

COMPLETE INSTRUCTIONS AND INTRODUCTION FOR THE CAIS QUESTIONS TO ASK AND CAIS INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

This is a set of complete detailed instructions for the *Cognitive Abilities and Intervention Strategies (CAIS) Questions to Ask and CAIS Intervention Strategies*. It begins with an introduction to the CAIS.

On Website

The **entire CAIS** (in an **interactive format** and as pdf files), including all the Questions to Ask and the Intervention Strategies in all four parts of the CAIS, along with instructions and introductions (including brief instructions and introductions for each part, and these complete instructions and introduction for the entire CAIS), and all the resources listed at the end of these instructions are available on the Michigan **Improving MI Practices (IMP) website** at this link: <https://www.improvingmipractices.org>

Topics (and headings) in this Complete Instructions and Introduction for the CAIS:

- I. Introduction
- II. Instructions
- III. Steps to Take: Outline for Using the CAIS
- IV. For More Information

I. INTRODUCTION

Topics (and subheadings) in this CAIS Introduction:

- A. The Cognitive Abilities and Intervention Strategies (CAIS) Questions to Ask and Intervention Strategies
- B. For More Information: CAIS Structure, Instructions, and Examples in the CAIS Manual
- C. Goal of the CAIS
- D. Unique Aspects of the CAIS
- E. Cognitive Abilities
- F. In a Person's Own Setting
- G. Environment, Communication, Task
- H. Anyone Can Use, With Any Person, In Any Setting, At Any Time
- I. Individualized
- J. Use, Add, Adapt the CAIS
- K. Address the Causes of Distress
- L. We all have Cognitive Strengths, Needs, and Coping Strategies

A. The Cognitive Abilities and Intervention Strategies (CAIS) Questions to Ask and Intervention Strategies

The CAIS (that is, the *Cognitive Abilities and Intervention Strategies (CAIS) Questions to Ask and the CAIS Intervention Strategies*) is a **guide** to help you **understand** a person and their cognitive abilities and to help you **support** this person by supporting their **cognitive abilities**. The CAIS examines four factors to identify a person’s unique pattern of cognitive abilities that are easier for this person and those that are more difficult, and how these cognitive abilities can be supported. It suggests ways to **adapt** a person’s environment, their tasks and daily routines, and your communication with this person to nurture, adapt to, or compensate for this particular person’s cognitive **needs**, and to use, build on, or rely on this person’s cognitive **strengths**.

(In these complete instructions and introduction “**Questions**” and “**Interventions**” or “**CAIS**” will frequently be used to refer to these two titles: “*Cognitive Abilities and Intervention Strategies (CAIS) Questions to Ask*” and “*Cognitive Abilities and Intervention Strategies (CAIS) Intervention Strategies*”.)

FOUR PARTS TO THE CAIS QUESTIONS TO ASK AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES:

1. Cognitive Abilities
2. Environment
3. Communication
4. Task and Daily Routines

There are **four parts** to the CAIS. These four parts reflect the **four factors** that are considered to generate ideas of intervention (or support) strategies. As indicated above, they address a person’s cognitive abilities, this person’s environment, their tasks and daily routines, and your communication with this person.

Each part has a set of **questions to ask yourself** and suggested **intervention strategies** to address the **cognitive abilities** of a **particular person** whom you observed while answering the questions.

B. For More Information: CAIS Structure, Instructions, and Examples in the CAIS Manual

The **structure** of the **CAIS** is **outlined** in detail in the introduction to this Volume II of the CAIS manual.

The **specific steps** for using the CAIS are **outlined** and described **in detail** at the end of this “Complete Instructions and Introduction for the CAIS”. There is also a summary list of the steps elaborated in the outline, as well as a **brief list** of the steps as a quick review.

Chapters 2 through 5 in Volume I give a **conceptual framework** and **tips** regarding the CAIS and the four factors. They also give **examples** from each part of the *CAIS Questions to Ask and Intervention Strategies* to illustrate how the questions and interventions are structured. Chapter 2

addresses and gives examples from the **Cognitive Abilities** CAIS, Chapter **3** the **Environment**, Chapter **4** **Communication**, and Chapter **5** the **Task and Daily Routines**.

For **instructions** regarding the CAIS see:

1. The “Brief Instructions and Introduction” **before each part** of the CAIS in Volume II. These are **brief** instructions that pertain to each part of the CAIS.
2. **Page 1** of the Questions to Ask in each part of the CAIS in Volume II. These instructions are brief but more **specific**.
3. This “Complete Instructions and Introduction for the CAIS Questions to Ask and CAIS Intervention Strategies” in Volume II. These are **detailed** and **in-depth** to provide more **complete** information regarding all four parts of the CAIS.
4. “Description of the CAIS” at the **end of** each of **Chapters 2-5** in Volume I. It is referred to as the “CAIS REVIEW”. Each description pertains to the part of the CAIS discussed in that chapter (Cognitive Abilities in Chapter 2, Environment in Chapter 3, Communication in Chapter 4, Task and Daily Routines in Chapter 5). This description in each chapter also briefly summarizes this “Complete Instructions and Introduction for the CAIS”.

More resources and **information** about the CAIS are listed at the end of this “Complete Instructions and Introduction for the CAIS Questions to Ask and CAIS Intervention Strategies”.

C. Goal of the CAIS

The goal of the CAIS Questions and Interventions is to **generate ideas** of support or **intervention** strategies that **address cognitive abilities** (that is, a **person’s cognitive needs** and cognitive **strengths**).

It is to help you understand and support a particular person’s specific cognitive strengths and needs, even as those cognitive strengths and needs change over time, so that you can help this person feel genuinely **comfortable** and **competent**. It is to help this person and you **think**, **communicate**, **perform tasks**, and interact with this person’s **surroundings** more easily, and to **avoid** stress, frustration, distress, and **distressing situations**. An important part of this goal is to nurture this person’s quality of life and to help you and this person **enjoy your time together**.

D. Unique Aspects of the CAIS

Some of the ways the **CAIS** Questions and Interventions are different from many other intervention or support strategies and approaches are they:

1. **Identify** and directly **address specific cognitive abilities** of a **particular person**.
2. Are based on **brain functioning**.
3. Can be used **by anyone**, regardless of their training or relationship to a person. They are accessible. You do not need to know about the brain.
4. Can be used **for any person**, in **any setting**, at **any time**. This person can have a severe or mild brain disorder, or no brain disorder. They can be healthy or not, and at any level of independence or dependence.
5. Are **specific**, **practical**, **concrete**, **simple** and can be used in **everyday situations**.
6. **Can be adapted**; they are not rigid.

7. Are intended to make **comfort, enthusiasm, tasks, and interaction** with the environment and other people **easier**.
8. **Reduce** dependence on a **trial and error** method of selecting interventions because they identify and address the **causes** of a person's difficulties with interactions or tasks and the causes of distress and distressing situations.
9. Are **individualized** to a person, time, and setting, as well as changes over time.
10. **Modify** conditions (the **environment, communication, the task**) rather than primarily a person or a person's behavior.
11. Are derived from your responses to a list of **questions you ask yourself** about a person's cognitive abilities, their environment, your communication, and the task.
12. Help you identify and address a particular person's **cognitive strengths and needs** regarding specific cognitive abilities and **five phases of cognitive processing**.
13. Can be used **on the spot**, as well as for longer-term **planning** purposes.
14. Generate **ideas** of intervention or support strategies that arise from your **observation** during an interaction or task, usually an **everyday task** in this person's own setting.

The CAIS **interventions** are intended to improve quality of life for both this person and you who relate to them, by **helping you both**:

- Feel comfortable.
- Feel more enthusiastic and energetic.
- Perform tasks more easily and with less stress and effort.
- Have more confidence and a sense of competence.
- Avoid distress and frustration.
- Have easier, happier, and more rewarding interactions with each other and other people.
- Understand and interact more easily with the environment.
- Help this person need less assistance, so that a move to another setting is delayed or unnecessary.
- Prevent distressing situations.
- Enjoy your time together.

