

# **ESA50 PART 2: MENTAL, COGNITIVE AND INTELLECTUAL FUNCTION**

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# **PART 3: EATING AND DRINKING**

## **FACTSHEET**

### **Part 2: Mental, cognitive and intellectual functions**

**NB:** Remember, as in the physical section if you cannot complete a task through extreme exhaustion, mental confusion or extreme discomfort this is counted as NOT being able to complete the task. The changes in descriptors are supposed to reflect this. If you do answer No to any question make sure you fully explain why or what happens when and after you try the activity.

### **Learning how to do tasks**

#### **Support Group Criteria**

Cannot, due to impaired mental function, reliably initiate or complete at least 2 sequential personal actions

#### **Descriptors:**

Cannot learn how to complete a simple task, such as setting an alarm clock.=15 points

Cannot learn anything beyond a simple task, such as setting an alarm clock.= 9 points

Cannot learn anything beyond a moderately complex task, such as the steps involved in operating a washing machine to clean clothes.= 6 points

Think about yourself in the workplace being taught tasks. In this example they use an alarm clock as a simple task. Think of the steps involved:

- being able to read numbers
- able to understand am from pm
- being able to move the hands or set the buttons to the correct timekeeping
- able to turn on the alarm.

If you were taught a similar (simple) task would you remember the details the next day and be able to complete the task without help or prompting from another person? This question is set ,so if prompting and re-learning is required the following day, then that task has not been learned and why there is a graduation of descriptors.

The ability to learn is seen as a key component of the workplace.

The guidance in the Medical Services handbook says this relates to learning difficulties or brain injury. But also consider any condition that affects the ability to learn, concentrate and remember.

Depression can cause problems with memory and concentration making learning how to do a new task,

e.g. working a new mobile difficult.

#### **If you tick “It varies”, explain why.**

Are you less receptive on some days than others? Why? Is this due to:

- erratic sleep pattern?
- regularly have to get up in the night for medication or discomfort?
- suffer from discomfort that makes it hard for you to concentrate?
- have a disability such as tinnitus or Chronic Fatigue that may impact on mental function?

have a learning disability?

### **Awareness of Hazards or Danger**

#### **Support Group Criteria**

Reduced awareness of everyday hazards, due to cognitive or mental disorders, leading to significant risk of:

- Injury to self or
- Damage to property or possessions, thus requiring supervision for the majority of the time

#### **Descriptors**

- Cannot learn or understand how to successfully complete a simple task, such as setting an alarm clock, at all = **15 points**
- Needs to witness a demonstration, given more than once on the same occasion, of how to carry out a simple task before the claimant is able to learn or understand how to complete the task successfully, but would be unable to successfully complete the task the following day without receiving a further demonstration of how to complete it = **15 points**
- Needs to witness a demonstration of how to carry out a simple task, before the claimant is able to learn or understand how to complete the task successfully, but would be unable to successfully complete the task the following day without receiving a verbal prompt from another person = **9 points**
- Needs to witness a demonstration of how to carry out a moderately complex task, such as the steps involved in operating a washing machine to correctly clean clothes, before the claimant is able to learn or understand how to complete the task successfully, but would be unable to successfully complete the task the following day without receiving a verbal prompt from another person = **9 points**
- Needs verbal instructions as to how to carry out a simple task before the claimant is able to learn or understand how to complete the task successfully, but would be unable, within a period of less than one week, to successfully complete the task the following day without receiving a verbal prompt from another person = **6 points**

The purpose of this activity is to find out if you are at risk from common hazards as a result of reduced awareness;; this may be caused by learning difficulties, affected concentration and self-awareness, or the side effects of medication. It reflects the absence of understanding or ability to recognise potential danger. You may want to get your healthcare worker, partner or friend to help you here as you may not always be aware.

#### **Examples:**

- have you injured yourself perhaps by cutting yourself on a sharp object or by burning yourself in the kitchen or with the iron?
- fallen or injured yourself in the street?
- damaged property (burnt the kettle, the saucepan, your clothes) and has this led to avoidance of attempting tasks?
- Because of the above do you avoid activities such as driving, cooking and other situations and circumstances you believe involve risk?

## **Starting and Finishing a Task**

### **Support Group Criteria**

Cannot, due to impaired mental function, reliably initiate or complete at least 2 sequential tasks

#### **Descriptors**

- cannot, due to impaired mental function, reliably initiate or complete at least 2 sequential personal actions = **15 points**
- due to impaired mental function, cannot reliably initiate or complete at least 2 personal actions for the majority of the time = **9 points**
- frequently cannot, due to impaired mental function, reliably initiate or complete at least 2 personal actions = **6 points**

#### **Examples**

- Are you unable to plan, organise, problem solve, prioritise, and switch tasks due to cognitive impairment without verbal prompting for most of the time, or from time to time?
- Does brain fog, forgetfulness and lack of concentration prevent you from completing tasks such as cooking a meal, getting drinks, getting up and dressed to leave the house and attend appointments without someone to remind you of what you need to do?
- Even if you have someone to remind you, are you still unable to complete the above tasks?
- Do you have to stick to strict pacing routines to enable you manage and get through the day?

## **Coping with Change**

### **Support Group Criteria**

Cannot cope with any change, due to cognitive or mental disorder to the extent that day to day life cannot be managed.

