

Introduction

We have worked in healthcare settings for over 25 years combined. During that time, we have had the privilege of working with clients with cognitive-communication impairments following traumatic brain injury (TBI); stroke; brain tumors; anoxic encephalopathy; and degenerative neurologic diseases, including the dementias. Working with these clients is both challenging and intriguing. Many of the activities we practiced during our therapy sessions with clients have come to life in *Results for Adults Cognition*.

Cognition includes cognitive processes and systems, such as attention, perception, memory, organization, and executive function. Cognitive deficits affect one or all of the following areas: attention, memory, problem solving, reasoning, organization, planning, and awareness of deficits. “Before brain injury, memory operations such as attention, rehearsal, organization, and mental transformation of new information occurred at an unconscious level (Huppert & Piercy, 1978). After brain injury, a person loses his or her ability to execute these mental operations unconsciously. Consequently, people with brain injury must learn to consciously rehearse, attend, concentrate, and manipulate information in working memory. Eventually, through conscious effort, the processes become unconscious again” (Parente & Herrmann, 2003, p. 50).

Research shows that clients experience significant gains in cognitive-communication function after receiving speech-language therapy (Cicerone et al., 2000; ASHA Treatment Efficacy Summary). Data gathered from ASHA NOMs shows that over 80% of patients with TBI who received speech-language therapy services made significant gains in several key cognitive areas.

Clients with brain injury, and especially those with TBI, need to efficiently manipulate novel information, develop cognitive flexibility, make accurate inferences, and use deductive and inductive reasoning. They need to rehearse information and encode it efficiently. Themed encoding, or the use of shared experiences combined with new information, is one technique to facilitate improved memory function. Once the client learns new memory strategies, it is important that he practice them in a variety of novel situations. Regular review of the strategy increases the skill level.

Results for Adults Cognition is a flexible, adaptable resource designed to improve a client’s cognitive abilities. The lessons are grouped by themes that represent common activities of daily living. Each lesson is divided into two parts. Part I consists of full-page picture scenes with corresponding memory and rehearsal tasks that address short-term auditory and visual memory recall, spatial orientation, following oral directions, and episodic memory. Part II expands the application of the theme to broader contexts that require more advanced organization and reasoning. It includes timelines for planning and organization; visuals for math concepts; and questions that address reasoning, flexibility of thinking, and predicting. The lessons conclude with two to three generalization tasks. For suggestions on how to use the book, detailed task descriptions, and some therapy tips, see pages 5-7.

We hope you find *Results for Adults Cognition* a useful tool to add to your resource library.

Melissa and Christine