The CAIS **questions** are intended to generate specific intervention suggestions by **identifying**:

- What makes a **task** easier or harder for a particular person.
- What makes the **environment** easier or harder for this person to understand and respond to.
- What makes **interactions** with other people easier or harder for this person.
- What hinders or helps this person.
- What increases this person's feelings of **comfort** or **distress**.
- What causes this person to act in a way that is relaxing or distressing to themselves or others. What causes someone else's actions to be distressing to this person.
- This person's **unique** pattern of **specific cognitive abilities** (that is, their cognitive strengths and needs) (with the *CAIS Cognitive Abilities Questions to Ask*).
- How well the **environment supports** this person's cognitive abilities (with the *CAIS Environment Questions to Ask*).

- How well your **interactions** with this person **support** this person's cognitive abilities (with the *CAIS Communication Questions to Ask*).
- How well the structure and timing of the **task** and **daily routines support** this person's cognitive abilities (with the *CAIS Task and Daily Routines Questions to Ask*).

E. Cognitive Abilities

Each person has a unique pattern of cognitive strengths and needs. This is because each of us is unique with respect to which parts of our brain work well and which parts don't work as well.

The **Questions** identify which of a particular person's **cognitive abilities** are strong and which need additional support. They note the specific cognitive abilities that are likely making tasks and interactions with the environment and other people **easier** for this person, and those likely making them more **difficult** and causing distress.

The Interventions **address this person's specific cognitive needs** and **strengths identified** by responses to the **questions**.

The interventions are likely to be effective because they **use, build, and rely on** this person's specific cognitive **strengths**, and **help, support, nurture, adapt to, or compensate** for this person's specific cognitive **needs**.

For example, in a situation where a task **requires** this person to use a **cognitive ability** that is **weaker** for them or harder to use, this person may not be able to do the task. Or they may become confused, fatigued, irritated, or overwhelmed. The interventions suggest ways to support the weaker cognitive ability or to perhaps compensate for it. They may suggest that you **modify** or **perform** for this person certain **parts** of a task that rely too heavily on this person's weaker cognitive ability. By modifying part of a task you are supporting the cognitive ability, and by performing part of the task for this person you are compensating for the cognitive ability.

This example of addressing cognitive abilities applies not only to a task, but to your **communication** and the **environment**, as well.

By addressing cognitive abilities, these intervention strategies can improve this person's ability to do tasks, to interact with other people and their environment, and to feel comfortable. This in turn reduces distress, distressing situations, and behavior that creates distress.

The CAIS can **help avoid a trial and error** method of intervention by suggesting specific interventions. These suggested interventions encourage this person's use of their cognitive strengths, and address the changes in or the insufficient support of this person's specific cognitive needs. In that way, they **address the causes** of the **difficulties** and **distress** rather than addressing primarily this person's behavior or emotions.

The interventions address **mismatch** between a person's cognitive abilities and their environment, task structure or timing, and your communication with them. They help ensure the situation or conditions (the environment, tasks, communication) around this person avoid underestimating or overestimating a person's specific cognitive abilities. When cognitive abilities are **overestimated**

there is too much dependence on weaker cognitive abilities and frustration, fatigue, irritation, distress, and withdrawal can occur. When they are **underestimated** there is too little reliance on this person's cognitive strengths and boredom, embarrassment, disinterest, irritation, anger, and withdrawal can occur.

Since most of our thinking is not conscious, that is, most of the time we are **not conscious** of our **cognitive abilities** or what our cognitive strengths and needs are, we each know very little about our own cognitive abilities.

So, these CAIS questions are to **ask yourself** and glean the answers from your **observation** of this person. They are NOT to ask the person you are observing and whose cognitive abilities you are trying to understand.

F. In a Person's Own Setting

You are also observing a person doing tasks that this person is doing in their **own setting**. These are not contrived tasks you are asking a person to do in order to see how well they perform the task in some standardized way. Doing their own tasks in their own setting can increase the chances that this person will not be distracted and confused by an unfamiliar setting or structure of a task, and will feel more relaxed, so you can more clearly see specifically what they can do easily and what they have more difficulty doing.

When a person is not distracted or fatigued by unfamiliar settings and instructions, they can more easily **focus** on the task itself. Also, when this person is more **relaxed** and **less anxious**, their **brain** can usually **think more easily**, that is, their cognitive abilities are usually easier for them. So, this person can more easily do **tasks** and **interact** with their environment and other people. This means interventions will be more effective when they help this person focus and feel relaxed.

G. Environment, Communication, Task

In addition to identifying cognitive strengths and needs, the **Questions** consider which aspects of the **environment, task, and communication** with others make interactions or a task easy or hard for this person with regard to this person's cognitive abilities.

For **each question** in the CAIS, there is a **list of** ideas of **interventions** regarding that question.

These interventions suggest ways to address this person's cognitive abilities by **modifying the environment, communication, and the task** and daily routines to help this person understand and interact with their environment and other people more easily, think, feel competent and comfortable, and improve their ability to do a task.

The interventions can make it easier for you to know when and how to best assist this person.

H. Anyone Can Use, With Any Person, In Any Setting, At Any Time

The CAIS is intended to be **accessible**. It can be used by anyone and with any person at any time in any setting. Various aspects of the CAIS ensure this.

Anyone can use the CAIS Questions to Ask and the *CAIS Intervention Strategies*. You may be for example, a friend, family member, healthcare provider, mental health professional, direct

caregiver or care partner, lawyer, bank teller, or employee in a fast food restaurant. You may be someone who has **just met** this person and has a very **specific task** to do with this person, someone who **relates regularly** with this person at specified times, or someone who is with this person **24 hours** a day.

If you are busy, it might be reassuring to know it **does not take more time** to use these questions and interventions during an interaction or task, especially after you have become accustomed to them. It just takes being **alert** and **watching** and **listening** to this person while you are observing or assisting them. In fact, asking these questions and interventions can **decrease** the amount of time required to complete a task or interaction and increase the amount of time you can engage in enjoyable activities together.

Everyone using the CAIS will bring their own type of **expertise, experience, and familiarity** with a person to the Questions and Interventions. Some may know more about the brain, or cognition, or environmental design, or assessment, or mental health, and some may know this person more intimately or completely. The CAIS helps guide the user to consider a variety of factors that affect this person's ability to think and to feel competent and comfortable.

The questions and interventions use a **minimum** of medical or **technical language**. Even though the CAIS questions and interventions address complex issues of brain functioning, specific cognitive abilities, and intervention, **you do not need to know anything about the brain or cognition** to ask the questions or use the intervention strategies.

The intervention strategies are generally **practical, concrete, specific, easy to use**, and apply to **everyday living** and routines, as well as to **unusual** situations.

The concepts, questions, and intervention strategies can be used:

- With **any person** of any age, healthy or not, with no disorder or with any brain disorder (psychiatric, neurological, an injury, developmental) of any level of severity. They may do tasks, think, and communicate at any level of independence or dependence.
- In any **setting** including any room in any building, for example, private home, office, residential setting, long-term care, gathering space, or store.
- At any **time**, for example, any time in this person's life, or during the 24 hour day, or while engaged in a task, communicating, or quietly thinking.
- With any **unusual** or **usual** situation, interaction, or **task**. The task could be for example, a **leisure** activity such as playing a game, doing crafts or hobbies, or conversing; an **abstract** task such as making a decision or learning how to get to a store; or a **concrete** task such as doing a household chore, preparing food, washing hands, dressing, eating, using the toilet, or showering. They can also be useful when this person is sitting or lying down or seems to be **doing nothing**.

I. Individualized

The CAIS Questions and Interventions are useful with any person in any setting and in such a variety of situations **because** they are **individualized** to a **particular person** and their cognitive abilities regardless of the **situation**, even as this person's situation and cognitive abilities change

over time. The suggestions of interventions change as these changes in cognitive abilities and situations occur.

There is more detail about individualizing later in the CAIS Instructions under the subheading “Individualized: The CAIS Questions and Intervention Strategies”.

J. Use, Add, Adapt the CAIS

These interventions can be added to interventions you already use. Adding **interventions that directly address cognitive abilities** to interventions you currently use can **expand your pool of intervention options**.

