Introduction

Word relationships are an integral part of our daily communication. We compare and contrast words in multiple ways every day. Being able to use words flexibly adds "color" to our communication and makes word finding and description easier. But the ability to understand and/or use words in different relationships is frequently impaired in someone who has language or thinking difficulties. It can become very confusing or overwhelming if these skills are impaired.

Many factors can hinder one's ability to understand and use words in different relationship patterns, such as:

- Word-finding difficulties (i.e., anomia)
- Difficulty understanding and using language or concepts due to aphasia.
- Difficulty utilizing convergent and divergent language skills.
- Difficulty with 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: Word Relationships* have been developed to address four different kinds of word relationships: opposites, synonyms, words with multiple meanings, and analogies. Being able to understand and use words in different relationships is foundational for many language and thought processes; and for activities of daily functioning.

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.

- It is recommended that you do not have your clients work on opposites and on synonyms at the same session. The focus of therapy is to teach processes so it can be detrimental to present items that focus on one process and then switch to the opposite processing strategy. It becomes cognitively confusing if a radical opposite change is presented in the same session and it may negate the learning that occurred with the first set of items presented.

- 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.

- 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 for a reference and are not intended to be all inclusive.

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

Kathy