

# ACCEPTANCE, ACCOMMODATION, AND ATTITUDE

## Supporting the Dyslexic

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# Agenda

What is Dyslexia

Supporting the Dyslexic Learning Profile

Acceptance

Accommodations

Attitude

“Whatever It Takes”

Discussion

# What is Dyslexia? Dyslexia Explained Video

Produced by Kids in the House  
Sandra Loo, Ph.D. et al

<https://youtu.be/yLMbjWwp4ZI>

# Dyslexia...

Is an inherited trait

Can be observed as a structural brain difference

Affects language processing

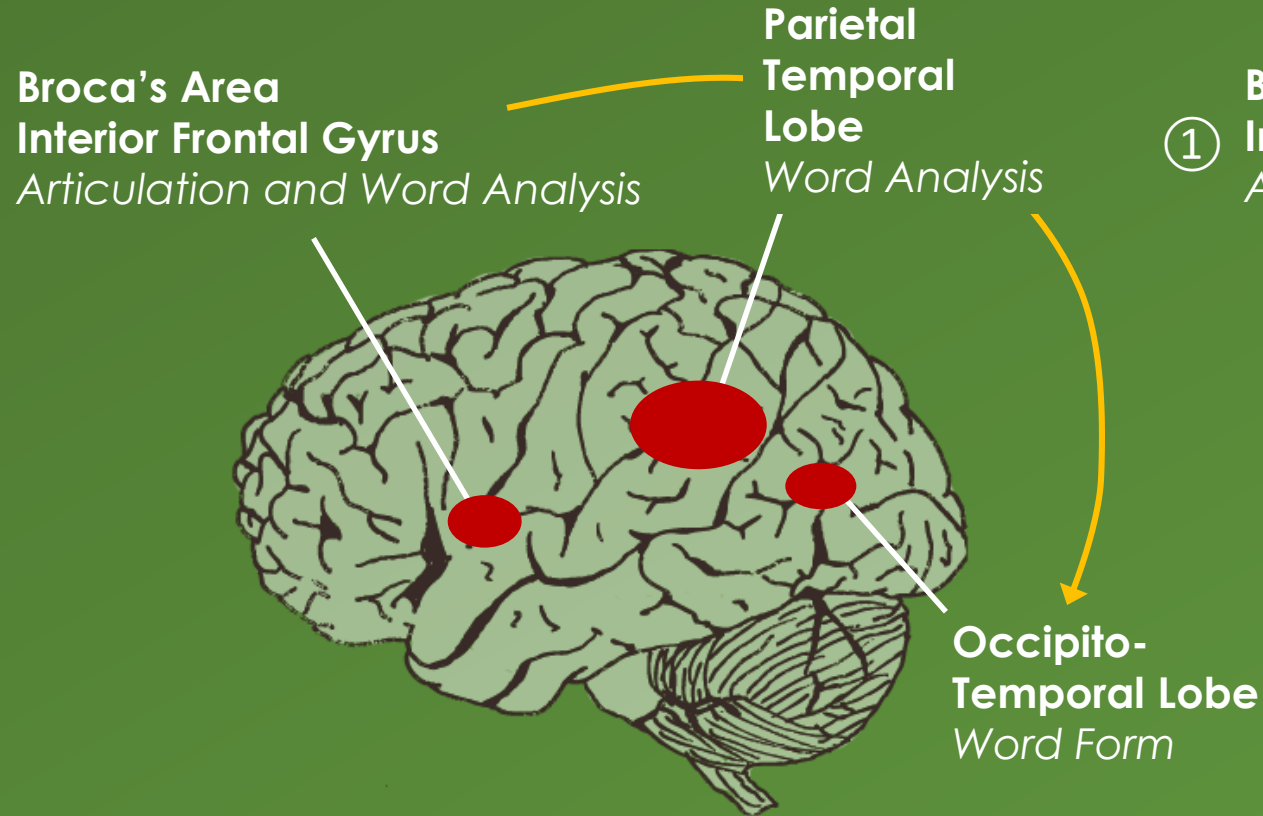
Reflects confusion with directions

Compounds memory weakness

Source: Susan Barton, Barton Reading Systems

# Typical Reader

# Dyslexic Reader



*Development as a reader starts with Broca's Area then Parietal and Occipito-Temporal Lobes mature*

*Broca's Area lights up first but gets stuck -- referred to as a "neural disruption"*

# Supporting the Dyslexic Learner



# Acceptance



# Expectation

*The act of looking forward to or anticipating*



# Acceptance

*To agree or consent to; to reconcile oneself to*

*Neurodiversity in children can lead you to change ideas about your child and to reflect on your own academic experiences*