While there is a systematic format and structure to the CAIS, there is no strictly formal way to use the CAIS Questions and Interventions. **You can adapt** them to the needs and preferences of you and the person you are relating to.

For example, you might ask the questions and use interventions in only one part of the CAIS, such as the environment if you are planning to redesign a room or space that is used by various persons rather than by primarily one person. Or you may be in a professional setting where you want to do a staff educational session on communication. So, you review the questions and interventions in the communication part of the CAIS.

You may want to team up with one or two other observers to help you answer the questions, especially when you are learning to use the CAIS.

Many more cognitive abilities, questions, and interventions could have been included in all the CAIS Questions and Interventions. You can **add** additional **questions** and **interventions** that are helpful regarding cognitive abilities, environment, communication, and task and daily routines.

The CAIS often assumes you are observing a person performing a **task** when you respond to the CAIS questions. This can make the underlying cognitive abilities and avenues of support more apparent. But a person can also be observed when they are not performing a task. The concepts and interventions apply in general and to **interactions** and **situations** that do not involve a task, as well.

The CAIS also uses various **examples** of tasks. These quite often involve washing, bathing, showering, or dressing. This is because such examples include many of the aspects that can make a task **difficult** due to the complex cognitive, emotional, social, and physical aspects of these tasks. Some of these aspects include abstract and concrete decision making, perception, body movement, and modesty issues.

Even if **you** are **not someone who assists** with some of the **tasks** described, the concepts and techniques illustrated in these examples apply to nearly any task, interaction, or situation you do encounter. The CAIS assumes an illustration of a challenging task such as bathing, showering, or dressing will illuminate difficulties and interventions that can apply to many other tasks that may seem unrelated or entirely different.

The CAIS can be **useful** in two primary ways:

1. **While** you are **helping** a person with a task, communicating with them, or simply observing them (for example, on the spot).
2. When you are **planning** ways to improve interactions, comfort, quality of life, or the experience of a task, such as decision making or an activity of daily living (for example, when are you in a problem solving or a planning session).

When you answer the questions while you are with a person, you can **intervene immediately** and respond to **subtle changes** that occur minute by minute in this person's cognitive abilities.

Sometimes, just reading through any of the intervention ideas without a specific question in mind can help you see more clearly what this person might need or want, or just give you ideas in general about what might be helpful.

The CAIS is a **guide**. It is highly structured and provides a highly organized method of examining a person and a situation, but it is not necessary to follow it strictly. It is not a formal assessment, clinical, or research instrument. It is intended to be simply a guide or an informal outline of a way to think about a person or a situation and imagine (or select) options for intervention.

It depends on your **subjective observation** and **understanding** of this person and tries to broaden your knowledge base, perspective, understanding, and options for intervention. It provides a series of questions you can informally ask yourself to better understand a person's cognitive abilities and ways to possibly use and support them or compensate for them. It helps you understand some specifics about cognitive abilities and how they can change and affect behavior, emotions, and a person's ability to perform tasks, communicate, and interact with the environment. It then offers interventions that arise from this increased understanding to help you broaden your repertoire of possible intervention or support strategies to try. In this way, it is also an **educational** tool.

It is intended to encourage you to be **creative** and to discover or identify **additional questions** to ask and **interventions** to try that you might not have thought of otherwise, or that are not included in the CAIS.

This means the CAIS can be **flexible** in how it is used and applied to a situation or a person. You can feel free to **adapt** it to a **specific person** and **situation** and to **your own skill set** and **perceptions**. In this way, it is a guide that opens up possibilities for learning and creative intervention generation. The CAIS as a guide is not standardized across individuals and it does not have established norms or reliability data.

So, feel free to use it as you wish in a way that is helpful to this person and to you.

K. Address the Causes of Distress

By addressing cognitive abilities, the CAIS **addresses** potential **causes** of distress or a reduced ability to communicate or perform a task. This more **efficiently** identifies effective interventions for this particular person that can help avoid the trial and error method of intervention.

A person's comfort and enthusiasm can be increased greatly when their difficulties and distress are addressed by supporting and encouraging their cognitive abilities. When a person's cognitive strengths are not used and their cognitive needs are not met or accommodated, their ability to do tasks, understand, communicate, and feel competent and comfortable is reduced. This can result in distress, frustration, anger, withdrawal, distressing situations, and behavior that is distressing to themselves or others.

These interventions suggest ways to address the **mismatch** between a particular person's cognitive abilities (their strengths and needs) and the requirements of the task, environment, or interactions this person encounters. This was discussed in more detail above in the section "Cognitive Abilities".

These interventions can **reduce** your own and this person's **frustration and distress** by helping you understand **why** this person can communicate or perform a **task more easily some times** than other times, what helps or hinders this person, and **why a distressing situation is occurring**. They give you specific strategies you can **try to make interactions or a task easier** and to **alleviate or prevent a distressing situation**. They help you address the **causes** of distress, distressing situations, and behavior that creates distress for this person, you, and others.

The interventions might also **prevent** this person from having to **move** to a more structured or supportive setting, by helping with their emotions and reducing their need for help in their current setting.

The CAIS addresses **cognitive abilities** and ways to support them through modifying the environment, communication, and task, rather than addressing primarily behavior or emotion. It assumes it is always important to discern and address the distress and other **emotions** at the moment and in long-term planning. It also assumes in general that while there sometimes needs to be an immediate response to behavior in an urgent situation, nurturing and responding to a person's cognitive strengths and needs will have a major long-lasting effect on emotions and behavior.

The CAIS can be one of your intervention approaches. It does not need to replace those you already use. What the **CAIS** offers that is less common in other intervention strategies, is this focus on **cognition**.

Because these CAIS Questions and Interventions address the causes of distress or the difficulties this person has in interacting and performing tasks, the CAIS Interventions may be more **effective** than other interventions with **this particular person** and a particular **situation**.

L. We all have Cognitive Strengths, Needs, and Coping Strategies

We said earlier that these questions can be asked about any person whether or not they have a brain disorder or diagnosis. While the CAIS can be used with a person with many cognitive needs, the questions and interventions are also useful for a person who has cognitive needs and strengths that are not particularly unusual or with a person who is **healthy** and **without a brain disorder**.

All of us are born with a brain that is **imperfect**. We each have noticed some parts of our brain that work particularly well. We each also know there are parts of our brain that don't work as well as other parts, or as well as other people's brains, or as well as we would like them to.

Since each **part** of the **brain** is associated with **specific cognitive abilities**, we also have some cognitive abilities that are stronger than other cognitive abilities. Some of us have difficulty having a sense of direction, others have difficulty telling our body what to do to be a smooth athlete, others have difficulty thinking in a linear analytical way and instead are creative in other nonlinear ways.

We all have our own unique compensatory or **coping strategies** for our weaker cognitive abilities (our cognitive **needs**) that help. (Most of these coping strategies are **not conscious**.) Some of us, for example, find making to do lists helpful, others find such lists overwhelming and stressful. We have all felt frustration with our own cognitive needs, weaknesses, difficulties, and inadequate or evolving coping strategies.

So even if you are interacting with a friend, member of your family, colleague, or an employee at the grocery store, these intervention strategies can be helpful and productive. They can be used when giving or receiving information, when analyzing a situation, or when helping a person do a task or learn a new skill. They can make it easier for you to **understand** and **adapt** to a person's particular cognitive strengths and needs and to help those **cognitive abilities grow**. These interventions can accommodate any person's cognitive strengths and needs.

II. INSTRUCTIONS

Topics (and subheadings) in these CAIS Instructions:

- M. Complete Instructions for the CAIS Questions to Ask and Intervention Strategies
- N. On Website
- O. **Finding** the CAIS Questions to Ask and Intervention Strategies
- P. CAIS **Questions** to Ask
- Q. Organization of Questions
- R. Similar Process in all Four Parts of CAIS
- S. How to Ask the Questions
- T. Ask about a Particular Person During an Interaction or Task
- U. Ask Yourself the Questions
- V. More to Notice
- W. How to **Record Your Answers** to the Questions
- X. Responses to the CAIS Questions Lead to the CAIS Intervention Strategies
- Y. CAIS **Intervention Strategies**
- Z. Organization of Intervention Strategies
- AA. Using the Intervention Strategies
- BB. **Individualized**: The CAIS Questions and Intervention Strategies

M. Complete Instructions for the CAIS Questions to Ask and Intervention Strategies

These are the **complete detailed instructions** for the CAIS questions and intervention strategies.

