

BRIEF INSTRUCTIONS AND INTRODUCTION FOR THE COMMUNICATION CAIS

Questions to Ask and Intervention Strategies

This part of the CAIS with the *Communication Questions to Ask* and *Communication Intervention Strategies* considers your **communication** and interactions with a person. The other three parts of the CAIS consider this person's cognitive abilities, their environment, and their tasks and daily routines.

FOUR PARTS TO THE CAIS QUESTIONS TO ASK AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES:

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

On Website

The entire CAIS (in an interactive format and as pdf files), including all the Questions to Ask and the Intervention Strategies in all four parts of the CAIS, along with instructions and introductions (including these brief instructions and introductions for each part, and the complete instructions and introduction for the entire CAIS), as well as additional resources regarding the CAIS are available on the Michigan **Improving MI Practices (IMP) website** at this link: <https://www.improvingmipractices.org>

Introduction

Changes in the brain can affect a person's cognitive abilities, that is, their ability to think, understand, and respond to other people and to their environment. The brain may have more difficulty figuring out what to do in the absence of enough information or the right kind of information and support from someone else, or when someone is unfamiliar. A person with many cognitive needs may frequently depend on someone else (for example, **you**) for information about what to do, where to go, and how to feel reassured.

Most of how we communicate with another person is **not conscious**, that is, we are usually unaware of all the ways and all the messages we are communicating when we are interacting with another person. So much of our communication is **unintentional**.

However, communication (both intentional and unintentional) with a person plays a **major role** in this person's ability to understand, respond, perform a task, and to feel competent, respected, and comfortable.

This Communication part of the CAIS gives you suggestions of how to help this person by giving them information in a way they can understand and use. These suggestions also help you more easily understand and respond to this person. These intervention strategies can help make **tasks** and **interactions easier** for this person and you, and reduce distress or upsetting situations.

Instructions

The instructions here are very brief. See the subheading “For More Information” below to find more **detailed instructions**.

The *CAIS Communication Questions to Ask* identifies some **questions** you can ask yourself about yourself and this person, to better understand how well your communication with each other supports this person and their cognitive abilities. These questions can help you understand how your interactions might help or hinder a person, and how these interactions might be helping a person communicate more easily, feel competent and comfortable, as well as how they might be unintentionally contributing to a person’s distress, frustration, stress, or inability to do something, or to situations that are upsetting for this person, you, and others.

This *CAIS Communication Intervention Strategies* suggest ideas of some **intervention strategies** to help you adapt your communication with this person in a way that supports this person’s particular cognitive strengths and needs. They give a list of **specific** practical, concrete, **everyday** interventions for each question on the *CAIS Communication Questions to Ask*. Your response to the questions directs you to the list of interventions when your response suggests your communication can be more supportive for this person in some way.

The Communication CAIS consists of **three documents** with the **same questions** in each document:

1. Yes/No Response Format
2. Four Point Response Format
3. Intervention Strategies

Steps for Using the Communication CAIS

1. Complete the *CAIS Communication Questions to Ask* **Yes/No Response Format** or the **Four Point Response Format** by following the instructions on the first page of the CAIS Communication Questions. Choose the format you prefer.
2. For each of your responses to the questions that is a “No” or a “1” or “2” see the same question in the CAIS Communication **Intervention Strategies**. All of the questions in the Questions to Ask are included verbatim in the Intervention Strategies.
3. **Review** the **intervention** ideas listed in the CAIS Intervention Strategies for each of the questions identified in step #2 above. **Choose** interventions to try that seem to make sense for this person and you at this time.
4. **Evaluate** the effectiveness of the interventions you’ve chosen by completing the CAIS Communication **Questions to Ask** again.
5. **Keep using these interventions** whenever you are with this person as long as they are helpful.
6. Do steps #1-5 **periodically** or whenever you recognize a **change** needs to be made, or a

change has occurred in this person's cognitive abilities or in their situation or conditions.

It may be helpful to go through these steps with someone else or a team rather than by yourself.

The CAIS is **individualized** to a particular person at a particular time. The abilities and desires of this person will be different from every other person and will also **fluctuate** and **change** over time. It is important therefore to ask the CAIS Questions **frequently** and to frequently **modify** intervention strategies to adapt to the changes. As a person's cognitive abilities and circumstances change, your communication with this person will need to change.

It is important to change the interventions **only when, how, and as much as is necessary** and **helpful** to this person, however. **Consistency** and **predictability** in you, your words, and movements will help this person be able to understand and respond to you more easily and to feel comfortable with you. The communication intervention strategies address this in detail.

When your communication with this person reflects respect, warmth, and calm support, this person can more easily feel comfortable and competent. The Communication questions and intervention suggestions are intended to **support you** by giving ideas of how to continue improving your communication and relationship with this person.

For More Information

- The CAIS and all three volumes of this manual, including all of the 43 CAIS handouts, and all instructions and CAIS resources are on the **website Improving MI Practices** at <https://www.improvingmipractices.org>
- The CAIS is available in an **interactive format** and as pdf files on the **Improving MI Practices** website at <https://www.improvingmipractices.org>
- The **first page** of the *Communication CAIS Questions to Ask* in this Volume II has a **brief** introduction and instructions for asking the questions and finding the interventions.
- The more **complete** and **detailed instructions** and **introduction** for the entire CAIS (all four parts) are in this Volume II under the heading "Complete Instructions and Introduction for the CAIS Questions to Ask and CAIS Intervention Strategies".
- More information about the CAIS is in both the "**Introduction to Volume II**" and in the **introduction** section of the "Complete Instructions and Introduction for the CAIS Questions to Ask and CAIS Intervention Strategies" in this Volume II.
- **Chapters 1-5** in **Volume I** explain the concepts and give examples from the CAIS. They also give additional tips. **Chapter 1** focuses on the **brain and cognition**. **Chapter 4** focuses on **communication**.
- The 43 **CAIS Handouts** in Volume I give more in-depth information and intervention suggestions about the brain, cognitive abilities, and communication, and a variety of other related topics.
- An **online course** of five one-hour modules called "Beyond Behavior: The CAIS" explores concepts and gives examples and tips from the CAIS. It also **shows how to use the CAIS**. **Module 4** focuses on communication. **Module 1** focuses on the brain and cognition. It is available for you to view or take on the Michigan **website Improving MI Practices** at <https://www.improvingmipractices.org>