# Acceptance ≠ Passivity

**Many parents start** with an idealized view of the parenting journey

**Acceptance doesn't mean lowering expectations** about your child

Acceptance does **open the opportunity to reconstruct expectations**

# Acceptance ≠ Passivity

**Discover** your child's "learning profile"

*WISC (Wechsler Intelligence Test for Children) assesses several characteristics:  
Verbal Comprehension, Visual Spatial, Working Memory, Processing Speed*

**Understand** strengths, resources and constraints

*Useful educational background, time, money, patience*

**Focus** your decisions and actions

*Traditional school/classroom or specialized school*

*Advanced curriculum with extra support or slower path to advanced classes*

*Robust schedule of extracurriculars or more limited participation*

# Learning Profile

## Working Memory

Cognitive system with limited capacity responsible for temporarily holding information available for processing

## Processing Speed

Cognitive attribute defined as time it takes to do a mental task; may interfere with executive functions

## Executive Function

Cognitive processes necessary for the cognitive control of behavior. Include attentional control, cognitive inhibition, inhibitory control, working memory, cognitive flexibility

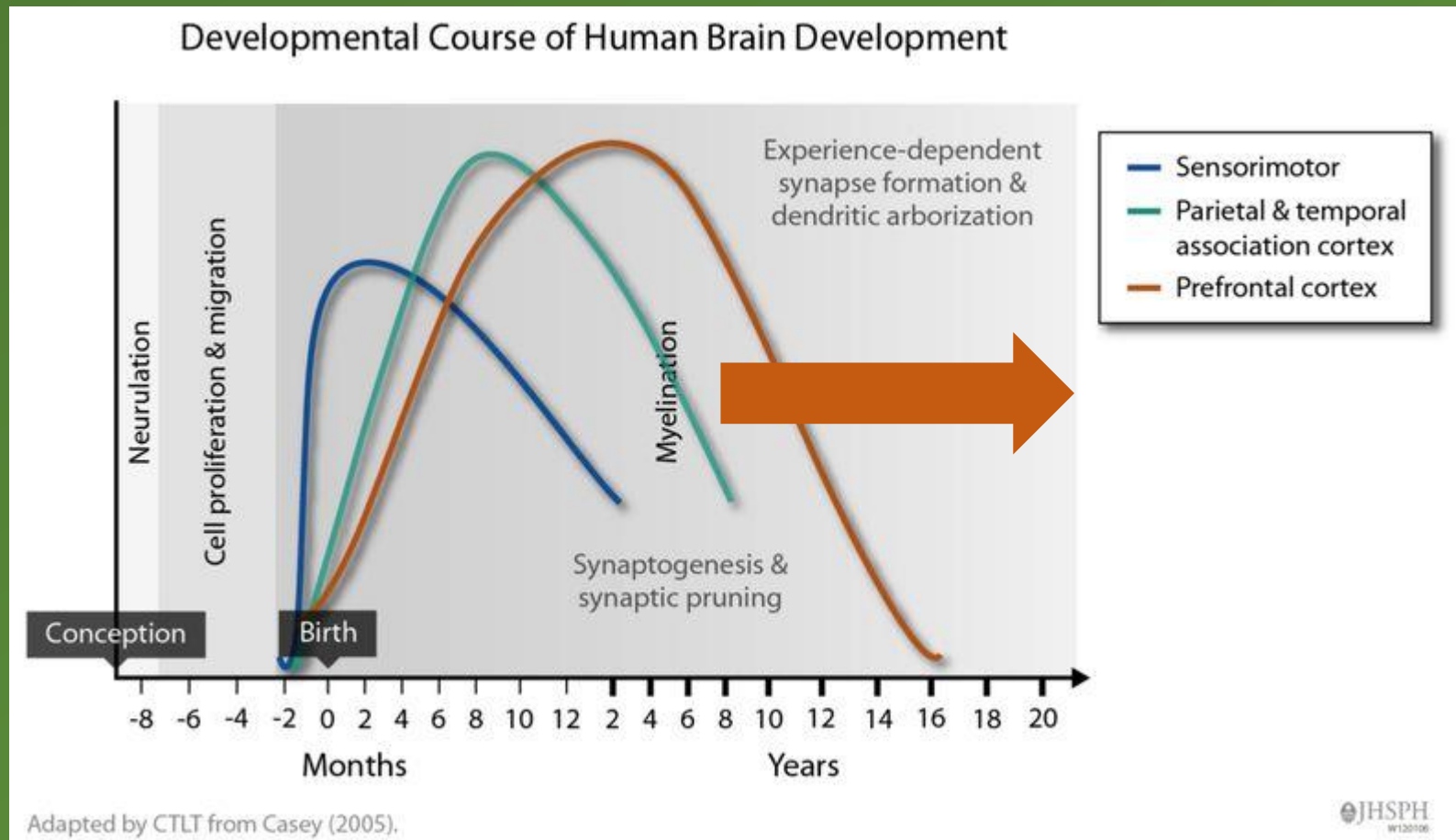
## Memory Overload

Brain has taken in more information than it is able to process

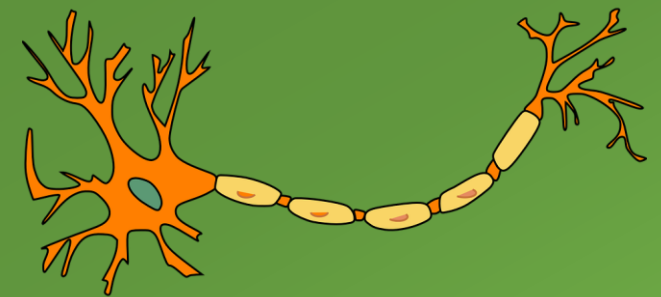
## Social Emotional

General feelings of distress or well-being and includes quality of peer relationships

# Dyslexia Delays Neural Connections Development



*Cable axons in brain slower to develop which shifts development timeline to the right*



# Dyslexia Requires Changing How to Think About Timeline

Elementary School	Middle School	High School	College and Vocational Training	Early Career
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*Memory overload first appears*

*Workload demands new study skills*

*Support can continue through college and early career*

*Learning to read → reading to learn*

*Building academic endurance*

*Recipe for success changes dramatically with transition from college to early career*

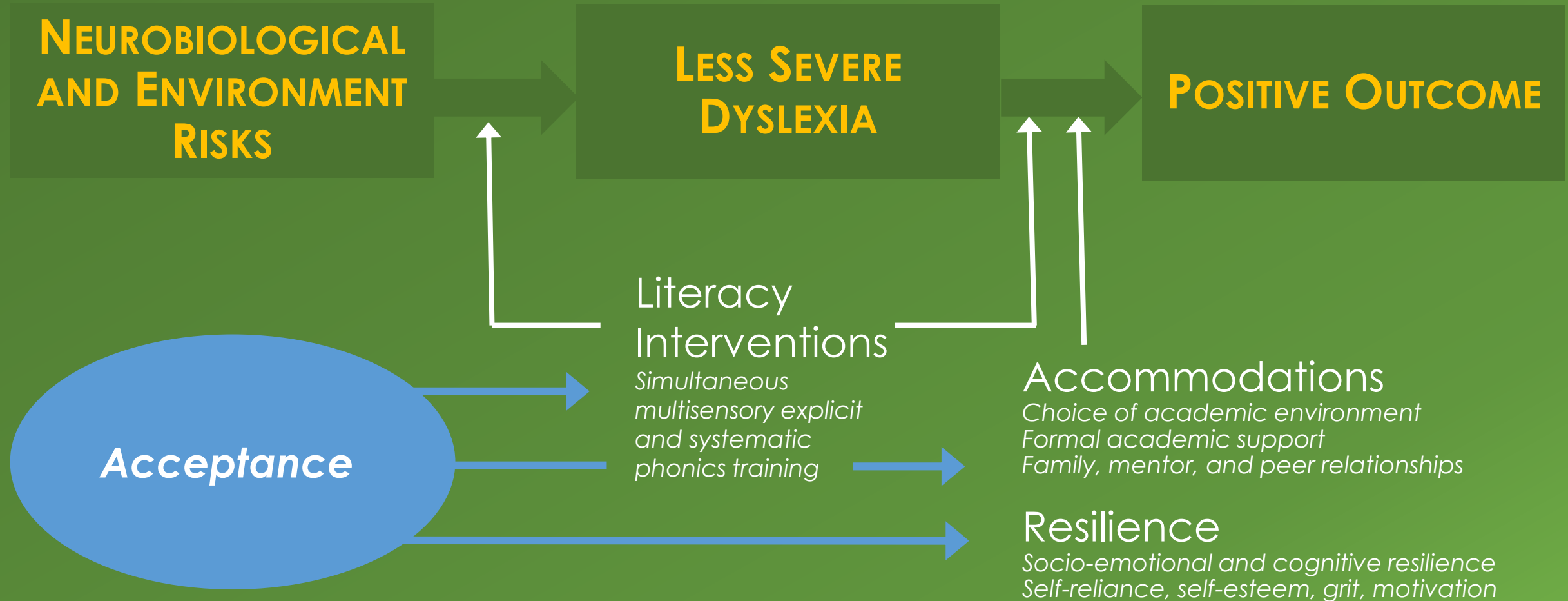
*Organizational skills, punctuality, more complex writing*