For **brief instructions** regarding the CAIS see in this Volume II:

1. The “Brief Instructions and Introduction” **before each part** of the CAIS. These are general brief instructions that pertain to each part of the CAIS.
2. **Page 1** of the Questions to Ask in each part of the CAIS. These instructions are brief but more specific.

You can use the CAIS with only the instructions listed above.

These complete instructions are more thorough and **in-depth** than the two cited above. These provide additional information in case you have questions or want a greater understanding of the CAIS and how to use it.

The **specific steps** for using the CAIS are **outlined** and described **in detail** near the end of these instructions. Following the outline is a **brief list** of the steps as a quick summary.

More resources are also listed for additional information and help using the CAIS, at the end of these instructions.

All chapters referred to in these instructions **are in Volume I** and listed at the end of these instructions.

More information about the CAIS is provided in the introduction above.

N. On Website

The **entire CAIS** (in an **interactive format** and as pdf files), including all the Questions to Ask and the Intervention Strategies in all four parts of the CAIS, along with instructions and introductions (including brief instructions and introductions for each part, and these complete instructions and introduction for the entire CAIS), and all the resources listed at the end of these instructions are available on the Michigan **Improving MI Practices (IMP) website** at this link: <https://www.improvingmipractices.org>

(In these complete instructions “**Questions**” and “**Interventions**” or “**CAIS**” will frequently be used to refer to these two titles: “*Cognitive Abilities and Intervention Strategies (CAIS) Questions to Ask*” and “*Cognitive Abilities and Intervention Strategies (CAIS) Intervention Strategies*”.)

O. Finding the CAIS Questions to Ask and Intervention Strategies

The *CAIS Questions to Ask* and the *CAIS Intervention Strategies* for all four parts are here in Volume II of this manual. The four parts are: 1) Cognitive Abilities, 2) The Environment, 3) Communication, and 4) The Task and Daily Routines. They are also available at <https://www.improvingmipractices.org>

You can **interact** with the CAIS Questions on the website and generate interventions electronically as directed by your responses to the questions. You can also access the Interventions when you are not using the Questions.

The CAIS Questions and Interventions are also available on the website as **pdf** files for you to print if you'd like.

The **process of finding** the CAIS Questions and Interventions is **similar** for all four parts: for cognitive abilities, the environment, communication, and the task and daily routines.

There are **three pieces** to each part of the CAIS **Questions** and **Intervention Strategies**: Yes/No Response Format to Questions, Four point Response Format to Questions, and the Intervention Strategies. The **Environment** CAIS has a **fourth piece**: Additional Instructions for Response.

The Environment additional instructions are explained later in these instructions under the subheading: "How to Record Your Answers to the Questions".

FOUR PARTS TO THE CAIS QUESTIONS TO ASK AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES:

1. Cognitive Abilities
2. Environment
3. Communication
4. Task and Daily Routines

THREE PIECES TO EACH PART OF THE CAIS QUESTIONS TO ASK AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES:

1. Questions to Ask **Yes/No Response Format**
2. Questions to Ask **Four Point Response Format**
3. **Intervention Strategies**

THE ENVIRONMENT CAIS ALSO HAS A FOURTH PIECE:

4. Environment Questions to Ask **Additional Instructions for Response** (FOR THE ENVIRONMENT ONLY)

P. CAIS Questions to Ask

The *CAIS Questions to Ask* is a series of questions you **ask yourself** about **four factors**: a person's cognitive abilities, the environment, your communication with this person, and a task.

Each of the **four parts** of the **CAIS** identified above, (that is, Cognitive Abilities, Environment, Communication, and Task and Daily Routines) has a set of CAIS Questions to Ask.

The **Cognitive Abilities** questions identify which of a particular person's **cognitive abilities** are strong and which need additional support. The **Environment, Communication, and Task** questions help you identify **how well** each of these three factors **use** the cognitive **strengths** and **meet** the cognitive **needs** of this person.

The questions should be answered **frequently** enough to accommodate changes in this person's needs, strengths, and desires, as well as changes in the setting or circumstances, including the environment, communication, and task.

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE:

- The section called “**Anyone Can Use, With Any Person, In Any Setting, At Any Time**” in the introduction part of these complete instructions, for more detail.
- **CAIS HANDOUT #5** about how to recognize evidence of a person's specific cognitive abilities.

U. Ask Yourself the Questions

All the CAIS Questions in all four parts are **questions to ask yourself, NOT** to ask the person you are observing or assisting. That is, do not ask the person whose cognitive abilities you are trying to understand. **You ask yourself** the questions and **you answer** them.

All of the questions also assume you are the one assisting, communicating, or interacting with this person. So, especially for the questions in the communication and task parts of the CAIS, **you are observing yourself** while you assist, communicate, or interact. The **intervention strategies apply to yourself** and your own communication and interactions with this person. **You are the observer** (your name goes on the “Name of Observer” line on the response form) and you are the one who **answers the questions**.

If someone else is interacting instead of you, then you will observe whoever is interacting and assisting, and **ask yourself** the questions about whoever is interacting with and assisting this person. Because any information about communication and a task regarding this person can be helpful, it will be valuable to keep in mind what you are learning from watching others communicating with this person or helping them with a task. This will help you get a truer understanding of what helps and hinders this person.

You may feel more comfortable simply observing while someone else is interacting with or assisting this person. That way, you can sit out of sight of this person and silently read to yourself the questions and record the answers as you observe. This might be helpful especially while you are learning to use the CAIS.

Anyone can ask these questions (and use the interventions). You may be someone who has **just met** this person and has a very **specific task** to do with this person, or someone who is with this person **24 hours** a day. (For more detail, see the section called “Anyone Can Use, With Any Person, In Any Setting, At Any Time” in the Introduction above.)

V. More to Notice

As you ask these questions, observe the **entire room**, since everything in this person's space can have an impact on this person, even when this person's conscious awareness of other people and the environment is not obvious. There may be a variety of unexpected events or influences

affecting this person, such as background noise like a fan or a car driving by that you may not notice, but that is preventing this person from hearing you. You may be in a space that changes frequently or is unfamiliar to you, since the questions can be asked in any **situation**, in any **room** in any **building** in any **setting**. This could include spaces as diverse as, for example, a private home, an office, residential setting, long-term care place, any gathering space, or a store.

While you are asking these questions in all four parts of the CAIS, it is important to be alert to **all the factors** that may be affecting this person's ability to think, interact with their environment or other people, or to perform a task.

In addition to cognitive abilities, carefully notice and consider this person's current **emotional**, **physical**, and **medical** status. The **whole person** needs to be a focus of support and intervention. A person's ability to think clearly is affected by their emotional, physical and medical status.

In all four parts of the CAIS, the environment, communication, and task need to be carefully evaluated for **emotional** and **physical** safety. These CAIS questions and interventions focus primarily on cognitive abilities and do not attempt to address all aspects of safety, for example, **physical safety in the environment**. **Trauma and discomfort** regarding past **emotional**, **physical**, and **sexual** encounters are addressed in multiple places in the CAIS questions and interventions, but again they do not attempt to address all aspects of emotional, physical, or medical recovery. More is said about this in the text of the five chapters in Volume I.

W. How to Record Your Answers to the Questions

You can record your answers to the questions on the hardcopy of the Response Format provided for each part of the CAIS, or you can select a response on your device or online at the **Improving MI Practices website** at: <https://www.improvingmipractices.org>

Complete the **information** requested at the beginning of the response **format** regarding your name and the name of the person you are observing (that is, whose cognitive abilities you are trying to understand and support. This is the person who is being assisted during the task.). Complete the rest of the information about the time, setting, and other relevant details requested on the form.

