

N.C. Nurse Aide I Curriculum

MODULE R

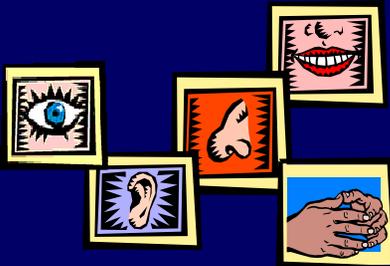
Cognitive Changes Due to Aging

Objectives

- Identify cognitive changes that occur due to aging.
- Describe the importance of pacing and patience while delivering care to the older adult.

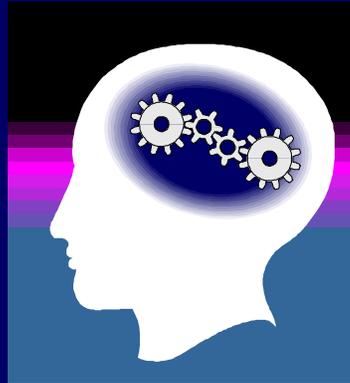
Cognition

The manner in which messages from the



are changed, stored

in memory,



recovered from memory, and later used to answer questions, respond to requests, and perform tasks

Cognitive Changes due to Aging

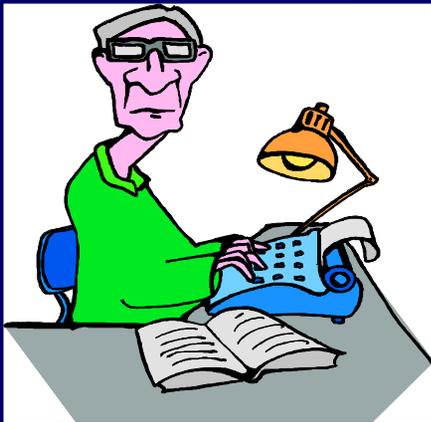
IMPORTANT FOR AN OLDER PERSON TO USE THE BRAIN OR LOSE IT



- Healthy older adults – no notable ↓ in cognitive ability and are able to learn
- Cognitive function is related to use
- Ability to think or problem-solve remains sharp

Cognitive Changes due to Aging – Key Terms

Learning –gaining of information, skills and knowledge measured by an improvement in response

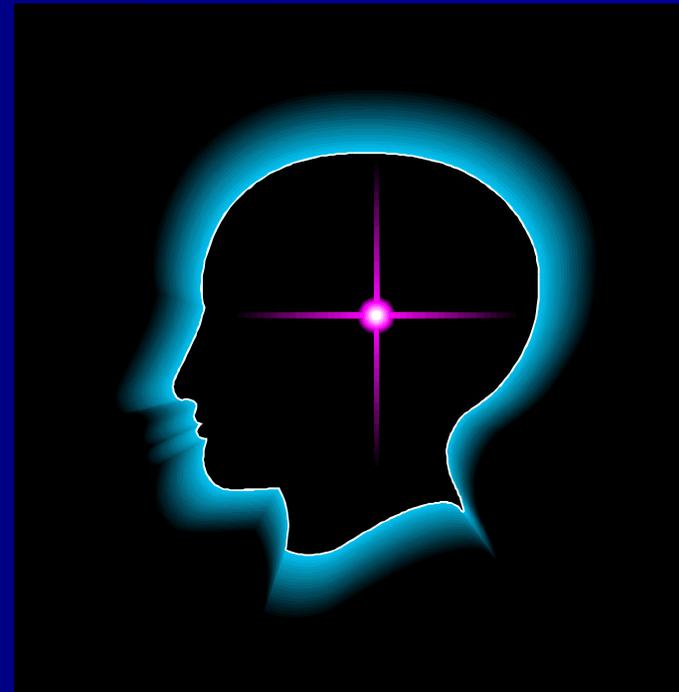


- The ability to learn remains
- Older adults learn things easier and better when they can set own pace
- Depends on memory

“Now, what is the definition of memory?”

