



COVID-19: GUIDANCE FOR WORKING WITH COGNITIVE DIFFICULTIES

We're currently in very confusing times, this can make it difficult for all of us, but especially so for people who experience cognitive difficulties. Here are some tips for communicating guidance when working with people with cognitive difficulties

COGNITIVE + EMOTIONAL DIFFICULTIES ASSOCIATED WITH...

ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY

- Motivation
- Concentration
- Problem solving and information processing skills
- Initiation of tasks
- Confabulation
- Memory, particularly forming new memories
- Communicating emotions and emotional lability
- Mental health difficulties (e.g. anxiety and depression)



Helpful Links:

<https://www.talkliverpool.nhs.uk/maintaining-your-psychological-wellbeing-during-the-corona-virus-outbreak/>

<https://www.easy-read-online.co.uk/erdocs/easy-read-online/>

LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

- Communication functions
- Social interactions
- understanding new and complex information/instructions

ADJUSTMENTS TO PROVIDING GUIDANCE:

Give specific and straight forward instructions

Present instructions in written or visual form in addition to verbally

Demonstrate guidance like thorough hand washing



Use positive instructions like 'remember to wash your hands' rather than 'don't forget to wash your hands'

Use pictorial aids (e.g. prompt cards) and make sure information is presented in a memorable way

Allow for flexibility with time i.e. pace information and allow for extra time to communicate guidance



Adapt mandatory guidance to ensure it is easy to understand e.g. breaking tasking into smaller steps

Allow time for questions and reiterate guidance multiple times if needed

Check understanding by asking the individual to repeat it back to check for misunderstanding/confusion. Try questions like "What else could I do?"



Write down and record agreed actions

Keep reminders with instructions and pictures around the building and 'alarms' near doors saying 'have you remembered to wash your hands?'

Supporting individuals to express any emotions they may be feeling around the guidance, listening, taking their feelings seriously and non-judgementally



Explain any upcoming changes and think through solutions to cope with any anxieties