You will likely record your responses to your questions after you have left this person, rather than trying to record them during a task. Or you may ask the questions and record your answers as a team, so that one of you is out of sight of this person, but is recording answers to the question as one of you is assisting this person with a task

Each time you ask the questions in any of the four parts of the CAIS, you can use one of **two response formats** to record your answers:

- The “**Yes/No Response Format**”
- The “**Four Point Response Format**”

You can choose the Response Format you prefer to use on each occasion. So, the response format used may vary depending on the situation.

Both the *Yes/No Response Format* and the *Four Point Response Format* have the exact **same questions**.

The “*Four Point Response Format*” offers options of responses from 1-4 rather than a simple “Yes” or “No”.

You may choose to use the *Four Point Response Format* if you want to **quantify** your responses more precisely. You may want to give a more **nuanced** response and to note change over time that is more **subtle**. For example, on any given question you may respond with a “3” one time, but with a “2” months later.

There are places in both response formats for you to record **comments** or specific details about your observations (for example, elaboration, explanations, illustrations, or your thoughts).

If you **don’t know the answer**, assume it is “No” or “1” or “2” and read the **intervention strategies** listed in the *CAIS Intervention Strategies* for that question. They can help **clarify** the question or give a better understanding of the subtleties, usefulness, or rationale for that question. Try **using** those interventions to see if they are helpful.

Note the *Environment Questions to Ask Additional Instructions for Response* that is described in these two boxes as an additional resource to get help understanding and answering the environment questions.

PLEASE NOTE ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT:

The instructions on the first page of both the *Yes/No* and *Four Point* response formats of the *Environment Questions to Ask* may be sufficient for you to respond to each of these questions.

But if you are uncertain about one of the environment questions, or would like to be more thorough, or to go into more depth, you can look up any of the questions in the *CAIS Environment Questions to Ask Additional Instructions for Response*. These additional instructions give more information about each question that can help clarify a question or help you be more precise and nuanced.

These additional instructions give more explanation, examples, elaboration, detail, rationale, and help with more precisely quantifying your responses for each question.

The *Environment Questions to Ask Additional Instructions for Response*, the *Yes/No Response Format*, and the *Four Point Response Format* all have the exact **same questions**.

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE:

- *CAIS Environment Questions to Ask: Additional Instructions for Response* for additional assistance in understanding a question and quantifying your responses more precisely in the Environment Questions to Ask

X. Responses to the CAIS Questions Lead to the CAIS Intervention Strategies

A “**Yes**” (or “**4**” or “**3**”) response suggests the environment, your communication, or the task may meet the needs and support the strengths of this person and their cognitive abilities.

A “**No**” (or “**1**” or “**2**”) response suggests you might be able to help this person by changing aspects of their environment, your communication, or the task.

A “**No**” (or “**1**” or “**2**”) response to any question in each of the four parts of the CAIS **directs you to the CAIS Intervention Strategies** in that part of the CAIS.

For **each question** in the *CAIS Questions to Ask* there is a list of ideas of specific **intervention strategies** in the *CAIS Intervention Strategies* that suggest ways to change the environment, your communication, or the task **with regard to that specific question**.

Just as the *Yes/No Response Format* and the *Four Point Response Format* have the exact **same questions**, the same questions are also included in the *CAIS Intervention Strategies*. The intervention ideas are listed under each question.

Your answers to these questions **in either response format**, may change each time you ask these questions over time. So, these questions should be **asked frequently** enough to recognize and adapt to the changes that take place. You need to change your interventions to accommodate not only changes in a person’s cognitive abilities (their needs and strengths) and desires, but changes in the environment, task, your communication, or this person’s situation as well.

Y. CAIS Intervention Strategies

The *CAIS Intervention Strategies* **lists ideas of intervention strategies for each question** in the *CAIS Questions to Ask Yes/No (or Four Point) Response Format*. These strategies suggest ways you can support a person’s **cognitive abilities** and **change the environment**, your **communication**, or the **task** to help this person more easily perform a task, interact with you and the environment, and to feel more comfortable and competent.

The goal of the interventions are to **help, support, nurture, adapt to, or compensate** for this person’s cognitive needs, and **use, build, and rely on** their cognitive strengths by modifying the environment, your communication, or the task.

Most of the interventions are to be **used all the time**, since they are **practical everyday** ways of structuring your interactions, the environment, and the task. They are not techniques you use only in some situations.

The interventions are specific, practical, concrete, simple, and can be used in everyday situations as well as in unusual situations.

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE:

- **Chapters 2-5** in Volume I for descriptions, explanations, rationale, and examples from the CAIS Intervention Strategies regarding each of the four parts of the CAIS.

Z. Organization of Intervention Strategies

The interventions in each part of the CAIS are **organized** under the same intervention concepts (**subheadings**) that were in the questions. These concepts address needs a person might frequently experience in various environments, during communication, or when performing a task respectively.

The CAIS focuses on changes in the conditions or **external factors** rather than trying to change a person and their actions or behavior. They suggest adaptations to the environment, your communication, and the task and daily routines.

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE:

- **Chapter 1** in Volume I for more detailed discussion about intervention and the CAIS.

AA. Using the Intervention Strategies

Most of the interventions for each question are **not listed in order** of priority. When you read through all of them, **select those** that **make sense** to you regarding this person at this time and in this setting or situation.

Try using them, then **evaluate** their effectiveness by noting the results.

It is important to keep trying an intervention to **give it time** and **opportunity** to be successful. **Consistency** is important for most interventions.

It is also important to notice how effective the intervention is and when it needs to be **changed** as this person changes or the situation changes.

These **interventions** can be **used** to support a person who needs help, but also with a **person** who is **doing** quite **well**, since they can also **benefit** from additional **support**. **We all** can be more **efficient** and **successful** when our **cognitive abilities** are **supported**.

These intervention strategies can be planned and used as a **team** or by you (as an **individual**) with this person.

You can use these interventions **systematically** or more **informally**. Use them in a way that suits you, the person you are helping, and the situation. This is true with regard to asking the questions as well. (This was mentioned in the section called “Use, Add, Adapt CAIS” in the Introduction above.)

The interventions can be used during **any unusual or usual interaction or task**. The task can be **any task** for example, a **leisure** activity such as playing a game or visiting a friend, an **abstract** task such as making a decision or learning how to get to a store, or a **concrete** task such as doing a household chore or dressing. But the questions can also be useful when this person seems to be doing nothing.

Your ability to do a few of the intervention strategies may **depend on the setting** you are in. Certain interventions may involve suggestions or tasks that are not part of your role with this person. For example, the intervention strategies may include changes to how you help this person with activities of daily living, such as taking a shower or using the toilet. Or they may suggest you paint the walls with warm colors, or help this person get an evaluation for their eyes or a medical condition, or ensure this person gets appropriate pain medication. In such cases, you will need to **alert someone else to do the intervention**, or that the **intervention is needed**.

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE:

- **Chapters 2-5** in Volume I for tips, suggestions, and examples regarding the CAIS Intervention Strategies and how to use them.

BB. Individualized: The CAIS Questions and Intervention Strategies

The questions and intervention strategies in **each part** of the **CAIS** are individualized to a person you are observing and trying to understand and help.

All the CAIS Questions and Interventions are **individualized** to any person, at any time, in any setting or situation. They are individualized to this person’s specific cognitive abilities (that is, their cognitive strengths and needs).

As said before, this person can be any age, healthy or not, with any brain disorder of any level of severity, or with no disorder, and with any level of independence or dependence. You can ask the *CAIS Questions to Ask* about any person at any point in time.

This is **because** these questions and intervention strategies are **individualized**. You are asking and answering the CAIS questions about a **particular person at this time**, so the CAIS is **individualized to this particular person**, regardless of who they are or their situation at this particular time.

