

**Memory Support Skills Workbook  
Session 1: Cognitive Function**

**Course Overview**

**Session 1 Introductions and an overview of cognitive abilities**

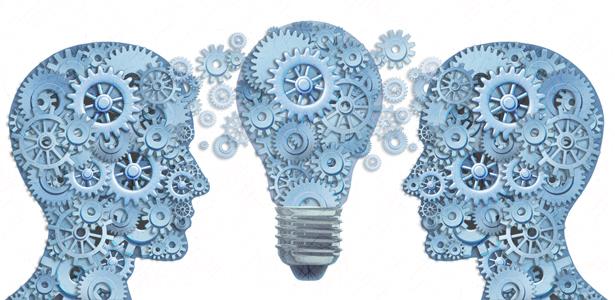
Session 2 Overview of memory

Session 3 Internal memory enhancement strategies

Session 4 External memory enhancement strategies

Session 5 Mood and cognitive functioning

Session 6 Keeping well, course reviews and goodbyes

[](https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjmp9fz_t3VAhWDMhoKHSoNA1AQjRwIBw&url=https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2011/12/is-the-expansion-of-knowledge-endangering-genius/249735/&psig=AFQjCNEusdfGovjSTS6aYtaxFysdWEFJig&ust=1503049757165511) **Course Introduction**

Thank you for attending and welcome to the memory support skills group. This group has been designed for people who are experiencing difficulties with their memory.

By participating in this group programme we hope that you will learn more about your difficulties and develop some strategies to help you manage these difficulties. The aims of the group are listed below:

* To develop knowledge and understanding of our memory and the process underpinning it
* To develop awareness of and share our own difficulties
* To develop internal and external strategies to support our memory
* To increase knowledge and understanding of the impact of memory difficulties on our wellbeing
* To develop an awareness of strategies to support psychological and emotional well-being
* To increase our knowledge and understanding of cognitive functioning and abilities

We hope that the memory support skills group will also provide you with a space to share your experiences, knowledge and skills.

It can be daunting coming together within a group and it’s perfectly natural to feel worried or anxious about attending and talking within a group. It is therefore important that we support one another and contribute as much or as little as we feel comfortable with. The emphasis of this group is active participation and it is equally important to contribute as much as you feel you can. It is also important that you attend all the sessions, however, if for some reason you can’t attend the group could you please let us know at least 24 hours in advance.

There will be the opportunity for you to complete some work out-of-session if you wish to. This is not compulsory, but may be helpful when thinking together about which strategies might help you manage your difficulties. Please also be aware that this group is not about ‘solving’ memory problems but developing strategies to help us to cope with our difficulties. It can take time to find the strategies that work for you, to implement these and for these to become effective. So it’s important that we take an explorative approach with trial and error.

Sometimes attending groups can cause us to have difficult thoughts and feelings. If you have any difficulties please feel able to arrange a time to discuss this with Grace Sunerton. I will endeavour to be available for telephone consultation on 01782 275188 to support you if you are having difficulties with the programme. There will also be space to ask any questions and explore with us your difficulties within the group if you feel comfortable sharing these.



**Introductions**

Before we get started with the group today we’d like to take some time for everyone to introduce themselves. Below are some sample questions we can use to help get to know one another.

What’s your name?  
  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Tell me about yourself:  
  
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\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
  
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\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What’s your favourite thing to do?  
  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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What’s the one thing you could not live without?  
  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Group Rules**

As we mentioned, we hope that members of the group will support and learn from each other. We also hope all the members will share thoughts, ideas and experiences during the sessions. However, it can help to have a few ‘ground rules’ to ensure that everyone feels as comfortable as possible and to help the group run smoothly.

This can also help to ensure that everyone has chance to contribute to the group. Is there anything that you would suggest could help the group to run smoothly? Feel free to make a note of any group rules agreed upon in the space below.



*We have agreed to:*

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**What are Cognitive Abilities?**

The term *cognitive ability* is used to describe people’s thinking abilities; including problem solving, concentration and memory. Our minds are made up of lots of these abilities.

We will explore some of these in more detail below; however, for the purpose of this group we will not cover all cognitive abilities.

We all have our strengths as well as areas we find more difficult. Some of you may have completed a cognitive assessment before attending this group which helps us to identify these strengths and areas of difficulty.

The image below shows the different types of abilities:

**Language**

**Memory**

[](http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjxmtHv8d3VAhUBVhQKHci_D1IQjRwIBw&url=http://diysolarpanelsv.com/brain-black-and-white-clipart.html&psig=AFQjCNHIrFOOBtVbVXs0t1U1wpzE000ZWQ&ust=1503046254597486)

**Visuospatial Skills**

**Types of Cognitive Abilities**

**Attention**

**Executive Functioning**

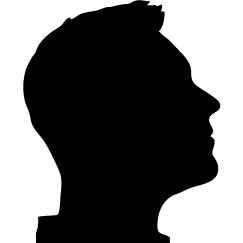
**Information Processing**

**Attention**

Attention is a complex thinking skill. Attention describes the process through which you select something to concentrate on, filter out distractions, maintain concentration and switch it when necessary.

