

Accessibility MYTHS



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#PrieinamumoMitas

MYTH 1#

**Accessibility
helps **only a
small** group
of people**



That's one of the most common excuses made by creators of inaccessible content. But can 15% of humanity be called a small fraction? People with disabilities are the largest minority in the world, and this number is constantly growing. Currently this "minority" consists of over 1 billion individuals with various disabilities! They all have the right to accessible content!

If we still haven't convinced you, [take a look at the video created for the 2020 Paralympic Games.](#)



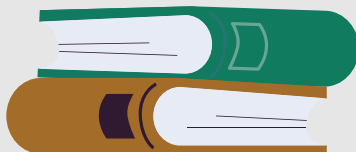
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MYTH 2#

People with disabilities do not use my website



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Without question, beauty and innovation attract attention. Originality, modernity, contemporary design trends, subtle colour combinations, and user engagement with various pop-up windows - are just a few of the main expectations for a newly created website. Isn't it surprising that the word "accessibility" is not on this list? The majority of business representatives would not hesitate to reply that people with disabilities simply do not use their websites. And they are partially correct - people with disabilities don't use them. Not because they don't want to, but because they cannot read the content.

Making content accessible is neither a complicated process, nor an expensive luxury. Let's make sure not to turn our backs on the user!

Everything you need to know about creating accessible content can be found in a publication prepared by the [Lithuanian Disability Organizations Forum](#).

MYTH 3#

People with disabilities are **only interested in disability topics**



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Are you only interested in politics? Only in basketball? Maybe just in business quirks? Most likely, there is a topic that you are more interested in than others, but that certainly does not mean that you ignore all other topics. Seems correct, right? But why doesn't the same logic apply when it comes to people with disabilities? Do people with disabilities really only have an interest in disability-related topics?

Of course not! Just like you, they read the news, want to try out new services, pursue education in various fields, and have an interest in all other possible things – they are curious to see a new play, discover an interesting TV series, or dance in a nightclub. Of course, disability is also within their sphere of interest, but that is not a reason to assume that nothing else interests them.

Don't look for excuses to avoid adapting content for people with disabilities; seek information on how to do it properly. After all, you never know who your real audience is.

MYTH 4#

Making a website accessible is expensive and time-consuming



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A true myth! But here's what you can do completely for free:

- Ask the target audience (people with visual and other disabilities) to evaluate the website's accessibility.
- Add descriptions to images and videos.
- Avoid colored text.
- Write in short, understandable sentences.
- Use a readable font, not a fancy one.
- Maintain an easily readable text size.
- Align the text to the left.
- Use a monochromatic background and maintain contrast.
- Disable pop-up windows.

True, there are things to consider before creating a website or seeking the assistance of graphic designers and IT specialists. However, taking only a few of the steps mentioned above costs nothing and makes it possible to significantly improve accessibility for people with disabilities.

MYTH 5#

Only developers are responsible for website accessibility



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Myth! Ensuring accessibility is a team effort. From the initial ideation stage to the creation and continuous maintenance of the website, many people are involved in the accessibility processes. A developer cannot create a website without knowing what is expected of them, a client cannot give instructions to the developer without understanding accessibility requirements, and both parties cannot ensure everything is done correctly - which is why testers with disabilities are also involved in the process. At a later stage, text and visual content creators, website administrators, and users from the already diverse group join this process.

Quite a few, right? Furthermore, the accessibility of state institution websites is periodically reviewed by the Committee for the Development of the Information Society, and non-governmental organizations also undertake this task!

MYTH 6#

Blind people **don't watch** movies



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Myth! People with visual disabilities watch movies and consume other visual content such as music videos, performances, and photographs. Of course, to provide sufficient information in the absence of visible content, films are supplemented with audio descriptions. Not sure what that means?

Audio description is additional commentary on a film. It conveys visual information through voice and reveals on-screen action when it is not explained by dialogue or clear sounds. During audio description, the on-screen visuals, character appearances, or actions are described in words.

Prefer seeing once rather than hearing a hundred times? Here you go: the film “Beauty” with audio description is available in the LRT media library. Take a look.

Audio-described content can also be found in the virtual library ELVIS!

MYTH 7#

People with intellectual disabilities don't read books



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Myth! They lack accessible content.

These readers are forced to choose children's books, which, of course, bring them joy. But is it enough? Is it a suitable option for their needs? Perhaps, if the reader is young. However, people with persistent intellectual disabilities or those with dementia have extensive life experiences, so reading children's books undermines their dignity. However, there are solutions! Texts prepared in an easily understandable language (Easy to Read) are perfect for people with intellectual disabilities. And not only for them! This method is suitable for seniors, children, non-native speakers, and all of society. Foreign publishers even release separate book series that match the experiences and interests of adults, but are written in an easily understandable language. That's what we should strive for.

Learn more about easy-to-understand language on our website.

MYTH 8#

People with disabilities don't work



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Myth!

They work in radio and television, advocate for our rights in court, program, shape our future in the Parliament, and they are everywhere! With advancing technologies, people with disabilities find various ways to “adapt” work processes and perform them as quickly or even faster than their colleagues without disabilities. They use assistive tools and employ software applications.

Not all disabilities are noticeable and not everyone shares information about their health with their colleagues. This may create a false impression that there are no people with disabilities in the job market, but they exist!

MYTH 9#

The Lithuanian Audiosensory Library is **only** for **the blind**



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Myth! This library community connects much broader audiences:

1. Children or adults with reading disabilities (dyslexia).
2. Individuals with deteriorating vision due to age or illness.
3. People with visual impairments.
4. Children with learning or developmental disabilities.
5. Individuals who, due to physical disabilities or illness, cannot hold a book, turn pages, or sit for long periods.
6. And everyone else, as long as their condition (temporary or permanent) impairs reading regular printed text.

