

# **N.C. Nurse Aide I Curriculum**

## **MODULE R**

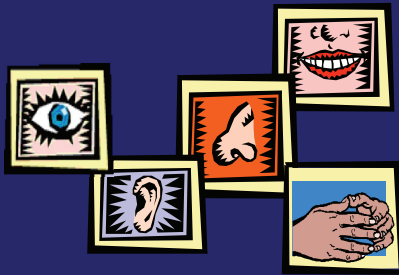
### **Cognitive Changes Due to Aging**

# 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*

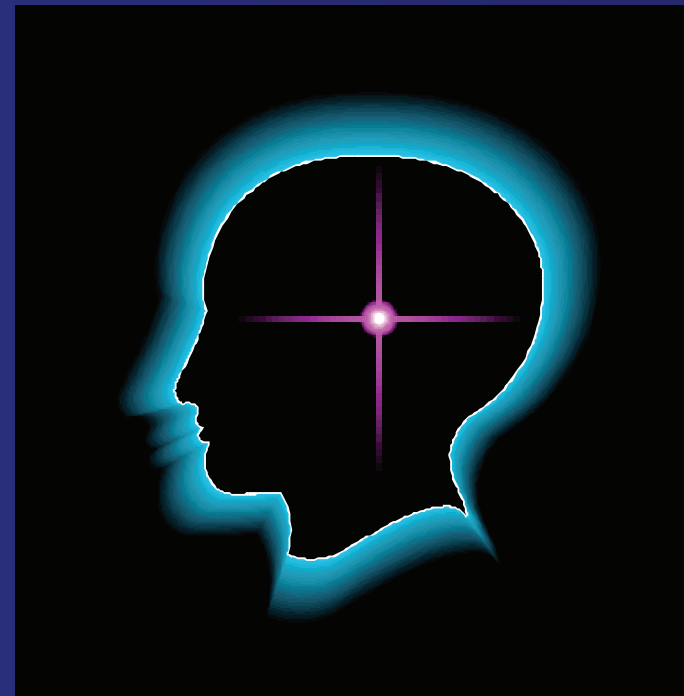


- The ability to learn remains
- Older adults learn things easier and better when they can set own pace
- Depends on memory

“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

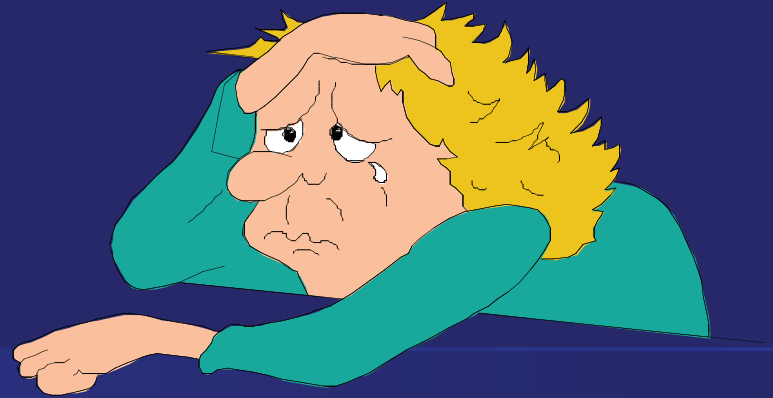


# Cognitive Changes due to Aging - Importance

- 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

The background of the slide is a vibrant, celebratory scene. It features several large, colorful balloons in shades of green, purple, red, blue, and orange. The balloons are decorated with small, multi-colored stars. Scattered throughout the scene are colorful streamers and confetti, creating a festive atmosphere. In the lower right corner, there is a stylized illustration of two figures, one in pink and one in purple, celebrating with their arms raised and hands clapping.

**PRAISE  
RESIDENT WHEN  
TASK IS DONE**

**Congratulations**

# **The End**