

SUGGESTIONS FOR COGNITIVE ACTIVITIES AT HOME

MEMORY- WHAT CAN I DO AT HOME?

- ❖ Encourage the person to use the following strategy to help aid their working memory; give cues if necessary to aid with recall.
 - Remember: **Write** – Write it down
Repeat
Visualize it in your head
Associate it with something you know
Summarize the facts
- ❖ Have client keep a memory log or a journal and remind them to write in it daily; discuss the events of each day at night, talking about what the client did yesterday, last week, a month ago, etc.
- ❖ Have client be responsible for remembering where you've parked the car at the mall or the grocery store.
- ❖ Read the paper or watch the news together; discuss the stories then and then talk about them at a later time.
- ❖ Give the client various things to remember like birthdays or specific grocery items that are to be picked up during the next trip to the grocery store.
- ❖ If the client enjoys playing cards, play games such as Memory, Go Fish or any other kind of card game; card games as well as board games allow for practice with keeping information stored in their short-term memory.
- ❖ Have a section in the house that can act as a "go-to" for important information, like appointments, medication schedules, addresses and phone numbers. This makes it easier for the client to refer to important information if it's all in one place.
- ❖ If it's safe, have the client help out in the kitchen; cooking and recipes requires lots of memory, such as remembering what you're going in the refrigerator for and how much of it you need.
- ❖ Make sure the client stays as social as they can possibly be.



ORIENTATION-WHAT CAN I DO AT HOME?



- ✓ Keep a calendar and a clock in a common area of the home and update it daily; that way the client can keep up with the day, date, month and year. You can then discuss the events of the day, of the past few days, and of the weeks to come (i.e., holidays, birthdays, etc.) This calendar can also include important phone numbers, addresses as well as other household or community notes.
- ✓ Stay abreast of current events by reading the paper together or watching the daily news; this will help reinforce orientation.
- ✓ While running errands in a familiar area, ask client what else they can find in that area, how you'd make your way home (make a right, make a left go straight), etc.
- ✓ While in familiar areas, like while visiting friends or going shopping, ask client to recognize landmarks in order to reinforce orientation.
- ✓ When getting ready for an appointment, have client keep track of the time in order to not be late to the appointment.
- ✓ If not too overwhelming for the client, use maps when necessary. Have the client give you directions to a place where you used to visit frequently; if unable to do so from memory or if the directions are too muddled, use a map.
- ✓ Use major holidays or events to keep the client oriented to the year, month, day and season.



SEQUENCING AND ORGANIZATION-WHAT CAN I DO AT HOME?



- Have client plan weekday meals for the family. To make it a bit more involved, have client check pantry to see if necessary ingredients are available; if not, have client make a grocery list of what items are needed.
- Create a situation in which the client must organize a certain amount of activities in a given time period; assign a length of time required for each task to be completed. For example, you need to go grocery shopping, pick up clothes from the dry cleaners, bake a cake and do laundry all in a span of 3 hours. Have client plan the day.
- If there's a family event approaching, allow the client to plan the event; check to see if the order of list of things to do is logical and, if so, let client continue with the process.
- Have client organize family chores and inform the family when and how each chore should be done. For example; Trash day is ____, so when should we take out the trash? We have company coming this weekend, so what needs to be done to prepare for their arrival?
- Have client prepare a meal for the family or for themselves; each item on the menu will have a different cooking time as well as its own recipe. Have the client organize the menu and sequence the preparation of each dish.





PROBLEM SOLVING -WHAT CAN I DO AT HOME?

- Discuss community and safety problems with client on a regular basis; ask the client to identify the problem and then provide one or two solutions to those problems.
- Watch the news with the client and discuss local issues in your community; again, have client identify the problems and possible solutions, if appropriate.
- Ask for the client's input in all medical decisions that may come up regarding their health, if appropriate.
- Ask for the client's input in financial decisions, for example, whether or not it's cost efficient to hire a gardener or how much to spend on holiday gifts.
- If you have several errands to run, have the client organize the schedule; the goal is to be as efficient as possible. For example, would it make sense for us to pick up the dry cleaning, go across town to the grocery store and then drop off new clothes to be dry cleaned?
- Encourage the client to be as social as possible and to become involved in social activities in the community; if appropriate, encourage client to run for leadership positions in their social groups.
- Read short articles to the client that might be interesting and discuss different viewpoints of the articles.
- If client is able to do so, encourage the client to vote in elections and discuss these voting decisions together as a family.
- Discuss local or national issues and how they were/could be solved or ameliorated.



REASONING AND EMOTIONAL AWARENESS-WHAT CAN I DO AT HOME?



- Discuss complex ideas and questions with the client to work on point of views; for example, asking questions like “Why do you think he said that?” while watching a television show or overhearing a conversation or “What are the pros and cons of this situation?”
- Ask the client to describe how different characters in television programs or movies are feeling and why they came to that conclusion; what clues led them to that decision?
- Buy a Joke-A-Day calendar and have client explain the joke each day. If they can’t, explain the joke to them.
- Pick out a few of the figurative expressions you use on a daily basis (e.g., It’s raining cats and dogs) and ask the client to interpret them.
- When telling the client a joke, see if they understand the punchline. If not, explain it so that they’ll understand the joke but not be embarrassed about needing the explanation.
- Introduce new slang phrases, and explain the meanings to the client so he keeps current with today’s changing figurative language trends.
- Discuss issues in the news, specifically those that are controversial and ask the client to provide pros and cons for each topic.

