

The Cognitive Intervention Strategies

IV. EXPRESSIVE FUNCTIONS

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Look for ways to help this person’s brain tell their body what to do, by helping this person more easily:

- Coordinate their body parts to perform a task
- Express a thought

A. Does this person easily produce correct words when speaking, that is, words come easily, the words seem to match what this person is trying to say, and the words are actual words (even if inaccurate) rather than nonsense sounds?

STRATEGIES:

1. Remind yourself that any reduced ability to produce words is most likely due to changes in this person’s brain, affecting the ability to express themselves with language, to tell their mouth how to say the words, or their mouth’s ability to shape and say the words. It is rarely due to this person’s desire, intention or manipulation. Be compassionate, patient, and tolerant.
2. Remind yourself that this person’s ability to produce words may fluctuate or be unpredictable at any given moment. If you return a short time later, they may be able to produce particular words more easily.
3. Watch and listen to this person closely to discern what they may want to say at this moment. Adjust your communication, the environment, and the task to help them produce words more easily or to compensate for the decrease in their ability to express themselves.

EXAMPLES for #A.3:

- *Other CAIS strategies sections give specific suggestions for modifying your communication, the environment, and the task.*
4. Help this person relax so they can think and speak more easily.
 5. Avoid quizzing this person or putting them on the spot to produce a word or name. Pressure will likely make it more difficult to produce the word or name.
 6. Ask this person questions that elicit a “yes” or “no” response, or an opinion, rather than a question that requests facts.
 7. Have only people who are familiar to this person speaking with them.
 8. Avoid situations where this person must speak on the phone.
 9. Encourage this person to speak as often and as much as they would like.
 10. Avoid encouraging them to talk more than they want to.
 11. Avoid calling this person’s attention to mistakes they make when speaking. For example, if they say “no” when they mean “yes”, respond as though they said “yes”. If they use incorrect words with similar sounds, such as “pip” when they mean “pen”, respond as though they said “pen”.
 12. When this person swears without emotion in the middle of a sentence, ignore the swear words and act as though they did not swear. Swearing can sometimes occur with various brain changes.
 13. Discern what this person is trying to say when you aren’t sure. Provide suggestions of words until a word matches what they are trying to express.
 14. Allow this person time to produce words. Wait for them to complete a thought. Avoid rushing in too quickly to supply words. The fluency with which this person speaks may vary moment to moment. Watch them to see if they want help at this moment.
 15. Reduce reliance on words to interact with this person.

EXAMPLES for #A.15:

- *Use nonverbal gestures to encourage this person to gesture.*
 - *Avoid asking them for more words when they are responding to a question.*
16. When visiting, use activities with this person rather than conversations.

EXAMPLES for #A.16:

- *Knit, wind yarn, sort screws or playing cards, or look at photos together, rather than talk*

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about the grandchildren.

17. Have objects available for them to point to, rather than having to say the words.
18. Label locations of frequently used items, so they can refer to written cues to help them say a word.

EXAMPLES for #A.18:

- *Put a sign “socks” on their sock drawer, so they can easily see it and say “sock” when they are asking for their socks.*

19. Allow time to rest. Avoid fatigue, since fatigue can make speaking more difficult.
20. Remind yourself that this person may be able to understand words more easily than to produce words. Avoid underestimating their ability to understand what you are saying based on their ability to speak meaningful words. Watch this person and listen to what they say to discern how much they understand at a given moment.

EXAMPLES for #A.20:

- *Avoid speaking in front of this person as though they aren't there. Assume they can hear and understand you.*
- *Avoid speaking in a softer voice with the assumption this person can't hear or understand you. Assume they can hear and understand you.*

21. Help this person clearly hear and understand you, so they can more easily respond with relevant words. Watch this person and listen to what they say to discern how much they understand and hear at a given moment.

EXAMPLES for #A.21:

- *This person may not clearly hear every word you say or may misinterpret a word.*
- *The ability to hear clearly and to understand is often affected by background noise, including subtle and momentary conditions you may not easily notice, such as a car driving by, a door closing, a phone ringing, or a hand held in front of the speaker's mouth.*

B. Does this person easily produce correct words when writing, that is, the words flow easily, the words seem to match what this person is trying to write, and the words are actual words (even if inaccurate) rather than nonsense markings or no markings?

STRATEGIES:

1. Help this person relax so they can think and write more easily.
2. Encourage this person to write as often and as much as they would like.
3. Avoid encouraging them to write more than they want to.
4. Allow this person time to write the words. Wait for them to complete the task comfortably. Avoid rushing them.
5. Avoid expectations of writing unfamiliar words or concepts.
6. Encourage writing about pleasant topics or for pleasant purposes.
7. Arrange the setting so this person is physically comfortable with the writing process.