MYTH 10#

**The biggest
barrier to
accessibility is
lack of
money**



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Myth! People with disabilities, like everyone else, can be in different financial situations. Some are wealthy, some earn average or minimal incomes, and a significant share of people live without opportunities to integrate into the job market. They rely on state support for their livelihood. However, personal finances do not determine the accessibility of the environment, services, or information. It all depends on the contribution of public institutions and businesses in adapting their services to the individual needs of all users. And not only services. Often, people with disabilities would be satisfied with a ramp instead of stairs, clear marking of unsafe areas, essential notes presented in high-contrast and sufficiently large font, and staff willing to assist. Even if we make movies, plays, and exhibitions free of charge, visitors with disabilities won't come unless they are accessible. Perhaps it's time to open up to all users?

MYTH 11#

People with disabilities live a **secluded life**



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Myth!

It should be understood that physical, sensory, intellectual, or psychosocial disabilities are not barriers to living a fulfilling life. The barrier for people with disabilities is the society we create, often neglecting accessibility even when it costs nothing, failing to ensure mobility guarantees, and ignoring the needs of this significant community (15 percent of the population has individual needs). But they still live their lives! They have fun, visit cafes and restaurants, shop in malls, engage in sports, sing, and utilize their abilities in various ways. And if you don't come across them in your surroundings, it's not because they don't exist and certainly not because they avoid contact and never leave their homes. It is most likely because your favorite places are not accessible to them.

MYTH 12#

**A person with disabilities will
never refuse
help**



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Myth! How do you feel when you need to ask for help? Many believe that asking for help emphasizes weakness and the inability to cope with given tasks, so they try all the possible ways to do everything independently before seeking help. Do you also experience this, even though you know that asking for help should not be shameful? If you understand all these feelings, why do you still believe that a person with disabilities will never refuse help?

A person with disabilities, just like you, enjoys their independence. And although they encounter situations that they can't manage alone, you don't need to underestimate them, cuddle them, or treat them like small children. Treat them as equals. When they truly need help, they will gladly accept it, and maybe even ask for it themselves.

MYTH 13#

**People with low vision
don't care about
the aesthetics of the
environment**



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Myth! Do you think people with visual impairments don't care about the beauty of their surroundings?

The truth is, when creating and appreciating their home interior, people with visual disabilities place great importance on the paths of movement, safe furniture corners, and tactile elements. They desire to feel tapestries and furniture, assessing their suitability and attractiveness through touch.

Visual difficulties do not mean that a person can live without curtains, indoor plants, or sofa cushions, or that they don't care if their home is cluttered or tidy. On the contrary, a person with low vision particularly values order: they find objects not with their eyes but with their fingers!

So, white walls, uncluttered corners and lack of plants most likely indicate only a person's aesthetic preference for minimalism. Don't be quick to judge.

MYTH 14#

Braille writing and guiding systems are an excellent design element



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Myth! Brightly colored guiding systems look playful against the city background, but their purpose is entirely different. They help visually impaired people navigate their surroundings and move independently. Therefore, guiding systems should not be arranged based on aesthetics or utilized as platforms for flower pots. They must be used according to their intended purpose.

The same applies to Braille writing used in public spaces. Everyone wants to demonstrate their commitment to accessibility. When presenting information in Braille, aesthetics and visibility are not the most important factors. It is crucial to adhere to the Braille standard and consider the material's surface, the Braille dot size, and the spacing between the dots. Braille writing can only be read when the letter fits under the fingertip and when it can be easily located.

[Want to learn more? Here is brief and comprehensive information about Braille writing.](#)

MYTH 15#

Accessibility undermines sustainability



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Do you really think that accessibility and sustainability are incompatible?

Ensuring accessibility inevitably requires additional resources, but the concept of sustainability goes beyond just conserving natural resources. For a service or product to be sustainable, sustainability must be ensured in many aspects:

- The need for an accessible service or product should be evaluated not only for the present but also for the future. Sustainable products last longer than a day.
- People who are the target audience for the service or product should be involved in the accessibility development processes. This saves resources because a universally suitable product is created from the start.

Creating accessible information not only does not harm sustainability but is also a necessary condition for sustainability!

MYTH 16#

The blind can **only** read **Braille**



This myth is easy to bust! Blind people have the choice to read Braille or listen to audiobooks. Braille has a digital version - the BRF format - which can be read using a Braille display (a device that displays the text on a screen using raised dots).

Another option for reading is screen reading software and speech synthesis. However, for screen reading software to work properly, properly prepared digital information with described elements and clear headings is required. This applies to websites as well as PDF, DAISY, EPUB, and other formats or digital documents.

So there are plenty of options; we just need to educate society so that it invests in creating accessible content. And the first lesson is that text in formats like JPG, PNG, or similar image formats is inaccessible to blind people.



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MYTH 17#

Times New Roman is the **best** font



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Unfortunately, that's a myth. Organizations representing people with disabilities recommend avoiding this font as it is inconvenient and difficult to read. Instead, they suggest choosing sans-serif fonts like Arial, Tahoma, Calibri, or similar ones (where letter spacing, symbols, and letter lines are clearly distinguishable and of equal thickness).

"Times New Roman" has become deeply ingrained and widely used in government correspondence. So why should we avoid it?

"Times New Roman" is a serif font, and the lines of the letters are not of equal thickness, causing parts of the letter to "drop" out of the field of vision. Therefore, this font is not suitable for those with poor vision, people who forgot their reading glasses at home, and individuals with dyslexia or cognitive disabilities. Text visibility improves dramatically when using an appropriate font! If you do it right, everyone can read the information!

MYTH 18#

**Text aligned
on both sides
looks best**



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It might be true for a book or on paper, but not in the digital space. Here, text should be aligned only on the left!

What happens when you align text on both sides of your website or in an email? Well, strange large gaps appear between words, which makes reading difficult.