*Unique skills of dyslexics offer advantages that emerge and become relevant in their career*

**Parents can play critical role in identifying and encouraging unique strengths**

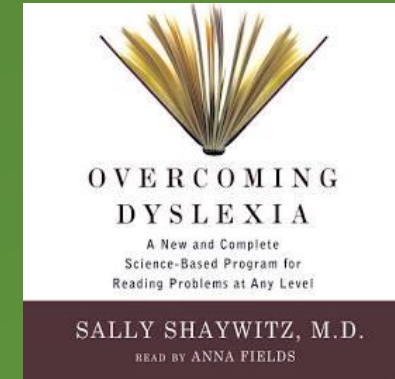
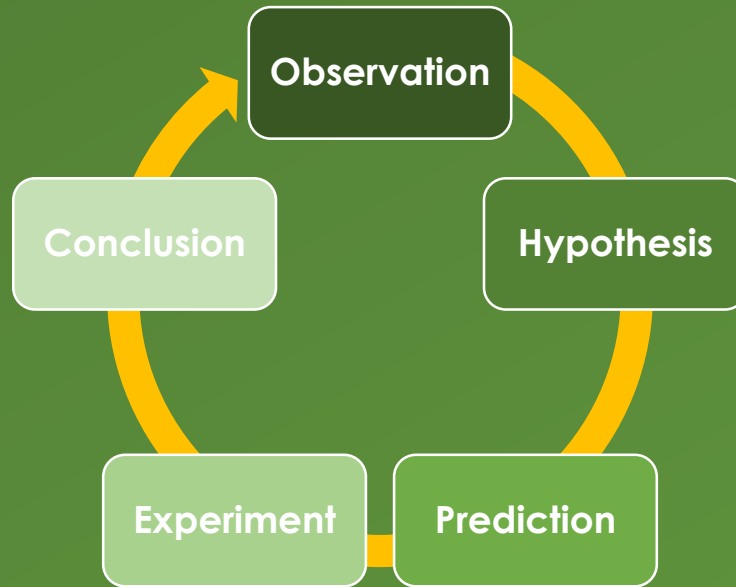
# Dyslexia Support Model

