

Four Factors



Cognitive Abilities and Intervention Strategies

Changes in the brain and resulting changes in cognitive abilities (thinking) can cause much of the distress and distressing situations that we see when we are communicating with a person or assisting them with a task.

There are factors that can make it harder or easier for a person with cognitive changes, and therefore make distress and behavior that causes distress increase or decrease. Or they might even trigger distress or cause behavior that creates distress.

These factors can also help all of us, healthy or not, even when there is no distress, feel content, comfortable, and competent in general and during communication or a task.

These factors might relate to:

- A person's cognitive, emotional, physical, and medical condition and history (including medications).
- What is going on in the environment around this person.
- How we communicate with this person.
- How we organize a particular task.

To help a person in any situation or with a task we need to examine four basic factors:

- The **Person**
- The **Environment**
- **Communication**
- The **Task**

We need to understand how each of these four factors is making it harder or easier for this person to understand what is going on, to feel comfortable, and to do a task.

Then, we can change the environment, our communication strategies, or the task itself to be more supportive of this person and their cognitive needs and strengths.

This will make it easier for this person to communicate, do a task, feel calm, comfortable, and successful in general.

When a person has changes in the brain, then this person needs us and the environment to support or compensate for their cognitive needs and to rely on or use their cognitive strengths. The more we know about how a person's cognitive abilities have changed and about their cognitive strengths and needs, the more we will know how to help them.