You say that your text looks good on your computer screen. Believe me, it only does so for you. You don't know the needs of the users and the capabilities of the devices that will be used to read the text. They might be browsing your website on a tablet, they might open your email on a smartphone, or even on a smartwatch. Many phones and tablets use larger fonts. Therefore, all the fancy justification on both sides can spread into an unpredictable information chaos that few will want to read.

If you want to appear professional online, align your digital text only to the left!

MYTH 19#

**Blind
people
see
absolutely
nothing**



Most people would say that blind people see nothing or only darkness, but we really want to debunk this myth!

For a blind person, the world is not always dark or black. Only a very small percentage of blind people see absolutely nothing. Some people can describe a gray or brown mist. Others can perceive bright light or changes in lighting, for example, they can tell if there's a window in a room based on the intensity of light or notice if the sun is shining or it's overcast. They can also notice where the TV is turned on in a room.

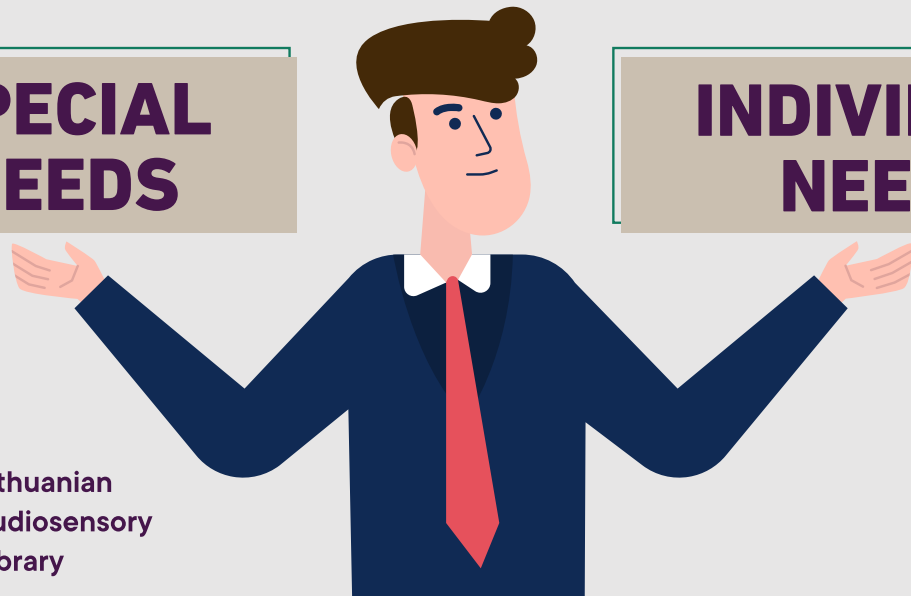
Much depends on the cause of visual impairment. Some eye conditions affect central vision, while others affect peripheral vision. Therefore, the visual image for a person may become darker, very blurry, or their field of vision might narrow.

MYTH 20#

The words we use **don't matter**

**SPECIAL
NEEDS**

**INDIVIDUAL
NEEDS**



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That's a myth! Words evoke emotions, they bring joy but also hurt, so they matter and must be used thoughtfully. Especially in the context of people with disabilities. Can you feel the difference between the words "invalid" and "disabled"? The first one is an unacceptable relic of the Soviet era, and the second one, although more modern, is also incorrect. If you want to be respectful, emphasize personhood and use "person with a disability". When describing a child who requires additional attention, which expression would you choose: "special needs" or "individual needs"? The child needs individual assistance that meets their needs, so it is best to say "a child with individual needs."

Many situations are difficult to navigate. But the most important thing to remember is that a person is defined by their personality, not their disability (when introducing a financial expert, it doesn't matter that they use a wheelchair - what matters is that they excel at their job).

MYTH 21#

You need to **speak loudly** to a blind person



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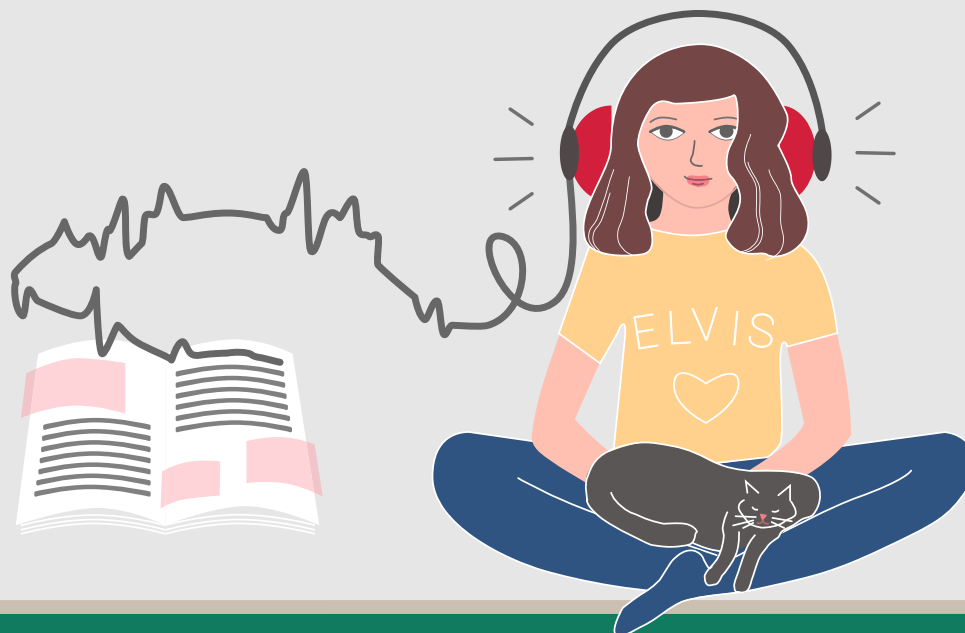
There is a myth in society that you need to speak loudly to a blind person. By the way, the same myth applies to deaf people.

We confidently refute this myth: blind people can hear perfectly well, so there's no need to shout - communicate normally! There are just a few nuances to keep in mind: if you want to address a blind person in a group of people, use their name. People with visual disabilities expect verbal cues during a conversation - even the most pleasant smile or nod of the head will go unnoticed.