Source: Fumiko Hoeft, MD, Ph.D



# Literacy Intervention

# Research-based Instruction Techniques

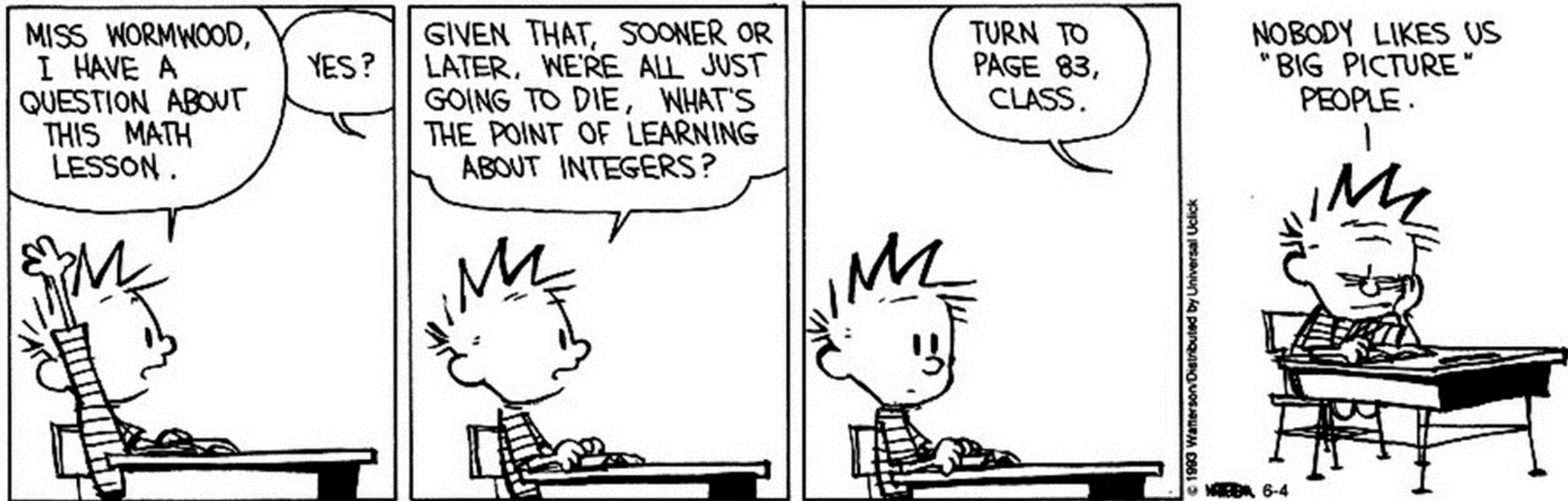


**SCIENTIST (PH.D. OR M.D. IN NEUROLOGY, PSYCHIATRY) OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH A UNIVERSITY**

**RANDOMIZED CLINICAL TRIALS AS THE BASIS FOR TESTING EFFECTIVENESS OF A INTERVENTION**

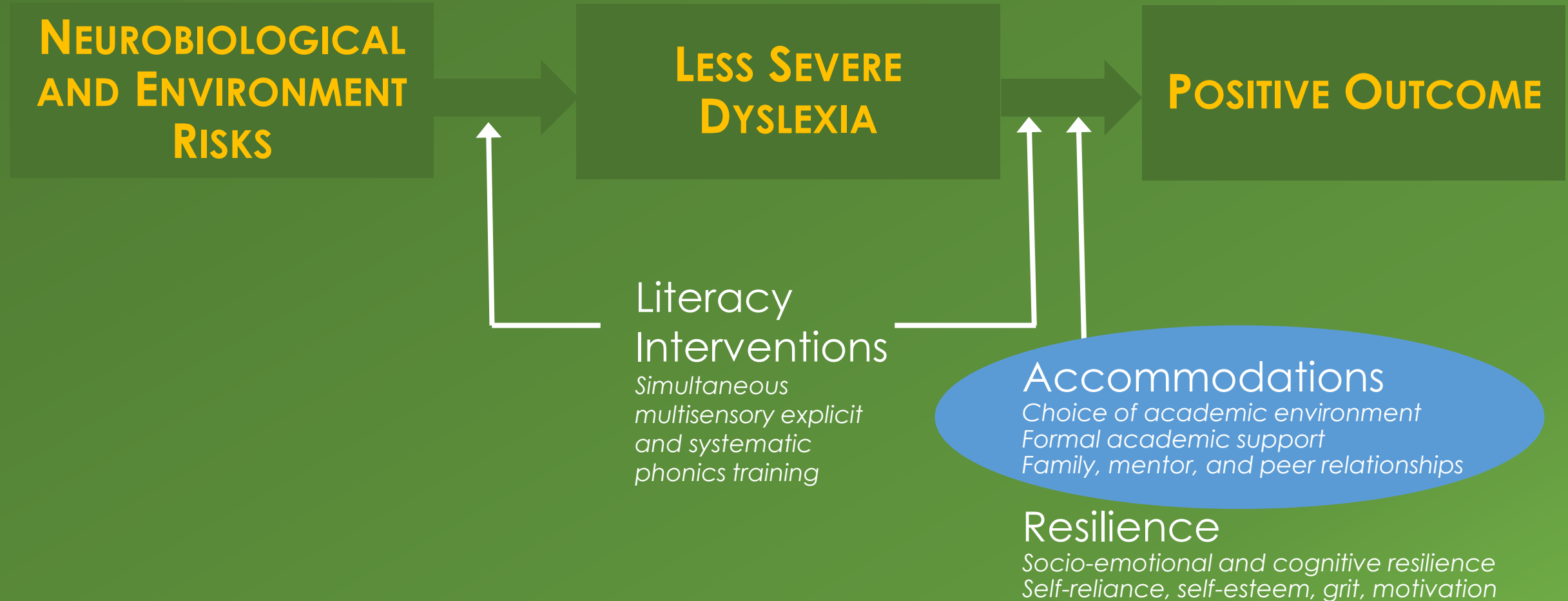
**TRANSLATE SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS INTO TECHNIQUES AND PROGRAMS**

# Accommodations



# Dyslexia Support Model

Source: Fumiko Hoeft, MD, Ph.D



# Formal Accommodations are Available

- 504** Refers to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973  
*Guarantees certain rights* to people with disabilities  
Shorthand for accommodations granted by a school district to a student
- IEP** Individualized Education Program  
Established in 1975 with Public Law 94-142 or EAHCA  
*Provides educational goals, with specialized instruction and classroom accommodations to help achieve them*
- ILP** Individual Learning Plan  
Student specific program that takes into account student's weaknesses  
"ILP" commonly *used in private schools* to refer to IEP- or 504-like document

