

# Cognitive Communication Disorder

## Speech and Language Therapy Department



**Patient information leaflet**

This leaflet explains what Cognitive Communication Disorder is, the communication difficulties that arise from the condition and what family and friends can do to help the affected person.

## **What is Cognitive Communication Disorder?**

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The frontal lobe in the brain is responsible for attention, personality, thinking and memory skills. The parietal lobe also has a role to play with these functions. People who have had damage in these areas of the brain, or who have increased pressure in the brain, may experience cognitive changes. These cognitive difficulties can affect communication in many ways. For example:

### **Attention and concentration problems**

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- Finding it hard to concentrate when others are speaking.
- Getting easily distracted.
- Unable to follow conversation.
- Changing topics often, or becoming fixed on one topic of discussion.



### **Memory problems**

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- Difficulty recalling conversations or specific things that have been said.
- Repeating information/questions without being aware.



## Slower processing speed

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- Needing extra time to think through information.
- Delay in responding to comments or questions.



## Difficulty initiating/starting things

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- Problems starting conversations or thinking of things to say.
- Difficulty planning tasks or identifying/completing what needs to be done e.g. getting yourself ready in the morning.



## Problems controlling own behaviour

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- Difficulty monitoring what is being said or adapting style of talking depending on who is listening.
- Uncharacteristic swearing or anger.
- Finding it hard to weigh up decisions.
- Not realising what their problems are.



## Difficulty reasoning and solving problems

- Problems using and interpreting facial expression and body language.
- Not being able to sort out a misunderstanding.



## What strategies can be used by family/friends to help?

- Find out which strategies help the person. Everyone is different.
- Keep distractions to a minimum.
- Slow down and chunk information. Make sure they have processed the information before continuing.
- Allow the person plenty of time to respond or think of things to say.
- Provide structure to the conversation and keep to one topic at a time.
- Jot down simplified notes to remind the person of your conversation or requests.
- Support what you are saying with gesture, written words, pictures or context as far as possible.



## What further support is available?

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Speech and Language Therapists can give specific strategies and exercises according to the patient's needs.

If you have any questions or you notice further changes, please call the Speech & Language Therapy Department. Please see contact details overleaf.

## Reference sources

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- <https://www.headway.org.uk/about-brain-injury/individuals/effects-of-brain-injury/communication-problems/cognitive-communication-difficulties/>
- <http://www.stroke.org.uk/sites/default/files/Communication%20problems%20after%20stroke.pdf>





## Contact details

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Please contact the Speech and Language Therapy department if you have any questions or concerns:

**Telephone:** 01483 571122 **ext** 4680

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## PALS and Advocacy contact details

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Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

**Telephone:** 01483 402757

**Email:** rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net

**Opening hours:** 9.00am–3.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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