People with hearing impairments would often reply "My hearing aid works perfectly" when others start shouting at them. When communicating with a person with hearing impairment, speak naturally, at a normal pace, and maintain eye contact. Don't turn away from the speaker during the conversation.

MYTH 22#

ELVIS is only for people with disabilities



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To become an ELVIS library user, having a disability is not enough - the inability to read is also required. Sometimes disability and the inability to read go hand in hand (for example, serious visual impairments or physical disabilities that prevent holding or flipping a book).

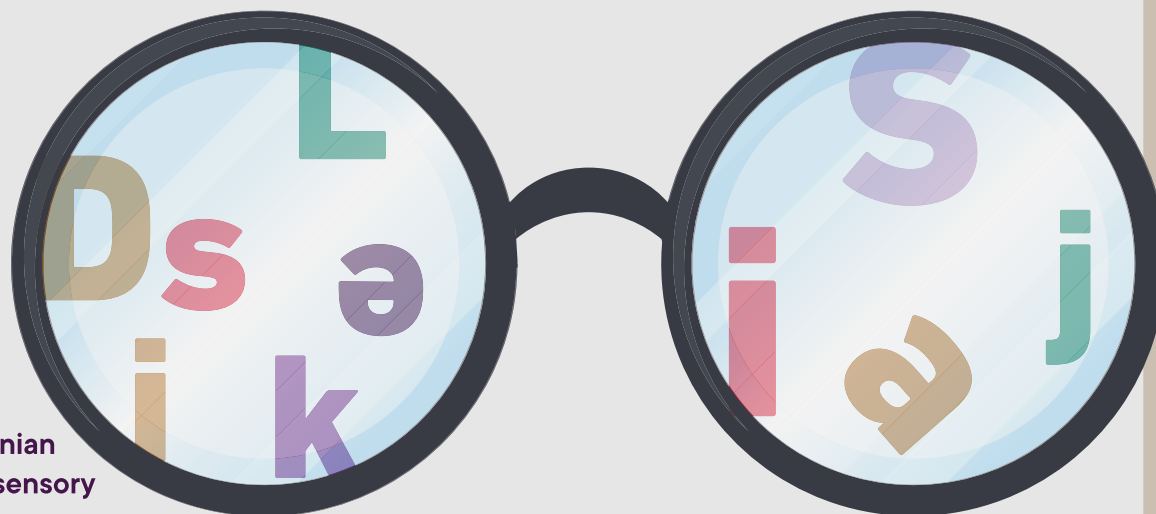
But here's the interesting part. Dyslexia opens up access to ELVIS resources, but dyslexia is not a disability - it's a learning disorder. As vision deteriorates with age, reading becomes difficult, but often it's not classified as a disability - in this case, a doctor's or optometrist's note is sufficient to access ELVIS.

Do you have a disability that affects your mobility but can read a regular book? Then you won't be able to become an ELVIS user.

But don't worry! You can still read books from libraries across the country (some even provide book delivery services), bookstores, or exchange them with friends.

MYTH 23#

Dyslexia is a **visual** impairment



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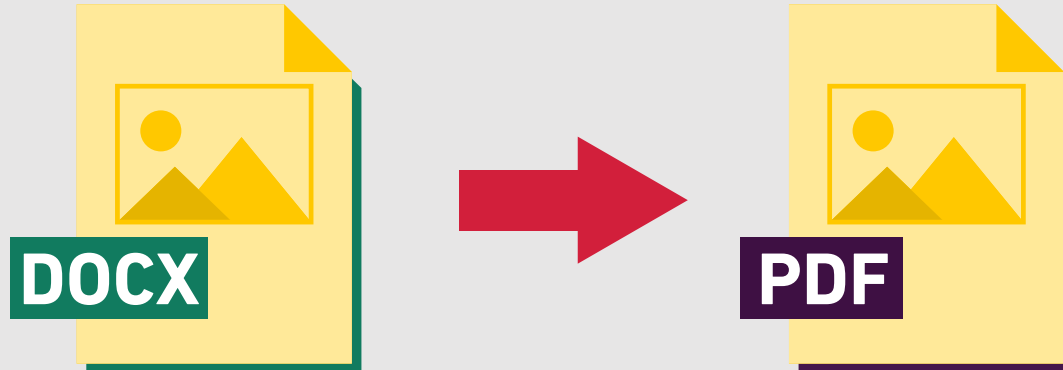
That's a myth! People with dyslexia, like those without it, can have visual problems but visual impairments themselves do not cause dyslexia nor are they part of it.

Dyslexia is a learning disorder that causes difficulties in reading and writing. This disorder arises from a "glitch" in the brain's functional area responsible for recognizing and connecting speech sounds into words. As a result, individuals with dyslexia may mix up letters, have them jump around, move, change places, or even disappear. They can read, although the reading process will never be as smooth, simple, and fast as it is for those without dyslexia. Children with dyslexia require different teaching methods and more time for information processing.

Now it's probably clear that glasses won't solve dyslexia. But you can help: be understanding, don't criticize mistakes in text messages, and encourage individuals. And if they need help with reading, recommend the ELVIS library!

MYTH 24#

Converting to PDF **ensures** accessibility



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That's a myth! Often only “on the surface” it seems that everything is fine with such a document.

How to enhance PDF accessibility?

- Create a clear content structure and active links.
- Assign header attributes and levels to headings.
- Add alternative text to visual content.
- Use high-contrast colors and appropriate fonts.
- Describe links and forms.
- Make sure elements are read in the correct order.

You can check the accessibility of a document by enabling the “Check Accessibility” feature or using other dedicated programs.

MYTH 25#

Text in large font size is already accessible

ACCESSIBILITY



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Very far from the truth. Using a large font size undoubtedly helps improve the accessibility of textual information, but if other important accessibility aspects are not considered, the text won't be easier to read.