*Wrightslaw ([www.wrightslaw.com](http://www.wrightslaw.com)) is a source of comprehensive information on special education law*

# However...

## You Will Know More About Dyslexia Than Most Teachers

Parents will know more about dyslexia than the professional teachers

Teachers are often

- generalists in elementary school and

- subject matter experts in secondary school

- rarely experts in dyslexia

But almost all have preconceived idea of dyslexia and support

# Reading Wars : How We Arrived Here

*Phonics versus Whole Word/Language debate has been ongoing for 150 years*

Early 1800s	1890 - 1910	1930 - 50	1970-1990s	2000s
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**Whole Language**

Horace Mann starts the Common School Movement to engage students , read whole words

Classic books written with only one syllable words used to “engage” students

Meaning Based Curriculum promoted reading whole words by sight

Whole Language approach continued to de-emphasize phonics through 1980s and 1990s

McGuffey Readers published in 1836

Rebecca Smith Pollard developed intensive reading program using synthetic phonics

Rudolf Flesch published “Why Johnny Can’t Read” and argued for phonics based approach to teaching reading

The Electric Company popularized phonics-based instruction

1930s: Samuel Orton and Anna Gillingham create program to teach the way letters and sounds correspond

**NIH studies show that reading depends on making connections between sounds and letters**

National Council on Teacher Quality finds most elementary teaching programs have still not adopted phonics best practice

**Phonics**

# Tailoring Your Communications

*Your goal is to support your child...*

*...and not to win arguments with teachers and administrators*

		Teacher Perception of Dyslexia	
<b>Teacher Willingness and Ability to Proactively Accommodate Students</b>	Support children regardless of formal IEP/ILP; proactively partner w/ parents or formally follow the IEP/ILP	Accept dyslexia diagnoses on <i>prima facie</i> basis	Perceive dyslexia as uncommon and over-diagnosed condition
	Maintain traditional approach due to lack of time, resources, other factors	<b>Work with Teacher to Address Resources</b>	<b>Consider Making Changes to Classes, Environment</b>

# Tips for the IEP and 504 Process

IEP/504/ILP is the official record – verbal agreements are easily forgotten

## PREPARATION

Request material/records prior to the meeting

Collect samples of your child's work  
*audio of reading, video of reading or writing,  
writing samples, log of schoolwork incl difficulties/tutoring*

## AT THE MEETING

Bring a spouse or friend (gender balance helps)

Record the meeting (notify administrators ahead of time)

Stay calm and professional

Know your rights

## FOLLOW THROUGH

Keep notes and put communication in writing

Insist on the use of Orton-Gillingham based programs

Wilson, Slingerland, Barton, Lindamood Bell, Project Read, Nessy,  
Sonday, Reading Horizons, Take Flight, Read Well

Source: DyslexiaLand: A Field Guide for  
Parents of Children with Dyslexia by Cheri Rae

# Common Accommodations Examples

## Instruction

Use explicit (direct instruction) methods

Combine verbal and visual instruction

Use mnemonic instruction

Repeat and/or write down directions

Use step by step instructions

Emphasize daily review

Make class notes or outlines available

Check for understanding of instructions

## Exams

Allow extra time (typically 1.5 times)

Quiet space and free from distractions

Read questions

## Allow Privacy

No spelling tests or spelling bees

No reading out loud

No peer editing

# Learning What Works for Your Child

Navigate and change course based on what works

Be a “technician”

