Neurodiversity Awareness Factsheet

Irlen Syndrome

Irlen Syndrome (or 'Meares Irlen Syndrome') involves visual perception or eye problems. This is often caused by the way in which the brain interprets visual information that is being seen by the eyes. It can make reading effectively and efficiently very difficult and people can also perceive their environment differently.

Those with Irlen Syndrome have to constantly make adaptations or compensate for their eye problems, which involves exerting extra energy and effort.

Most common difficulties include:

Reading Difficulties

- Poor comprehension
- Problems tracking from line to line
- Prefers to read in dim light
- Reads slowly or hesitantly
- Gets tired easily when reading
- Often loses place in text
- Avoids reading altogether

Physical Symptoms

- Sensitivity to bright light
- Eye strain ie eyes hurt or water frequently
- Fidgety or restless when reading
- Dislikes glare from bright objects
- Irritable in direct sunlight
- Feels fatigued easily

Other Difficulties

- Ineffective use of time
- Lack of motivation
- Working hard but not achieving results
- Difficulty with navigation and left/right confusion
- Difficulty judging distances
- Accident prone or clumsy

Whether you have a friend, colleague, student or employee with Irlen Syndrome, there are some simple things you can suggest to make their life easier:

- **USING COLOURED OVERLAYS**

  Different overlays can help to make the print appear more clear and stable. They can improve speed, accuracy and comprehension and can reduce headaches and tiredness. A specific colour or combination of colours can help with Irlen Syndrome, but this will differ from person to person – trial or assessment must be used to find the most effective colour for that specific individual.

  Coloured filters are also available as lenses in spectacles if preferred.

- **OTHER SOLUTIONS INCLUDE:**

  Use a ruler to keep track of your place in the text. Avoid fluorescent or harsh lighting and change the background colour on computer screens. Larger, clearer print can also help.