

Department of
Occupational Therapy

Living with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI)



Foreword

- People with mild cognitive impairment may experience unique set of challenges in their daily activities.
- Examples in this booklet may not be applicable to all individuals with mild cognitive impairment.
- The list of activities in this booklet is not exhaustive. Your Occupational Therapist will suggest what is suitable for you.
- Note: Your emotional state and stress may also affect cognitive processes and coping with daily life. Do seek medical help and attention where necessary.

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What is Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI)?



It is a condition which causes a decline in one's memory, attention and higher thinking skills. However, you can still manage routine self-care tasks if you adopt the recommended strategies.



"People with MCI can still live independent, fulfilling lives."



*"But they tend to be forgetful and have difficulty completing tasks that require **multiple** steps, like cooking a complicated dish."*



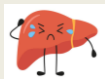
Possible Causes of MCI



Depression, chronic stress and anxiety



Stroke or traumatic brain injury, brain tumours



Thyroid, kidney or liver problems



Medication side effects



Sleep disorders



Substance and alcohol use disorder

MCI is different from normal aging or dementia



Normal Ageing

MCI

Dementia

Difficulty concentrating



Occasionally forgetting (e.g. an appointment, task, or conversations from a year ago)



More frequent and severe memory lapses (e.g. of common words, names of good friends)



Difficulty performing familiar self-care tasks

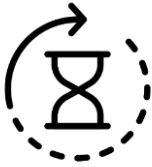


Changes to mood, behaviour, personality



How Does a Decline in Cognition Affect our Daily Activities?

1. Slower Processing Speed



Slower response to an emergency



Taking longer to reply questions



Missing the bus

2. Poorer Ability to Focus



Difficulty locating a road sign in crowded places



Unable to focus in a group conversation



Difficulty multitasking

How Does a Decline in Cognition Affect our Daily Activities?

3. Poorer memory



Forgetting passwords



Forgetting items from a grocery list



Forgetting to bring the house keys



Missing medications or appointments



Forgetting important dates

4. Difficulty with executive functions

Ability to plan, organise, reason, make judgement, problem solve, think abstractly, modify responses to the environment and have appropriate social interactions.



Needing more time to make decisions than previously



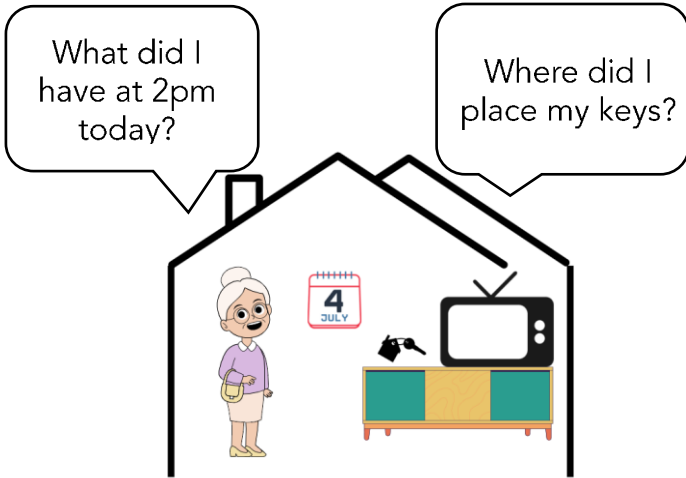
Requiring more time and practice to learn a new task or skill



Missing out key details when planning for an outing or activity

Example of Individual with MCI: Mdm Wong

What daily life looks like for Mdm Wong:



Forgot to bring the house keys



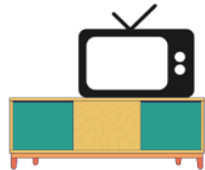
Missed out a scheduled medical appointment



Forgot to take her medications



Lack of motivation to plan her day



Spends most of her time sitting in front of the TV



How can we help Mdm Wong continue to lead an active and fulfilling life?

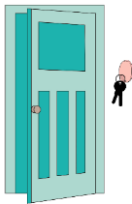
Memory Strategies

Use your environment

- Have visible reminders



- Place items at obvious places

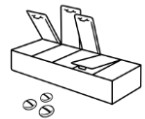
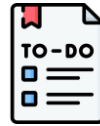


Use tools to help

- Calendars
- Alarms



- Lists
- Pillbox



Use your routine

- Associate medication routine with daily meals where possible
- Do one thing at a time

Internal techniques

- Ask questions
- Rephrase
- Try to visualise information
- Relate information to something familiar
- Test yourself at intervals
- Group similar information together

Specific recommendations

Attention Strategies

Make changes to your environment

- Limit distractions



- Only show what is necessary



Make changes to your task

- Do one thing at a time
- Use a checklist to keep track



- Plan ahead!

- Take rest breaks



- Give yourself sufficient time

- Do more challenging activities when you are most alert

Others

- Repeat and clarify information heard immediately
- Take notes
- If you feel anxious, find ways to calm down before starting the activity

Specific recommendations

Cognitive Stimulating Activities

How do Cognitive Stimulating Activities help?

- Delay functional and cognitive decline
- Stimulate the brain
- Increase participation and quality of life



How to choose a Cognitive Stimulating Activity?

- Personalise to individual interests
- Consider your personal interests and past hobbies



Please consult your Occupational Therapist for more targeted strategies, interventions or for further clarification.

Examples of Cognitive Stimulating Activities

Physical Activities

1. Brisk walking
2. Tai-Chi
3. Dance
4. Yoga



Benefits

- ✓ Stimulates the brain
- ✓ Improves body strength and cardiovascular endurance



Daily Activities

1. Gardening
2. Money management
3. Cooking
4. Baking
5. Grocery shopping
6. Knitting/ Sewing
7. Reading
8. Diary writing



Benefits

- Retrains / maintains higher brain functions



Picking up a New Skill

1. A new musical instrument
2. Cultural activity
3. New language
4. New gadgets
5. Photography
6. Arts and crafts



Benefits

- Engaging in new activities stimulates brain cells



Examples of Cognitive Stimulating Activities

Interactive Activities

1. Karaoke
2. Family Outings



Benefits

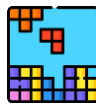
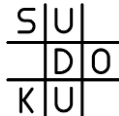
- ✓ Stimulates memory function
- ✓ Promotes social communication
- ✓ Trains activity tolerance

Engage in Games

1. Board / Card Games
(Chess, Mahjong, Monopoly, Rummy-O, Uno)
2. Single-player Games
(Sudoku, Jigsaw Puzzles, Word Search, Crosswords)
3. Game applications
(Tetris, Solitaire, Peak)

Benefits

- ✓ Involves memory, information processing
- ✓ Interpersonal interactions in games
- ✓ Practice hand-eye coordination



Home Programme

Your Occupational Therapist may use this home programme to advise you on strategies that you can adopt in daily activities.

Areas to target (e.g. areas of occupation, cognition, assets and barriers)	Specific recommendations

General Strategies

- Use reminders
- Plan it
- Simplify it
- Stay active with cognitive stimulating activities

Useful Links

Scan the QR codes below
to access more resources on:

Cognitive Health

Find out more about
cognitive health and
strategies to maintain
cognitive health



Games for Daily Engagement

Find out a wide array of
digital, card and board
games here



If you would like to find out more about how to cope with living with mild cognitive impairment, kindly approach your Occupational Therapist for more information.

Clinic B1C

TTSH Medical Centre, Level B1

Contact:

6357 7000 (Central Hotline)



Scan the QR Code with your smart phone
to access the information online or visit
<http://bit.ly/TTSHHealth-Library>

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you have just read at
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