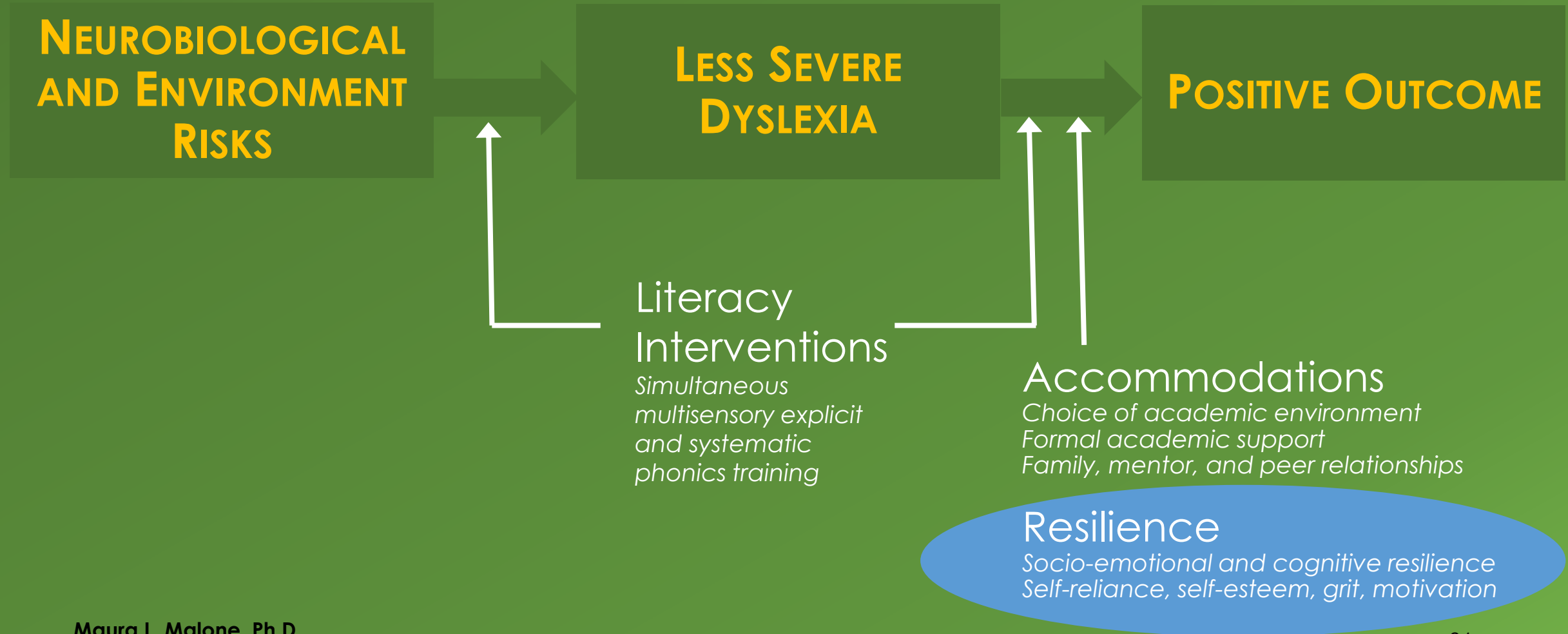
Chose techniques based on the challenge at hand

Draw connections between the task and the “big picture”

# Attitude

# Dyslexia Support Model

Source: Fumiko Hoeft, MD, Ph.D



# Resilience

## Grit

Angela Duckworth

Passion and **perseverance for long-term goals**

Individuals high in grit **maintain determination** and motivation over long periods despite adversity

