



# THINKING SKILLS

## FOR RECOVERY

### Cognition (thinking) skills

Cognition or thinking skills are the things our brains do to understand the world. These are;

- paying attention
- memory
- planning
- problem solving
- getting organised
- how we think around other people



### Cognition facts

Thinking skills develop and change over our lifetime. Thinking skills are influenced by our experiences, as well as where and how we live. We are born with certain thinking abilities (like intelligence).

We can learn how to best use our thinking skills for what we want out of life. We all have different thinking strengths and weaknesses. For example, some people are artistic others enjoy numbers or building objects.



### Did you know...

**We can improve our thinking skills and learn ways to manage our weaker thinking skills.**





## Cognition & mental illness

Thinking problems can occur with mental illness.

Sometimes thinking problems only occur when you are unwell. For example, having trouble problem solving when you are feeling depressed or anxious. For other people, the thinking problems continue.

The thinking problems that occur with mental illness can also be treated.

## Cognition & medication

Researchers are looking at medications that can help thinking problems associated with schizophrenia. These are not yet available.

Medication to treat psychosis can be chosen to help thinking side effects.

Always take medication as advised- too much, too little or not taking medication regularly can impact on your thinking skills.

**Recognising and strengthening thinking skills helps with recovery from mental illness.**



# Strengthening your thinking skills

## Ask yourself

What things do I **find interesting** that would keep my mind active?



What **social** situations keep my mind active? (like family events)



What **places** keep my mind active? (library, park)



How can I avoid or cut back on **alcohol or drugs**?



## Try this

**Stop**



**Think**

What do I need or want to do today/this week?

What thinking skills do I need to use?



**Do it**



**Check how it went**



# MAKING YOUR BRAIN WORK

## FOR YOU

### Eat well



Make sure your plate is filled with vegetables, fruits, low fat protein, and whole grains.

### Sleep well



Make sure you get 7-9 hours of sleep every night to restore energy.

### Exercise



Physical exercise has been shown to improve your thinking skills.

### Use your strengths



Know your learning strengths and style (see the learning style checklist).

### Adapt



Reduce your thinking “load” by having a routine and “a place for everything and everything in its place”.

### Compensate



Use your phone alarms to help you remember, use a calendar to remember and plan.



# BOARD GAMES AND

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## COGNITION

The table below gives some ideas about the cognitive domains targeted by various games

Game	Attention	Memory	Executive	Perceptual	Language	General knowledge
Uno	++		@			
Articulate	+		+			++++
Dumb criminals			++		#	
Game of Life	+		+++		#	
Yahtzee	+	+	+			
Scrabble			+	+	+++++	
Chess	++		+++			
Connect 4	++		+++			

@ Set shifting

# Logic and critical thinking

Board games should be fun. Most also involve interacting with others (social skills). All require cognitive skills.

