

Cognitive Impairment Intervention Protocol (CIIP) for Cognitive Functions of a Person with Cognitive Impairment: III. EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

Look for ways to help this person categorize, organize, manipulate, and use information received, by helping her/him to more easily:

- Recognize the importance of various pieces of information
- Use information to solve problems
- Use information to make decisions and plan

A. Does this person pay attention to, and stay focused on a task, an object, or what I am saying?

1. Reduce distractions by modifying the environment, the task, and your interactions with this person, since this person may be easily distracted by other stimuli in the environment, even when she/he wants to pay attention. Remind yourself that her/his brain's ability to screen out or ignore irrelevant stimuli might be impaired.
2. This person may find her/his mind wandering when trying to concentrate, even when there are no distractions. Remind yourself that this person may have difficulty sustaining focus and attention on a task, object, or words if she/he has trouble concentrating. Help this person sustain focus and concentration by modifying the environment, the task, and your interactions with her/him.
3. Discern this person's level of interest or desire, at this time, regarding a task, object, or what you are saying. If she/he is disinterested, then try again at another time.
4. Present tasks, objects and comments only when this person is emotionally and physically ready to pay attention. For example, avoid presenting them when she/he is in pain or is emotionally distressed.
5. Get this person's attention before presenting a task, object, or comment.
6. Talk and/or touch this person, and look into her/his eyes, before presenting a task, object, or request to help her/him have time to shift attention to you.
7. Be the strongest stimulus in the environment, both before and throughout your interaction with this person
8. Get and keep this person's attention and focus through touch (when appropriate), placing your face close to hers/his, maintaining eye contact, speaking more loudly, or positioning yourself and contrasting with your surroundings, so as to be more visible to her/him. Avoid calling or talking to her/him from across the room.
9. When using touch to keep this person's attention, watch this person to ensure she/he is comfortable with the touch. Occasionally gently squeeze or stroke her/his hand, arm, or leg to draw her/his attention back to you or to help her/him relax.
10. When this person is engaged in a task, avoid distracting her/him with unnecessary interactions, such as asking questions or touching.
11. Avoid environmental distractions, such as noise and visual stimuli. For example, close the door, turn off the telephone ringer, and reduce the number of items in the area of the task, such as excess dishes from the dining room table.

12. When speaking to this person, make your most important point first while she/he is still focusing on your words.
13. Use short words and sentences.
14. Present one idea and request at a time.
15. Allow enough time to process each point you are making, but a short enough time to prevent her/him from forgetting or losing track of the thread of the conversation.
16. When this person is engaged in a behavior that is distressing to her/himself or others, consider allowing the behavior to continue for a short time, until it gradually stops due to this person's reduced ability to concentrate and focus on the task or to complete the behavior. For example, if someone is going into a room and looking through someone else's things, discern if it is more effective to wait until the person stops on her/his own before attempting other interventions, such as persuading her/him to stop the behavior or distracting her/him with some other activity.

B. Does this person figure out what I mean, even if she/he can't hear or understand me very well?

1. Remind yourself that if this person is an older adult, she/he may have age-related hearing and vision loss. Enhance this person's ability to hear you by presenting information in a low pitched and calm voice, slowly and clearly enunciated, and after you have her/his attention. Reduce noise and distractions in the environment.
2. Talk to this person when she/he is calm, relaxed, and well rested. Remind yourself that emotional distress and fatigue will likely decrease this person's ability to figure out what you are saying.
3. Discern if this person can hear you well enough to understand you.
4. Discern if this person can interpret what you are saying by guessing your content, even if she/he couldn't hear you. For example, you may see evidence of impaired ability to analyze a situation and interpret your words, if she/he says "drecked?" when you have said "dressed" when she/he is in pajamas.
5. Provide an obvious context for this person. For example, orient this person to the time and situation by saying it is morning and that she/he is in pajamas, before offering to help her/him get dressed.
6. Use nonverbal interactions, such as gestures and touch to communicate with this person. Watch her/him to ensure she/he is comfortable with your touch. Remind yourself that all touch is a form of communication. Use touch to help her/him understand what you are asking. For example, touch her/his body part when asking her/him to move it or if it hurts.
7. Modify your interactions and the environment to better accommodate sensory changes, since this person may have an increased dependence on sensory functions when her/his brain cannot compensate for impaired sensory functions.

