

RCSLT Cognitive Communication Disorders – Table 1 the potential impact of the impairment of cognitive skills on communication

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

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The information in this document is currently in development and has been shared as part of a consultation. If you are seeking guidance or information on this topic, please ensure you refer to final published content which can be found on rcslt.org.

We appreciate any comments provided to us during the consultation, all of which will be reviewed by the working group within the context and scope of the project. We ask that, where possible and relevant, you accompany any counter arguments to statements made in the document with supporting evidence e.g. a research reference.

Members of the working group should not be contacted directly, and all feedback should be made through the assigned route e.g. via survey or project manager. Feedback made through unassigned routes or after the closing date will not be accepted or responded to.

Thank you for your support with this project.

Cognitive communication disorders – Table 1 the potential impact of the impairment of cognitive skills on communication

The list in Table 1 illustrates the potential impact of the impairment of cognitive skills on communication. It was created by expert consensus of the RCSLT cognitive communication guidance working party. However, it is acknowledged that representing cognitive communication symptoms in these linear relationships is overly simplistic. The models and framework presented in the RCSLT Cognitive communication disorders member guidance, more accurately depicts the interacting components that contribute to cognitive-communication competence (Sohlberg et al, 2019).

| Cognitive Skill | Function in communication | If impaired, a person with a cognitive communication may: |
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| Attention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To pay attention to what others are saying To pay attention to what you are saying / doing To shift attention from one topic, conversation, or communication partner to another To split attention between tasks. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lose the thread of what others are saying, what they are saying, what they are reading/writing, especially if material is complex or lengthy Be easily distracted by internal thoughts or external stimuli Have difficulty shifting attention in conversation between participants or topics Struggle to change topics Have difficulty keeping up with topic changes Have difficulty maintaining topics; may have tangential discourse style Be unable to talk and do something else at the same time Have difficulty conversing in situations with distractions, background noise or multiple participants Have poor turn taking and sharing during games / activities with peers Frequently interrupt Able to recall only small parts or the main idea of given information Either not answering questions asked of them or answering too quickly. |

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| Memory | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To remember what has recently been done, read or said • To keeps track of what's been said and the flow of dialogue • To retain personal details, emotions, and communication preferences of communication partners. • To supports planning and sequencing of what you want to say • To support self-monitoring and correction of any errors during conversation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have difficulty recalling instructions, messages, conversations • Have difficulty retaining details when reading, especially if lengthy or complex • Have difficulty learning or remembering names, appointments, locations, • Have difficulty learning new vocabulary or new information (eg curriculum) • Have difficulty retaining topic or purpose of conversation • Repeat ideas, statements, questions, stories • Not include sufficient detail in narratives and stories • Not recall compensatory strategies to optimise or repair conversations • Have difficulty remembering details correctly, leading to errors or omissions • Confabulate • Have difficulty following rules during games with peers or classroom activities. |
| Information processing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To process spoken, written, and visual information received from other people, written texts, social events, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have difficulty comprehending large volumes of spoken or written information • Need longer or frequent repetition to process information • Take longer to respond to written or spoken questions or directions • Take longer to formulate what they want to say (even when they may know the correct response) • Have long pauses in discourse • Speak more slowly • Misinterpret information if attempting to do so quickly • Have poorer performance (when compared to knowledge of curriculum) during academic tests / assignments. |
| Awareness and insight | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be able to monitor what you | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be less aware of how others may perceive them |

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| | are saying and how others are reacting. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be less aware of others' needs from conversation • Have reduced insight into own communication and any changes • Have problems recognising and repairing communication breakdown • Have difficulty appreciating the rationale for, and therefore not using, strategies. |
| Executive functions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To respond in a goal directed and appropriate fashion • To prepare what to say or how to respond • To organise thoughts and words into a clear response • To start conversations • To monitor your own performance in conversation • To modify your behaviour in response to the situation or feedback • To inhibit inappropriate comments • To perceive and interpret complex or inferential language • To problem-solve any communication breakdown and social situations etc • To critically evaluate spoken and written information (eg determine fact from opinion). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empty, poorly referenced, or irrelevant responses. • Not include necessary detail • Lack coherence or logical structure in discourse, stories or play • Have difficulty initiating conversation • Have difficulty maintaining conversations and thinking of things to say • Make comments perceived as blunt or rude by others • Talk more than they used to, be less concise, and include excessive detail (verbosity) • Have tangential discourse, frequent topic changes • Interrupts at inappropriate times • Get stuck on the same topics and return to this topic repeatedly • Be unable to move to another topic • Unable to end a topic or conversation • Have rigidity of thought; may find it hard to change their view • May appear selfish, egocentric, grandiose • Have difficulty making inferences or drawing conclusions • Difficulty identifying the gist of stories or the key story components • Have reduced comprehension of abstract language, humour, indirect requests • Misinterpret, or literally interpret, information • Be unable to work out how to respond to more complex questions |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty applying or using strategies to novel situations • Unable to think of / predict consequences of actions leading to poor / unsafe decision making • Unable to monitor what they are saying • Difficulty adjusting communication style to the context or audience. |
| Social cognition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising own emotions and emotions of others (emotional processing) • Theory of mind • Empathy • Social perception • Nonverbal language. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have reduced emotional affect • Have difficulty recognising the mood or emotions of others • Have difficulty perceiving humour, sarcasm or deceit • Have reduced empathy • Be egocentric in their communication • Have difficulty seeing/understanding from the other person's perspective • Be unresponsive to social cues • Continue talking when others indicate they are not interested Miss implied meanings/inference • Overly familiar • Have difficulty interpreting nonverbal information (eg facial expressions, gestures) • Have reduced or unexpected use of non-verbal communication • Have unexpected emotional reactions (eg laughing at times when others don't) • Have reduced understanding or following of social norms (eg being quiet in a library setting) • Difficulties participating in social contexts • Alexithymia (difficulty identifying, experiencing, and describing emotions). |

Table 1: The potential impact of the impairment of cognitive skills on communication.