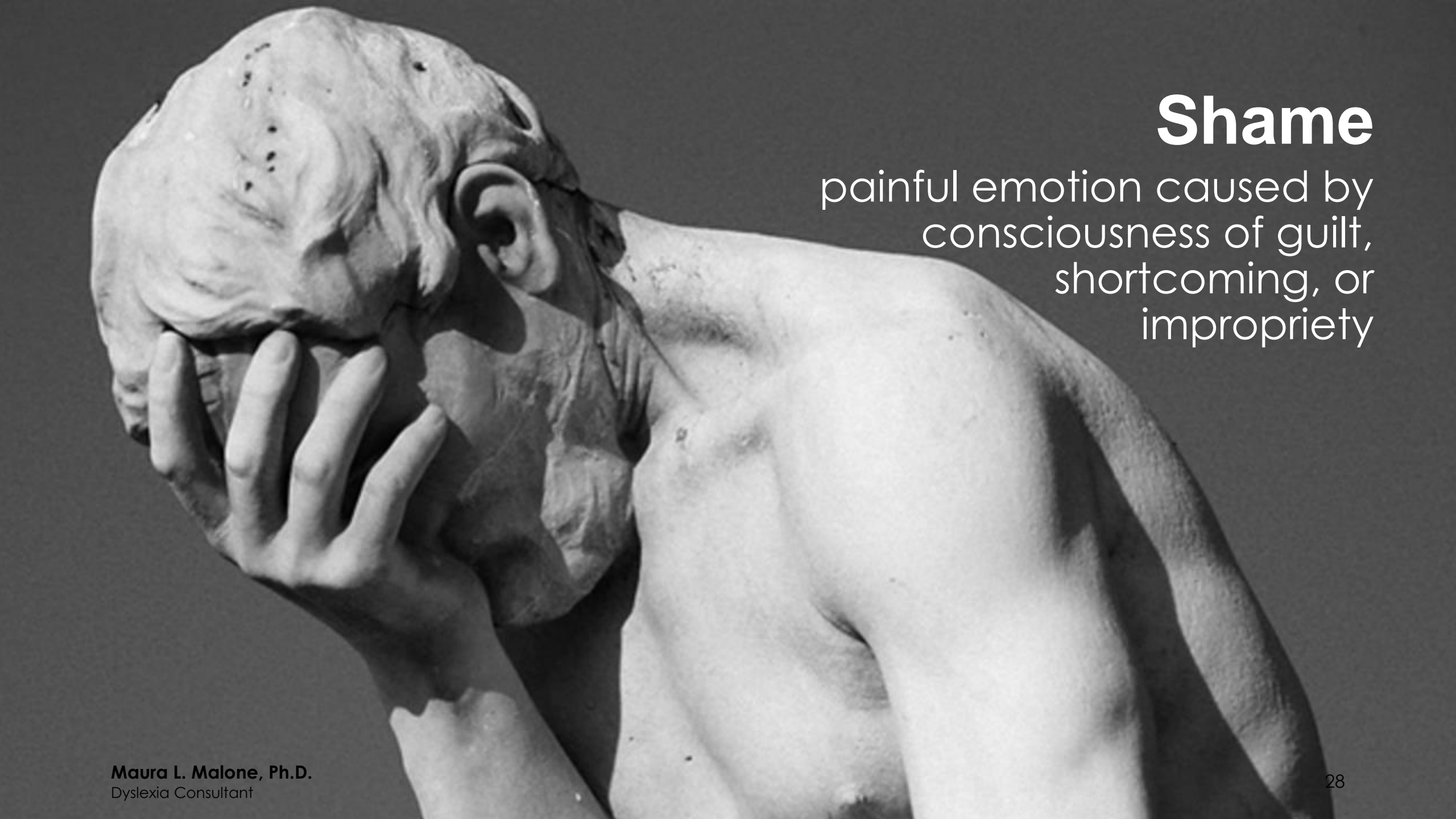
## Growth

## Mindset

Carol Dweck

Belief that talents and **abilities can be developed** through effort, good teaching, and persistence

Individuals with growth mindset more likely to **continue working hard despite setbacks**



# Shame

painful emotion caused by  
consciousness of guilt,  
shortcoming, or  
impropriety

# Shame

Dyslexia can be the perfect storm for shame caused by rejection at a vulnerable age

Lack of context leads to a “script” that the student is stupid and lazy

# Antidote to Shame

**Cohesive narrative** that explains their cognitive style and its challenges and strengths

Post Traumatic **Growth** Syndrome: Make sense of a trauma you have experienced will allow you to be resilient

# Dyslexic Strengths

**M**aterial Reasoning

**I**nterconnected

**N**arrative

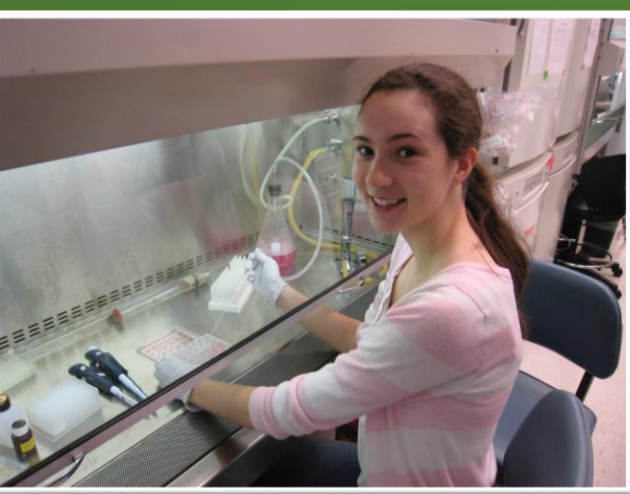
**D**ynamic



*Many dyslexics have one or more of these strengths*

*Dyslexic population tends to have more of these strengths than the general population*

*fMRI testing show strengths derive from connections among multiple parts of the brain; tend to be “late blooming” skills*



*Engineering*

*The Arts*

*Entrepreneurship*

*Architecture*



# Summary

**Accept** your child's dyslexia and **embrace** your child's strengths

Provide all the **academic support** that time and resources allow

Parent is the child's **executive function**:

*provide additional (or even baseline) memory capacity, organize and plan work, check-in with teachers, activate accommodations*

Address any co-morbidity risks like **ADHD and anxiety**

Know and assert **your child's rights**

***“Whatever It Takes”***

# Thank You !

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