C. Does this person remember what she/he sees, hears, or figures out?

1. Present information to this person in a way that increases her/his ability to remember it. For example, present information so she/he can both see and hear it, such as a towel when you say it is time for a shower.
2. Help this person to relax when she/he is receiving and trying to remember information, so she/he can think and remember more easily.

3. Present information when this person is comfortable, free of pain, and is emotionally calm. Avoid giving her/him information when she/he is distressed.
4. When giving information, get and keep this person's attention and focus through touch, (when appropriate), placing your face close to hers/his, maintaining eye contact, speaking more loudly, or positioning yourself and contrasting with your surroundings, so as to be more visible to her/him.
5. Ensure this person has adequately received any information to be remembered. That is, ensure that she/he has correctly seen and heard the information when it was initially presented. For example, when you said you would help her/him with a shower, make sure she/he heard "shower" and not "flower".
6. Ensure this person has adequately interpreted the information to be remembered. That is, ensure that she/he has correctly interpreted the information when it was initially presented. For example, she/he may have heard "shower" but didn't realize you meant she/he was going to take a shower, rather than you.
7. When this person's response seems inappropriate, see if she/he is remembering a piece of information incorrectly or is remembering different information than you expected and therefore is basing her/his response on an inaccurate assumption. For example, when you said you would help her/him with a shower, you were brushing the dog, and she/he assumed you were intending to give the dog a shower.
8. Present any information she/he needs to remember in a clear and concise manner. Avoid giving information when there is distraction, or while you are doing something else. Avoid giving confusing information or unintended cues. She/he may remember what she/he saw, instead of what she/he heard. For example, she/he may remember irrelevant information rather than the intended information when you told her/him, while clearing the breakfast dishes, that you would help her/him with a shower in a few minutes. She/he may remember the breakfast dishes she/he saw rather than what she/he heard you say, causing her/him to think she/he is supposed to eat rather than shower.
9. Present visual cues when telling this person information to remember. For example, when telling this person she/he will be going to the doctor in 20 minutes, give her/him a note with the same information.
10. Repeat suggestions, explanations, information, and requests to this person as often as is necessary to compensate for impaired memory. Use the same words when repeating them.
11. When this person asks the same question frequently in a short period of time, remind yourself that a repeated question may be due to forgetting that she/he had asked it or forgetting the answer. It could also be due to this person thinking, consciously or not, that it had been some time since she/he had last asked it. If it is due to memory loss, then simply repeat your response. Give the same response in the same way that you did when your response first satisfied her/him. For example, if she/he asks repeatedly when lunch is, respond with the same words, tone of voice, and hand gestures you used to respond when she was satisfied with your response. By simply repeating it, you will relieve your own frustration and fatigue. Avoid the temptation to vary your response until you come up with the one that stops the questions once and for all. Also, provide a note to remind her/him, invite her/him to help you make lunch, or offer her/him some food now if she/he is hungry. Respond in a warm reassuring tone of voice.
12. Be as consistent and predictable as possible. Avoid changes in the environment, schedule of events, the way tasks are performed, who helps this person with tasks, and the way in which caregivers and other people interact with her/him.

13. Use notes and other written cues. For example, use signs to inform this person where things are and when activities will occur.
14. Explain what you are doing and orient this person as often as necessary.
15. Avoid quizzing this person or putting her/him on the spot to produce a word or name. Pressure will likely make it more difficult for her/him to remember the word or name.
16. Introduce and identify people, even when she/he has met them before. Be subtle if this person might be embarrassed about not remembering names or recognizing who people are. Avoid quizzing this person or asking her/him to guess.
17. Give this person enough time to remember and respond during a conversation or to a question.
18. Avoid the temptation to test this person's memory or to encourage her/him to practice remembering, for example, with memory games, unless she/he particularly enjoys them.
19. Remind yourself that the memory might be there in the person's mind, but she/he just isn't finding it at the moment. Help orient this person to a change in topic, activity, or expectation, so she/he can "place" or find the different topic, fact, or skill in her/his mind. When changing the topic of conversation, for example, provide information about the topic before making your point about the topic, such as when talking about a relative starting a new job, say "Bill's daughter Mary also has a new job. Mary said she is sorry she chose the job she did." This gives time and orienting information to help this person shift from the first relative to Mary. It also helps her/him to focus on and to "place" in her/his mind who Mary is and what previous information she/he had about Mary's job situation.
20. Remind yourself that memory is very complex. Her/his ability to remember information from long ago may be more intact than her/his memory for events that occurred recently or a few moments ago. She/he may also be able to remember certain types of information more easily than others or at certain times of day more easily than at others. Information or skills that she/he used frequently throughout her/his life will likely be retained longer. For example, an engineer may be able to take apart and reassemble appliances even when very cognitively impaired.
21. Present tasks, task objects and methods of performing tasks in ways that are familiar to this person and are as similar as possible to the way she/he performed the tasks throughout most of her/his adult life. Rely on the skills and information this person has used throughout most of her/his adult life.
22. Ask this person questions with a "yes" or "no" response or that invite opinions, rather than facts.
23. Remind yourself that this person's ability to remember may fluctuate or be unpredictable at any given moment. If you return a short time later, she/he may be able to remember more easily.
24. When this person has difficulty remembering, adjust your communication, the environment, and the task to help her/him remember more easily or to compensate for her/his memory loss. (Please see other sections of this CIIP for specific suggestions.)
25. Remind yourself that this reduced ability to remember is most likely due to changes in this person's brain's ability to remember or to express her/himself. It is rarely due to this person's desire, intention or to manipulation. Comments such as "She/he can remember what or when she/he wants to" is usually false and a misinterpretation of this person's abilities or desires.

