



COGNITIVE STIMULATION THERAPY IN 6 QUESTIONS

Cognitive stimulation therapy aims to maintain cognitive functioning by providing group activities that stimulate memory, language, attention-concentration and executive functioning (organisation, planning, information selection). Cognitive stimulation therapy also aims to improve quality of life, well-being and mood.

1

For whom and why?

Cognitive stimulation therapy is aimed at people with mild to moderate dementia. This intervention provides cognitive stimulation of memory, language, attention- concentration and executive functioning and a psychological support (mood, quality of life and social interactions).

2

How is the intervention conducted?

A cognitive stimulation therapy programme lasts 7 weeks with 2 sessions of 45 minutes per week in group of 5 to 8 participants. The group can choose a name and a song to be played at each session.

A session proceeds as follows: welcome of each participant; name and song of the group if chosen; time orientation (date of the day, time, weather of the day); discussion of current issues (newspapers); main activity adapted to the difficulties of the participants; participants feedbacks. The main activity focuses on a theme such as food, word games or money management (paying for groceries, doing the accounts, etc.) with exercises and discussions.

The aim is to work on cognitive functioning.

At the end of the programme, the professional reviews the situation with the participant and may suggest a new programme if necessary.

3

What are the benefits?

Observed effects are a maintenance or even an improvement of the cognitive functioning. Family caregivers of people receiving cognitive stimulation therapy show an improvement in their quality of life and mood. This can be explained by the improvements in the person's cognition and the fact that family caregivers can take a break and have some time to themselves while their loved one attends the sessions.

4 How does it work?

Cognitive stimulation therapy targets and involves 4 areas:

- Physical: praxis and sensory-motor integration (control and coordination of gestures related to the perception of one's environment and one's own sensations).
- Cognitive: memory, attention-concentration, executive functioning, language, and temporal and spatial orientation.
- Behavioural: mood and behavioural disorders.
- Social: social interactions and communication.

The sessions are based on appropriate and adapted mental stimulation to maintain and sustain preserved cognitive capabilities and to promote new learning. The sessions also help to maintain social links and the pleasure of carrying out group activities.

The sessions are a space for people to express and share difficulties encountered during the sessions and in daily life.

5 When is it contraindicated?

This intervention is not recommended for people with moderately severe and severe cognitive impairment and/or for people with severe hearing and/or visual impairment. Unawareness of one's cognitive impairments, severe cognitive and/or auditory and/or visual impairments may prevent people from following the sessions properly and may set them up for failure; this is obviously not the desired effect. People with behavioural symptoms such as agitation or wandering may interfere with the course of the sessions.

In all cases, it is necessary to discuss it beforehand with professionals.

6 Who can provide cognitive stimulation therapy?

Cognitive stimulation therapy is provided by carers, psychologists, neuropsychologists, speech therapists, psychomotor therapists or occupational therapists who have undergone training or are based on the cognitive stimulation therapy manual.



Do not forget your glasses and/or hearing aids if you need them.



Your participation in the sessions is free. You will always be asked if you wish to participate.

This sheet is adapted from a chapter in the guide *Psychosocial interventions and dementia: understanding, knowing, implementing* which presents 10 psychosocial interventions.

