message on your hand, your car, or a note to leave behind

Create opportunities to pique someone's curiosity. A strategically placed graphic representing dyslexia can catch someone's attention and open their eyes to this amazing population of kids. Dyslexia is not rare but is surely under-diagnosed and most often misunderstood. Help get people thinking about how common this learning disability really is.

Invite a friend, fellow parent or teacher to a local dyslexia event, conference or webinar

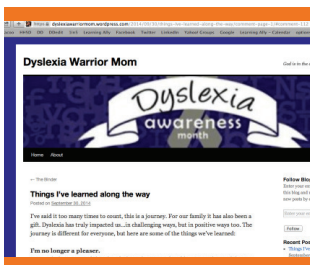
One of the best things you can do is to share your knowledge about resources and information. Bring a friend (or two) to the next event you plan to attend yourself. Spread the learning!

Tell your story to friends and family

Nothing can compare to the power and impact your own personal story can have on others. Practice telling your story to friends and family members and have them ask you questions. It can take a while to craft a story that delivers the message you want to emphasize. Sharing your story in a way that gets others to care about this issue is key.



Decoding Dyslexia networks from across the country spread awareness via community resource events and local library displays.



Dyslexia Warrior Mom blogs about her journeys and what she learns along the way.

Bigger Steps:

Ready to do more?

Once you get some experience spreading the word, you may feel inspired to help educate or engage others. There can never be enough good information out there about dyslexia. Roll up your sleeves and keep talking!

Email and call your lawmakers.

It is important for citizens to participate in the democratic process. If you believe systemic change is needed in your community or state then it's time to start making sure your local policymakers and elected officials understand dyslexia and the impact it has on your family and others. Keep your message concise and to the point and be sure to offer your opinions on solutions and best practices.

Share a book on dyslexia with your child's teacher.

Myths and misconceptions of dyslexia abound. Share your favorite dyslexia related titles with your child's teacher and offer to connect him/her to more resources if interested. Highlight or place bookmarks in your favorite sections to call attention to what you want them learn.

Ask your local school, library or bookstore to promote dyslexia.

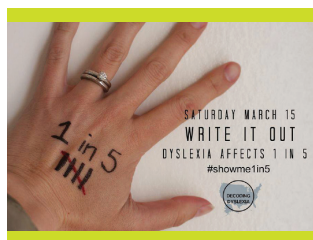
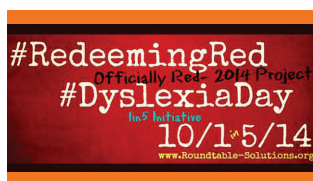
Ask if you could help design a dyslexia display for your local school, library, community center or bookstore. Include books, tip sheets and resource handouts.

Ask the school principal to share dyslexia websites with staff.

There are many great websites out there with excellent information and resources on dyslexia and other learning disabilities. Create a resource list of all your favorite sites including brief descriptions and ask to have it shared with teachers and resource staff at your child's school.

Begin a blog about your journey.

If you are passionate about raising awareness or supporting other families on this journey and have the writing skills to blog, go for it! Helping others realize they are not alone is a worthy endeavor and your unique perspective could bring new understanding to many.



Top: Roundtable Solutions launched a Wear Red for Dyslexia Day via social media.

Bottom: Decoding Dyslexia generated buzz with a Show Me 1in5 campaign on Facebook.



Top: The legislative efforts in NJ all started with the work of one mother-daughter team and grew into a statewide movement!

Bottom: Dyslexia activists from NJ and TX meet with US Senator Cassidy in Washington DC.

Present on dyslexia to your school's PTA or Board of Education.

Put together an informational presentation or workshop for your school community. Make yourself available as a local resource and consider having your child participate with you. The student voice is very powerful.

Plan a social media campaign.

Get your creative juices flowing and come up with some fun ways to get others engaged. Social media campaigns can be a fun way to show support and if you're lucky have your message go viral. Ask Facebook friends or Twitter followers to dance, share photos or attach hashtags to their favorite quotes in support of dyslexia.

