

# Cognitive Impairment Intervention Protocol (CIIP) for Caregiver Interactions with a Person with Cognitive Impairment: VIII. CHARACTERISTICS

## Ask myself:

- Am I the best person to be helping with this task?
- Are there things I can change about myself to make this go more easily?
- Are there things I cannot change and therefore must compensate for?
- How do I feel about this person and about this task?

## A. Does this person recognize me as myself and not someone else?

1. Watch this person to see if she/he seems to know who you are. Remind yourself that this person may recognize you even if she/he doesn't realize it or calls you by a different name. Look for evidence that she/he knows you by the way she/he acts and seems to feel. For example, she/he is consistently calmer with you than with other caregivers, or she/he relates to you in the same unique way as before her/his brain changes.
2. If this person calls you a different name or relates to you in an emotionally distressed way, examine yourself to see if you look, move, or act like the person she/he called you or seems to think you are. For example, if she/he calls you "mother", it might be that you look like her/his mother when she/he was a young person. Or if she/he seems to be angry with you, she/he may think you are a spouse or grandchild who previously hurt her/him.
3. Identify yourself each time this person sees you.
4. When this person first calls you by a different name, say your name once. Avoid correcting her/him when he/she calls you by a different name after that.

## B. Does this person feel comfortable with me or with the person she/he thinks I am?

1. Look for evidence this person is comfortable, for example, a relaxed face and body, smiling, words of contentment.
2. Look for evidence this person is uncomfortable, for example, a frown, tension, jerky movements, words of anger or pain
3. Help this person to feel comfortable, even if she/he thinks you are someone other than yourself.
4. If this person feels emotionally distressed or uncomfortable with you, regardless of whom she/he thinks you are, then help her/him to feel more comfortable.
5. If this person feels emotionally distressed or uncomfortable with you because she/he thinks you are someone else, make it clear that you are not that person. If that is not possible, then find a different caregiver with whom she/he is comfortable. For example, if she/he thinks a middle-aged child is a deceased abusive spouse, because the child looks like the spouse, then encourage the child to identify her/himself frequently, and to dress or wear a hairstyle different from the deceased abusive spouse.

### **C. Does this person have strong feelings about me?**

1. Look for evidence of strong positive feelings, for example stroking your arm or face, spontaneous smiles, eye contact, words of endearment.
2. Look for evidence of strong negative feelings, for example, tense face, raised hand or fist, words of anger.
3. If there are strong negative feelings, examine yourself and the ways you help this person to see if you can change in ways to reduce her/his negative feelings about you. If the required changes are not possible, then find a different caregiver.

### **D. Does this person trust me?**

1. Look for evidence this person trusts you, for example she/he tries to respond consistently and immediately to your requests even when she/he doesn't understand you.
2. Look for evidence this person doesn't trust you, for example widening eyes that appear fearful, pulling back, looking away, stiffening of body parts.
3. If this person doesn't trust you, examine yourself and the ways you help this person to see if you can change in ways to increase her/his trust in you. If the required changes are not possible, then find a different caregiver.

### **E. Is my gender comfortable and appropriate for this person?**

1. Look for evidence this person is uncomfortable with your gender, for example, using words that indicate a preference for a particular gender in her/his caregiver.
2. If this person has a preference for a particular gender in her/his caregiver, and you are not of that gender, then find a different caregiver.

### **F. Am I comfortable with this person in general?**

1. Examine your own feelings before, during, and after you help this person with a task.
2. Remind yourself that your feelings may have a strong effect on the comfort level and emotions of this person, and on her/his behavior and ability to function. For example, she/he may become too upset to be able to understand you well, or your distress may prevent you from being able to focus on this person enough to be helpful.
3. If you are uncomfortable, explore possible reasons for your discomfort, for example, discomfort with death due to a recent loss of a loved one, or with this person's sexual behavior due to your earlier or current experience with sexual abuse.
4. Avoid talking to this person about your discomfort.
5. Talk about your discomfort with someone you can trust to see if you can change your own feelings of discomfort.
6. Change the conditions that make you uncomfortable, if the changes do not affect this person in a negative way.
7. If the required changes to make you comfortable are not possible at this time, or if you need more time to change your feelings, then find a different caregiver until you are able to feel comfortable with this person.

8. If the required changes to make you comfortable are not possible at any time, then find a different caregiver.

### **G. Am I comfortable with this person today?**

1. Examine your own feelings before, during, and after you are with this person or help this person with a task today.
2. Remind yourself that your feelings may have a strong effect on the comfort level and emotions of this person, and on her/his behavior and ability to function. For example, she/he may become too upset to be able to understand you well, or your distress may prevent you from being able to focus on this person enough to be helpful.
3. If you are uncomfortable, explore possible reasons for your discomfort, for example, you are in a rush or you are emotionally vulnerable or tired today.
4. Avoid talking to this person about your discomfort.
5. Talk about your discomfort with someone you can trust to see if you can change your own feelings of discomfort.
6. Change the conditions that make you uncomfortable, if the changes do not affect this person in a negative way. For example, reduce the number of tasks for today.
7. If the required changes to make you comfortable are not possible today, then find a different caregiver until you are able to feel comfortable with this person.

### **H. Am I comfortable doing this task with this person? For example, am I comfortable seeing this person without clothes or drooling while eating?**

1. Examine your own feelings before, during, and after you help this person with a task.
2. Identify the tasks or aspects of tasks that change your feelings about this person. For example, bathing and dressing, or helping this person eat when she/he has trouble swallowing.
3. Identify how your image of this person is changing and how you feel about that. For example, you are uncomfortable seeing your distinguished father drool while he eats in public.
4. Talk about your discomfort with someone you can trust to see if you can change your own feelings of discomfort, embarrassment, guilt, disgust, anger, or frustration.
5. Change the task to avoid aspects that make you uncomfortable, if the changes do not affect this person in a negative way. For example, eat with your father in private and do other activities that aren't embarrassing when with other people.

### **I. Am I comfortable with this person's dependency?**

1. Examine your own feelings before, during, and after you help this person with a task.
2. Identify your feelings about this person's dependency. For example, notice how you feel about your distinguished father becoming incontinent.
3. If you are uncomfortable with this person's dependency, talk about your discomfort with someone you can trust to see if you can change your own feelings of discomfort, embarrassment, guilt, disgust, anger, or frustration.

4. If you are unable to change your feelings over time, find a different caregiver to help with the tasks that are upsetting to you.

**J. Can I avoid letting my anger or sadness about this person's behavior affect my ability to help?**

1. Examine your own feelings before, during, and after you are with this person or help this person with a task.
2. Monitor your own physical and emotional health to see how you are affected by your caregiving with this person.
3. Notice how often or how strong your feelings of anger and sadness are about this person's situation or condition. For example, record the times you become impatient, irritable, tearful, or raise your voice angrily when she/he is or is not present.
4. Watch this person to see if your feelings are affecting this person. For example, see if this person pulls away from you, becomes rigid, or appears fearful or tearful.
5. Record the times your feelings of anger or sadness seem to affect this person.
6. If your feelings affect this person frequently, change your feelings, or find a different caregiver.
7. If there is an occasion when you physically or emotionally harm this person, for example you strike this person, raise your voice, or say words that hurt her/him, then immediately talk to someone you can trust, and find a different caregiver until you emotionally heal enough to help this person safely.