

## **Asking Why**

**With the CAIS: A Guide to Supporting a Person and Their Cognitive Abilities**

## **VOLUME II:**

## **Addressing Why**

**with**

## **The CAIS Questions to Ask and Intervention Strategies**

**By Shelly E. Weaverdyck, PhD**



**Cognitive Abilities and Intervention Strategies (CAIS)**

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This entire three-volume manual is available on the Michigan Improving MI Practices (IMP) website at <https://www.improvingmipractices.org>

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We welcome feedback.

Please comment on the *improvingmipractices.org* website where indicated.

**Disclaimer:**

This CAIS three-volume manual is not sufficient for the understanding, assessment, or intervention regarding any individual person or situation. In each individual case, a health professional must be consulted. This manual simply presents ideas from which to draw and apply as appropriate. The suggestions here will not be appropriate for every person in every situation.

## INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME II

### Addressing Why With the CAIS Questions to Ask and Intervention Strategies

This is Volume II of the **three-volume manual** “Asking Why with the CAIS: A Guide to Supporting a Person and Their Cognitive Abilities”. Volume I is “Understanding Why with Concepts, Tips, and CAIS Examples”. Volume III is “Teaching Why with the CAIS Educational Series”.

**On Website:** All three volumes of the CAIS manual, as well as the online course “Beyond Behavior: The CAIS” (described at the end of this introduction) are on the Improving MI Practices website at <https://www.improvingmipractices.org>

**Volume II** of this manual is comprised solely of the CAIS, that is the *Cognitive Abilities and Intervention Strategies (CAIS) Questions to Ask* and the *CAIS Intervention Strategies* along with instructions for using it.

All **four parts of the CAIS** are presented here, along with an **introduction** and **instructions for each part**. If you would like a more thorough understanding of how to use the CAIS, a more **in-depth introduction** to the CAIS and **instructions** on how to use the CAIS Questions and Interventions are in this Volume II. **Additional resources** for understanding and using the CAIS are listed at the end of this introduction to Volume II and at the end of each set of instructions.

#### Content in Volume II

- Introduction to Volume II that outlines the **structure** of the CAIS
- The **CAIS Questions to Ask** in each of four parts
- The **CAIS Intervention Strategies** in each of four parts
- **Brief instructions** and introduction for **each** of the four **parts** of the CAIS
- **Complete detailed** and in-depth **instructions** and introduction for the entire CAIS
- **Lists of additional resources** to learn more about the CAIS and related topics

#### What the CAIS Is

The *CAIS Questions to Ask* and the *CAIS Intervention Strategies* are a set of questions and intervention strategies that address a person’s **cognitive abilities**, to help this person **think**,

**understand, communicate**, interact with their **environment**, and **perform tasks** more easily, to **improve everyday life**, and to **reduce distress** and **distressing situations**.

### **What the CAIS Does**

The CAIS helps you relate to a person throughout their day, while communicating, or during a task, in a way that **feels good to this person** and to **you**.

The *CAIS Questions to Ask* and the *CAIS Intervention Strategies* provide the content and structure to help you interact with and assist a person by addressing this person's **cognitive abilities**.

**Changes in the brain** can **change a person's cognitive abilities**, including for example, their thinking, communication, understanding, memory, attention, and decision making. This affects their ability to perform tasks and interact with other people. The individual might have difficulty recognizing people, objects, or places, and might find new places or situations overwhelming. This person may be confused, or anxious, or moody, or have difficulty with their usual daily tasks.

These changes can cause frustration and distress for both this person and others who relate to this person.

The **CAIS Questions** identify the specific **cognitive strengths** and **needs** of a **particular person**. The **CAIS Intervention Strategies** then suggest intervention or support strategies that will likely support those specific cognitive strengths and needs.

The CAIS can be used to support and enhance the cognitive abilities of **any person**, whether or not they have a usual or unusual brain, a brain disorder, or need for assistance. It can be helpful with any person at any age or level of independence.

### **The CAIS is Unique**

Features of the CAIS are unique in a number of ways. The focus of the CAIS is **cognitive abilities**. It can be used by **anyone** and with **any person**. The interventions are **practical, concrete, and simple** and can be useful in **everyday situations** as well as unusual situations. It **avoids trial and error** in intervention planning by **addressing the causes** of difficulties with communication or task performance or of distress and distressing situations. It adapts **conditions** to the person, rather than trying to change the person or the behavior directly. The questions and interventions can be **adapted** to the preferences or needs of you and this person. You **ask the questions to yourself** based on **observation** of a person.

**Other features** of the CAIS that make it **unique** are listed near the beginning of the **Complete Instructions and Introduction** for the CAIS in this Volume II.

### How the CAIS is Structured

The CAIS **Questions** and **Intervention Strategies** consist of **four parts**:

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

Each CAIS **part** consists of:

- Questions to Ask
- Intervention Strategies

Each CAIS **Questions to Ask** consists of:

- **Questions** to ask yourself under **subheadings** that reflect intervention concepts relevant to that part of the CAIS (Cognitive Abilities, or the Environment, or Communication, or the Task and Daily Routines)
- A **Yes/No Response** Format
- A **Four Point Response** Format
- In **ONLY** the **Environment** Questions to Ask: **Additional Instructions** for Response. These are **optional**. They are available for the user who would like to quantify their responses more precisely.