There are **five ways** the *CAIS Questions to Ask* and *CAIS Intervention Strategies* (in all four parts of the CAIS) are **individualized** to a particular person, time, setting, and situation (See an elaboration of each of these after this list.):

1. The **questions** are structured to consider this person in this setting at this time as the reference for response.
2. **Answers** to the **questions** in the *CAIS Questions to Ask* are specific to a particular person in a particular setting at this time.
3. Identification of specific **intervention** strategies in the *CAIS Intervention Strategies* are **determined by the answers** to the questions in the *CAIS Questions to Ask*.
4. **Similarities between concepts** referred to or identified in the suggested interventions as relevant to this person in the *CAIS Cognitive Abilities Questions to Ask*, and concepts (that is, subheadings) identified as relevant to this person in the *CAIS Questions to Ask* in the **other three parts** of the CAIS (that is, in the *Environment*, *Communication*, or *Task CAIS*). These similarities identify the interventions likely to be the **most** effective among the interventions likely to be **effective** for this particular person.
5. **Similarities between specific intervention** strategies suggested in the *CAIS Cognitive Intervention Strategies* and specific intervention strategies suggested in the *CAIS Intervention Strategies* in the **other three parts** of the CAIS (that is, in the *Environment*, *Communication*, or *Task CAIS*) identify the interventions likely to be the **most** effective among the interventions likely to be **effective** for this particular person.

#1 above notes the questions are structured in a way that asks with regard to what is appropriate for this person at this time. For example, a question might begin as, “Is there an appropriate number of items . . .?”. The questions will help you identify what “appropriate” means. The responses to the *CAIS Cognitive Abilities Questions to Ask* about a particular person will also suggest what is “appropriate” for this person.

#2 above notes when you answer the questions in the *CAIS Questions to Ask* you are answering with regard to a particular person at this time, so the responses are individualized to person and time.

#3 above notes the resulting intervention suggestions from the *CAIS Intervention Strategies* are individualized to this particular person and at this particular time, because they are identified by your responses to the questions.

You can **increase** the **precision** of the individualization to a person, time, setting, and situation in two ways (#4 and #5).

#4 above is one way. It is described in detail and illustrated in Chapter 3 of Volume I. It uses the intervention **concepts** to individualize when the responses to the CAIS questions trigger intervention concepts generally referred to or identified in the suggested interventions as relevant in the *CAIS Cognitive Intervention Strategies*, that are similar to those intervention concepts (that is, the subheadings of sections in the CAIS) triggered as relevant in the *CAIS Intervention Strategies* in the **other three parts** of the CAIS (that is, in the *Environment*, *Communication*, or the *Task CAIS*). **Similarities** in these concepts identify interventions that will likely be especially **important** for **this particular person**. This way of individualizing applies to all four parts of the CAIS, but Chapter 3 uses the *CAIS Environmental Intervention Strategies* as an example in the *I*

Contrast section. (See the “For More Information See:” box below to find this illustration in Chapter 3.)

#5 above is another way. It is described in detail and illustrated in Chapter 4 of Volume I with examples of the CAIS questions and interventions. It notes similarities between the **interventions** specifically suggested from the *CAIS Cognitive Intervention Strategies* and the interventions specifically suggested from the *CAIS Intervention Strategies* in the **other three parts of the CAIS** (that is, in the *Environment*, *Communication*, or the *Task CAIS*). **Similarities** in these suggested interventions identify those interventions that are especially **important** for **this particular person**. This way of individualizing applies to all four parts of the CAIS, but Chapter 4 uses the *CAIS Communication Intervention Strategies* as an example in the *IV Approach* section. (See the “For More Information See:” box below to find this illustration in Chapter 4.)

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE:

- **Chapter 3** in Volume I for an explanation and illustration with an example of individualizing the CAIS by noting **similarities between concepts** identified as relevant in the completed Cognitive Abilities CAIS and the other three completed parts of the CAIS. (This illustration is in Chapter 3 under the heading “V. Illustration of Individualizing the CAIS through Similar Intervention **Concepts**”.)
- **Chapter 4** in Volume I for an explanation and illustration with an example of individualizing the CAIS by noting **similarities between interventions** suggested as important in the Cognitive Intervention Strategies CAIS and the interventions suggested as important in the other three parts of the CAIS. (This illustration is in Chapter 4 under the heading “V. Illustration of Individualizing the CAIS through Similar Intervention **Strategies**”.)

III. STEPS TO TAKE: OUTLINE FOR USING THE CAIS

Topics (and subheadings) in this Steps to Take: Outline for Using the CAIS:

- CC. Lists of Steps to Take
- DD. **Brief Steps** to Take
- EE. Using the CAIS to Understand How to Help
- FF. Goal: Reminder
- GG. Steps You Have Already Taken
- HH. **Summary List** of Elaborated Outline of Steps to Take
- II. **Elaborated Outline** of Steps to Take

CC. Lists of Steps to Take

The instructions on **page 1** of the *CAIS Questions to Ask Yes/No* and *Four Point Response*

Formats for each part of the CAIS (*Cognitive Abilities, Environment, Communication, Task and Daily Routines*) list very briefly the steps to take to use the CAIS.

Listed here in this “Steps to Take” section, are **three** different **lists** of steps to take for using the *CAIS Questions to Ask* and the *CAIS Intervention Strategies*. First is the list of **brief steps**. Second is a **summary list of an elaborated outline of steps**. And finally, there is an **elaborated outline of steps** to take that goes into more detail and provides more context.

In the previous “**Instructions**” section of this “Complete Instructions and Introduction for the CAIS” there are even more detailed instructions for a more in-depth understanding and use of the CAIS. **Chapters 2-5** in Volume I provide additional context, concepts, instructions, and **examples** from the CAIS. The **online course** called *Beyond Behavior: The Cognitive Abilities and Intervention Strategies (CAIS)* also gives concepts and examples from the CAIS that illustrate the structure of the CAIS and how to use it.

DD. Brief Steps to Take

1. For each part of the CAIS (Cognitive Abilities, Environment, Communication, Task and Daily Routines), complete the **Questions to Ask Yes/No Response Format** or the **Four Point Response Format** by following the instructions on the first page of the *CAIS Questions to Ask* for each part. Choose the response format you prefer. If you would like more assistance with the Environment questions, review the document called *Environment Questions to Ask Additional Instructions for Response*.
2. For each of your responses to the questions that is a “No” or a “1” or “2” see the same question in the **CAIS Intervention Strategies** for each part of the CAIS. All of the questions in the Questions to Ask are included verbatim in the Intervention Strategies.
3. **Review** the **intervention** ideas listed in the CAIS Intervention Strategies for each of the questions identified in step #2 above. **Choose** interventions to try that seem to make sense for this person and you at this time.
4. **Evaluate** the effectiveness of the interventions you’ve chosen by completing the **CAIS Questions to Ask** for each part again.
5. **Keep using these interventions** as long as they are helpful.
6. Do steps #1-5 **periodically** or whenever you recognize a **change** needs to be made, or a change has occurred in this person’s cognitive abilities or in their situation or conditions.

EE. Using the CAIS to Understand How to Help

There are **various ways** you can use the CAIS Questions to try to understand how to best help a person and to get ideas of support or intervention strategies to try. The CAIS can be **adapted** to suit the preferences of you and this person you are relating to as was said.

This **outline** presented here is **one way** to use the CAIS. Once you feel familiar with the CAIS, you may find other ways that work well.

The CAIS is intended to help you assist this person in **whatever way works for both of you**. The CAIS can help you understand this person’s cognitive abilities, then give you ideas of intervention

strategies to try that make use of your understanding. Hopefully, you will be able to recognize **new aspects** of this person and **ideas** you hadn't been thinking of.

You can **find examples** to illustrate the outline of steps below in **Chapters 1-5** in Volume I.

FF. Goal: Reminder

The goal of the CAIS is to support a person's cognitive strengths and needs. The interventions are intended to **help, support, nurture, adapt to, or compensate** for this person's cognitive needs, and **use, build, and rely on** their cognitive strengths.

Let's imagine you want to understand a person or situation in order to:

- **Improve quality of life** for this person including helping them feel comfortable, competent, and enthusiastic.
- Help this person more easily **think, understand, respond, interact** with their **environment** and **other people**, and **perform tasks**.
- **Prevent or reduce distress** or a distressing situation.

The CAIS intervention strategies help you do all of the above by focusing on changing the **conditions** or **situation** rather than changing a person or their behavior. They generally suggest changes in the environment, your communication with this person, and in the structure or timing of a task.

