

Hi. I'm Emily Gee, and welcome to my talk. Thank you so much for coming to watch, and I hope you enjoy watching. So today I'll be talking about, my journey at university, with the DSA and talk about dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, as well as just, like, my journey throughout life and how I've dealt with it. And now here I am, and my current Emily.

So I was diagnosed at a very young age with dyslexia and dyscalculia, and then later on in my life, I was diagnosed with dyspraxia. Very lucky with all 3, as people say. And, it was honestly it's had its ups and downs. School, very early on in my age, the first school that I went to, they weren't very understanding. They didn't really get what I had, And sometimes it was very frustrating for me and my parents because they want the best for me and the school wasn't providing that, and it was very tough.

The one moment that I really remember is just my page being ripped out in front of the whole class because my writing was bad and my spelling was really bad or, like, standing up in front of the whole school and do my top button. And at the time, I couldn't do that. And I had to go I had to go to a different school, and that school was amazing. And they really embraced what I had and they really, understood me. And to this day, Kingswood School, I will sing your praises forever and ever and ever about how great the school was.

And I don't know how to explain it. It's why or every time I talk about this, it's so much, like, I vary about what I say, but they embraced with what I was good at and that was my performing. And every Friday, my headmaster will be like, so today, guys, Emily will be singing. Mister Shaw, he was great. And because school was so dark for me, I couldn't understand the curriculum, and I couldn't I didn't enjoy walking into school in the mornings because I I didn't enjoy it.

I hated it. I didn't it was hard for me, and I was all I was very aware that I was behind my peers in my, in my group. But they were separate. They did separate me into the children that have got SEN needs that had more of like a one to one help, which was really really good. And then I had to get retested to go to, secondary school to act I had a full statement as they used to call it back back in the day, and I was in a SBLD unit with about 15 kids, I think.

Oh, no. 10. It was 10 of us. 5 girls, 5 boys. And I think it got to a point where I was very aware of what I've got.

I was very, like, I don't want this. And it got to with my dyscalculia because no one really understood what it was. A lot of people were like, oh, we don't know what we're gonna do. Oh, we're gonna do with this. Oh, we're gonna do with that.

And it meant a lot that they did try their best, but because this calculator was so unknown and because a lot of people said I had a very extreme case of it, and I don't want to be like, oh, it's, like, really, really bad. I'm just being really honest. It was like, oh, she really does not understand maths. My English, on the other hand, because so many people know about dyslexia and they know what to do with dyslexia and they know what to put in place. My dyslexia was doing actually okay.

It was on a steady route, but my dyscalculia was not going anywhere. With my dyspraxia, it was basic, like, in PE, I would get so anxious about getting change because it would take me so long to get change. And the base that was, like, the basic, like, putting my PE shorts on. Not really I wasn't able to, like, do shoelaces, so I used to have Velcro embarrassment. Oh my god.

The embarrassment of trying to get Velcro shoes was so embarrassing. And then late in my life, I'm like, why do I even care? Why do I even care? Older me. And yeah, it was it was it was hard, it was challenging and I came out with 4 GCSEs and, weirdly enough, it was my English literature, my English language.

It's not my history, Not my history. It was my music and my drama. And my last I tried my maths. I've lost count. I did functional.

I did higher, and I've done lower. And then I went to college, and they basically forced me to do my maths because I was on, like, the level I think it was, like, level 3 or level I can't remember. I think it was level 3. And I was like, you need your GCSE maths to do this. Even though you've got all your Englishes and you've got your blah blah blah, you still need your your maths.

So I was forced to do that. And then when it got to, like, college, I was just like, either I kind of, like, mask it, and I did really. I did mask it. Masking is a massive thing that I've talked to a lot of people in the communities, like a lot of people do, is pretending that you don't have it, so it's kinda, like, easier. Like, it's not easy for you in the classroom, but not to have that little bit of stress and anxiety and masking in.