D. Does this person easily make simple decisions, for example stating a preference or choosing among options, such as eggs rather than oatmeal for breakfast?

1. If this person has difficulty making decisions, present options to her/him.
2. Frequently assess this person's ability to recognize and choose among options.
3. Adapt your approach and presentation of options to this person's ability to choose among options. Remind yourself this person can make choices and express preferences regardless of her/his level of confusion or ability to process information, even when severely impaired.
4. Simplify your presentation of this person's options when she/he is making a choice, especially as she/he becomes increasingly confused and less able to understand multiple, unfamiliar, or abstract options.
5. Try to be creative when discerning what she/he might want or need.
6. If this person is nonverbal, encourage her/him to point to what she/he wants.
7. List specific options available. For example, say, "Would you like eggs, cereal, or a muffin for breakfast?" rather than "What would you like for breakfast?"
8. Use words that are familiar and recognizable to this person.
9. List fewer options at a time. For example, say, "Would you like eggs or cereal for breakfast?" rather than "Would you like eggs, cereal, or a muffin for breakfast?"
10. Present each option as a "yes/no" choice, when necessary. For example, say, "Would you like eggs for breakfast?" and then, regardless of her/his response say, "Would you like oatmeal for breakfast?" in order to better understand what her/his desires might be.
11. Show this person the options rather than simply naming them. For example, show her/him eggs and cereal, to make the options more concrete and visible.
12. Help this person feel or taste the options, if she/he is unable to see or recognize objects. For example, put a small taste of each option in her/his mouth and watch for her/his response to each option.
13. Present options slowly enough to allow time for her/him to process the information, but quickly enough so she/he doesn't forget the options presented.
14. Discern this person's preferences, needs, and goals at this moment in time, to increase the chances the options will be desirable.
15. If this person appears unable to make a decision or choose an option at this time, present the opportunity or choices again later.

E. Does this person easily shift from one activity to another?

1. Give this person enough time before and during the shift, to move from one thought or activity to another. For example, enter this person's visual space and wait for her/him to focus on you before speaking; when offering to help this person take a bath or shower, allow her/him time to process your words before handing her/him a robe or beginning to undress her/him.
2. Assume this person needs time and help shifting focus, even when she/he seems to be uninvolved in any activity, such as staring off into space or sitting with her/his eyes closed.
3. Avoid changes in routine, expectations, the environment, the tasks, and your interactions with this person.

4. Avoid rapid or unexpected shifts in conversation, activities, or expectations. For example, when passing this person in a hall or room, avoid saying a brief "Hi" and short comment before moving on. Remind yourself that this person may need to use too much energy to shift her/his focus and orientation to you. If you don't have time to help her/him shift gradually, then simply pass by with only a smile. If while passing she/he and you establish eye contact and it is clear she/he has shifted her/his attention to you, then slow down and smile. If she/he says something to you, then stop and say a few words in response to her/him comment. Stay and converse as long as you are able.
5. Orient this person to the shift in focus or activity. For example, orient this person to the time and situation by saying it is morning and that she/he is in pajamas, before offering to help her/him get dressed. When changing the topic of conversation, provide information about the topic before making your point about the topic. For example, when talking about a relative going on vacation, say "Bill's daughter Mary is also going on vacation. Mary said she is sorry she chose Florida instead of California." This gives time and orienting information to help this person shift from the first relative to Mary. It also helps her/him to focus on and to "place" in her/his mind who Mary is and what previous information she/he had about Mary's vacation.
6. Avoid assuming this person doesn't want to do a task, if she/he doesn't respond immediately to your suggestion. Assume she/he may need time to shift her/his focus to your suggestion or to the new task.
7. Show this person other people who are doing a task before suggesting she/he do it. For example, bring this person to the dining table after other people are already there, so this person can more quickly see it is time to eat lunch.

