

DOMAINS FOR ASSESSMENT & INTERVENTION

Suggestions of Information to Consider about Someone with Cognitive Impairment

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TO KEEP IN MIND

This is a list of domains for assessment and intervention for a caregiver or health care professional to consider regarding a person with cognitive impairment. This information should be gathered before examining and offering suggestions regarding a specific person or specific situation.

The information is intended to help caregivers enable a person to function more easily, feel relaxed, comfortable and competent, and to help prevent or respond to behaviors that are distressing to the person with cognitive impairment and to other people around them.

The four headings here reflect four factors that play a significant role in any person's ability to perform tasks, feel comfortable, and to respond easily to the environment and to other people.

The four factors are:

- Person**
- Environment**
- Caregiver**
- Task and Daily Routines**

It is important to address all four factors when assessing and intervening with someone with cognitive impairment. That is, we need to consider the person, and the conditions around the person that contribute to a situation.

The four factors and the information presented are the places to look to understand why a person is having difficulty. They are also the places to look to identify ways to improve this person's level of functioning and comfort. When we identify the triggers or causes of distress or difficulty, we can then modify the environment, interactions with the person, and the structure and timing of tasks to improve a situation.

Details presented here pertain only to the person. The domains of cognition, environment, caregiver, and task are specified in detail in the Cognitive Impairment Assessment and Intervention Protocols by S. Weaverdyck, with regard to both assessment and intervention suggestions.

SUGGESTIONS OF DOMAINS FOR ASSESSMENT & INTERVENTION

Consider the history, current status, and patterns of shifts in status (for example, the timing of fluctuations or cycles of emotions, clarity of thinking, energy levels) of each suggestion to get a more complete understanding of a person or a situation.

Be alert to strengths, resources, and supportive elements in each domain, as well as the needs and challenges.

PERSON

1. General-----age, gender, languages, occupation, education, goals, marital status, spouse occupation, living situation, ethnic and cultural background, family, birth place, childhood place, places lived as adult, birth date, awareness and acceptance of own functioning level
2. Medical-----diagnoses, history, physical status, medications, pain, discomfort, birth hand dominance, allergies, dates of first symptoms of cognitive impairment, dietary needs and preferences
3. Functional--ability to perform simple and complex tasks, sensory status, motor status
4. Emotional---mood, ability to cope, past coping strategies, cycles, ease of expression, sources of pleasure, comfort, and pain, dates and description of significant past events
5. Social-----significant relationships, ability to converse & interact, preferences, support network, health status of primary caregiver, conformity to common social norms
6. Cognitive----ability to comprehend, perceive, conduct sophisticated thought processes, express, attend, remember events and information from remote and recent past, habits and preferences in brain functioning and thinking, past assessments
7. Behavioral---daily schedules & routines in past and present, strengths, own distressing behaviors, other people's/caregivers' behaviors that are distressing
8. Needs-----glasses, hearing aids, dentures, prosthetics, equipment, walker, wheel chair, medical treatments, diet
9. Interests-----life aspirations, hobbies, significant events & dates, preferences, reading, music
10. Habits-----daily routines and schedule, task (e.g., bathing) routines, sleep, exercise, food
11. Talents-----past & current skills & gifts, strengths to draw upon, past accomplishments
12. Religion-----preferences, routines, spiritual resources & rituals
13. Approach----responses to interventions/strategies used in the past when assisting or approaching, best/worst times of day or week to approach

Environment

14. Physical
15. Social
16. Emotional
17. Cognitive

Caregiver

18. Characteristics
19. Interactions with person

Task & Daily Routines

20. Familiarity
21. Timing
22. Emotional appeal
23. Physical demands
24. Complexity
25. Social context

SOURCES:

- Weaverdyck, S. (1997) "Assessment and Care/Service Plans". In National Alzheimer's Association (Ed.) Key Elements of Dementia Care Manual. Chicago, Illinois: US Alzheimer's Association.
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- Weaverdyck, S. (1990) "Neuropsychological Assessment as a Basis for Intervention in Dementia". Chapter 3 in N. Mace (Ed.) Dementia Care: Patient, Family, and Community. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press.