

Optimize Your Thinking! Cognitive Impairment in PD and How to Stay Engaged

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Agenda

- Discuss cognitive changes associated with PD
- How to identify cognitive decline
- Tools and strategies for managing changes in cognition
- Role of occupational therapy (OT) in cognitive rehabilitation

What is Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI)?

- Change in cognition that exceeds changes associated with aging
- Subtle changes in memory or thinking that are often unnoticed by others
- Most individual are continuing to manage self care or activities of daily living (ADLs), but may notice changes in activities requiring higher level demands at home or work-related tasks

Prevalence of Cognitive Impairment

- Cognitive impairment is one of the more significant non-motor symptoms
- Impairments range from mild to severe
- Mild to moderate cognitive deficits can be present in early stages
- Time of onset varies person to person. Mild cognitive impairment impacts ~ 40% of people with PD in early stages (Baiano et al, 2020)

How do we identify these changes?

- Interview with the individual with PD and family
- Administration of cognitive screenings
- Neuropsychological testing
- Occupational therapy evaluation



Cognitive Difficulties in PD

- Attention and working memory
- Problem solving / analyzing information
- Planning and organization
- Executing tasks, difficulty getting started
- Memory
- Visual spatial difficulty
- Language, verbal fluency – finding the right words

Factors which inhibit cognition

Medications

Apathy

Fatigue

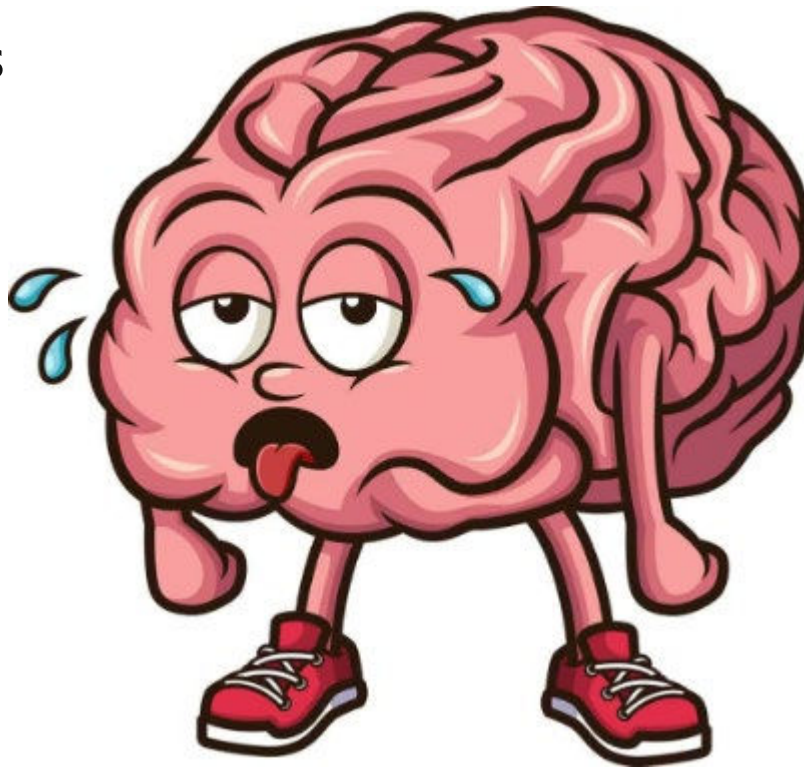
Stress / Anxiety

Sleep

Depression
or
low mood

Pain

Environment



Back to the Basics

- Keep your brain active – stay engaged (community activities, leisure interests, social interaction, etc.)
- Establish a routine
- Incorporate physical activity and/or exercise
- Eating a well balance diet and staying hydrated
- Reducing stress / anxiety
- Good quality sleep



Role of Occupational Therapy in Cognitive Rehabilitation

- Identify impairments and areas of risk
- Identify patient / family goals
- Consider independence and safety
- Teach strategies
- Identify need for support



Cognitive Strategies

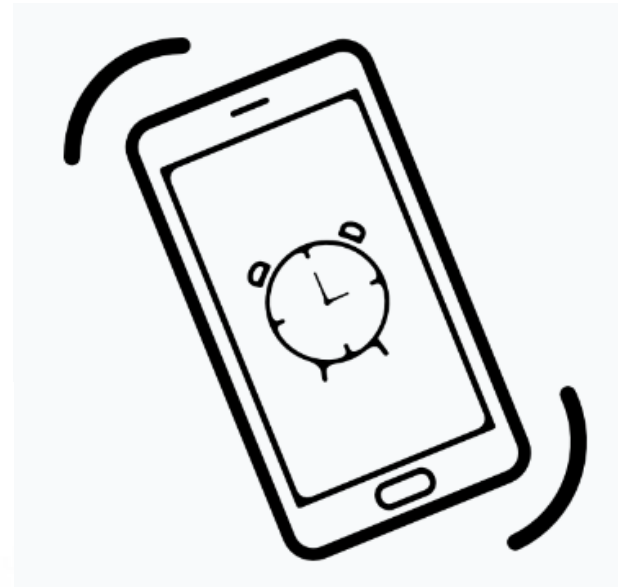
Have a plan and be specific!