F. Does this person easily get started on a task or a response?

1. Remind yourself that this person's apparent lethargy or lack of initiative is most likely due to impaired brain functioning or an emotional disorder, such as depression. It is rarely due to laziness or this person's intention.
2. Have this person professionally diagnosed to discern how much her/his reduced initiative is due to impaired brain functioning, to an emotional disorder such as depression, or to something else. For example, if this person seems to be uninterested in engaging in most activities or stays in bed or lounges around, consult a medical professional for diagnosis and recommendations.
3. When this person's reduced initiative is due to impaired brain functioning, compensate for the reduced initiative by providing activities and suggestions. Use gentle and respectful humor, persuasion, and creativity to encourage her/him to participate in an activity or task. Participate in the task with her/him. Use objects of interest, aromas, and music in the environment to invite and stimulate her/him.
4. When an emotional disorder such as depression appears to be the cause of reduced initiative, seek medical advice and treatment.
5. When boredom seems to be the cause of the reduced initiative, introduce engaging stimulation and activities this person can easily do, rather than relying on conversation or a spectator type of stimulation, such as TV or watching someone else do an activity.
6. Remind yourself that this person's difficulty with initiation, that is, getting started on a specific task or movement, is most likely due to impaired brain functioning. It is rarely due to obstinacy or resistance or this person's desire or intention. Be compassionate and patient.

7. When this person has difficulty getting started on a task, such as standing up, allow adequate time between the request or invitation and the expectation of a response. Wait and/or repeat the request as often as necessary to allow adequate time and to help her/him remember the request.
8. Initiate the task for this person, so she/he can then continue it. For example, when she/he is sitting in front of a plate of food at the dining table, pick up the fork, put it in her/his hand and move her/his hand toward her/his mouth until she/he begins to do it on her/his own.
9. Avoid assuming this person doesn't want to do a task, if she/he doesn't respond immediately to your suggestion. Assume she/he may need time to get started on the task.
10. When this person stops or hesitates before entering doorways or small rooms, patiently encourage her/him to continue. Say that you are with her/him. Encourage her/him to focus on a line on the floor in the room and to approach it or step over it. Stand in front of her/him and ask her/him to focus on your face while walking forward. Have someone else enter ahead of this person. Try a little distraction to help her/him avoid noticing the doorway or room as much.

G. Does this person know how much time has passed, for example that she/he has been sitting at the dinner table for only two minutes rather than 20 minutes?

1. Have accurate clocks available throughout the environment.
2. Encourage this person to wear a watch and to use it.
3. Have signs or notes that indicate the starting and ending time of a task.
4. Tell this person verbally, but in a subtle way to avoid embarrassment, what time it is and how much time has passed since she/he began the task. For example, if she/he leaves the dining table within minutes of sitting down, say "It's 12:00 noon, should we take 10 more minutes to eat?"
5. Distract this person by singing or engaging in a lively conversation to prevent her/him from noticing the task or becoming uncomfortable with a perception that a lot of time is passing.
6. Inform this person as the task progresses what is being done and how close it is to being completed, so she/he focuses more on the task and less on how she/he feels or the passing of time. For example, show her/him the soap on her/his body when she/he wants to leave the shower too soon.
7. When this person asks the same question frequently in a short period of time, remind yourself that a repeated question may be due to this person thinking, consciously or not, that it had been some time since she/he had last asked it, rather than forgetting that she/he had asked it or forgetting the answer she/he had received. For example, if she/he asks repeatedly when lunch is, tell her/him that you haven't forgotten to call her/him, or invite her/him to help you make lunch, or offer her/him some food now if she/he is hungry.
8. When this person confuses the amount of time between events in the past, ignore the confusion and focus on the feelings and the point she/he is trying to make. For example, when she/he, who is now 90 years old, says she/he needs to go home to feed her/his children, reassure her/him that the children are being fed well and that she/he did a wonderful job of raising them, rather than saying the children are now adults and don't need to be fed. If she/he currently thinks of her/himself as 50 years younger than she/he is now, focus on her/his concerns rather than on correcting the facts of time and history.