Size, contrast, and font are three key factors that determine whether the text is accessible to individuals with specific reading needs.

Here's what you need to know:

- Size - use a font size no smaller than 12-14 pt and ensure that the user can receive information in a format suitable for them.
- Color - maintain contrast between the background and the text, avoid placing essential information on images, photos, or busy backgrounds.
- Font - if you want to be easily understood, there's no place for calligraphy: choose Arial, Verdana, Tahoma, Calibri, or similar fonts.

If you aim for accessibility, follow the guidelines!

MYTH 26#

When communicating with a person with a disability, you need to talk to their companion



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That shouldn't be the case! Although it's easy to understand why it happens: we want to stay within our comfort zone, avoiding eye contact with a visually impaired person or speaking in a way that a deaf person can understand. Is that OK? Definitely not - it's self-centered, impolite, and makes the person with a disability feel uncomfortable.

First, try to establish direct contact with the person with a disability. Only ask for assistance from the companion when it's impossible or difficult to directly communicate with the person due to their disability.

It's unpleasant when people around you only talk to your friends, as if you can't understand what they're saying or as if you don't even exist! There's nothing more hurtful than the feeling of being excluded - let's strive to minimize it as much as possible!

MYTH 27#

It's best for a child with a disability to learn at home



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That's a myth! Of course, in complex conditions, home learning can be justified. Yet, choosing this form of education solely because a child needs more effort to learn to read, write, or simply learn is not advisable. Why?

- All children need to expand their social circle, make friends, and interact.
- This form of education can increase the isolation of children with individual needs.
- Regularly developing children experience diversity by learning together with peers who have disabilities.

Do you think that a child with a disability will slow down the educational process? Most parents fear this, but if a child requires more time and assistance due to their established individual learning needs, a teacher's aide can help them! This maintains the usual pace of learning and ensures that other children receive sufficient attention from the teacher.

MYTH 28#

People with disabilities have superpowers



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We expect autistic individuals to demonstrate phenomenal memory, we believe that a blind masseur's skills are unattainable for sighted individuals, but is that true? Of course not. People with disabilities are increasingly visible in public, but only direct contact dispels myths and unrealistic expectations.

The truth is that the abilities of masseurs, models, programmers, entrepreneurs, and representatives of other fields are glorified and turned into miraculous things solely because of their disabilities or impairments. Of course, disabilities require more effort, willpower, and patience to achieve one's goals, but every person can be a skilled professional in their field. Trust me, disabilities do not grant extraordinary powers!

Your masseur became an excellent specialist through learning and gaining practical experience, not because they are visually impaired!

MYTH 29#

**You need to
talk about
disabilities
gently**



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Do diminutive words really make disabilities gentler? That's a myth! Emphasizing disabilities, especially when it's unnecessary, is not good. Using diminutive forms only exacerbates the situation.

Imagine this: you get injured, and from that moment on, people don't see you as a person, stop appreciating your abilities, and forget that you are excellent in your field... They only notice the broken leg, feel sorry for you, and pity you, calling you a "poor thing" or "disabled", asking, "Is your wheelchair doing okay?"... Would you feel dignified?

Diminutive words not only display patronizing sympathy but also take away your status as an adult, diminish your individual experience and personhood.

People with disabilities hear these "sympathetic" words very often and it hurts them. So let's stop feeling sorry and communicate in a normal way.

MYTH 30#

Children **should never ask people about disabilities**



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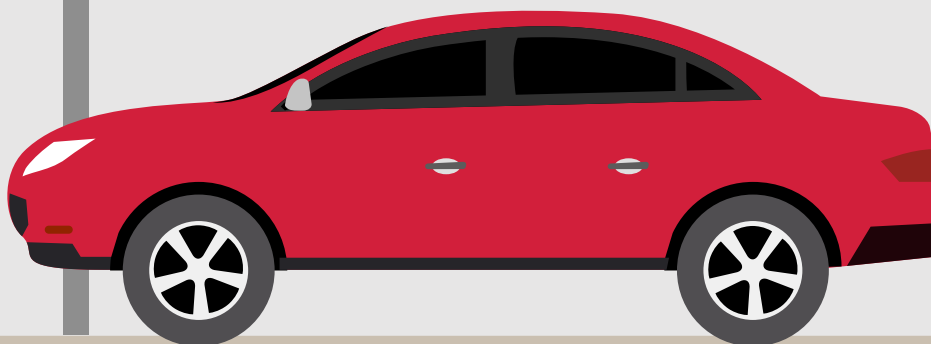
A total myth! Children naturally have unrestricted curiosity. They can (and should!) ask the questions that arise in their minds (“Why don’t you have legs?”, “How can you drink coffee if you can’t see?”). The problem lies in the fact that some adults believe that asking about disabilities, and even worse, asking the person with a disability directly, is shameful or impolite.

However, the truth is quite different. Prohibiting discussion on this topic can form a negative opinion in children regarding disabilities or create the perception that disability is taboo. This can potentially lead to bullying and increased marginalisation-after all, if you cannot ask a peer with a disability important questions, it’s unlikely you’ll be able to communicate with them effectively...

Our worldview is shaped during childhood, so we must respond to children’s questions about disabilities. It’s up to us to take the initiative and educate them about diversity!