Honestly, masking makes it just 10 times worse because you're struggling 10 times worse. Because with my experiences, if you don't like, if you suffer in silence, it's it's not it's not it's that's easier if that's no. If you if anyone understands what it's like, it's easy just, like, be quiet and then just fall through the cracks. And a lot of people are like that. I've spoken to people.

They're like, this this child is, like, the quietest person in the class because they don't want that attention. They don't want that teacher to be like, oh, what's going on here now? Like, what's going on now? Because I have that at primary schools where I would be in the back of the classroom, and I wouldn't put my hand up, and I would just be failing because I didn't want to and it honestly, it's the one my one tip is make sure if, like, parents or carers or whatever, make sure your child is in front of the class so that teacher can see. They've got no excuse for the child.

They've got that child right in front of them, so they know if they're, like, they're not picking up their pencil. They're not, you know anyway, I'm talking a lot about my my my my past, which leads me on to taking, like I took a gap year before I went to uni. And then I went to university and I studied musical theater because throughout my whole life, I've been performing, and, I've never not performed. And as I you could see, I did music at musical theater at college. I did so much in secondary school.

I was performing at a very young age. It was very much like, let's just do it. Let's do this one route of musical theatre. And my course was very written. It was very academic.

And you would think, oh my goodness, a dyslexic doing that, it what? I mean, my my my parents were like, look, we're gonna take a risk. The course is good. The university is lovely. It's really nice for me to have a soft start into university life because it wasn't I wanted to go to London.

I really wanted to go to London U, but I knew I wasn't ready for that yet. So, university came along, and this is when it kind of masking was really in full force where I just wouldn't say a single thing about what I've got because I was ashamed. I wanted to be like everyone else. I wanted to be you know, go never miss classes, never miss any social events because if you do get the help, the right help, you do miss a lot of social events. You do miss the classes because you you're you're pulled out to have that one to 1 and, like, that guilt and, like, oh, I just wanna be with I just wanna be with everyone.

So it kind of got to my first end of 1st year and my writing was bad. Not bad. I hate the word bad. It was grammatically not correct. It wasn't okay.

Like, my right there it's just some things weren't matching. And then my mom was like, have you had any support? And I was like, I haven't told anyone. I haven't told anyone that I've got this. And she was like, right.

So, applying for DSA was, how can I explain it, long? Very, very long. It wasn't very accessible to people that have got dyslexia. It was a lot and I think it took about overall a year to process everything. I don't know how to explain it, but from what I remember, it was it'd be back and forth in emails, getting letters, and not really understanding it.

For example, like, I would get all these information about laptops and stuff And then, like, the prices and, like, there's so much information. It just wasn't accessible. So it got to a point I was like, oh, leave it. I kinda don't wanna do it. And then a lot of people pushed me to be like, no.

You need you need this stuff. You need the support. So I got the laptop. For example, I got the the people think, oh, you get, like, a MacBook, and it's like, no. You have to pay more for a MacBook.

But I got, like, the cheaper one, I think. And, I don't know how it wasn't great. It wasn't it wasn't I don't know how to explain it. Like, you know, like, the the the like, the talk the talking thing that you have into your laptop, a common voice called. I should know I should know that.

The little talking thing into my laptop, it didn't really work. My laptop kept on crashing. It took me ages, like because I'm quite a good typer. I'm not, like, verbally because I've got verbal dyslexia where so I've got more of a speech and language, typing actually was better for me. I it just wasn't working.

Trying to get the one to one support was tough. It was really tough to get the right person and all the hours that I was supposed to have, It wasn't very much like, oh, you know, easy peasy, there you go. It was quite a complicated process. I can't remember the, like, the, like, the ins and outs of it, but from what I remember is it got to a point where my mom was literally was like, I will have a meeting with these people because you need that help. The lady that I got, who was absolutely amazing, she was a dyslexic specialist.

She knew what she was doing. I've had experiences in the past where I was at college where they gave me someone who had down who was specializing down syndrome, and I was like, that's not gonna help me. I haven't got down syndrome. I've got a different whole different thing. So this lady was absolutely great.