**Types of Attention**

* **Focused or selective attention** is your ability to choose something to pay attention to while filtering out and ignoring other stimuli like noise.
* **Sustained attention** is your ability to keep concentrating on something over a period of time.
* **Divided attention** is your ability to pay attention to more than one thing at the same time.
* **Alternating attention** is your ability to switch your attention between two or more tasks.

[](http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwi-s6vRpuDVAhWHthoKHXFDDP0QjRwIBw&url=http://hddfhm.com/clip-art/face-silhouette-clipart.html&psig=AFQjCNHN9huNsjRkY7vaQTffz7tdlo6B6A&ust=1503129139781585)**How are people with attention difficulties affected?**

I find it hard to do more than one thing at a time like writing a message while talking on the phone.

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My mind often wanders when I read or watch TV. I’ll get to the end of a programme or page and have no idea what I read or watched.



I start doing something but then get distracted and start doing something else. Then I can’t remember what I was meant to be doing.

**Information Processing**

[](http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwiE_fut-d3VAhUFbRQKHbj7BTMQjRwIBw&url=http://controlmind.info/human-brain/brain-and-computer&psig=AFQjCNHe2KRY2cy3LIHX1VziquJa073Q7Q&ust=1503048281782910)Information processing refers to the process through which your mind takes in information, processes that information and acts on. We often talk about speed of information processing which refers to how quickly people are able to do this. For some people this may have slowed down which means that they find it hard to take new information in, especially when they’re trying to concentrate on lots of different things at once. Imagine that your mind works a bit like a computer.

If you have lots of programmes open at the same time this will put pressure on the computer and cause it to slow down. Equally, if you’re using one programme it might be overloaded with information. The same can happen with our minds, especially for people who have reduced speed of information processing. If you overload your mind, information might not go in properly.

**How are people with reduced speed of information processing affected?**

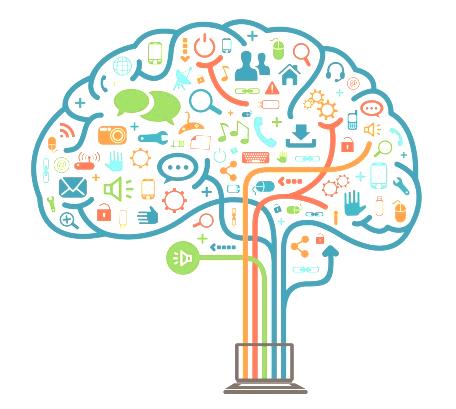
It takes me longer to answer questions now. If someone asks me something I have to stop and think about what it means before I can answer.

I used to be able to do maths in my head really quickly but now it takes me ages.

If someone’s explaining what something means I have to ask them to slow down and repeat it because it takes a while for the information to sink in.

**Executive Functioning**

Executive functioning is a broad term used to describe our ability to regulate and organise our thoughts and activities and effectively make decisions.   
It includes lots of different abilities such as:

* **Planning and organising:** The ability to plan a task including organising your time.
* **Sequencing:** the ability to complete tasks in the right order.
* **Flexible thinking:** the ability to think in a non-rigid way and adapt your thinking.
* [](http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwim2-Cd_t3VAhUGVRQKHeIbCicQjRwIBw&url=http://atclassroom.blogspot.com/2015/08/executive-functioning.html&psig=AFQjCNHHsqxZ8ThmyuezKdOsvZxO1VrizA&ust=1503049569429952)**Self-monitoring:** The ability to monitor your behaviour and responses and adapt these if necessary.
* **Problem solving:** the ability to solve problems or tasks.

**How are people with executive functioning difficulties affected?**

Sometimes I find it hard to multi-task or change what I’m doing

I have trouble planning ahead what I need to do during the day or for specific tasks

I can’t seem to follow a recipe anymore

**Out of session work: Memory self-assessment**

As we start out in the group, it can be really helpful to think about our own memory difficulties – what’s brought you to the group?   
  
It can also be helpful to identify any strategies/things you may already be doing, to try and overcome any memory difficulties and help you to remember things. Not only will this help us to build on any strategies that are already proving useful and share them with the rest of the group, it will also help to develop a picture of where our own individual strengths and difficulties lie.   
  
Between now and the next session, have a go at filling out the form on the next page if you want to. We’ll have chance to review it in session 2.

**Session 2 Overview**

We will also be talking a bit more about memory in the next session. At the start of the next session we will be doing a brief breathing exercise. This is because often when we attend the sessionsthere may be lots of things on our minds. Perhaps thoughts about what we’ve been doing, what we need to do, maybe some expectations or perhaps worries about what the group itself will be like. Our minds often wander and life is sometimes filled with stresses or worries. So we will do this breathing exercise to help us to feel more ‘grounded’ in the next session.

**Out of Session Work: Memory Assessment Form**

Memory Self- Assessment Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When did my difficulties start?   
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
  
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What difficulties am I having (e.g. forgetting conversations, not recognising people, difficulty paying attention, feel like I’ve slowed down a bit, information isn’t going in)? Note as many as appropriate for you:

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Which strategies am I using currently to help me remember things? Note as many as appropriate for you:

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Are these helpful or unhelpful?   
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