MYTH 31#

Anyone can park for a short time in a parking space designated for people with disabilities



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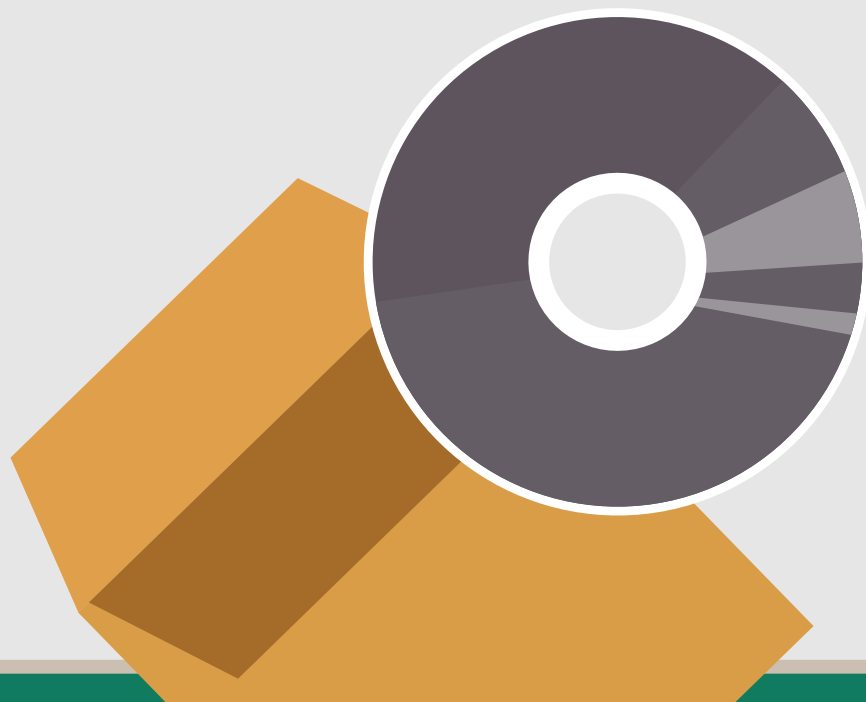
This is a myth and an excuse for inconsiderate drivers. Even if you obtained the right to drive by demonstrating your financial capabilities (by purchasing a vehicle), traffic rules still apply to you! “I was in a hurry”, “I didn’t see the sign”, “I didn’t know”, “I thought that...” - these are excuses often heard from drivers who leave their vehicles in spaces designated for people with disabilities.

You might think, what’s the big deal? After all, you can quickly reach your destination even if you park farther away from the main entrance. However, for people with disabilities, not only the distance but also other obstacles along the way can become insurmountable challenges.

Let’s be understanding and think not only about ourselves but also about others. After all, there are plenty of spaces available for you but only a few are designated for people with disabilities.

MYTH 32#

CDs are the best medium for audiobooks



Myth! This is an outdated medium that audiobook readers still use out of habit (or perhaps out of some fear of new technologies?). Devices that recognize this data medium are no longer being produced, and it's only a matter of time before CDs will disappear.

The world is advancing, and it can offer consumers much more convenient, spacious, and environmentally friendly media. For example, a USB drive—it's small, reusable, and easy to use. Just insert the USB into your smart device, open the desired book, and listen!

The Lithuanian Audiovisual Library takes the issue of reducing waste seriously, so we will encourage readers to gradually abandon discs, teach them to use other media, and reduce the circulation of printed publications. Everything will become even more intuitive and convenient!

MYTH 33#

Autism is a **communication** disorder



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Not true! Such an understanding of autism is very superficial. Autism spectrum disorders are characterized by significant complexity. Up to 80% of autistic individuals have co-occurring conditions, such as:

- Emotional disorders: anxiety and depression - about 44%
- Social anxiety - about 29%
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) - about 28%
- Bipolar disorder - about 28%
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) - about 8%
- Sleep disorders - 53%
- Epilepsy - 10-25%
- Tics - 11-26%

By understanding the complexity of autism, we can find more precise ways to provide support that better meets individual needs.

We thank "Draugiški autizmui" for the idea behind this myth.

MYTH 34#

People with
dyslexia **don't**
like reading



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That's a myth!

Of course, reading traditional books can be challenging - letters jumble and words become difficult to decipher, and by the time the sentences form a paragraph, the magic of the text is lost...

That's why people with dyslexia choose audiobooks. This reading method brings great pleasure, and the reading pace is much faster. The virtual library ELVIS (elvislab.lt) offers audiobooks for both children and adults. If an average library reader reads about 12 books per year, an ELVIS reader can go through even 60!

Dyslexia doesn't take away the desire to read, so don't draw false conclusions - these individuals, like the rest of society, can either enjoy or dislike books, and it's solely their personal choice.

MYTH 35#

**It is more important
for visually impaired
individuals
to touch
than to see**



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This is myth has different variations. Here are a few of them:

- Tactile guiding systems can be the same gray color as the sidewalk - they don't need to be seen, it's important to feel them with the feet;
- The button next to a museum exhibit that triggers an audio recording can be the same color as the wall - it is raised and can be felt by touching;
- Visually impaired individuals can benefit from the information in Braille...

If a person only notices something by touching it - it's **ALREADY TOO LATE!** We need to ensure that seniors or individuals with poor vision notice the entrance to a building or a window before their head touches the glass.

No matter how limited their vision is, a well-adapted environment provides a lot of benefits: direction of movement, safety, and self-confidence. By the way, a person with low vision does not necessarily know Braille.

MYTH 36#

People with disabilities should not have children



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It is often believed that people with disabilities either should not have children or cannot have them. This is not necessarily true. Disability often has no impact on fertility and certainly does not take away a person's right to parenthood. This myth is harmful due to the mistaken belief that "disability gives birth to disability". People with disabilities carefully consider their choices, consult with specialists in the face of risks, and responsibly decide whether to have children or not.

We know of wonderful families where both parents have different disabilities and are raising happy children. Parenthood is not about hearing, seeing, or being able to run. Parenthood is the ability to forge a respectful bond with one's child.

People with disabilities have the right to decide for themselves whether to create a family, give birth to children, or adopt them. Each of us finds our paths to our own (and our family's) happiness.