EXAMPLES for #B.7:

- *Adjust how high and close the chair and writing surface are.*
- *Position the paper, and offer a pen that is easy to see and use and is familiar to this person.*
- *Address any physical pain or discomfort in their hand, fingers, and arm.*

8. Avoid tasks or activities that require their writing.
9. Allow time to rest. Avoid fatigue, since fatigue can make writing more difficult.
10. Remind yourself that this person's ability to write words may fluctuate or be unpredictable at any given moment. If you return a short time later, they may be able to write particular words or their name more easily.
11. Remind yourself that any reduced ability to write words is most likely due to changes in this person's brain, affecting the ability to express themselves with written language, to tell their hand how to write the words, or their hand's ability to shape and “draw” the words. It is rarely due to this person's desire, intention or manipulation.

C. Does this person speak words as easily as they sing words? For evidence, note if they can sing a familiar song more easily than they can speak the words, or if they speak in

rhymes or in simple songs.

STRATEGIES:

1. Use music to help this person speak more easily, perform tasks, and feel comfortable.
2. Encourage this person to sing as much as they want to.
3. When walking with this person, use a marching rhythm to help them walk more easily.

EXAMPLES for #C.3:

- *Sing a song with a beat.*
 - *Have recorded music playing in the room or through ear devices.*
4. Use the same song and beat every time you walk to a particular destination.
 5. Match songs to the content of your comments or conversation.

EXAMPLES for #C.5:

- *Sing a song about food while inviting them to supper.*
 - *Sing a song about water while bathing.*
6. Sing a song as often as necessary while performing tasks.

EXAMPLES for #C.6:

- *Sing "My Bonnie Lies over the Ocean" as often as necessary while bathing, even if you sing it twenty times or more.*
7. If this person uses rhymes or rhythm to talk, avoid calling their attention to it or discouraging them. In fact, use a similar rhyming or rhythm when helping them with a task or in conversation if it is helpful.
 8. Sing information and instructions to this person to help them understand more easily and to reply more easily.
 9. Encourage this person to sing their comments, questions, or responses, rather than speaking them.

D. Does this person talk when asked to as easily as they talk spontaneously?

STRATEGIES:

1. Discern what conditions make it easier for this person to talk upon request.
2. Create a calm, quiet, comfortable environment by reducing noise, confusion, and the number of people in the room.
3. Have only one person talk with this person at a time.
4. Have only people who are familiar to this person speaking with them.
5. Help this person relax so they can think and speak more easily.
6. Make comments to this person, rather than asking questions.
7. Avoid quizzing this person or putting them on the spot to produce a word, name, or fact. Pressure will likely make it more difficult for them to produce the words or name.
8. Ask this person questions that elicit a "yes" or "no" response, or an opinion, rather than a question that requests facts.
9. Speak in a casual and relaxed way with this person, in a manner that reflects a conversation, rather than a set of instructions or requests that demand responses.
10. Avoid situations where this person must speak on the phone.

E. Does this person do a task as easily when asked to as they do spontaneously? (For example, do they stand up as easily when asked to as they do when they aren't asked to, that is, they do it spontaneously?)

STRATEGIES:

1. Remind yourself that any reduced ability to perform a task when asked is most likely due to changes in this person's brain, affecting the brain's ability to tell their body how or when to perform the task, or their body's ability to respond to the brain's instructions. It is rarely due to this person's desire or intention. The comment "They can do it when they want to." is usually false and a misinterpretation of this person's abilities and desires. There are many factors that affect a person's ability to perform a task at a given moment, including pain, fatigue, or environmental conditions that you may not easily notice. Be compassionate, patient, and tolerant.
2. Remind yourself that this person's ability to perform a task when asked may fluctuate or be unpredictable at any given moment. If you return a short time later, they may be able to perform a task when asked more easily.

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3. Watch this person closely to discern when they are having difficulty performing a task upon request at this moment. Adjust your communication, the environment, and the task to help them perform the task more easily or to compensate for the decrease in their ability to perform the task.

EXAMPLES for #E.3:

- *Other CAIS strategies sections give specific suggestions for modifying your communication, the environment, and the task.*
4. Help this person relax so they can perform tasks more easily.
 5. Allow time to rest. Avoid fatigue, since fatigue can make doing a task more difficult.
 6. Reduce the need to tell this person when to perform a task. Set up conditions that inform this person without words that it is time to perform the task.
 7. Reduce the need for words to invite this person to do the task.

EXAMPLES for #E.7:

- *Use gestures or make it an assumed part of a fun activity.*
8. Follow a consistent order of tasks every day, so this person can more easily anticipate the next task to perform without being told.
 9. Follow a consistent order of task steps every day, so this person can more easily anticipate the next task step to perform without being told.
 10. Model the task to be performed.