- Identify a goal
- Take time to plan ahead
- Breaking tasks down into smaller, more achievable steps



Keep yourself on track

- Use a timer or alarm
- Create an image or use visualization
- Use post-it notes
- Ask others to help you remember something or provide reminders



Stay organized

- Use of planner or calendar to write down important events, like appointments
- Make a daily to-do list
- Use a journal or notebook to write down highlights from the day or things you want to remember
- Organize information into chunks

Saturday Date: July 3, 2021

Weather:

3. Priorities

- ☐ Grocery shopping for juice making
- ☐ calling grandma for her birthday
- ☐ meeting with Tommy (2pm)

To Do List

- ☐ PT with MrWhite @ 5pm
- ☒ Buy some fresh fruits
- ☒ ULTA 30% coupon ads / going shopping
- ☐ submit all papers for tax return
- ☐

Things to Get Done

- ☒ Calling my mom
- ☒ Juice making ready for breakfast
- ☐

Plans & Schedules

06:00 am	Getting up
07:00 am	Have a breakfast, juice
08:00 am	morning exercise
09:00 am	
10:00 am	
11:00 am	
12:00 pm	
01:00 pm	
02:00 pm	meeting with Tommy (2pm)
03:00 pm	
04:00 pm	
05:00 pm	PT with MrWhite @ 5pm
06:00 pm	Buy some fresh fruits
07:00 pm	Calling my mom
08:00 pm	
09:00 pm	
10:00 pm	
11:00 pm	
12:00 am	

Strategies for memory

- Place items in a consistent location
 - Items you want to keep track of or items that you don't want to forget to take with you
- Retrace your steps when you have forgotten or lost something

Strategies for memory

- Repeat information out loud
- Create a story to link together information you want to remember
- Use of rhymes or acronyms
- Use of association

Enhance and simplify your life

Daily routines – Create a *pace* that fits for you and your body

- Prioritize the “must” do from the “nice” to do
- Balance your daily routines between active and passive
- Consider taking on more demanding parts of your routine when you have the most energy

Tasks / activities you do

- Choose things that will support / stimulate your mind / health – vary activities and work in some “new”
- Include social activities and balance with quiet time / self-reflection
- Balance “me” activities with “do for other” activities

Your environment

- Declutter your home – for visual relief and for safety
- Socialize / volunteer / give back – make sure you get / stay connected

Other ways to exercise your brain

STIMULATE your brain to grow new connections:

- Puzzles / games – mental “gymnastics”
- Exercise – it pushes O₂ into your brain cells
- Learn new skills – you don’t have to be perfect
- Meet new people / travel
- Read
- Take a class
- Do art work / craft work
- Engage with others – and share different points of view

Anything where you have to focus, concentrate, and DO!

Washington University Occupational Therapy

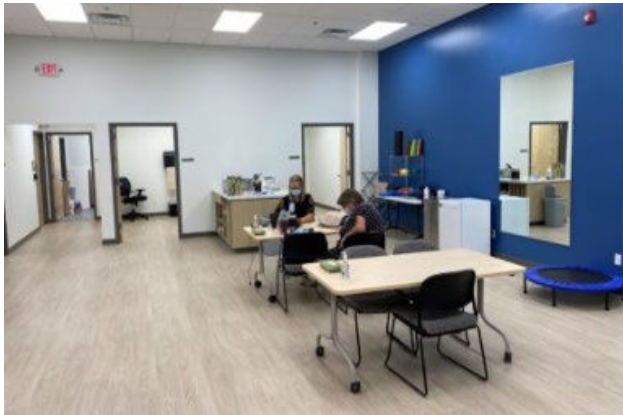


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- Projects and programs to help people with PD deal with cognitive challenges in their daily lives
 - Work, home, family, community
 - Across the spectrum of cognitive decline

Contact us for more information!

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Questions?

Care Partner Tips

- Speak clearly, keep message simple
- Avoid quizzing, focus on the facts
- Provide choices to help with decision making
- Use gestures or visual cues
- Reduce distractions