



# 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 more 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 patients experience, 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.

NAME:

DATE:

## Dementia can affect the following cognitive and physical functions:

**Section One - Attention and Concentration:** Ability to maintain attention for a particular activity. Use the checklist below.

<i>Examples of impaired attention may include:</i>	<b>Check if applicable</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Example(s):</b>
Easily Distracted			
Difficulty taking down phone numbers			
<u>Difficulty reading books or following movies</u>			
<u>Difficulty returning to a task if interrupted</u>			
<u>Difficulty following conversations in environments where there are competing sounds or activities</u>			
Other:			

NAME:

DATE:

3

**Section Two - Executive Function:** Goal directed behavior (versus habits) that permits organization, planning and executing a plan. Executive function involves organization, insight, reasoning and judgment.

<i>Examples of impaired executive function may include:</i>	<b>Check if applicable</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Example(s):</b>
<u>Difficulty following recipes or driving directions</u>			
Jumping to conclusions resulting in poor decisions			
<u>Difficulty multitasking</u>			
Diminished self-control			
<u>Inability to quickly or effectively adapt to changed circumstances</u>			
Other:			

NAME:

DATE:

4

**Section Three - Learning and Memory:** The ability to take in new information and retain it.

<i>Examples of impaired learning and memory may include:</i>	<b>Check if applicable</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Example(s):</b>
Difficulty using a phone or remote control			
Being unable to locate a familiar object or place			
Repeating the same information without remembering to have done so			
<u>Difficulty learning a new task</u>			
Other:			

NAME:

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ 5

**Section Four - Language Function:** Ability to speak and understand speech, printed information, and symbols

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

NAME:

DATE:

**Section Five - Visual, Spatial and Sensory Processing:** 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>	<b>Check if applicable</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Example(s):</b>
<u>Difficulty tracking and judging distance, depth, orientation, color or contrast</u>			
<u>Misidentifying a person or object</u>			
<u>Hallucinations- which means perceiving things not really present; can involve vision, hearing, smells, taste, or touch sensations</u>			
<u>Diminished sense of smell or taste</u>			
Other:			

NAME:

DATE:

7

**Section Six - 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. Beyond social situations, this category may include poor emotional control in general.

<i>Examples of impaired social functioning may include:</i>	<b>Check if applicable</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Example(s):</b>
Inability to distinguish sarcasm from sincerity.			
Difficulty correctly identifying facial expressions			
Decreased ability to infer the thoughts and feelings of others			
Socially withdrawn or inappropriate (poor "filter")			
Loss of motivation or caring about things that were previously important (apathy)			
<u>Decreased ability to understand or share the feelings of others. (empathy)</u>			
More argumentative or obstinate in situations than previously			
<u>Excessively anxious, or alternatively, lacking concern when appropriate</u>			
<u>Holding onto a false belief despite all evidence to the contrary (delusion)</u>			
Other:			

NAME:

DATE:

8

**Section Seven - Other Physical Functions:** Ability to carry out voluntary actions, as well as actions controlled automatically by the nervous system, such as blood pressure, temperature regulation and sleep

<i>Additional examples of other physical functions may include:</i>	<b>Check if applicable</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Example(s):</b>
<u>Difficulty with balance</u>			
Slowness getting out of chairs or walking			
<u>Clumsy manual dexterity, such as fastening buttons, writing, or using utensils</u>			
Difficulty with chewing or swallowing			
Feeling faint after standing up			
Recent onset of urinary frequency or incontinence			
New erectile dysfunction or inability to achieve orgasm			
Acting out dreams while asleep			
Abnormal, involuntary movements of face or body			
Other:			



NAME:

DATE:

9

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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