

Introduction

Critical Thinking for Activities of Daily Living and Communication is designed to provide a variety of common everyday situations that stimulate critical thinking and communication skills. Kurfiss (1988, p. 2) defines critical thinking as an “investigation whose purpose is to explore a situation, phenomenon, question, or problem to arrive at a hypothesis or conclusion about it that integrates all available information and that therefore can be convincingly justified.”

As the literature suggests, cognitive therapy is most effective when carried out in natural home and community situations (Seaman, Roberts, Gilewski, & Nagai, 1993). Each picture in *Critical Thinking for Activities of Daily Living and Communication* depicts a realistic scenario in home and community activities that requires the client to analyze and synthesize information in order to answer the questions provided.

The simulated situations and activities demand the use of one or more cognitive and executive functions. Cognitive functions include, but are not limited to, attention, memory, reasoning, problem solving, organization, and sequencing. Executive functions include self-awareness, self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and planning. All of

these functions are essential for a patient’s independent reentry into the home and community, and therefore need to be assessed and targeted during therapeutic rehabilitation.

This material is designed to identify and remediate the skills that appear to be impaired in the clinical setting. The clinician should be cautioned that critical thinking skills demonstrated in a therapeutic setting may not generalize to the same functional situations at home and in the community. Therefore, the clinician is encouraged to challenge the client with the scenarios provided in the real world.

Critical Thinking for Activities of Daily Living and Communication consists of 50 pictures in a “flipbook” format along with questions that facilitate critical thinking. The questions are in both English and Spanish. The flipbook design enables the clinician to read the questions while the client views the picture. The images include photographs, computer-generated graphics, and line drawings. The material is divided into the following seven sections:

- I. Home Management
- II. Community Access
- III. Following Directions
- IV. Problem Solving
- V. Health/Personal Well-Being
- VI. Calculations/Measurements
- VII. Leisure/Play

Rationale

Changes in the health-care delivery system are moving the focus away from lengthy rehabilitation stays to home- and community-based interventions. The current emphasis is on functional outcomes. To meet this need, *Critical Thinking* provides functional scenarios for both the home and community.

Objectives

Critical Thinking for Activities of Daily Living and Communication is designed to

1. improve critical thinking skills by providing simulated practice of daily situations.
2. expand language skills.
3. stimulate generalization of language and cognitive skills from a therapeutic setting to everyday activities.

4. provide clinicians with a functionally based method to observe strengths and weaknesses in cognitive skills that may impede daily function.

Population/Setting

This book is appropriate for young adults to geriatric patients who have decreased cognitive skills secondary to stroke, brain injury, dementia, or other neurological events. It also can be used effectively with psychiatric patients who may have cognitive deficits that impede social function.

Critical Thinking can be used effectively by speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, therapeutic recreational therapists, vocational therapists, cognitive therapists, psychologists, and educators. It is appropriate for use with clients receiving treatment in rehabilitation centers, hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies, psychiatric settings, schools, and vocational settings.

Suggested Applications

Individual Treatment

Present the stimulus card to the client, then ask the questions that correspond to that picture. In addition to asking for the answer, you should question the client about the thought processes leading up to the answer.

In addition to the questions provided, you may ask other questions that are appropriate to the picture on the card and to the individual client's life experiences. You may also modify the questions provided by using either simpler or more complex language to meet the comprehension level of each client.

You may choose to use *Critical Thinking* before going on a community outing or home visit. For example, the money management and calculation situations can be practiced with real money in the therapeutic setting before the client goes out into the community to perform a similar task.

The stimulus cards are grouped into sections so that you can focus on a particular cognitive skill or treatment goal. You may use a particular selection of stimulus cards with individual clients. For example, if you know that your client will be using public transportation, then the stimulus cards that depict bus and train transportation may be appropriate; however, if you are sure that the client will not be using public transportation, then you may choose to omit those cards. The literature suggests that functional gains are more likely to be achieved when highly motivating stimuli are used (Seaman, Roberts, Gilewski, & Nagai, 1993). Whenever possible, relate the pictures on the stimulus cards to an actual situation to facilitate generalization.

Most questions are based directly on the stimulus picture; however, some questions require general knowledge and rely on previously learned information. You must decide which questions are appropriate for each individual.

If the question requires calculation, you may allow the client to use paper and pencil or a calculator to answer. In most cases, the answer appears in parentheses after the question. Once again, take into account the skill level of each client and modify the questions or number of cues accordingly.

Group Treatment

You can use *Critical Thinking* to facilitate group interaction. Give one question to each group member or open the treatment session with a general discussion of each question. Encourage peers or group members to provide feedback and contribute their knowledge to assist in the learning process. Another suggestion is to have one client read the questions to another client. This enables you to address reading skills as well as pragmatics in a peer situation. Here, too, clients can practice group communication skills before going on a community outing. For example, if your group is practicing meal planning, you may choose to review the stimulus cards that relate to managing money, following directions, and shopping for groceries.

Whenever possible, draw upon real-life situations of the group members and relate them to the stimulus card. To best promote critical thinking, the treatment focus should not necessarily be on the correct answer so much as on the accuracy of the steps that led your client to the answer.

Co-treatment

Co-treatment with other professionals (e.g., speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, psychologists) is an excellent

holistic treatment approach to achieve multidisciplinary goals. A co-treatment session with occupational therapy and speech therapy can address direction-following tasks. Use the muffin recipe activity to determine whether a client is able to sequence the processes involved in the task, then take the activity a step further to see if the client is able to generalize these skills and put them into practice by baking the muffins.

High/Low Functioning

The stimulus cards and questions are not listed in order of complexity. You may add, modify, or eliminate questions to individualize the treatment to the cognitive and communication level of the client.

Other Language Applications/Activities

Another language application is to have the client answer the questions in writing. Depending on the client's skill level, you can have the client write the answers in words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs. This will enable you to address critical thinking skills as well as written expression.

The ideas listed here are just suggestions for using *Critical Thinking for Activities of Daily Living and Communication*. You will find many other applications, using your own creativity and imagination to meet the needs of your clients.

Feedback and Cueing

Critical Thinking is a therapy tool that can elicit a number of different thoughts and discussions about each picture. As with real life, there are many ways to organize, sequence, and think through a scenario. Your treatment focus should be on the thought processes that led the client to the answer, not solely on the correct answer. Verbally explore the thinking processes that led your client to his or her response. Reinforce those steps and reinforce all responses that are logical and correct. Use verbal cueing as a way to modify responses that are incorrect, incomplete, or partly correct. In an effort to transfer skills from the therapeutic setting to real life situations, the clinician should draw upon the client's experiences and incorporate discussions about real situations whenever possible.