Introduction

Categorization is an integral part of our daily communication. We categorize in multiple ways every day. We categorize when we get dressed, when we choose what to eat, when we go shopping, when we plant gardens, and so on. But the ability to categorize is frequently impaired in someone who has language or thinking difficulties. It can become very confusing or overwhelming if categorization skills are impaired.

Many factors can hinder one's ability to categorize, such as:

- Difficulty understanding language or concepts due to aphasia.
- Difficulty utilizing convergent language skills.
- Difficulty mentally manipulating information and coming to a conclusion.
- Impulsivity causing action before receiving and analyzing all pertinent information.
- Becoming overwhelmed with mentally-held information and new input.

The exercises in *Just for Adults: Concrete Categories* have been developed to address concrete categorization. Concrete categorization refers to things that are definite and tangible as opposed to abstract categorization which addresses intangible qualities and characteristics. Concrete categorization skills are foundational for many language and thought processes and for activities of daily living.

The exercises can be done in multiple ways.

- Have clients read items silently and complete them independently.
- Have clients read task items aloud and write the response. In general, performance improves when a person has multi-modality input (i.e., hearing it while reading it).
- Read the items to the client and have the client give responses verbally.

On page 6, you will find a screening tool that is not to be used as a test but rather as a way to observe a client's use of strategies and reasoning patterns. Some questions to think about while observing how the client completes the screening include:

1. Does the client need to use verbal rehearsal to aid comprehension?
2. Is the client impulsive, and does his impulsivity lead to errors?
3. Does the client read too much into the task and become confused?
4. Is the client aware of his error responses?
5. Does the client ask for clarification when having difficulty or does he just keep going, whether the item is understood or not?
6. Does the client miss salient information?
7. Is the client able to think convergently and divergently?
8. Does the client have trouble shifting from one task to the next?

These guidelines will help you present the activities in this book.

- The goals of these exercises are to improve a person's ability to converge upon specific members of a category and to think divergently to determine the category to which members belong. These abilities to converge and diverge information are foundational skills in many cognitive functions. Be flexible with presentation and accept answers that differ from your viewpoint if the client can give a logical explanation. The answers in the Answer Key are provided as a reference and are not intended to be all inclusive.

- The exercises are not for testing purposes. Try to make them as enjoyable as possible. Talking about the specific task items, particularly when correcting error responses, will help to improve the client's ability for achieving the goals. Do not get into debates if the client is unable to see another viewpoint for a response. Just move on to the next item.

I hope you and your clients find these exercises enjoyable and beneficial.

Kathy