

COGA Glossary 8th September 2020

Age Appropriate Forgetfulness

Sometimes called “age related memory loss”

People with age appropriate forgetfulness have impaired memory issues that can be a normal part of healthy aging. They may take longer to learn new things, forget something but remember it later, or occasionally forget particular words. (This differs from dementia where forgetfulness is due to a disorder and is more pronounced.)

Alternative and Augmentative Communication System

Sometimes referred to as “AAC”

Any method, device or app that can be used to help those who cannot use spoken language and need additional support by means of symbols, images and/or text. For example a screen with symbols that the user can select to speak the appropriate words or add them to a document.

Anxiety Disorders

People who have anxiety disorders struggle with intense and uncontrollable feelings of anxiety, fear, worry, and/or panic. This is more than just feeling worried once in a while. This may last for a long time and can interfere with daily activities, such as concentration and executive functioning.

Attention Deficit (hyperactivity) disorder, AD(H)D

Sometimes called Attention deficit disorder, ADD, and Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, ADHD

Attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder or **AD(H)D** involves difficulty focusing on a single task, focusing for longer periods, or being easily distracted. It is marked by an ongoing pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development.

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)

Sometimes called “autism,” “Asperger syndrome,” and “pervasive developmental disorder”

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is characterized by some degree of impaired social behavior, communication and language abilities. This may also impact the person’s ability to regulate behavior and attention. Individuals can have a narrow range of interests and activities and they may rely on alternative communication methods. Some individuals may also experience episodes of sensory overload.

Brain Injury

Brain injury including Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Acquired Brain Injury (ABI), are caused by damage to the brain which can lead to long-term impairment of executive function, memory, learning, coordination, speech and emotions as well as other physical and sensory impairments.

Brain injury can have many different causes such as a concussion or stroke, and can happen at any stage of life.

Cognitive and Learning Disabilities

Cognitive and learning disabilities include long-term, short-term, and permanent difficulties relating to cognitive functions, such as:

- Perception, memory and attention;
- Learning and orientation; and
- Visual, verbal or numerical thinking.

Early Stage Dementia

Common impairments of early stage dementia include memory loss, difficulty concentrating, and struggling to follow a conversation or find the right word. These may appear before a diagnosis of dementia. At this stage, these symptoms are often mild.

Executive Function

The group of cognitive processes and skills that help an individual plan, monitor, and execute their behaviors or goals.. It includes working memory and remembering details, impulse inhibition, organizing tasks, managing time, fluid reasoning and solving problems

Intellectual disabilities

Intellectual disabilities involve a significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information and to learn and apply new skills which started before adulthood. This has a lasting effect on development with a reduced ability to cope independently. Down syndrome is one among many different causes of intellectual disabilities.

Memory impairments

Memory impairments are where a person is unable to remember or recall pieces of information or skills that are usually remembered. It can affect

Working memory that holds information while it is processed. For example, we rely on working memory for tasks such as typing in a credit card number.

Short-term Memory that stores information for a few seconds or longer before it is stored in long-term memory. For example, we rely on short-term memory to remember the location of menu items between web pages.

Long-term Memory that holds information long term, such as information from personal events, language and information. For example, we rely on long-term memory to recall personal contact information.

Mental Health

Mental health refers to our emotional, psychological, and social well-being.

A Mental health condition/impairment generally has some combination of disturbed thoughts, emotions and ability to relate to others that impairs daily functioning. Examples include depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder. These conditions may cause difficulty focusing on information, processing information, or understanding it.

Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI)

Mild cognitive impairment is when some people have more memory and processing problems than is normal for their age. MCI is often used when impairments are not a part of typical aging and a person doesn't have a specific diagnosis. MCI may impact a person's ability to concentrate on a task or process new information. There is often a marked feeling of mental fatigue when mental tasks are attempted, and new learning is found to be difficult. This can sometimes develop into other types of cognitive disabilities like dementia.