H. Does this person recognize her/his own abilities, needs, desires, and mistakes?

1. Remind yourself that this reduced ability to recognize her/his own abilities, needs, desires, and mistakes, that is, a lack of insight, is most likely due to impaired brain functioning. It is rarely due to denial or this person's desire or intention. Be compassionate and tolerant.
2. Remind yourself that this person may not know that she/he knows something. For example, she/he may know which chair she/he always sits in for lunch, but may say she/he doesn't know, even as she/he walks to the chair on her/his own and sits down.
3. When this person doesn't seem to know she/he is impaired, or doesn't seem to realize how impaired she/he is, or doesn't understand the implications of her/his impairment, avoid calling her/his attention to the impairment or telling or explaining to her/him what she/he is able or unable to do.
4. Avoid giving this person information that is untrue. Withhold information that might be unnecessary, confusing, or painful, but ensure that the information you do give is accurate and honest.
5. Avoid asking questions that require self analysis and insight, such as "What do you want?" "What are you doing?" "Where are you going?" "Why are you crying?" "What is wrong?" "How are you feeling?" or "Why are you doing that?"
6. Discern what this person is trying to do or say and offer options or suggestions. For example, "Are you looking for your purse?" "You look sad." or "Let's find some tea."
7. Remind yourself that this person may ask for one thing when she/he actually wants or needs something else. For example, she/he may say she/he wants to go home, even when she/he is sitting in the home she/he has owned for 50 years. What she/he actually wants may be to use the bathroom, eat, leave a confusing environment or noise, do a task she/he feels she/he should be doing, such as feeding her/his children, be comforted because she/he is anxious and uncertain, get exercise, be relieved from boredom, or to return to her/his childhood home.
8. When this person says something that seems surprising or inappropriate, avoid correcting her/him or asking her/him for explanations, especially at night. Talk conversationally with her/him to discern if she/he is unclear about what is a dream, a memory, or a real event.
9. Discern how this person is feeling by observing her/his behaviors and comments. Avoid asking her/him questions about her/his feelings, such as "Are you feeling sad?"
10. Avoid confronting this person with her/his mistakes or inaccurate statements. Discreetly fix the mistake without calling attention to it. For example, when this person puts the milk pitcher in the oven, quietly move it to the refrigerator.
11. Avoid correcting this person's beliefs or statements. For example, say "That must be upsetting. I'll help you." rather than "No, they weren't stolen. You just put them somewhere and forgot."
12. When she/he makes a mistake in public, discern what she/he actually wants and discreetly help this person move to an appropriate space. For example, if she/he removes her/his clothes because she/he is hot or the clothes are uncomfortable against her/his skin, adjust the air temperature or help her/him to the bedroom to change clothes. Avoid telling her/him to stop the behavior. Instead, respond to her/his need or desire.
13. Avoid calling attention to this person's swearing or incorrect use of words. For example, when she/he says "No" when meaning "Yes", simply respond as though she/he said "Yes".
14. Encourage and reassure this person by telling her/him how well she/he is doing as a task progresses.

15. Avoid assuming she/he knows what she/he needs or wants, or will take initiative to ask for what she/he needs or wants. For example, when necessary assess for pain without asking questions. Do not wait until she/he asks for pain medication before giving it to her/him.
16. Help her/him recognize her/his needs and desires.
17. Use cues or information that draws this person emotionally rather than simply cognitively. For example, rather than using a sign that says "den" with an arrow to help this person come to a quiet den area when she/he feels the room she/he is in is too noisy, place a plant with a low-light cozy lamp in a spot that is visible from the noisy room. As she/he approaches the plant and lamp, she/he may be able to see the den and be drawn to it. This allows this person to meet her/his own needs emotionally without having to recognize them cognitively or to understand the word cues.
18. When this person tries to do something that is unsafe, or something she/he is not capable of doing, distract her/him or ask her/him to help you with something else, rather than telling her/him "No, you can't do that! You'll hurt yourself."
19. Observe this person closely to discern what she/he can do and understand. Avoid overestimating or underestimating this person's abilities. Assess frequently since her/his abilities will change over time and possibly from moment to moment.
20. Observe this person closely and frequently to discern her/his needs, goals, and desires, and to recognize when they change.
21. Find out what goals she/he has had throughout most of her/his adult life. Ask people who knew her/him well what kind of person she/he seemed to want to be. Discern what characteristics were high priorities for her/him when trying to be successful as a person, such as accomplished, compassionate, admired, busy, elegant, and socially popular.
22. Remind yourself that this person can make choices and express preferences even when very severely impaired. Be creative when discerning what she/he might want or need.
23. When this person is unable to recognize or communicate desires, present options in a way she/he can understand and can reject them or indicate preferences. For example, if this person is nonverbal or unable to see or recognize objects, try putting a small taste of each food option in her/his mouth and watch for her/his response to each option.
24. At all times, watch and listen to this person to see how she/he is reacting to what you are doing and saying. Immediately change what you are doing or how you are doing it, when you see or hear negative reactions.
25. Adapt your presentation of options over time and moment to moment to accommodate changes in this person's ability to recognize her/his own needs, desires, and preferences. Remind yourself this person can make choices and express preferences regardless of her/his level of confusion or ability to understand and process information.