Each of the CAIS **Intervention Strategies** consists of:

- Lists of **suggested intervention strategies**. Each list is under one of the questions that was asked in the Questions to Ask. All the questions in the questions to Ask are in the Intervention Strategies under the same subheadings, and each question has a list of interventions that is specific to that question.
- These specific lists of intervention strategies are identified to address the cognitive abilities of the particular person observed while using the Questions to Ask.

### Process of the CAIS for All Four Parts

1. You **ask yourself** the **questions** in the Questions to Ask.
2. The questions in the *Cognitive Abilities Questions to Ask* identify a particular person's **cognitive abilities** (that is, their cognitive strengths and needs).
3. The questions in the *Questions to Ask* of the other three parts of the CAIS (environment, communication, task) identify how well the environment, communication, or task supports this person's cognitive abilities.
4. Your responses to the questions direct you to suggestions in the CAIS **Intervention Strategies** that specifically address this particular person's cognitive strengths and needs.
5. You **select intervention** strategies to use.
6. You **modify** or **replace** the interventions as this person's **cognitive abilities change** or the situation or conditions (the environment, communication, task) change.

### Instructions in Volume II for the CAIS

There are **brief** instructions and introduction for using the CAIS **before each part** of the CAIS.

In addition, the **first page** of the **CAIS Questions to Ask** in each part has a brief introduction and more **specific** instructions about the questions and responses.

The **complete** detailed **instructions** and **introduction** go into **more depth** about the structure and the process of using the CAIS. You can use the CAIS without reading these complete instructions, but they will be helpful if you have questions or want more detail.

### **Subheadings in The CAIS Questions and Intervention Strategies**

All the CAIS questions and intervention strategies are organized in each part under **subheadings** that are **intervention concepts** specific to that part. The subheadings (intervention concepts) are listed below under each part of the CAIS.

### **Cognitive Abilities CAIS: Five Sections**

The *Cognitive Abilities Questions and Intervention Strategies* have five sections, each under one of the following five subheadings that are the **five phases of cognitive processing**. These are phases (or steps) everyone must go through in order to receive information from their environment and respond to it.

The five subheadings are:

- I. Sensory Phase
- II. Comprehension/Perception Phase
- III. Executive Phase
- IV. Expressive Phase
- V. Motor Phase

### **Environment CAIS: Nine Sections**

The *Environment Questions and Intervention Strategies* have nine sections, each under one of the following nine subheadings that are environmental intervention concepts. These are concepts that address needs a person might frequently experience in most environments.

The nine subheadings are:

- I. Contrast
- II. Patterns
- III. Clutter
- IV. Cueing
- V. Normal
- VI. Homey
- VII. Lighting
- VIII. Texture
- IX. Privacy

### **Communication CAIS: Ten Sections**

The *Communication Questions* and *Intervention Strategies* have ten sections, each under one of the following ten subheadings that are communication intervention concepts. These are concepts that address needs a person might frequently experience in most interactions.

The ten subheadings are:

- I. Respect
- II. Explanation and Reassurance
- III. Body Language
- IV. Approach
- V. Observation
- VI. Distraction
- VII. Consistency
- VIII. Characteristics
- IX. Organization
- X. Prevention

### **Task and Daily Routines CAIS: Six Sections**

The *Task and Daily Routines Questions* and *Intervention Strategies* have six sections, each under one of the following six subheadings that are task intervention concepts. These are concepts that address needs a person might frequently experience while performing a task.

The six subheadings are:

- I. Task Steps
- II. Modification of Steps
- III. Modification of Objects
- IV. Timing
- V. Consistency
- VI. Task Goals

### **For More information**

For more information about the CAIS see the **five chapters** in Volume I and the CAIS **Handouts** also in Volume I. An **online course** that shows how to use the CAIS is described below.

- **Chapters 1-5: Concepts and CAIS Examples:** The five chapters in Volume I present **concepts, tips, explanations, and examples** from the **CAIS** to illustrate the structure of the CAIS as outlined above.

The **five chapters** are:

- The Brain and Cognition
- Cognitive Abilities
- The Environment
- Communication
- The Task and Daily Routines

- **CAIS Handouts: Information and Suggestions:** The CAIS Handouts (43 total) in Volume I give more **in-depth information** and intervention (support) **suggestions** on a variety of topics regarding the brain, cognitive abilities, the environment, communication, and the task and daily routines, in addition to brain disorders, specialized intervention strategies, and issues specific to cognitive intervention. One handout that may be particularly helpful is the **CAIS Handout #5 “Recognizing Cognitive Abilities: Suggestions for Recognizing Evidence of a Person’s Cognitive Strengths and Needs”**.
- **Online Course: CAIS Beyond Behavior:** The **Online Course** of five one-hour modules called “Beyond Behavior: The Cognitive Abilities and Intervention Strategies (CAIS)” explores **concepts** and gives **examples** and **tips** from the *CAIS Questions to Ask and Intervention Strategies*. It also **shows how to use** each of the four parts of the CAIS. The five modules address the brain and cognition, cognitive abilities, the environment, communication, and the task and daily routines, respectively. The **title** and **content** of **Modules 2-5** in the online course **correspond** to the title and content of **each part** 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 Improving MI Practices at this link:  
**<https://www.improvingmipractices.org>**
- **Website with the CAIS:** The Michigan **Improving MI Practices website** at this link:  
**<https://www.improvingmipractices.org>**  
This website has the entire CAIS, this entire three-volume manual, and the CAIS Beyond Behavior online course. The **CAIS** is available in an **interactive format** and as pdf documents on this website as well. Many other resources regarding the brain, mental health, and cognition are on this website.