

FOUR FACTORS

Cognitive Abilities And Intervention Strategies

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This is an adaptation of Handout Two from Session One of the Cognitive Abilities and Intervention Strategies (CAIS) Educational Series.

The CAIS Educational Series of five sessions can be found on the Michigan Improving MI Practices website at <https://www.improvingmipractices.org>

This handout is a brief and basic introduction to the four factors as a way of organizing intervention planning. More details and information are available in CAIS Handout “#22 Four Factors and Basic Concepts for Intervention”, in other CAIS Handouts, and in the *Cognitive Abilities and Intervention Strategies (CAIS): Questions to Ask* and *CAIS: Intervention Strategies* by S. Weaverdyck. All of these are on the above website at <https://www.improvingmipractices.org>

1. **Changes** in the **brain** and resulting changes in **cognitive abilities** (thinking) **can cause** much of the **distress** and distressing situations that we see when we are communicating with a person or assisting them with a task.
2. There are various **factors** that can **make it harder** or **easier** for a person with cognitive changes, and thus increase or decrease distress or behavior that creates distress. These factors might even directly trigger distress or cause behavior that creates distress.
3. Even when there is no distress, these factors can **help all of us**, healthy or not, feel **content**, **comfortable**, and **competent** in general, as well as during communication or a task.
4. These factors might relate to:
 - a. A **person’s cognitive, emotional, physical, and medical** condition and history (including medications).
 - b. What is going on in the **environment** around this person.
 - c. **How we communicate** with this person verbally and nonverbally.
 - d. How we **organize** a particular **task**, with regard to its structure and timing.
5. To help a person in any situation we need to examine **four basic factors**:
 - a. The **Person**
 - b. The **Environment**
 - c. **Communication**
 - d. The **Task**
6. We need to **examine** each of these four factors to clarify how each factor is making it harder or easier for this person to understand what is going on, to feel comfortable, to communicate, and to do a task.
7. Then, we can **change** the environment, our communication strategies, or the task itself to be more **supportive** of this person and their cognitive needs and strengths.
8. This will make it **easier** for this person to communicate, do a task, feel calm, comfortable, and successful in general.
9. When a person has changes in the brain, then 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 and about their cognitive strengths and needs, **the more we will know how to help them**.