I. Does this person stop doing a task or focusing on a thought when it is completed or when it needs to stop?

1. Remind yourself that this person may not know when a task or thought is completed or may not be able to stop her/himself when it is completed. For example, she/he may continue to wipe a table long after it is clean, say a sentence over and over again, or put on multiple shirts when dressing.
2. Keep daily routines and tasks as consistent and simple as possible. Avoid changes. Perform a task the same way each time with the same task objects, people, and order of task steps, so she/he can develop a sense of what the task consists of and when it is time to move onto the next task.

3. Discern how important it is to prevent this person from continuing to do a task or focusing on a thought, even when it is completed. If there is no harm in this person continuing the task or thought, then focus on what the person is feeling and respond to the feeling, or wait until she/he stops the task and thought before initiating another with her/him.
4. When she/he needs to stop doing a task, thought, or behavior, discern the reason for her/his continuing the behavior, thought, or task. Respond to her/his needs or desires and feelings, rather than focusing on the task, thought, or behavior. Avoid drawing her/his attention to the behavior.
5. Gently inform this person, clearly and kindly when the task is done or an activity is over.
6. Gently remove a task object or take this person's hand when the task is done.
7. Help this person shift attention and focus from this task or thought to the next task and thought. Distract her/him, use humor, or move to another room with her/him.
8. When you need to quickly stop this person from continuing a task or behavior, remain calm, reassuring, and comforting. Avoid using many words or a loud voice. Avoid arguing or rationalizing. Avoid touching her/him unless it is helpful or necessary. For example, if this person is reaching out to strike another person, place yourself between this person and the other person about to be struck. If she/he is about to pour boiling water onto her/his hand instead of a cup, remove or at least shift the direction of the tea kettle spout.
9. Respond positively to a persistent thought or idea, even when she/he needs to stop the thought or behavior. Avoid saying "No" or "Stop", since that would require this person to rapidly shift out of the idea or behavior. Offer a different idea, repeat key words she/he is using and initiate a conversation about them, or suggest you and she/he do something else first. For example, when she/he says she/he wants to go outside when it is too cold or dangerous, say "That would be fun. For now, I would like your help with supper." Then immediately engage her/him in the task to help shift her/his focus. Or ask her/him questions about when she/he used to go hiking in the mountains in the past.
10. When this person has problems with collecting too many things or putting things in places she/he cannot find later, ask if she/he would like help with cleaning or straightening up. If she/he refuses, and it is very important to reduce the number of items collected or hidden, quietly find or remove items a few at a time when she/he is out of the room.

J. Does this person easily control her/his impulsive responses to her/his own thoughts and feelings, by censoring, delaying, or pacing the responses?

1. When this person does or says something that immediately comes to her/his mind without first considering it and it offends you, remind yourself that this impulsive behavior is likely due to changes in this person's brain. It is rarely due to this person's true desire or intention. Avoid taking her/his actions or comments personally.
2. When this person says something that offends another person, ignore the comment and reassure the offended person.
3. Reassure family members and friends from the past, that these impulsive comments or behavior most likely do not reflect feelings this person has long held and hidden. They are more likely immediate impulsive reactions to current events and this person's distressing situation. This person may have intense feelings of anxiety and anger about her/his cognitive impairment that are then directed at other people.

