

Defining and Assessing Capacity

A presentation for:
National Guardianship Association – KY Chapter
May 20, 2009

What is decisional capacity?

- ✓ NGA Code of Ethics The ability to understand and appreciate the nature and consequences of a decision and to reach and communicate an informed decision in the matter.
- ✓ Two methods to measure this:
 - ✓ Mental Status Assessment
 - ✓ Functional Assessment

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Assessing Mental Status

- ✓ Orientation
- ✓ Registration
- ✓ Attention or calculation
- ✓ Recall
- ✓ Cognitive disturbances

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Orientation

- Orientation to time and place
- Answers are easy to determine
- Measures client's functional level
 - Time – When to take medications?
 - Place – How to drive home?

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Registration

- Ability for client to repeat 3 words
- Same three words to recall later during assessment
- Measures client's functional level
 - Are they able to hear?
 - Are they able to express themselves?

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Attention or Calculation

- Serial 7(s) or
- Spelling a 5-letter word backwards
- Measures client's functional level
 - Are they able to balance a checkbook?
 - Are they able to follow sequential instructions?

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Recall

- Ability to remember 3 words from registration
- Short-term memory
- Measures client's functional level
 - Is the stove on?

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Cognitive Disturbances

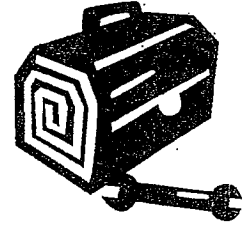
- Agnosia – failure to recognize or identify objects despite intact sensory function
- Have the client name common objects (watch, pen, etc.)
- Measures client's functional level
 - What do I do with a ringing telephone?
- Aphasia – loss or impairment of the ability to use or comprehend words (language disturbance)
- More pronounced with individuals who have had a stroke
- Have the client repeat a sentence exactly

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Cognitive Disturbances

- Executive functioning – disturbance or loss of ability in planning, organizing, sequencing, abstracting
- Have the client demonstrate a three-stage command
- Measures client's functional level
 - Do they cook raw meat before eating it?
- Apraxia – impaired ability to carry out motor activities despite intact motor function
- Have the client draw a diagram or write a sentence
- Measures client's functional level
 - Are they able to button a shirt or drive a car?

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Assessing the Mental Status of the Older Person Video Exercise

Instructions. Follow along with the video interview and record your assessment below.

Notes/ Observation

Orientation (Time and Place):

- What is the year?
- What is the month?
- What is the day of the week?
- What is the date?
- What is the name of the city?
- What is the name of the state?
- What is the name of the building?

Registration:

Repeat three words.

Calculation:

- Serial 7s from 100
- Spell "house" backwards

Recall:

What were the three words from above?

Cognitive Functioning:

Agnosia (object recognition)
What do you call these?

Aphasia (speech)

Repeat the following phrase.

Executive Functioning (plan, sequence)

Demonstrate a 3-stage command.

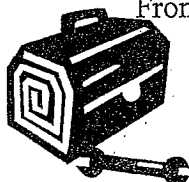
Apraxia (motor skills)

Draw a picture.

Write a sentence and read it back.

Conclusion:

From DCBS Training Branch curriculum:
Meeting Needs of Vulnerable Adults



Functional Assessment

- Determine ability to carry out activities of daily living
- Provides evidence to present to the jury and/or judge
- Can be administered using questions and observations

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Functional Assessment

- If I gave you a quarter, nickel, dime, and penny, how much money would you have?
 - Hand client those 4 coins and have ask them for total amount.
 - Have client arrange coins in value, from highest to lowest.
- If I gave you a \$10 and asked you to buy a loaf of bread and gallon of milk, how much change would you have left?

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Functional Assessment

- What are your medications?
- Ask client to locate pill bottles.
- Observe pill bottles – date last filled, number of refills, number of pills in bottle, number per day client is supposed to take
- Ask client when they take this medication?
- Ask client what medication is for?
- What happens if don't take medication?
Went missing? Someone stole it?

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Clock Drawing Test


- Clock Drawing Test
- Have client draw a large circle on paper
- Have client place hours on clock in correct orientation and sequence
- Give client a time and have them draw on clock (ten before 3:00 PM)
- Christine Kennard for About.com

| Functional Assessment | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------|-----------|-------|----------|
| Needs Assistance w/ | Never | Sometimes | Often | Complete |
| Ambulating | | | | |
| Eating | | | | |
| Finances | | | | |
| Medication | | | | |

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| Video Resources |
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| <p>✓ Assessing the Mental Status of the Older Person, with Peter V. Rabins, MD University of Maryland, Video Press http://www.videopress.org</p> <p>✓ The Care Transitions Intervention University of Colorado Health Sciences Center www.caretransitions.org</p> |

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| Thank You |
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