MYTH 37#

People with dyslexia **cannot** read



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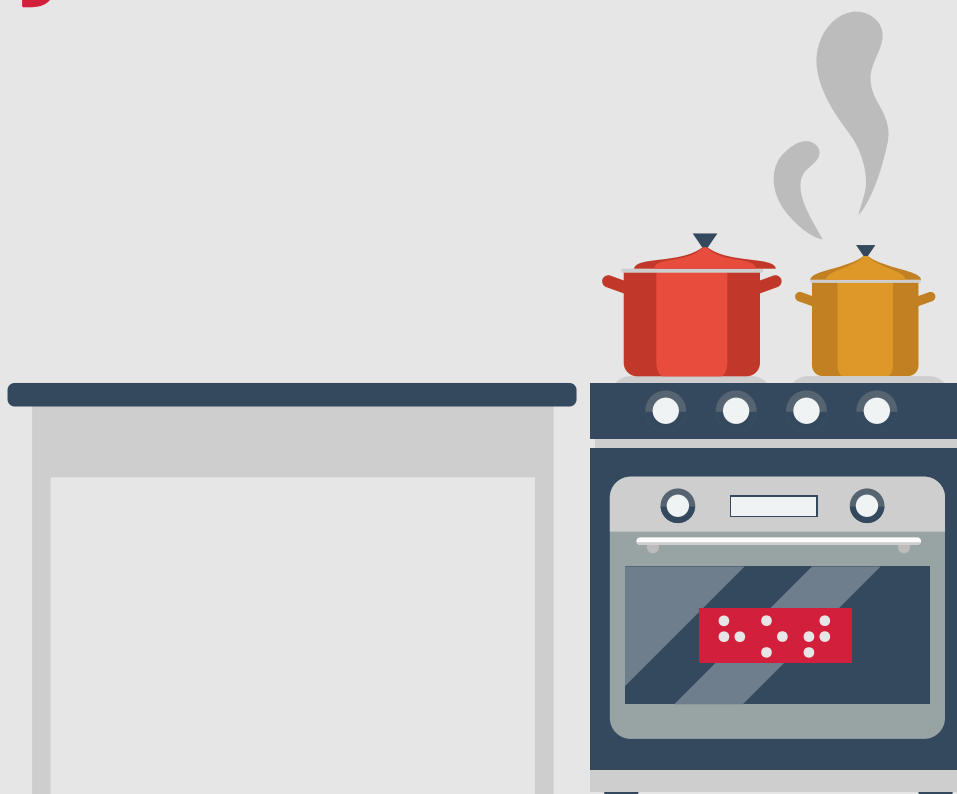
This is a myth! The absolute majority of individuals with dyslexia can read, although the reading process may not be smooth or fast. Children with dyslexia require different teaching and learning methods and more time for information processing. However, with early recognition of this condition, everything can be overcome! Here are some signs of dyslexia:

- Slow reading pace;
- Children replace syllables while reading;
- Guessing, confusing similar letters;
- Make many spelling mistakes, improperly combine letters;
- Difficulty understanding and retelling a text;
- Difficulty understanding concepts of time (before - after);
- Reading and writing skill acquisition lagging at least 2 years behind peers.

A speech therapist can diagnose dyslexia - don't delay, help your child!

MYTH 38#

We need Braille everywhere



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The goal may seem noble, but we hasten to reject it. Public spaces do need to provide accessible information for the blind, but it can be conveyed not only through Braille but also through sound. And if you choose Braille, it must be readable, intuitively located, and not pose a danger. For example, if you write “Caution, hot”, “STOP”, “High voltage”, or similar warnings in Braille, one can only hope that a blind person will not come across such writing and attempt to touch it.

If you have already planned an intuitively located and appropriate material for Braille (for example, in winter, it becomes impossible to read metal Braille with fingers), remember that information presented in Braille should adhere to the Braille standard, ensuring proper size and accessibility.

Take a moment and learn when to say “yes” to Braille and when it is not necessary.

MYTH 39#

**It is impossible
to hide
autism**



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This is a myth! Up to 94% of autistic individuals mask their condition at some point in their lives. Although they may succeed in doing so, creating an inauthentic self requires a great deal of effort, causing physical and emotional exhaustion, and, worst of all, negative consequences for their personal identity. Regaining lost energy requires spending more time alone. It can trigger depression or even self-harm.

It is incredibly important to talk positively about disabilities, regardless of what they may be, from a young age, with everyone! Teach acceptance of oneself, acceptance of others, and acceptance of different opinions.

Let's strive to embrace neurodiversity, stop labeling people, and stop searching for characteristics of a presumed "norm" or "abnormality" in others. Only in an accepting environment masks are shed, and authentic identities can flourish!

We thank "[Draugiški autizmui](#)" for the myth and fact!

MYTH 40#

People with visual impairments **don't use computers**



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On the contrary, the internet and technology have provided greater independence for individuals with visual impairments. Computers used by people with visual disabilities have integrated screen reading software that converts on-screen text into audio. So don't be surprised if you see a visually impaired person using a computer without a monitor. They simply don't need it.

However, not everything is as good as one might imagine. Uniqueness, modernity, contemporary design trends, subtle color contrasts, and user engagement through various pop-ups are not what a blind or visually impaired user expects or experiences.

We need accessibility! And you can create it by using the publication prepared by the Lithuanian Disability Organizations Forum.

MYTH 41#

**All disabilities
are visible**



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Not true. In Australia alone, millions of people have a disability or a similar condition, and up to 90% of them have what is known as an “invisible” disability.

Curious about these invisible disabilities?

This term includes multiple sclerosis, autism spectrum disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), brain injuries, mental illnesses, epilepsy, learning disabilities, dyslexia, chronic pain, visual impairments, and many other conditions. These conditions are difficult to notice, and sometimes, even impossible. Even when you become closer to people with these disabilities or conditions, you may not necessarily notice them immediately or at all.

So if something unusual or unexpected happens during communication that surprises you, don't rush to judge, dismiss, or underestimate. Sometimes the best solution is to ask openly and show genuine interest.

MYTH 42#

Accessible toilets are only **for** **wheelchair** **users**



Not true. There are many reasons why a person who does not use a wheelchair may need to use an accessible toilet!