4. Watch this person closely to see when she/he might say or do something without first "counting to 10" or considering the consequences. Gently distract her/him or remove the trigger for the thought or reaction. For example, if she/he is about to swear or say "her hair is ugly" about someone who is walking by, comment on the flowers in the vase or this person's own hair.
5. Remind yourself that even when she/he appears to be aware of what she/he is doing, it might not mean she/he can control it, or that she/he can understand or analyze it quickly enough to prevent the action. For example, if this person squeezes a caregiver's breast as she leans over to adjust something in this person's chair, then winks and grins at another caregiver, it doesn't mean this person could have easily controlled the behavior. She/he could have squeezed the breast before she/he could stop her/himself, but knew afterwards that she/he shouldn't have done it. Deciding that it was wrong took longer than did the action to squeeze. This person's next thought might have been, "but it felt good", so she/he winked at another caregiver. This person may not have been able to quickly appreciate the consequences of the wink and squeeze or the subtle differences between the effects of acting on a sexual impulse versus merely saying or thinking a sexual thought. She/he may not recognize the extent to which various actions are inappropriate, or the risks of offending caregivers she/he depends on.
6. Help this person to get adequate rest, since impulsivity might increase with fatigue.
7. Help this person stay busy to avoid boredom, irritation, and anxiety which could increase impulsive behaviors and comments that are offensive.
8. Modify the environment, tasks, and your interactions to prevent misinterpretation or unintended invitations for impulsive behaviors and comments.

K. Does this person know and follow a sequence of task steps or pieces of information or logic?

1. Keep tasks steps, person assisting, and task objects as consistent and familiar as possible. Avoid changing the order of the task steps from day to day.
2. Order the task steps in the same order she/he has performed the task throughout most of her/his adult life.
3. Discern when an order to task steps is necessary, and suggest the conventional order only when necessary. For example, if this person puts clothes on in an unusual order while dressing, such as one pant leg on before she/he puts each sock on, avoid calling her/his attention to it, unless the change in order confuses her/him further.
4. Write the order of task steps in a note or sign that this person can follow as she/he performs the task. Make sure this person can read and understand what she/he reads when she/he sees the note or sign.
5. Present each task step one at a time.
6. After each task step is done, tell this person what task step comes next, if necessary.
7. Avoid rationalizing or trying to convince this person when she/he is confused or disagrees with your logic. Instead, nurture her/his trust in you and your judgment and suggest alternative explanations or options.

8. Avoid correcting this person when she/he confuses the chronology of historical events in her/his own life. Ignore the confusion and focus on the feelings and the point she/he is trying to make. For example, when she/he who is now 90 years old, says she/he needs to go home to feed her/his children, reassure her/him that the children are being fed well and that she/he did a wonderful job of raising them, rather than saying the children are now adults and don't need to be fed. If she/he currently thinks of her/himself as 50 years younger than she/he is now, focus on her/his concerns rather than on correcting the facts of time and history.

L. Does this person do more than one thing or think more than one thought at a time?

1. When approaching this person, do only one thing at a time. Move into her/his visual field, then wait until she/he focuses on you, then touch if she/he welcomes touch, then speak. Begin speaking with a comment, such as "Hello, Mary" before asking her/him a question.
2. Present only one idea or one task step at a time. Avoid sentences with multiple ideas. Say "Let's walk to the bathroom." rather than "Let's go to the bathroom and take a shower."
3. Pause long enough between single-idea sentences to allow time for this person to process the idea before introducing the next idea.
4. Avoid using many words when this person is emotionally distressed, so she/he doesn't have to think and feel at the same time.
5. Avoid asking her/him to do something when she/he is emotionally distressed. For example avoid asking her/him to stop a behavior when she/he is focused on her/his emotions, since it may be difficult for her/him to figure out how to stop an action and to feel intense emotions at the same time.
6. Avoid calling attention to her/his behavior since it may be difficult for her/him to cope with embarrassment about the behavior and change the behavior at the same time.
7. Have one person assist at a time.
8. Help this person prioritize among a variety of options or task steps, since she/he may have difficulty holding all the options or task steps in her/his mind and choosing which one to do at the moment.

M. Does this person know what something is even when she/he can't see, hear, touch, taste, or smell it?

1. Remind yourself that this person may have difficulty imagining an object when she/he can't see, hear, touch, taste, or smell it. To her/him, it may not exist if it isn't in front of her/him.
2. Keep options concrete, if this person has difficulty creating a picture in her/his mind of an object. For example, show this person eggs and cereal as options for breakfast rather than simply showing her/him a menu or asking her/him which of those she/he wants.
3. Tell this person what an object is, if it is difficult to recognize or seems to be invisible. For example, tell her/him there is water in a glass even when the glass is clear, since the water can't be seen. When the glass is opaque, tell and show her/him what is inside it.
4. Provide calm and quiet areas within sight of caregivers. This person may want to be in a less confusing place, such as a bedroom, but may also want other people visible for security and in case she/he needs help.

