

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and Cognitive Impairment

Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)

refers to an injury to the brain resulting in deterioration in functioning. It can result from traumatic causes such as car accidents or from non-traumatic causes such as alcohol or other drug related brain injury

Intellectual Disability

You're most likely to encounter people with borderline or mild intellectual disability. Most people with such a disability can learn the many skills necessary to live in the community relatively independently.

Delivering CBT to complex needs clients

Evidence suggests people with ABI or other cognitive impairment are more likely to display maladaptive coping styles due to impaired functioning. CBT has been suggested as an appropriate therapeutic intervention because of its structured format, flexibility and extensive range of therapeutic techniques that can be employed and potentially adapted.

Cognitive Impairment

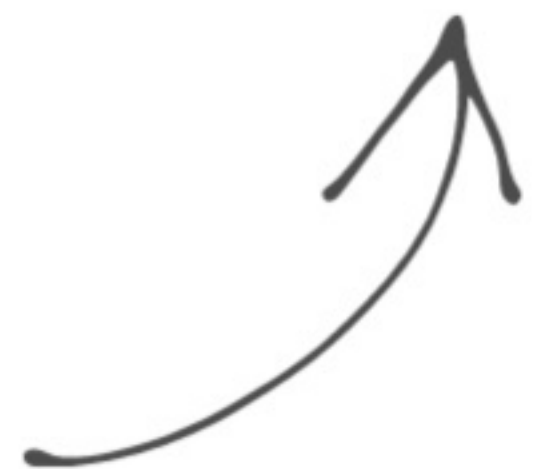
is a term used to recognise a broad range of disorders that affect cognitive functioning, including intellectual disability, acquired brain injury and fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. People with cognitive impairment experience difficulties with a range of adaptive behaviours including social, conceptual and practical skills they've learned in order to function in their everyday lives.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

is an umbrella term used to describe a range of conditions and harms which have emerged as a result of prenatal alcohol consumption.

Remember

No matter what counselling technique you use, it's important to remember that non-compliance, being late or not attending sessions does not automatically translate into a person being ambivalent or unmotivated. Rather, this may be due to the impact of their cognitive deficits.



Delivering Cognitive Behaviour Therapy to People with Complex Needs

The following list of techniques may help in delivering CBT to people with complex needs



Session times

Shorten the length of individual sessions and increase the frequency of your sessions



Refocus

Use techniques such as summarising, or even agreeing on hand signals, to refocus clients.

Tailor to client needs

Counsellors in drug and alcohol settings work from a variety of models. When counselling people with cognitive impairment, it's essential you have strategies to tailor sessions to their needs.

Helpful aids

Use memory aids such as written notes, cue cards, digital recorders or audio tapes



Involve another person

Involve a family member or support person to help remind or reinforce therapy strategies and to assist with work out of the counselling session.

