

ABBIE'S DYSLEXIC JOURNEY

What main concerns and difficulties were being faced before the one week program?

In July 2020 Abbie and I (Nanna) had a discussion about dyslexia. At first Abbie was against any discussion regarding dyslexia and said that she would rather not know. Abbie displayed anger, frustration, fear, despair, a feeling of being trapped and blamed it all negatively on dyslexia.

I opened a document on the Dyslexia WA website and played a you-tube video, then read out, a list of traits displayed by dyslexics. Abbie became involved stating: "that's me, that's my brother, that's my friend, no that's not me".



Halfway through the list Abbie changed again to: "I am not doing any tutoring, I am not leaving the class to do special programs" because she could not see any benefit and her class mates would view her differently. Abbie attends extra tutorials and she feels it is overload. When she experiences overload she loses the processes, steps and has no recall. She gets tired and it is like nothing registers.

When Abbie reads a book she knows the words but they have no meaning and she does not have an understanding. She thinks that at times her brain is like a camera and she can see the word and remember it, but then there are times when she will get a word totally wrong and believes her brain has played a trick on her and then the teacher yells at her in front of the whole class causing her embarrassment.

Abbie struggles with time, identifying her left and right and no matter how hard she really tries she cannot get it. There are moments where, whatever Abbie is looking at, it does not register, she refers to them as a blank moment, no thinking.

After spending time discussing dyslexia and Abbie explaining her dyslexic world she asked about what Dyslexia WA did because she had picked up a newsletter. I had read the books "The Gift of Dyslexia" and "The Gift of Learning" by Ron Davis and explained the Dyslexia Correction Program® to the best of my understanding and asked if she would be interested in finding out more about the Program.

Abbie said that she would not be interested in doing the program if she had to do it in a group. Abbie also wanted to see what Annette looked like, so we found an image and she liked what she saw. It was explained that Annette is a Facilitator for the Dyslexia Correction Program in Rockingham, Western Australia. The Program was run one on one (just Annette and Abbie) and that we could make

an appointment and travel to Rockingham to meet and speak to Annette to find out more about the Program which was held over 5 days.

Abbie asked why she was dyslexic and said that dyslexia was not a gift. I said that maybe it can be a gift we just need to find out more. Abbie explained that now she was in High School and she could understand some of her strengths and knew her weaknesses and that maybe the Program could assist with better understanding. Arrangements were made to have the initial appointment with Annette and then there was an agreement by Abbie to complete the 5 day Dyslexia Correction Program®.

Abbie continued to struggle at School in term three and expressed feelings of hopelessness, sadness, frustration, anger and that she felt she was drowning and some times she was sitting on the ground and could not get up.

The week before travelling to Rockingham to commence the Dyslexia Correction Program® with Annette, Abbie experienced an all time low. Abbie –“I am in Year 7 and I cannot read confidently, I do not comprehend, I can't write good sentences, I have to sing the alphabet song to know what letter comes before or after another letter”.

“I am stressed, the assessments are getting to me and I am spending all my time doing homework and I feel I am drowning. I hate school and I just want to run away and I will deny I am dyslexic as there is no gift, just bad, bad, bad”.

How was the one week program experience?

Abbie and I drove to Rockingham the day before starting the Dyslexia Correction Program®, Abbie was upbeat with a sense of excitement and feeling a little bit positive. We had many conversations on the way including about the book I was reading ‘Fish Don't Climb Trees’ and Abbie had lots of questions and in the end sort of related herself as the Fish in the scheme of things and that she was looking forward to seeing Annette again and starting the Program. Abbie was her beautiful self, happy, involved respectful and explained to the people we were staying with that she was dyslexic and excited to be starting the Program and also what she was expecting to achieve.

Monday morning and Abbie is focused and looking forward to learning. Data lines established with an outline of how this Program could help Abbie with the introduction of Tools – Point for focusing, release, dial, Koosh®, symbol mastery and picture at punctuation. Accepted differences of orientation and disorientation, there are benefits for both and it is up to the individual when learning to read to be orientated and to know what triggers disorientation. It was refreshing to be a part of this experience and gave a greater understanding of what dyslexics deal with on a daily basis at school and now what can be achieved by Abbie upon accepting responsibility and ownership of her learning.

Abbie was exhausted at the end of the first day and appreciated all that Annette had taken her through to better understand the root of many problems that she

had been experiencing and that there are possibilities to improve her learning situation now and beyond school. Abbie had an understanding for the first time that she was not dumb or stupid but that she was different in her learning style and that the tools she had been given would help make changes that were needed for her to learn and excel.

On the third day there was a light bulb moment. Abbie was mastering orientation and identifying what was triggering disorientation and bringing herself back on point. She read a passage like she had never read before and she shouts out "I am smart".

Abbie was making sense of her dyslexia and she stated that she thought dyslexia might be a gift. The introduction of Koosh brought a sense of fun but also a realisation of the importance of balance/orientation. It was all fitting into place with ownership now accepted by Abbie. Her words – "No Excuses!"

What immediate differences were noticed?

Abbie stated at the end of the Program that there was a new sense of direction, a new world, a new purpose and a new person because she now had tools and a new understanding of dyslexia.

Abbie's self-esteem and confidence were raised and there is ownership to becoming an independent learner and she now admits that she is dyslexic. Abbie set goals to de-clutter her room, participate more in physical activity, to continue to work at implementing her new tools, staying orientated, to create order, keep up with in class learning have fun and be happy.

What changes has the experience made now it is 3 months later?

Abbie has achieved her goals to de-clutter her room, create order and has taken on more physical activities and says that this has helped to release stress and relax. She continues to work at mastering her trigger words and identify what triggers her disorientation to allow her to stay more focused.

Changes at school have taken time to implement due to meeting processes. Abbie has spoken to her teacher outlining what was achieved from attending the Dyslexia Correction Program® and has been asked by the teacher on occasion if she is on point during her subjects. Abbie's Mum, with Abbie, has had discussions with the Head of Secondary School to make changes for next year. The School has been supportive in some areas to assist Abbie's learning.

Ongoing support is needed to assist Abbie to stay on track and to continue with implementing her tools when the going gets tough. Abbie appreciates the follow up with Annette to discuss any issues that arise and to receive reminders in solving any new matters.

IT TAKES AS LONG AS IT TAKES! Debra (Nanna) December 2020