#### **Descriptors**

- Cannot cope with any change to the extent that day to day life cannot be managed = **15 points**

- Cannot cope with minor planned change (such as a pre-arranged change to the routine time scheduled for a lunch break), to the extent that overall, day to day life is made significantly more difficult = **9 points**
- Cannot cope with minor unplanned change (such as the timing of an appointment on the day it is due to occur), to the extent that overall, day to day life is made significantly more difficult = **6 points**.

This is not about disliking change, but the inability to cope with it, resulting in reactions such as not being able to do anything for the rest of the day, anxiety or panic attack, angry outbursts, collapsing in a heap, crying etc. Use examples such as how you have coped - or not coped - when you have had to change the time of an appointment.

## **Going Out**

### **Descriptors**

- Cannot get to any specified place with which the claimant is familiar = **15 points**
- Is unable to get to a specified place with which the claimant is familiar, without being accompanied by another person = **9 points**
- Is unable to get to a specified place with which the claimant is unfamiliar without being accompanied = **6 points**

This activity identifies individuals who are unable to travel without supervision and support from another person. This may be due to disorientation or agoraphobia for example, but is not the result of a physical impairment.

This activity does not reflect lesser degrees of anxiety about going out, nor does it reflect planning and timekeeping. According to DWP: "The means by which an individual arrives at their destination is less important in the context of their capability for work.

Individuals that are unable to use public transport, and yet are able to arrive at their destination alone through other means, will not score on this activity.

Do you get fearful, scared, panicky or anxious when you are visiting new places or engaging in social contact? If you do, do you feel the need to avoid these situations, all of the time, for the majority of the time, or frequently?

The medical services handbook states that it would be also be unlikely to apply to anyone who has managed to attend their medical alone, so make sure you are aware of this.

## **Coping with Social Engagement, due to Cognitive Impairment or Mental Disorder**

### **Support Group Criteria**

- Engagement in social contact is constantly precluded because of difficulty relating to others or significant distress to the claimant.

### **Descriptors**

- Engagement in social contact is always precluded due to difficulty relating to others or significant distress experienced by the individual = **15 points**
- Engagement in social contact with someone unfamiliar to the claimant is always precluded due to difficulty relating to others or significant distress experienced by the individual = **9 points**
- Engagement in social contact with someone unfamiliar to the claimant is precluded for the majority of the time due to difficulty relating to others or significant distress experienced by the individual = **6 points**
- The activities Coping with Social Situations and Propriety of Behaviour with Other People refer to an individual's ability to function in social situations.

These activities are intended to reflect real difficulties with social engagement and behaviour. **For example**, displaying consistently abnormal behaviour, or a level of anxiety much more severe than fleeting moments of anxiety, which any individual might experience from time to time.

This activity is to determine how you cope socially. You also need to explain what happens when you go to new places and meet new people.

Do you withdraw from going out and meeting people altogether or can you cope with people and places you know?

Explain how you feel physically and mentally and what level of distress you feel Again, be aware the

medical services handbook states that it would be unlikely to apply to anyone who has managed to attend their medical alone.

### **Behaving Appropriately**

#### **Support Group Criteria**

On a daily basis has uncontrollable episodes of aggressive or dis-inhibited behaviour that would not be reasonable in any workplace

#### **Descriptors**

- Has on a daily basis uncontrollable episodes of aggressive or dis-inhibited behaviour that would be unreasonable in any work place = **15 points**
- Frequently has uncontrollable episodes of aggressive or dis-inhibited behaviour that would be unreasonable in any workplace = **15 points**
- Occasionally has uncontrollable episodes of aggressive or dis-inhibited behaviour that would be unreasonable in any workplace = **9 points**

The key phrase in this section is “aggressive or dis-inhibited behaviour”. “Dis-inhibition is a term in psychology used to describe a lack of restraint manifested in several ways, including disregard for social conventions, impulsivity, and poor risk assessment.

Dis-inhibition affects motor, instinctual, emotional, cognitive and perceptual aspects with signs and symptoms similar to the diagnostic criteria for mania.

This descriptor refers to people on the autistic spectrum, psychotic illness and brain injury. It also states that a lack of ability to maintain personal hygiene can cause the claimant to be totally unacceptable to other people - you are likely to have noticed if this applies. Also consider the effects of paranoia, anxiety, impaired brain functioning due to insomnia, any thought disorders or impairments in cognitive function can result in misinterpreting others and result in you becoming distressed.

If you have problems in this area, it might be best to get someone else to fill in this form for you as you may not be fully aware of the types of problems caused or the frequency.

### **Part 3: Eating and Drinking**

#### **Support Group Criteria**

Eating and Drinking.

- Cannot convey food or drink to the claimant’s own mouth without receiving physical assistance from someone else;
- Owing to a severe disorder of mood or behaviour, fails to convey food or drink to the claimant’s own mouth without repeatedly stopping or becoming breathless or in severe discomfort
- Cannot convey food or drink to the claimant’s own mouth without receiving regular prompting from someone else
- Owing to severe disorder of mood or behaviour, failing to convey food or drink to claimant's own mouth without
  - (i) physical assistance from someone else; or
  - (ii) regular prompting given by someone else in the claimant’s presence.
- Chewing or swallowing food or drink.
- Cannot chew or swallow food or drink;
- Cannot chew or swallow food or drink without repeatedly stopping, experiencing breathlessness or severe discomfort;
- Cannot chew or swallow food or drink without repeatedly receiving regular prompting given by someone else in the claimant’s presence; or
- Owing to a severe disorder of mood or behaviour, fails to ;
  - (i) chew or swallow food or drink; or
  - (ii) chew or swallow food or drink without regular prompting given by someone else in the claimant’s presence.