

Four Factors



Cognitive Abilities and Support Strategies

Changes in the brain and resulting changes in cognitive abilities (thinking) can cause much of the distress and distressing behavior that we see when we are assisting a person with a task such as an activity of daily living (ADL).

There are factors that can make it harder or easier for a person with cognitive changes, and therefore make distress and behavior worse or better, or trigger distress or a behavior.

These factors might relate to:

- A person's cognitive abilities, emotions, and physical condition.
- What is going on in the environment around this person.
- How we communicate with this person.
- How we organize a particular task.

To help a person with a task, we need to examine four basic factors:

- The **Person**
- The **Environment**
- **Communication**
- The **Task**

We need to understand how each of these four factors is making it harder or easier for a person to figure out what is going on, and to do a task.

Then, we can change the environment, our communication strategies, or the task itself to be more supportive.

This will make it easier for this person to feel calm, comfortable, and successful during a task and during activities of daily living.

Because of the changes in the brain, this person needs us and the environment to support or compensate for their cognitive needs and to rely on or use their cognitive strengths.

The more we know about how a person's cognitive abilities have changed, the more we will know how to help them.