

CHANGE IN COGNITION QUESTIONS

Suggestions for Exploring Possible Reasons for Cognitive Changes in Mental Illness

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These are some of the questions to ask to help identify possible causes of confusion or similar cognitive changes that are treatable. Once all emotional, medication related, and treatable physical causes of this person's cognitive changes are eliminated as possible causes, then additional questions focus on possible changes in the mental illness or possible onset of a brain disorder such as an injury, stroke, or dementia. **See Handout #17 "Three Questions About Cause" for additional questions and potential causes or factors.**

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT COGNITIVE CHANGES:

1. What are the **changes in cognition** you have seen? Describe each one.
2. What are the **changes in behavior** you have seen? Describe each one.
3. **When did you first see these changes** in cognition and behavior? Note the timing of the beginning of each change and the order in which the changes occurred.
4. Is there a **diagnosis of mental illness**? What is the diagnosis?
5. **How long has this person had this mental illness**?
6. Have there been any **changes in the symptoms of mental illness**? When did these changes begin?
7. Have there been changes in this person's physical **health** or level of physical **pain**?
8. Which of ALL of these changes are getting **progressively worse**?
9. Have there been any **other changes in this person's life**?
10. What **medications** is this person taking and which medications were they taking as each change began? List them. Include all medications (including psychoactive, pain, for medical conditions, etc). How long has this person been taking these medications? Were there any changes in medication or in medication dosages or the time of day the medications were taken? When did each of the changes in medication begin?
11. Have there been any changes in this person's **diet**?
12. Has this person been using any **other drugs** (including alcohol)? Were there any changes in the drug usage at the time of any of the other changes you've identified?
13. **How old is this person**?
14. Chart all of the changes on a **timeline** and see where they tend to coincide.
15. What **diagnostic and evaluation tests** have been conducted?
16. What is the **current diagnosis or explanation for these changes** in cognition, behavior, or symptoms?