GG. Steps You Have Already Taken

The focus here is only on using the CAIS. We will assume you have already ensured the **physical** and **emotional safety** of all involved. We will also assume that you have methods for checking on this person's **medical** and **physical status** as well.

If you have a specific **distressing situation** that requires an action (an intervention strategy) then let's assume you have identified **who is in distress** or ready for change (that is who is wanting or needing the action or support). For example, is this person in pain or distress, or is someone else upset or in distress regarding this person? Or is someone else unintentionally causing this person to be distressed? This could be anyone's (including your) distress or behavior.

We will also assume that you will first **address the distress**; that you will look for the feelings behind the situation or behavior and respond to them by, for example, listening, affirming, reassuring, soothing, or explaining.

Let's assume you have reminded yourself of the goal to **address** the **causes** of the **distress** that are **immediate** (for example, this person wants to tell something to a member of their family, or does not want to have their clothes changed) and that are **underlying** (for example, this person has difficulty finding words they want to use, or this person is very sensitive to touch and these clothes feel comfortable).

Whether the situation is **ongoing** (for example, this person usually resists taking a shower) or is a situation in need of **immediate action** (for example, this person is about to strike another person), identifying and accommodating cognitive strengths and needs can help improve the situation. It

can help with this person's emotions and improve their ability to interact and perform tasks. It can **prevent** frustration and **stress** for both **you** and **this person**, and might **prevent** this person from having to **move** to a more structured or supportive setting.

Chapter 1 discusses this in detail, as do many of the CAIS handouts. Some of those are listed in the box here.

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE:

- **Chapter 1** in Volume I for details and concepts about emotions, behavior, and the CAIS.
- **Chapters 2-5** in Volume I for implications and examples.

CAIS HANDOUTS:

- **#2** about basic assumptions regarding cognitive change and behavior.
- **#41** about responding to acute distress.
- **#40** about addressing behavior.
- **#42** about planning intervention strategies for a distressing situation.
- **#17** about exploring the cause of change in behavior.
- **#24** about do's to remember.
- **#26** about how to recognize a person's emotions (including nonverbal evidence).
- **#25** about how to recognize and respond to pain, needs, and distress.
- **#1** about basic assumptions about intervention that focuses on cognitive abilities.

HH. Summary List of Elaborated Outline of Steps to Take

Here is a summary list of the elaborated steps outlined and described in more detail below for using the CAIS Questions and Interventions to understand and help a particular person.

1. **Ask yourself "Why?"** Identify the reason an intervention is needed and the cause(s) of the situation that needs the intervention. Ask why a task, interaction, or situation is cognitively challenging for this person.
2. Look at the **four factors** (quickly at the moment when action is needed immediately, or more thoroughly when planning an intervention) to see what role each factor is playing in the cause or the need for intervention.
3. Ask yourself and answer the **questions** in the *CAIS Cognitive Abilities Questions to Ask* to identify this person's cognitive strengths and needs. Consider also the whole person, including their emotions and desires. **Record** your answers on the Yes/No or Four point **Cognitive Abilities Response Format** (either on hardcopy or electronically).
4. **Review** the ideas of **suggested intervention** strategies in the *CAIS Intervention Strategies* under each of the questions you answered with a "No" or "1" or "2". Consider how to use the cognitive strengths identified by your responses of "Yes" or "4" or "3".
5. **Select CAIS interventions** you plan to try, then try the interventions.
6. Note the **results** of the interventions.
7. To make an intervention more effective, take time to **use it, alter it, further individualize it, or replace it** with another intervention.

8. When you find interventions that are **effective** for this person, use them **all the time** (not only in certain situations) and **keep using them** until you must **modify** or **replace** them due to changes in the situation, in conditions, or when this person’s cognitive abilities and desires change.
9. Use the *CAIS Questions to Ask and Intervention Strategies* to examine and adapt the **environment**, your **communication**, and the **task** to this person’s cognitive strengths and needs. Follow steps #3 through #11 regarding each of these other three factors (the environment, communication, task).
10. **Repeat these steps** at intervals to monitor how well this person is doing or when changes occur or new challenges arise.
11. **Enjoy this person and your time together.**

II. Elaborated Outline of Steps to Take

1. Ask Yourself “Why?”

When a person is having difficulty communicating or performing a task or there is distress or a distressing situation, **ask yourself “Why?”**

For example:

- Why is this person having difficulty understanding or communicating at this moment?
- Why is this person having difficulty doing this task?
- Why is this person upset, confused, or frightened by this environment or space?
- Why does this person seem irritable, angry, or resistant to my requests or suggestions?
- Why is this distress or distressing situation occurring?
- Why is this person not enjoying life as much as possible?
- Why are we not enjoying our time together as much as we would like?

2. Four Factors

To **answer** the “**why**” questions, you can look to **four factors**:

- 1) This **person**
- 2) Their **environment**
- 3) Your **communication** with this person
- 4) Their **task and daily routines**

The **CAIS** helps you answer the “why?” questions by looking at a person’s cognitive abilities, the environment, communication, and the task respectively. **Chapters 1-5** in Volume I also describe how to do this.

You can **initially briefly ask yourself** if there is anything about this person, their environment, interaction or the task that clearly stands out to you as something that should be adapted to this person. (For example, the noise in the room needs to be reduced.) You can try to make those changes quickly and immediately.

You could then quickly review the **questions** and interventions in the CAIS Environment, Communication, or Task Questions and Interventions to see if you can immediately recognize additional or more specific intervention strategies that might work well.

Or you can take a more systematic approach and go first to the Person as described here.

3. Person: Ask the CAIS Cognitive Abilities Questions

Look first at this person. You need to know as much as you can about the whole person, but with the CAIS the focus is this person's cognitive abilities. (Chapter 1 discusses the whole person in more detail.)

To understand a person's cognitive abilities, ask yourself how easily this person can go through each of the **five phases of cognitive processing** described in Chapter 2. The questions in the *CAIS Cognitive Abilities Questions to Ask* are organized under five subheadings that are these five phases of cognitive processing that all of us must go through in order to respond to another person or to our surroundings.

These five phases are:

- 1) Phase one: **Sensory**: Does this person receive information from the environment through their five senses (seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, smelling)?
- 2) Phase two: **Comprehension/ Perception**: Does this person recognize and understand information received through their five senses? Do they know what they saw and heard? (For example, do they know what an object is and where it is? Do they understand words?)
- 3) Phase three: **Executive**: Does this person categorize, organize, apply, and use the information received? (For example, can this person decide what response they want to give regarding the information they received? Can they make decisions? Do they know what they want or need?)
- 4) Phase Four: **Expressive**: Does this person's brain tell their body what to do? (For example, can it tell this person's body how to reach out and take what is offered to them?)
- 5) Phase Five: **Motor**: Does this person's body physically respond to the instructions from the brain? (For example, can this person's arm and hand physically reach out to take what is offered?)

Identify the phase (or phases) of cognitive processing this person is having **difficulty** with.

Ask yourself the questions in the *CAIS Cognitive Abilities Questions to Ask* that are listed under that subheading or subheadings (that is, that phase, or phases of cognitive processing) to **identify the specific cognitive abilities** required in that phase (or phases) that are **difficult** for this person.

To ask and answer the *CAIS Cognitive Abilities Questions to Ask*, observe this person as you interact with them or assist them with a task. For details or suggestions about this see the CAIS Handout #5 "**Recognizing Cognitive Abilities: Suggestions for Recognizing Evidence of a Person's Cognitive Strengths and Needs**" at the end of Volume I in the section called "**CAIS Handouts**".

Record your answers on the Yes/No or Four point **Cognitive Abilities Response Format** (either on hardcopy or electronically).

Then identify the specific cognitive abilities that are easier for this person in the five phases to identify this person's cognitive **strengths** (that is, the questions you answered with a "Yes" or a "4" or "3"). When you know what this person can do well, you can rely on those strong cognitive abilities to help support this person's weaker cognitive abilities (their cognitive needs).

Then identify the specific cognitive abilities that are more difficult for this person in the five phases to identify this person's cognitive **needs** (that is, the questions you answered with a "No" or a "1" or "2").

