

CHECKLIST FOR IDENTIFYING COGNITIVE WEAKNESSES

Cognitive skills are the foundation for thinking and learning and dictate much of our performance in school, work, and life. Like a computer's processor, they are always running in the background, allowing us to take in, process, store, and retrieve information. Low cognitive function is the primary cause of most learning difficulties and disorders such as ADHD and dyslexia. Brain injuries caused by substance abuse and concussions lower cognitive skill function. The good news is that all cognitive skills can be made strong by focused and deliberate cognitive skills training. Below are some of the most common symptoms of weakness in each skill. Keep in mind that not all symptoms of a weakness must be present for someone to be low in a cognitive skill. Check all the relevant symptoms below to determine which cognitive skills may be causing difficulties.

SHORT TERM MEMORY

- ☐ Difficulty with multi-step instructions
- ☐ Needs repetition
- ☐ "In one ear and out the other" syndrome
- ☐ Distracted
- ☐ Off-task or zones out
- ☐ Frustrated easily
- ☐ Completes tasks slowly
- ☐ Poor note-taker
- ☐ Difficulty copying from board to paper
- ☐ Looks like ADD/ADHD

PROCESSING SPEED

- ☐ Difficulty completing tasks
- ☐ Procrastinates
- ☐ Distracted
- ☐ Off-task or zones out
- ☐ Low participation in group settings
- ☐ Frustrated easily
- ☐ Performance or test anxiety
- ☐ Reads slowly
- ☐ Delayed response when asked a question
- ☐ Performs below their ability or potential
- ☐ Looks like ADD/ADHD

LONG TERM MEMORY

- ☐ Needs repetition
- ☐ Forgets names and information easily
- ☐ Outcomes don't reflect effort
- ☐ Difficulty applying learned concepts
- ☐ Misses appointments
- ☐ Needs to write everything down
- ☐ Requires frequent reminders

ATTENTION

- ☐ Completes tasks slowly
- ☐ Distracted
- ☐ Difficulty jumping between tasks
- ☐ Short attention span
- ☐ Impulsive

LOGIC & REASONING

- ☐ Difficulty with writing or reading comprehension
- ☐ Answers are out of left field
- ☐ Overwhelmed by new problems
- ☐ Struggles to connect consequence with behavior
- ☐ Difficulty reading between the lines
- ☐ Difficulty connecting ideas or concepts

AUDITORY PROCESSING

- ☐ Needs repetition
- ☐ Poor note-taker
- ☐ Choppy reader
- ☐ Poor spelling
- ☐ Mispronounces words
- ☐ Difficulty reading out loud
- ☐ Low reading comprehension
- ☐ Better with visual cues
- ☐ Confused when called on

VISUAL PROCESSING

- ☐ Difficulty making mental movies or pictures
- ☐ Struggles to visualize future scenarios
- ☐ Dislikes visualization exercises
- ☐ Low reading comprehension
- ☐ Poor spatial awareness/coordination
- ☐ Dislikes reading for pleasure

Provider: _____ **Client:** _____

Concerns/Questions: _____

Reason for Referral: _____