DLD:
Beyond Language Difficulties

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A language disorder with multiple manifestations and impacts.



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The visible part: language difficulties

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Language is at the heart of DLD.



But what a person with DLD experiences doesn't always stop there.

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When language difficulties ripple into other areas

Language difficulties can have an impact on several areas of functioning.

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DLD

Reading and spelling

- Phonological weaknesses that can interfere with sound-letter correspondence
- More difficult lexical access
- Decoding and spelling difficulties

Mathematics

- Understanding certain terms (e.g., add, subtract, reduce, parallel, acute angle, etc.)
- Understanding word problems and instructions
- Verbal reasoning
- Grasping meaning and solving problems

Social interactions

- More discomfort in interactions
- Fewer social initiatives
- Difficulty understanding nuances (double meanings, implied meaning)
- Risk of isolation

Behaviour and emotional regulation

- Frustration when it is hard to be understood
- Withdrawal or avoidance of some situations
- Sometimes more intense emotional reactions
- Sometimes less effective coping strategies

Mental health and well-being

- Higher risk of anxiety and depressive symptoms
- Self-esteem that is sometimes more fragile
- Possible impact on sense of competence and social participation

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Cognitive functions closely linked to language

In many people with DLD, certain cognitive functions are also more vulnerable.

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Working memory

- Holding and manipulating verbal information
- Following complex instructions
- Keeping information in mind to understand, reason and produce

Inhibition

- Managing distractions
- Controlling automatic responses
- Adapting behaviour to the context

DLD

Cognitive flexibility

- Adapting to change
- Shifting from one idea to another
- Using different strategies to solve a problem

Attention

- Sustaining attention on a task
- Filtering out irrelevant information
- Dividing attention between several sources

These functions support many activities:

- Reading comprehension
- Writing texts
- Mathematics and problem solving
- Organization and planning

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A neurodevelopmental profile that is sometimes broader

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In many people with DLD, other developmental differences are also present and can affect day-to-day functioning.

ADHD and other NDDs

- Frequent co-occurrence (e.g., ADHD)
- Can amplify difficulties with attention, organization and learning
- The profile varies from one person to another

Motor skills and coordination

- Fine motor difficulties (e.g., graphomotor skills)
- Developmental coordination disorder (DCD)
- Can have an impact on writing, daily activities and some sports



Sensory differences

- Possible hypersensitivities or hyposensitivities (auditory, tactile, visual, proprioceptive, etc.)
- Can affect participation in activities, eating and day-to-day well-being
- Can cause cognitive overload

Sleep

- More frequent sleep difficulties
- Can have an impact on attention, emotional regulation and learning

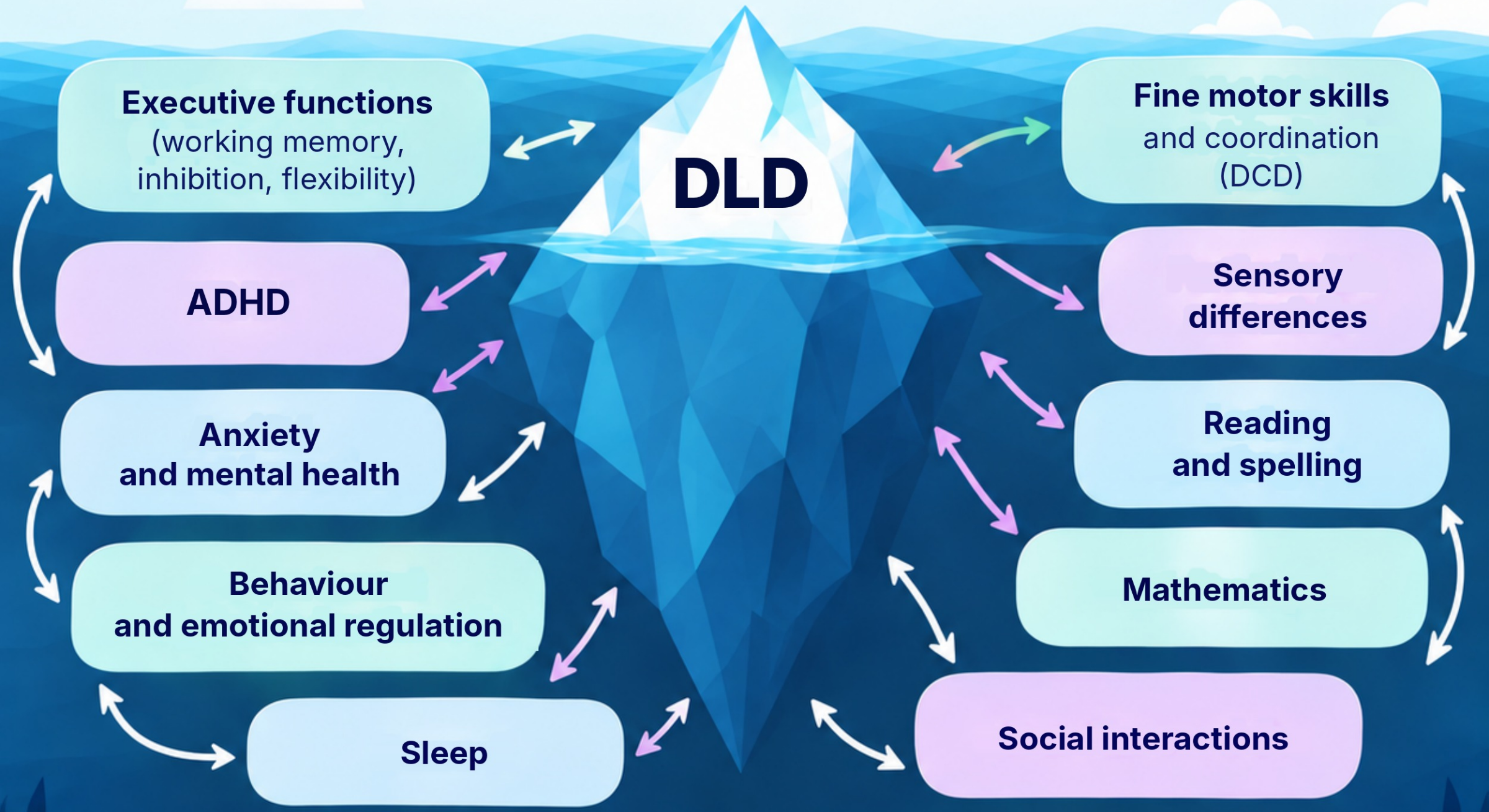
These differences are not systematic, and their presence, intensity and interactions vary from one person to another.

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It's all connected

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DLD is often part of a complex profile
that goes beyond language difficulties alone.



These elements may vary from one person to another,
but they **often influence one another.**

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