“The world is just so fast, and I’m not fast… it’s just really, really difficult to keep up”

Dr Rebecca Murray, Cara Staniforth, & Dr Lucy Eddy

What did we do?

Ten adults with a diagnosis of DCD (self-reported) were interviewed online for between 30 minutes and one hour. Participants who were based both nationally and internationally were asked to share their experiences of DCD within the realms of healthcare, education, friendships, romantic relationships, employment and wellbeing. The study was approved by the University of Bradford Ethics Committee (ref: E1026).

What did we find?

Theme 1: The impact of DCD

Positive role of diagnosis
Fostering self-concept, acceptance and identity

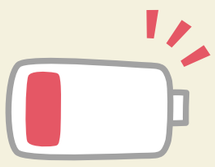
Childhood motor skills
activities were hard and/or avoided

‘Clumsy' label
with implications for health

Independence milestones
challenges with learning to drive that persist

Employment
Impacting choice of career and support

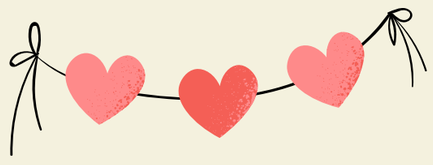
Mental health
challenges throughout life



Cognitive load
Challenges with planning, memory & time management

Challenging childhood peers
Not being picked in P.E., feeling ‘different’

Commonality in difference
finding connection through shared understanding



Romantic relationships
finding partners that truly understand

Theme 2: Lack of awareness, understanding and support

Non-believers
in education dismissing needs

Discrimination
in education causing hostile interactions

Lack of resources
in healthcare, private diagnosis

Poor support
in the workplace, turning to self-employment

Family misconceptions
dismissed needs and lack of validation

Talents ‘not conducive’ to DCD
e.g. music & sport led to disbelief about challenges

Denied validation
and lack of desire to understand

Poor awareness
compared to Autism, ADHD, Dyslexia etc.

Community support gap
since the closure of the Dyspraxia Foundation

Next Steps

More needs to be done to ensure a lifespan approach to DCD, to allow greater opportunities for adults with a diagnosis to thrive alongside their ‘neurotypical’ peers

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