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE:

- **Chapter 2** about cognitive abilities in Volume 1 for more details.

CAIS HANDOUT:

- **#3** with a list of cognitive abilities identified under each of the five phases
- **#4** with informal questions to ask about each of the five phases
- **#5** about how to recognize evidence of a person's specific cognitive abilities.

4. Review the Suggested Cognitive Intervention Strategies

To generate ideas of how to **help this person** with the cognitive abilities required **in that phase** (or phases) look at the questions you answered with a "No" or "1" or "2".

Find in the **CAIS Cognitive Intervention Strategies** the list of **intervention ideas** identified under each of the questions that you answered with a "No" or "1" or "2". (Find these interventions on hard copy or see the interventions triggered by your responses electronically.)

Review the intervention ideas and consider how they might be useful for this person and situation.

Note the questions to which you responded with a "Yes" or "4" or "3" and consider how you can better rely on or use those cognitive strengths to support this person's cognitive needs and the interventions suggested for this person.

5. Select Interventions and Try Them

From the interventions listed, **select the interventions** most likely to help this particular person. You don't need to try all the interventions at once. Choose a few that seem to you to make sense or might be easy to try first.

Try using the selected **interventions**.

It is important to be consistent when you try an intervention.

6. Note the Results of the Interventions

Watch to see if the interventions are as effective as you and this person want.

You'll need to continue to watch and evaluate each intervention as you try it to see if it is working, even after it has been successful, since this person and conditions change over time.

7. Continue to Make the Intervention More Effective

If an intervention doesn't seem to work well enough with this person, try to:

- Give it more time
- Modify/Refine the intervention
- Individualize more precisely the intervention to this person or situation
- Select other CAIS interventions to try
- Modify it as necessary over time as this person and the situation changes

To give an intervention a chance to be effective, give it **time**. It might take you and this person time to get used to the intervention or to figure how to use it in a way that works well and feels comfortable. It may take a while to learn to use the intervention consistently.

If it continues to be unsatisfying, then try altering it. **Make adjustments.**

Try to individualize this intervention to this person. Use the suggestions for further **individualizing** to this person with more precision, as described above under the subheading "Individualized: The CAIS Questions and Intervention Strategies". The various ways to increase the individualization of the CAIS to a particular person or situation are also described and elaborated with examples in **Chapters 3 and 4** of Volume I.

If there still are problems, then try **replacing** it with another intervention strategy.

Over time, **modify the interventions** as necessary and as this person's cognitive abilities or desires or the situations or conditions (that is the environment, communication or task) change.

8. Keep Using Effective Interventions Consistently

When you find interventions that are **effective for this person, keep using them** until you must **modify** or **replace** them due to changes in the situation, in conditions, or when this person's cognitive abilities and desires change.

Use these interventions **all the time**, NOT selectively in only certain situations.

9. Environment, Communication, Task and Daily Routines

Go through steps #3 through #11 regarding each of the other three factors (the environment, communication, task).

Ask the questions and try the interventions in the CAIS Environment, Communication, or Task Questions and Interventions in the same way as you did above with the Cognitive Abilities CAIS.

You can explore ways to modify the environment, how you communicate with this person, or the structure and timing of this person's tasks and daily routines to support this person's cognitive abilities.

Note the questions to which you responded with a “Yes” or “4” or “3” and consider how you can better enhance, rely on, or use those strong aspects of the environment, your communication, or the task to further support this person’s cognitive needs.

Again, over time, **adapt** or **replace interventions** as necessary and as this person or the situations or conditions (that is the environment, communication or task) change.

10. Repeat these steps

Repeat these steps at intervals to monitor how well this person is doing or when changes occur or new challenges arise.

11. Enjoy this Person and Your Time Together

As you begin to understand this person’s cognitive abilities you will hopefully appreciate this person more and be able to relax with them, and find more humor and fun during your time together. Often, the more we come to **know** and **understand** a person, the more we can admire who they are.

IV. FOR MORE INFORMATION

Original Sources

1. Weaverdyck, S.E. (1990) “Neuropsychological Assessment as a Basis for Intervention in Dementia”. Chapter 3 in N. Mace (Ed.) Dementia Care: Patient, Family, and Community. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press.
2. Weaverdyck, S.E. (1991) “Assessment as a Basis for Intervention” and “Intervention to Address Dementia as a Cognitive Disorder”. Chapters 12 & 13 in D. Coons (Ed.) Specialized Dementia Care Units. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Additional Resources

For more information about the CAIS, the brain, cognitive abilities, the environment, communication, and the task that is easily accessible and easy to read see:

1. The Michigan **Improving MI Practices website** at <https://www.improvingmipractices.org>
This website has this entire three-volume manual, the entire CAIS, the 43 handouts, the CAIS curriculum, and the online course that are described below. Many other resources regarding the brain, mental health, and cognition are on this website.
2. The **entire CAIS** including all four parts (Cognitive Abilities, Environment, Communication, Task and Daily Routines), and the Questions to Ask (in two response formats) and Intervention Strategies for each part, as well as the additional instructions for the Environment part. All are in Volume II and on the website at <https://www.improvingmipractices.org>
3. The entire **CAIS**, that is available in an **interactive format** and as pdf files on the Improving MI Practices website at <https://www.improvingmipractices.org>
4. **Instructions** and **introductions** to the **CAIS**, including these compete instructions, as well as the brief instructions for each part, and the first page of each of the CAIS Questions to Ask in each part. All are in Volume II and on the website at <https://www.improvingmipractices.org>
5. The **Introduction to Volume II**. It outlines in detail the **structure** of the entire CAIS and gives an overview of the CAIS.

6. **Chapters 1 through 5** in Volume I. They give background information about the brain, the *CAIS Questions to Ask* and *CAIS Intervention Strategies*, the concepts underlying the CAIS, along with examples to illustrate how the CAIS is structured for all four parts: Cognitive Abilities, Environment, Communication, Task and Daily Routines. They also give additional tips. These are all posted on the website at <https://www.improvingmipractices.org>
7. The **43 CAIS Handouts of Information and Suggestions** in Volume I. These can be distributed as handouts. They are additional resources and background information on a variety of topics with a more in-depth focus on the brain, cognitive abilities, and specific intervention and support strategies. There is a list of the handouts that are especially relevant to the brain, cognitive abilities, the environment, communication, and the task at the end of each chapter that addresses each topic respectively in Volume I. All 43 of the handouts are at the end of Volume I and on the website at <https://www.improvingmipractices.org>
8. CAIS Handout #5 “**Recognizing Cognitive Abilities: Suggestions for Recognizing Evidence of a Person’s Cognitive Strengths and Needs**”. It describes **how to identify** a person’s **cognitive strengths** and **needs** by watching them perform a task and in other ways. This handout is at the end of Volume I in the section called “**CAIS Handouts**”.
9. The **CAIS Curriculum** of five one-hour sessions called the “**CAIS Educational Series: Understanding and Supporting a Person’s Cognitive Abilities**” in Volume III. It can be used informally or be presented more systematically by an instructor. Sessions 1-5 address the brain, cognitive abilities, the environment, communication, and the task. These sessions include **informal questions** to ask and some information about dementia (or major neurocognitive disorder). Each session has a script, objectives, PowerPoint slides, handouts, and evaluation forms. The entire curriculum is posted on the website at <https://www.improvingmipractices.org>
10. The **Online Course** of five one-hour modules called “**Beyond Behavior: The Cognitive Abilities and Intervention Strategies (CAIS)**”. The modules explore concepts and give examples and tips from the CAIS. They also **show how to use each part** of the **CAIS**. Modules 1-5 address the brain, cognitive abilities, the environment, communication, and the task, respectively. The **title** and **content** of **Modules 2-5** in the online course **correspond** to the title and content of the **four parts** of the **CAIS**. The online course is for **anyone** who interacts with a person (particularly a person living with cognitive challenges or distressing behavior), assists with a task, or advises (or supervises) someone who does. You do not need specialized expertise or training to use the CAIS or take the online course. The course is available for **you** to view or take on the Michigan **website** at <https://www.improvingmipractices.org>