



National Council of DEMENTIA MINDS

Insights of Persons Living Well with Neurocognitive Disorders

If you have experienced a **significant change from your previous level of thinking or functioning**, you may want to bring a list of these problems to your appointment with your healthcare provider. Why? Particular patterns of symptoms may point toward certain diagnoses or categories of diseases. Initial test results may not validate your observations or concerns. Documenting your symptoms over time is important for an easier, quicker and accurate diagnosis and treatment.

This comprehensive tool has been created by an interdisciplinary team of retired physicians, who are living with neurocognitive disorders. Like many, being able to share all our symptoms with our provider proved to be challenging. Our hope is, by offering tools and education, the diagnostic process may be less challenging for others.

Dementia can affect the following cognitive and physical functions:

Concentration: Ability to pay attention for extended periods of time. The ability to control, shift, or divide one's focus. Use the checklist below.

<i>Examples of impaired concentration may include:</i>	Check if applicable	Duration	Example(s):
Difficulty multitasking			
Difficulty returning to a task if interrupted.			
Difficulty reading a long article/book or following a long movie,			
Easily distracted.			
Difficulty following conversation in a noisy environment or rapid rate of speech.			
Phone numbers or long numbers become difficult (i.e., putting zip code in at a fuel station when you use your credit card or writing down a phone number)			
Other:			

Executive Function: The ability to sustain attention long enough to permit organization, planning and following through on a plan. Executive function involves insight, reasoning, judgment.

Examples of impaired executive function may include:	Check if applicable	Duration	Example(s):
Difficulty problem solving, following recipes or directions when driving.			
Difficulty performing everyday math calculations. (e.g. calculating a tip)			
Problems with phones/computers - multiple steps, screens.			
Difficulty understanding visual/spatial instructions or commands.			
Bad decisions/jumping to conclusions.			
Slowed thought processing.			
Other:			

Learning and Memory: The ability to take in new information and retain it.

<i>Examples of impaired learning and memory may include:</i>	Check if applicable	Duration	Example(s):
Difficulty using a phone or remote control.			
Being unable to retrace steps to find something.			
Losing track of the passage of time.			
Repeating the same information without remembering you did.			
Other:			

Language Function: Ability to produce and understand speech, printed information, and signs (when sign language used).

<i>Examples of impaired language may include:</i>	Check if applicable	Duration	Example(s):
Word finding difficulty.			
Trouble following or joining in conversation.			
Using wrong word, such as “apple” for “peach”			
New difficulty with spelling, punctuation, grammar			
Change in pronunciation or volume of speech.			
For bilingual speakers, switching to an inappropriate language for their listener			
Other:			

Visual, Spatial and Sensory Processing: The ability to understand the environment. May involve senses of hearing, smell, taste, touch, and knowing where your body is in space.

<i>Examples of impaired visual, spatial, and sensory processing may include:</i>	Check if applicable	Duration	Example(s):
Difficulty tracking and judging distance, depth, orientation, color or contrast.			
Not recognizing a person, animal, or object			
Hallucinations- perceiving things not really present; can involve vision, hearing, smells, taste, or touch sensations.			
Altered sense of smell or taste.			
Problems following visual diagrams/instructions.			
Other:			

Social Functioning: The ability to recognize, interpret and respond to information about others, which helps us explain and predict how people behave. This includes awareness of our feelings and whether they are appropriate for the circumstances.

<i>Examples of impaired social functioning may include:</i>	Check if applicable	Duration	Example(s):
Inability to distinguish sarcasm from sincerity.			
Difficulty correctly identifying facial expressions.			
Decreased ability to infer the thoughts and feelings of others.			
Social withdrawal or excessive interactions with others.			
Loss of motivation or caring about things that were previously important (e.g. apathy)			
Decreased ability to understand or share the feelings of others. (e.g. empathy)			
Argumentative or obstinate in situations that would not have caused this response in the past			
Excessive anxiety or fear, or alternatively, lack of concern when appropriate			
Holding onto a false belief despite all evidence to the contrary (delusion)			
Loss of social appropriateness/filter			
Other:			

Other Physical Functions: Experienced or observed additional physical symptoms.

<i>Additional examples of impaired physical functioning may include:</i>	Check if applicable	Duration	Example(s):
Balance and coordination			
Chewing and swallowing.			
Bladder, bowel, and sexual function			
Maintaining blood pressure, heart rate, breath, and temperature intolerance.			
Maintaining regular sleep-wake cycle.			
Other:			
Other:			
Other:			

CONTINUED - Other Physical Functions: Experienced or observed additional physical symptoms.

<i>Specific examples of physical functions may include:</i>	Check if applicable	Duration	Example(s):
Sleeping too long or too little			
Talking or moving excessively when asleep			
Frequent urination or incontinence			
Recent onset of erectile dysfunction or loss of ability to have orgasm.			
Repeatedly feeling faint after standing up.			
Shaking while sitting quietly.			
Clumsiness with movement or manual dexterity, such as walking, manipulating buttons, writing, or using utensils.			
Leaning to one side or loss of balance while sitting, standing or walking.			
Taking very small steps while walking casually (e.g. shuffling)			
Slowed movements.			
Other:			

This checklist provides general information and is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

- It may not encompass all potential causes of these symptoms, as they can be attributed to various health conditions.
- Use it as a starting point for discussion with your healthcare provider, but not as the sole diagnostic tool.
- Consult a qualified healthcare professional for personalized guidance.
- Seek early evaluation and diagnosis for better cognitive health and quality of life.

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