Cognitive Changes due to Aging

- Size of neurons (brain cells) progressively ↓
- Total brain mass ↓



Cognitive Changes due to Aging



- Responses ↓
- ↑ learning time needed for new activities
- ↑ difficulty in learning skills
- ↓ processing, response time and reaction time

Cognitive Changes due to Aging

- More deliberate, less frequent responses and less effective performance when pace is fast
- Cannot adapt as well
- Easily confused



Cognitive Changes due to Aging



- Mild short-term memory loss
- Motivation to learn ↓
- Feels threatened
- Difficulties in doing more than one task or dealing with more than one request
- Unable to ignore stimuli

Cognitive Changes due to Aging

Reaction time – time it takes to begin an answer or a movement after someone asks a question or makes a request

- Changes vary
- Reaction time ↓ gradually after age 60
- Impaired by aging process, sensory ↓, or chronic disease



Cognitive Changes due to Aging - Importance

- Important to be aware of changes in reaction time and pace accordingly
- Important to develop understanding of ways to help make up for slowed reaction time



Workload of the Nurse Aide



**THEY HAVE A WHOLE LOT TO DO
IN A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME!!!!**

**When working with residents,
nurse aides may accidentally
quicken pace and expectations**

Effects of a Fast Pace on an Older Resident

Can negatively affect older resident's ability to learn, perform a task, or maintain motivation

Older residents tend to be more cautious and less willing to respond quickly

May choose not to do task

Social Breakdown Syndrome

- **May occur if resident is rushed and not allowed enough time**
- **Will keep quiet and not ask for slower pace and blame self for not being able to keep up**
- **Begins to feel incompetent with ↓ in self-esteem**



Social Breakdown Syndrome

Society becomes impatient....

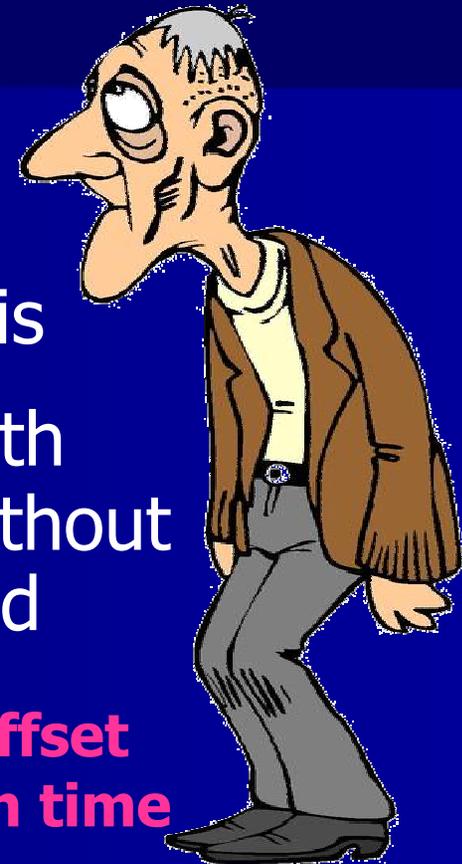


....with those who cannot keep up

Pacing and Patience

- **Pacing** – awareness and adjustment of care based on how slow or how fast a person is
- **Patience** – ability to deal with slowness, delay, or boredom without complaining or appearing rushed

Pacing and patience can be used to offset effects of a resident's slowed reaction time



Pacing and Patience – Importance

When allowed to take time and set own pace, residents

- Are better able to perform tasks or learn new things
- Have time to use assets to the best of abilities
- Feel better, competent and in control



Pacing and Patience – Nurse Aide's Role

- Slow down pace when working with residents
- Let the resident set the pace
- Ensure the resident is wearing hearing aid and glasses
- Tell resident ahead of time



Pacing and Patience – Nurse Aide's Role



- Allow time to focus
- Allow time to think
- Give clear, short, easy instructions
- Relate new information or tasks with past

Pacing and Patience – Nurse Aide's Role



- Use simple words
- Show the resident what is to be done
- Allow resident to look at equipment

**PRAISE
RESIDENT WHEN
TASK IS DONE**

Congratulations



The End