She was really good. She was really on track. Every week, we would come together. We would help with my dissertation, and it was great. I just think it's just the whole act the the application and the process was just too long, And I I think my feedback to anyone who's watching this is just like, I had to get retested as well, and that was an oh, that was a lot.

And, like, me having a statement, like, I had 3 learning difficulties. I've had a full statement. I've had the full hours when I was at school. I was in a unit, and I still had to get tested. And it was a lot of money where it was just like it was gonna for me as well, I'm being really honest, going back into a room and being tested again when I knew myself that I've got it.

It was quite traumatizing, and I didn't wanna do it. And it was really hard when I came out of the because I'm older now. I'm more aware. When I was younger, I couldn't really like, I came out of the test and I didn't really feel anything. I was like, oh, I've just been tested again.

Now I'm older. I'm like, this is what I can't do. This is what I I, you know, I can't do this. I can't do that. And it was really hard.

It was really like, oh, I felt really down for a couple of days. But the support that I got, though, really helped me with my dissertation mostly. Like, it was such intense piece of work, and the lady who'd helped me was really, really good. And, honestly, I have not used that laptop since I got it, because it wasn't accessible, and I couldn't afford it at the time to get a better laptop because I was a student and I was just about paying my bills okay. But, yeah, overall, my university experience was it was okay.

Like, my 1st year, it was well, educational wise, being a uni student, it was great. I just lived my life. But going back to the masking and a lot of people not knowing what to do with me, it felt like I was, oh, I'm back at primary school again. And because I don't I don't look dyslexic, I don't look dyspraxic, I don't look dyscalculic, it was quite tricky for people to understand, if that makes any sense. And it's the uni was great.

My my tutors were amazing. I think it's just people like me, like, going into their room and, like, they're learning stuff from me. Like, actually seeing, like, a lived experience, not like dyslexia definition meaning on a page. So much deeper than that. And dyscalculia, I didn't really need dyscalculia support at uni, because it was music or theater and, like, writing.

Dyspraxia, it was my dancing. I just wish people kinda understood dyspraxia and dancing and how I've got such a passion for it, and I love doing it. And I felt like I was putting so much work into practicing and making I was going into that dance studios at 10 o'clock at night after finishing my job, and working really hard, and that's what you have to do. You have to work 10 times harder than everyone else that hasn't got it. And that's when we're going, oh, like, we work harder.

We actually just have to, like, put that 10% little bit more than everyone else. Like, I was in the library till 3 AM in the morning sometimes writing because I was like, I've got to be ahead of everyone else, you know, ahead of everyone else in, like, my peer group because me writing I can't remember how many words dissertation is, but it was a lot of workload, so I had to get ahead of everyone before I got stressed. But I think just like any advice from people that do the applications and stuff for, like, getting a laptop, getting that support is give yourself enough time and make sure you've got someone helping you and someone in your in your corner to be like, no. Keep going. Keep going and you will get the support.

I just yeah. I think just being tested again was quite traumatic. But, yeah, I think now look. I'm older and I'm I'm 20, 25, and I'm a teaching assistant from Reception Children, and I'm making sure that there's kids that don't fall through the cracks, because a lot of people do without the support and having a mentor. And sometimes, you know, school's not always the best friend to parents.

Sometimes it could be a really hard conversation and sometimes it can be great. Sometimes I've seen it in my in my my class. The teachers are so great with the parents, and it's quite nice to see that. I've heard stories from other parents from different schools saying it's really hard, but my school personally, it's that there's really good communication with the teachers. So yeah, so this is my little talk.

Thank you so much for watching and if you're a student out there who's worrying about anything, please follow me on LinkedIn or whatever, Emily G or, you know, Instagram, Emily PG, Instagram kind of thing. I'm happy to talk about it, and, yeah. Thank you so much for watching, and, yeah, thank you so much.