Perhaps the person has a colostomy bag (a disposable bag that collects intestinal waste), so they need more space and running water. Maybe they have difficulties with disabilities or vestibular system disorders, making it challenging to maintain balance, or perhaps they have weak legs and prefer to hold onto grab bars.

There can be a multitude of disabilities or temporary conditions that make it difficult or impossible to use a regular toilet, so let's leave these intimate spaces for those who need them!



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MYTH 43#

People with autism **don't feel love**



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Audiosensory
Library

Believe it or not, one of the most frequently asked questions about autism on Google is, "Can a person with autism spectrum disorder feel love?"

And, of course, they can! People on the spectrum experience all emotions, including love. Sometimes this feeling can even be more intense and evident than what we are accustomed to. This myth likely arose because some individuals with autism find it difficult to express love and warm feelings in conventional ways—they struggle to share what they feel. It's a great opportunity for all of us to learn to accept love in its various forms!

MYTH 44#

**All individuals
with autism are
like “Rain Man”**



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Library

Hollywood loves good stories, but not all of them reflect reality! While the character of “Rain Man” was inspired by the real-life story of Kim Peek, his autism spectrum disorder was fictionalized. Furthermore, the movie perpetuated another myth that all individuals with autism have exceptional talents.

People with “savant syndrome” are particularly gifted in music, art, mathematics, cartography, and creating three-dimensional models. They can instantly operate with three-digit numbers or calculate what day of the week May 5th, 3017, will be within a second. While savant syndrome is indeed associated with individuals on the autism spectrum, it is extremely rare. Only 10% of people on the spectrum have some level of savant abilities.

The moral of the story? Enjoy the Hollywood film, but fact-check the information!

MYTH 45#

People with disabilities are **unreliable** employees



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Library

Ironically, it is not the cost of workplace adjustments or doubts about abilities and competencies that are the primary reasons why people with disabilities struggle to find employment. Would you believe that employers worry that a person with a disability simply won't show up for work?

In reality, it has been proven that people with disabilities are 40% less likely to take vacations or have sick leave! Moreover, employees with disabilities often work longer hours in companies than other employees.

Considering these facts and despite the deeply ingrained stigmas in society, an employee with a disability can be beneficial not only as a specialist but also in reducing employee turnover and... saving money. After all, investments in skill development pay off only when employees work for a long time!

MYTH 46#

When talking to a person using a wheelchair, you need to crouch down



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Audiosensory
Library

Absolutely not! While it is more comfortable to communicate when both speakers are at eye level, such unnecessary actions can offend your conversation partner.

To have a comfortable conversation, try taking a step back or sitting on a chair, and maintaining eye contact at a comfortable level for both of you. In exceptional cases, such as in a particularly noisy or crowded environment where there may be a lack of chairs, kneeling might be an option. Kneeling is not considered offensive but it should not be done without a valid reason.

MYTH 47#

Books in public libraries are meant for everyone



Then why, when you enter the virtual library ELVIS, are you required to provide documents proving that you cannot read conventionally? After all, you are a citizen of Lithuania and dutifully pay taxes!

ELVIS is managed by the Lithuanian Audio-Sensory Library (LAB), which also provides audio books. LAB strictly adheres to the Copyright and Neighboring Rights Act. The act states that when creating an audio version of a book, LAB does not have to seek the author's or publisher's consent but must ensure that the audio copy is accessible **ONLY** to those who cannot read in a conventional way (and who cannot find a suitable book in bookstores or their grandparents' collection).

Can you read regular books? Congratulations! You have access to 1,200 libraries and numerous bookstores, offering a much wider selection than ELVIS can provide.

Let's respect the law and those who cannot read regular print.

MYTH 48#

People with cerebral palsy **cannot communicate**



That's a myth! Cerebral palsy is a brain injury that affects muscles, impeding movement and posture. However, it is often mistakenly believed that cerebral palsy also causes communication problems or intellectual disabilities. In reality, only about 50% of people with cerebral palsy have some form of intellectual disability, ranging from mild to severe. But even then, it does not imply inability to communicate.

Of course, if cerebral palsy affects the muscles around the mouth and tongue, speaking may be difficult or even impossible. However, there are many other ways to communicate, such as sign language, communication boards, and assistive technologies. Speech therapists can also help children and their families.

Let's not underestimate people due to differences in appearance, involuntary movements, or speech impairments! Communication is always possible; it's important to find suitable forms.

MYTH 49#

Guide dogs are **only**
needed by
people with
visual
impairments



That's a myth! The range of disabilities or conditions that properly trained guide dogs can assist in is much broader.

Guide dogs (or assistance dogs) can assist not only the blind or visually impaired but also individuals with physical or mental disabilities, hearing impairments, diabetes, chronic depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder. Assistance dogs are also very helpful to people experiencing mobility difficulties.

While these four-legged helpers are incredibly beneficial, their training takes several years and costs a significant amount of money. In Lithuania, such dogs are still rare, and only a few enthusiasts are involved in their training. There are also voices suggesting that such dog employment violates animal rights.

But it's worth considering the pros and the cons and to start taking appropriate action.

MYTH 50#

Dyslexia is a medical **diagnosis**



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That's a myth! Dyslexia is not described as a medical problem or simply put, an illness. Doctors typically do not diagnose dyslexia because they are not trained to evaluate verbal language, reading, writing, or spelling abilities. Pediatricians, who have additional knowledge in cognitive and learning areas, and some with a clinical and neurobiological understanding of dyslexia, can diagnose it. There are no pills or medications that can cure dyslexia. This condition, caused by a different construction of the sound-letter linkage, persists throughout life. The difficulties caused by dyslexia can be alleviated by teaching alternative learning methods or choosing different channels of receiving information (e.g., listening to audiobooks or watching documentaries).

By the way, the term "dyslexia" is not yet officially recognized in Lithuania! This diagnosis is officially referred to as a reading and/or writing disorder.