EXAMPLES for #E.10:

- *Sit at the table and eat your own dinner with this person when it is time to eat a meal.*
11. Help this person perform the task in the same room and in the same part of the room each time the task is performed.

EXAMPLES for #E.11:

- *Dress on one side of the bedroom and undress on the other side.*
12. Help this person perform a task in a room and in a way that matches the place and way this person performed this task throughout most of their adult life.
 13. Use task objects that are familiar to this person and are an expected part of this task.

F. Does this person do a task as easily when focusing on the task or thinking about how to do the task, as they do when doing the task automatically without thinking about it? (For example, do they stand as easily when asked to “stand up” as they do when asked to “come to lunch”; or do they get dressed as easily when reminded of each task step, as they do when being slightly distracted by a conversation about the weather?)

STRATEGIES:

1. Remind yourself that any reduced ability to perform a task when this person thinks about it is most likely due to changes in this person’s brain, affecting the ability to tell their body how or when to perform the task, or their body’s ability to respond to the brain’s instructions. It is rarely due to this person’s desire or intention. The comment “They can do it when they want to.” is usually false and a misinterpretation of this person’s abilities and desires.
2. Remind yourself that this person’s ability to perform a task when they think about it may fluctuate or be unpredictable at any given moment. If you return a short time later, they may be able to perform a task when they think about it more easily.
3. Watch this person closely to discern whether at this moment, they are having difficulty performing a task because they are thinking about it. Adjust your communication, the environment, and the task to help them perform the task more easily or to compensate for the decrease in their ability to perform the task.

EXAMPLES for #F.3:

- *Other CAIS strategies sections give specific suggestions for modifying your communication, the environment, and the task.*
4. Reduce the need to draw this person’s attention to a task or task step. Set up conditions that help this person perform the task without thinking about it. Remind yourself that it is easier to tie your shoe if you don’t think about each task step while doing it.
 5. Slightly distract this person while performing a task.

EXAMPLES for #F.5:

- *Sing songs or talk about the weather or upcoming activities while getting dressed.*
6. Reduce the need to tell this person how and when to perform a task. Set up conditions that inform this

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person without words that it is time to perform the task and how to do it.

7. Reduce the need for words to invite this person to do the task.

EXAMPLES for #F.7:

- *Use gestures or make it an assumed part of a fun activity.*
8. Use task objects that are familiar to this person and are an expected part of this task.
 9. Group tasks and task steps into chunks so this person performs them automatically. Discern how large a chunk or how small the task steps should be for this person to easily perform this task at this moment.

EXAMPLES for #F.9:

- *Find the balance between thinking of a task as “taking medicine” versus breaking the task down into steps of putting the pill on a spoon, then putting it in their mouth, then sipping water and swallowing it. Watch to see if this person gets stuck on a task step, such as the last step of swallowing the water and pill. It might be easier to simply take the medicine in one automatic activity that includes multiple steps.*
10. Ask this person to think about a larger goal, so that they don’t think about each step toward the goal.

EXAMPLES for #F.10:

- *Ask them to come to lunch, rather than asking them to stand and then asking them to walk toward the dining room.*
11. Match the size of the goal of the task to this person’s ability.

EXAMPLES for #F.11:

- *If the goal of taking a shower is too overwhelming, suggest a smaller goal of walking with you to the bathroom.*
12. Avoid pauses between tasks and between task steps, so that they flow smoothly into one another.
 13. Follow a consistent order of tasks every day, so this person can more easily anticipate the next task to perform without being told.
 14. Follow a consistent order of task steps every time a task is performed, so this person can more easily anticipate the next task step to perform without thinking about it.
 15. Model the task to be performed.

EXAMPLES for #F.15:

- *Sit at the table and eat your own dinner with this person when it is time to eat a meal.*
16. Help this person perform the task in the same room and in the same part of the room each time the task is performed.

EXAMPLES for #F.16:

- *Dress on one side of the bedroom and undress on the other side.*
17. Help this person perform a task in a room and in a way that matches the place and way this person performed this task throughout most of their adult life.
 18. Help this person relax so they can perform tasks more easily.
 19. Allow time to rest. Avoid fatigue, since fatigue can make doing a task more difficult.

G. Does this person move a body part as easily when asked to as they do spontaneously on their own?

STRATEGIES:

1. Ensure this person is not in pain or discomfort when moving part of their body at this moment in time. When there is pain, have a professional diagnose and make recommendations of treatments to reduce the pain and discomfort.
2. Draw this person’s attention to the body part to be moved.
3. Ask them to move it using a few simple words.
4. Touch the part of this person’s body that needs to move, while asking them to move it. Watch this person to make sure they are comfortable with your touch. Either stop touching or modify your touch until they are comfortable.
5. Help this person move by moving your hand on the body part and its joint, warming the joint with your hands or a warm washcloth, and cradling the joint while lifting it gently. Ask them to move a body part while they are relaxing in warm bath water.
6. Reduce the need to draw this person’s attention to the task of moving their body part. Set up conditions that help this person perform the movement without thinking about it.

