

DOMAINS TO EXPLORE

Suggestions of Information to Gather as you Consider How to Help

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TO KEEP IN MIND

This is a list of some of the domains (or aspects) of information to gather as you consider how to help a person by addressing their cognitive abilities. This information should be gathered before planning intervention or support strategies regarding a specific person or a specific situation.

The information is intended to help you enable a person to understand, communicate, and perform tasks more easily, and to feel more relaxed, comfortable and competent. The information can also be helpful with preventing or responding to distressing situations, including behavior that is distressing to this person or to other people around them.

The four headings here reflect four factors that play a significant role in any person's ability to perform tasks, feel comfortable, and to respond easily to the environment and to other people.

The four factors are:

- **Person**
- **Environment**
- **Communication/Interactions with others**
- **Task and Daily Routines**

It is important to address all four factors when gathering information. That is, we need to consider the person, and the conditions around this person that contribute to a situation.

The four factors and the information presented are the places to look to understand why a person is having difficulty, is distressed, or is a part of a distressing situation. They are also the places to look to identify ways to improve this person's comfort and ability to communicate and perform tasks. When we identify the triggers or causes of distress or difficulty, we can then modify the environment, interactions with this person, and the structure and timing of tasks to improve a situation.

The particular details that are presented here pertain only to the person. The domains of cognition, environment, communication, and task are specified in more detail in other CAIS Handouts, and in the *Cognitive Abilities and Intervention Strategies (CAIS): Questions to Ask* and *CAIS: Intervention Strategies* by S. Weaverdyck.

SUGGESTIONS OF DOMAINS TO CONSIDER

Consider the history, current status, and patterns of shifts in status (for example, the timing of fluctuations of emotions, clarity of thinking, energy levels) of each suggestion to get a more complete understanding of a person or a situation.

Be alert to strengths, resources, and supportive elements in each domain, as well as the needs and challenges.

Person

1. General ----- Age, gender, languages, occupation, education, goals, marital status, spouse occupation, living situation, ethnic and cultural background, family, birth place, childhood place, places lived as adult, birth date, awareness and acceptance of own functioning level

2. Medical ----- Diagnoses, history, physical status, medications, pain, discomfort, allergies, birth hand dominance, dates of first symptoms of cognitive changes, dietary needs and preferences
3. Functional ---- Ability to perform simple and complex tasks, sensory status, motor status
4. Emotional ---- Mood, ability to cope, past coping strategies, cycles, ease of emotional expression, sources of pleasure, comfort, and pain, dates and description of significant past events, evidence or experience of emotional, physical, or sexual pain, trauma, or discomfort in past or currently
5. Social ----- Significant relationships, ability to converse & interact, preferences, support network, health status of primary care and support people, conformity to common social norms
6. Cognitive ---- Ability to comprehend, perceive, conduct sophisticated thought processes, express, focus attention, remember events and information from remote and recent past, habits and preferences in brain functioning and thinking, past assessments
7. Behavioral --- Daily schedules & routines in past and present, strengths, own distressing behavior, other people's behavior that is distressing to this person
8. Needs ----- Glasses, hearing aids, dentures, prosthetics, equipment, walker, wheel chair, medical treatments, diet
9. Interests ----- Life aspirations, hobbies, significant events & dates, preferences, reading, music
10. Habits ----- Daily routines and schedule, task (e.g., bathing) routines, sleep, exercise, food
11. Talents ----- Past & current skills & gifts, strengths to draw upon, past accomplishments
12. Religion ----- Preferences, routines, spiritual resources & rituals, accessibility of religious support
13. Approach ---- Responses to interventions/strategies used in the past when assisting or approaching, best/worst times of day or week to approach

Environment

14. Physical
15. Social
16. Emotional
17. Cognitive

Communication/ Interactions with Others

18. This person's responses to characteristics and actions of others who support or interact with this person
19. Interactions with this person

Task and Daily Routines

20. Familiarity
21. Timing
22. Emotional appeal
23. Physical demands
24. Complexity
25. Social context

SOURCES:

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- 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.