N. Does this person's expression of emotions match the intensity of her/his emotions?

1. When this person expresses an emotion strongly, such as tears or appears sad, tell her/him "You look sad." If she/he replies, "No, I'm fine," it might indicate her/his expression of emotion is not matching the actual intensity of her/his emotion. Respond to her/his actual level of emotion and do not call further attention to her/his expression of emotion.
2. If she/he doesn't know how she/he feels, even when expressing emotion, reassure her/him and move to another topic.
3. Avoid asking her/him why she/he is feeling the emotion, since she/he may not know.
4. When she/he appears very angry, discern the actual level of intensity of the anger and respond to the actual level. For example, if a little irritation is producing profuse swearing, respond to the irritation without drawing attention to her/his swearing.
5. Remind yourself that this person's exaggerated or minimized expression of an emotion, or her/his switching from one emotion to another rapidly and without apparent reason, are likely due to changes in this person's brain. They are rarely due to this person's manipulation or intention. Be compassionate, patient, and tolerant.
6. Take this person's emotions and expression of emotions seriously, even when they appear to be exaggerated. Avoid trying to convince her/him she/he doesn't really feel that bad or dismissing the situation causing distress. Avoid talking about her/him in front of her/him. Reassure her/him and then distract with another topic or activity.
7. When this person looks intimidating or more angry and stubborn than she/he actually is, because of her/his slightly monotonic speech and rigid set face, remind yourself that this appearance may be due to changes in the brain. Inside, she/he may feel very differently. The brain changes may be causing a reduced variation in speed and range of movement. Her/his pattern of rhythm and cadence of speech and of movement of arms or legs while walking may become more abrupt and rigid. Avoid misinterpreting her/his physical changes as a reflection of her/his emotions.
8. Help this person feel she/he is in control, especially when she/he seems to focus anger about a lack of control or about her/his disabilities on other people.
9. When this person is angry, anxious, or sad, let her/him know you understand she/he is upset and reassure her/him.

O. Does this person adapt to new situations by problem solving and explaining to her/himself the circumstances?

1. Avoid changes in this person's environment. Keep the surrounding space and structure of tasks and daily schedules as consistent as possible.
2. Keep tasks and caregivers consistent over time.
3. When change is necessary, make as little change as possible and introduce the change slowly and carefully. She/he may feel anxious or unable to do a task in unfamiliar surroundings or with unfamiliar task objects. For example, she/he may have difficulty brushing her/his teeth with pump toothpaste rather than tube toothpaste, even though physically the pump toothpaste may be easier.
4. Keep tasks and routines consistent with how they were through most of her/his adult life.

5. Explain changes since she/he may not be able to explain or interpret unfamiliar surroundings and events to her/himself. For example, when eating in an unfamiliar space, say "Today we are eating here, but tomorrow we will be in our own dining room." Remind yourself that this person may not be able to understand your explanations, even though she/he may talk as though she/he does.
6. Watch her/him carefully to discern her/his needs, since she/he may not know how she/he feels and may not have ideas of how to help herself feel better. For example, if she/he appears to be distressed, suggest you and she/he go to another room where it is quieter. If she/he is bored, use information about her/his past experiences, interests, hobbies, and goals to initiate conversations and suggest activities to relieve the boredom. Be sensitive and careful when making suggestions, since she/he may be unaware of the boredom and have difficulty thinking of ways to alleviate the boredom.
7. When she/he is angry, frightened, or panicked and is accusing you of something that isn't true, avoid being defensive and taking it personally. Let her/him know you are on her/his side. Tell her/him you and she/he will solve the problem together. Remind yourself that she/he may not be able to think of possible explanations for an experience and may get stuck on an inaccurate explanation, because of changes in her/his brain. Avoid contradicting or correcting her/him. For example, if the water tastes odd due to medications she/he is taking, and she/he accuses you of poisoning her/him, say, "Oh the water tastes bad; let's find something else to drink."
8. Conserve this person's energy. Make tasks easier or do the tasks for her/him. Even if she/he can do a task, it is likely hard work and might take energy away from other more pleasurable or more difficult tasks and activities.
9. Think of this person as a unique individual at all times. Tailor your observations and responses to her/him in this specific situation at this particular time.
10. When you are frustrated, remind yourself of what you like and love about this person.