Monster Steps:

Now you're rolling! Think even bigger...

OK, now that you know how it's done, it's time to take some actions to impact your community or school in a tangible way. Change requires people who are willing to speak up and speak out. Solidify your message and start working on ways to implement the changes you hope to see.

Contact your local legislator and offer to help write a bill.

This may be best accomplished by coordinating efforts with a local dyslexia advocacy organization but don't be discouraged if you are going it alone. Researching legislation in other states and learning a bit about the legislative process could be just the foundation you need to take that first step at finding a champion policy-maker willing to work for the cause.

Meet with school leadership to set district goals on dyslexia.

Begin a dialogue with the administration or board of education in your school district. Ask good questions about their current strategies for addressing struggling students. Share factual information on dyslexia and make suggestions for what improvements you think could be made. Be sure to introduce resources so district officials can continue building their knowledge base and ask that they include you in any future planning or goal setting on the topic.



Top: National non-profits Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity, Learning Ally and Eye to Eye worked with parents to bring a road-show tour of the film, *The Big Picture*, to ten cities across the country.

Middle: Activists in KY proudly marched in their Fourth of July Parade.

Bottom: Parent expert from Understood.org keynotes at NJ's LDA Conference highlighting dyslexia simulation resources that could be useful for local advocacy efforts.

Host an awareness event in your community.

This can take many forms... get creative! Team up with local dyslexia testing centers to plan a free dyslexia screening day. Ask a local movie theater to show a documentary related to dyslexia. Order a dyslexia simulation kit and host your own event. Organize an awareness walk to raise money for a dyslexia non-profit.

Host a gathering for families of children who have dyslexia.

One thing we all acknowledge is it's important that children with dyslexia know they are not alone. Consider what activities you can plan or what organizations you can get involved with that bring families together and foster friendship and camaraderie. This type of networking can help children develop a strong sense of self!

Participate in a parade, health fair, or book festival.

Find ways to speak to people "outside of the choir". Individuals involved with the LD community most likely already know about the cause and are actively engaged in the mission. Seek out opportunities to bring the message to new audiences – people that might not yet know they need you.

Pitch a story to your local newspaper or radio.

Contact your local and national news organizations and pitch them a story on dyslexia. Convince the education or community reporter that you have an important angle to share. Also don't underestimate the power of a well written letter to the editor.

Find community partners to help you go big.

Ask local businesses to light the town red to raise awareness. Contact local news media about showing a public service announcement. Reach out to your local billboard company to ask if they would donate space for an awareness campaign.



Parents in OK convinced a billboard company to host their dyslexia awareness billboard pro bono!



Top: A school in PA brought a screening and cast member discussion of *The Super d! Show* to their student body.

Middle: Dyslexic students submit artwork for the annual IDA Student Art Exhibition.

Bottom: A young man from VA proudly represents students with dyslexia at the 40th Anniversary Celebration of IDEA at the White House in Washington DC.

Next Steps:

As we work for awareness, let's also empower the next generation!

Hearing a parent, professional or educator share the story and mission is great but want to see everyone perk up and listen? Encourage and facilitate young people to speak up and speak out. They have a vested interest in this movement and their voices carry far and wide.

Encourage your child to:

Connect with a youth self-advocacy program

Talk to their teacher about their dyslexia

Attend and participate in community events

Join you in lobbying policymakers

Write a thank you note to a champion that supported them

Create an advocacy card or presentation on dyslexia

Write an article on dyslexia for their school newspaper or blog

Use social media to reach out to other kids

Promote a love of and awareness for eye reading and ear reading

As you work to raise awareness, we'd love to have you join us as part of the larger Decoding Dyslexia grassroots movement. Please contribute regularly to your state Decoding Dyslexia Facebook Page. **We want your videos, photos, blog posts and more!**

Together, we can make a difference for our children with dyslexia!

Special thanks to Decoding Dyslexia members, Jules Johnson (TN) and Deborah Lynam (NJ) for volunteering their time to develop this guide. They credit much of their inspiration to the countless individuals and organizations across the country working to raise awareness each and every day!