

# FOUR FACTORS AND BASIC CONCEPTS FOR INTERVENTION

## Suggestions for Assisting a Person by Addressing Their Cognitive Abilities

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### BASIC CONCEPTS AND TIPS FOR INTERVENTION

1. **Respect** a person and who they are. Show them your appreciation, respect, and admiration.
2. Keep in mind we all have difficulty with some cognitive abilities. None of us has a perfect brain.
3. Focus on how to rely on what a person does well, and accommodate what they have difficulty doing.
4. **Change the way you act** and what you say, rather than trying to change a person or their behavior.
5. Discern and **respond to** this person's **feelings**, rather than primarily to their behavior or words.
6. **Observe** a person closely to better understand how they are reacting or feeling and what kind of help they might want or need. Try to feel, see, and experience everything **from their perspective**. They will not experience a situation exactly as you do. They may even "see" an object in a different spot.
7. **Ask yourself why** this person is having difficulty doing something or is acting a certain way. **Address** the reason, trigger, or **cause** rather than simply the difficulty in functioning or behavior.
8. **Individualize** your interventions to a particular person at a particular moment in time. Remember needs and abilities will likely change over time and even from moment to moment. Assess frequently and have a variety of intervention strategies to try on the spot as this person and situation changes.
9. Be **creative**. Foster **autonomy**. Help them be in charge, and to do what they want when they want.
10. Help a person **relax** and feel comfortable so their brain can function more easily.
11. **Conserve their energy**. The simplest task for you is likely difficult for a person with many cognitive needs. They are usually working very hard even on simple tasks. Make tasks, your interactions with this person, and their environment as easy as possible for them, so they can save their energy for more enjoyable or difficult tasks, such as eating ice cream with family, playing a game, or taking a bath.
12. Avoid feeling offended or disappointed by what a person says or does. Acknowledge to yourself your own feelings of distress, then set them aside until later. For now, focus on this person and their needs.
13. Remind yourself a person with many cognitive needs often isn't able to control what they say and do. They may know how to do something, but can't do it, or they can't stop themselves in time from doing something even when they know they shouldn't do it. They may not fully understand or know their own abilities, especially when distressed. Avoid: calling attention to their mistakes or behavior; asking them why they are doing something; or how they would feel if someone did that to them.
14. **Remember the positive** aspects about this person and what you like and admire about them.
15. Most interventions work sometimes and not others. Have a **variety** of interventions and **adapt** them.
16. Even **small** interventions can have a major effect.
17. **Address the conditions** around a person, rather than simply this person. Make the conditions around this person accommodate this person's cognitive abilities and their physical and emotional needs and preferences. Do this by modifying the expectations, requirements, and demands of the conditions. To address conditions (and make these modifications) examine four factors:
  1. This **Person**
  2. Their **Environment**
  3. **Communication** and interactions with this person
  4. **Task and Daily Routines** of this person including the timing, structure, and appeal

## FOUR FACTORS FOR ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION

Each person is **unique**, so **intervene** by assessing and changing this particular person's **environment**, how you are **interacting** with this person, and this person's **tasks** and daily routines to address their unique strengths, needs, and preferences. Such interventions are to help this person more easily think, perform tasks, understand and respond to their surroundings and other people, and to **feel comfortable**. The interventions can reduce distress, frustration, stress, and distressing behavior and situations. Here are a few examples of interventions related to each of the four factors.

### Examples of Interventions:

#### 1. Person

- a. Get to know this person as an **individual** with their unique strengths, needs, desires, preferences.
- b. Find out what their **likes** and **dislikes** are and **adapt** to them.
- c. Enable them to be in charge and to make their **own decisions**. Avoid making decisions for them.
- d. Follow the **daily routines** they have always followed in the **past** and prefer.
- e. Do **tasks** (like getting dressed) the way they used to do them in the **past** and prefer.
- f. Accommodate their **sensory** changes.
- g. Figure out which **cognitive abilities** they do well and which they have difficulty with.
- h. Rely on the cognitive abilities they do well. Use and develop their **strengths** and resources.
- i. **Help** them with and support the cognitive abilities they have difficulty with.
- j. **Compensate** discreetly for the cognitive abilities that are too difficult. Help them feel competent.
- k. **Change** your interventions when their physical or emotional needs and desires or cognitive abilities fluctuate and change over time. Try to preserve their ability to function **independently**.

#### 2. Environment

- a. Use **cues**, such as objects, signs or notes that they understand and/or respond to emotionally.
- b. Make sure the environment and you are telling them the same thing (for example, avoid telling them it is time for a shower when they are eating breakfast in the dining room).
- c. Make the environment feel homey, **normal**, safe, **comfortable**, warm, **stimulating**, and inviting.
- d. Make **objects** in the environment easy to **see**, **recognizable**, and **engaging** (for example, the objects stimulate conversation or are things they would want to use).
- e. Reduce **noise**, **clutter**, and **confusion** in the environment.

#### 3. Communication and Interactions

- a. **Explain** and **repeat** as often as is necessary what is going on and what you or others are doing.
- b. Speak clearly using **fewer words**.
- c. Get their **attention** and keep it when interacting with them.
- d. **Slow** down.
- e. Be **calm**, warm, friendly, and **reassuring**. Be cheerful.
- f. **Position yourself** in a spot where they can best see and relate to you.
- g. Use your **body** to communicate. Be alert to how you look, move, and gesture.
- h. Make sure your **voice** sounds warm, reassuring, and unhurried.
- i. Build and keep **trust** in your interactions. Be honest and accurate.
- j. Only give as much information as is helpful.
- k. Have **only one** person interact with them at a time.

#### 4. Task and Daily Routines

- a. Make the task **easier** for them.
- b. Make the task something they want to do.
- c. Help them do tasks when they are emotionally **ready** for them and are well rested.
- d. Match the **timing** and schedule of tasks to their preferences and past experience.
- e. Discern their **goals** for a task and try to help them meet them, even when they are at odds with your goals for the task. Try to get everyone's goals met with theirs the highest priority.