EXAMPLES for #G.6:

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- *To help this person move their arm, offer them an object so that they reach for it without thinking about it.*
7. Slightly distract this person while moving their body part.
EXAMPLES for #G.7:
 - *Talk about the weather or upcoming activities while helping to move their arm into the sleeve of a shirt.*
 8. Help this person relax so they can move more easily.
 9. Follow every day a consistent routine and order of tasks, and a consistent order of task steps each time a task is performed, so this person can more easily anticipate when to move each body part without being told or without thinking about it.
 10. Help this person perform a task with the same body movements in the same room and in the same part of the room each time the task is performed.
 11. Help this person perform a task with the same body movements in a room and in a way that matches where and how they performed this task throughout most of their adult life.
 12. Watch this person closely to discern when they are having difficulty moving a part of their body upon request at this moment. Adjust your communication, the environment, and the task to help them move a part of their body upon request more easily or to compensate for the decrease in their ability to move a part of their body upon request.

EXAMPLES for #G.12:

- *Other CAIS strategies sections give specific suggestions for modifying your communication, the environment, and the task.*
13. Remind yourself that this person's ability to move a part of their body upon request may fluctuate or be unpredictable at any given moment. If you return a short time later, they may be able to move a part of their body upon request more easily.
 14. Remind yourself that any reduced ability to move a part of their body upon request may be due to changes in this person's brain, affecting the brain's ability to tell their body how or when to move, or their body's ability to respond to the brain's instructions. It may be the body part is contracted due to a medical condition or a reflex that is hard to intentionally modify. It is rarely due to this person's desire or intention. Be compassionate, patient, and tolerant.

H. Does this person move or manipulate an object as easily when asked to as they do spontaneously while doing a task such as eating?

STRATEGIES:

1. Help this person relax so they can use and manipulate objects more easily.
2. Draw this person's attention to the object to be moved or used.
3. Ask them with a few simple words to move or use it.
4. Hand this person the object that needs to be used, while asking them to use it.
5. Use the same objects this person has used throughout most of their adult life.
6. Use the same objects every day, so this person uses them automatically out of habit.
7. Reduce the need to draw this person's attention to an object or a task. Set up conditions that help this person use the object without thinking about it.
8. Slightly distract this person while using an object.

EXAMPLES for #H.8:

- *For example, talk about the weather or upcoming activities while peeling potatoes.*
9. Ask this person to focus on the task rather than the particular object, so that they don't think about the object or how to use it.

EXAMPLES for #H.9:

- *Ask them to eat lunch, rather than asking them to use the spoon, or ask them to peel the potatoes rather than saying, "Use this for the potatoes."*
10. Model the use of the object.

EXAMPLES for #H.10

- *Peel potatoes with this person.*
11. Avoid modifying the objects more than is necessary.

EXAMPLES for #H.11:

- *If an object must be modified to accommodate this person's changing needs, then do as*

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little modification as possible. Keep the color, size, shape, and purpose of the object the same.

- *If this person needs a plate with sides (a large shallow bowl) in order to scoop their food more easily with their spoon, then make the bowl look as much as possible like the plate this person is used to using.*
12. Modify an object to adapt to this person's changing needs when necessary and only if they can continue to use the object as it becomes less familiar.

EXAMPLES for #H.12:

- *Avoid modifying an object if it makes the object so unfamiliar to this person that they have to look at it and think about it, and maybe be unable to use it.*
 - *A spoon might be easier physically for this person to use if it had a thicker handle to accommodate their arthritis. But it may become useless to this person if they don't recognize it as a spoon or don't know how to use it. Or it may bring this person's attention to the spoon, preventing this person from being able to use the spoon automatically without thinking about it.*
 - *Sometimes it is better to keep an object the way it is, even if it becomes a little more difficult to use.*
13. Remind yourself that this person's ability to move or manipulate an object upon request may fluctuate or be unpredictable at any given moment. If you return a short time later, they may be able to move or manipulate an object more easily.
14. Watch this person closely to discern when they are having difficulty moving or manipulating an object at this moment. Adjust your communication, the environment, and the task to help them move and manipulate the object more easily or to compensate for the decrease in their ability to move and manipulate the object.

EXAMPLES for #H.14:

- *Other CAIS strategies sections give specific suggestions for modifying your communication, the environment, and the task.*
15. Remind yourself that any reduced ability to move or manipulate an object upon request is most likely due to changes in this person's brain, affecting the brain's ability to tell their body how or when to move or manipulate the object, or their body's ability to respond to the brain's instructions. It is rarely due to this person's desire or intention. Be compassionate, patient, and tolerant.