



WELCOME TO FOCUS FORWARD

Our staff is honored to work with you during your recovery.

Our goal is to provide you with education and strategies so that you can manage your cognition, improve your self-confidence, and engage in all your life roles.

This book has been set up into topic-specific sections:

Introductory Concepts, Strategies and Resources

___ Information Management

___ Attention and Fatigue Management

___ Time Management

Each section will provide you with:

- Written handouts
- Worksheets that help you connect the information to your daily life
- Weekly review
 - 1) Reviews the effectiveness of the strategies used
 - 2) Summarizes new concepts
 - 3) Identifies your focus for the next week
- Core strategy review
 - 1) Areas of inefficiency you are addressing
 - 2) Strategies that are most effective for you
 - 3) Examples of how you would use them in everyday life



FOCUS FORWARD

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INTRODUCTORY CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES

The Introductory Concepts frame the education and strategies that you will be using. It is very important that you understand these concepts and can apply them to your life and unique experience.

The term **cognition** is used throughout. Cognition is defined as: The product of many integrated processes carried out by the brain that allows humans to be aware, think, learn, judge plan and execute behavior. (National Institutes of Health, n.d.)

Key Concepts:

1. Multi-factor Model of Functioning
2. Awareness

Strategies:

1. Pausing
2. Checklist
3. Timer

Optional Resource:

- Six Things You Can Do For Optimal Thinking



Introductory Concept 1

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MULTI-FACTOR MODEL OF FUNCTIONING

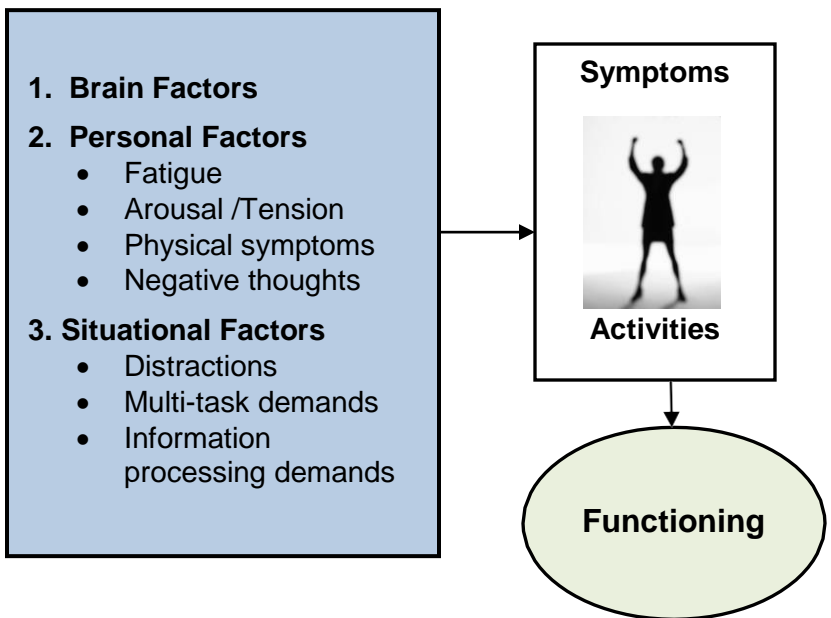
Brain factors combine in some fashion with personal and situational factors to influence performance, social interaction, and coping.

After treatment a person's abilities are influenced by:

- **Brain factors**
 - Baseline cognitive functioning
 - Possible secondary effects from illness and treatment
- **Personal Factors**
 - Fatigue
 - Arousal / Tension
 - Physical Symptoms (i.e. headaches)
 - Negative Thoughts
- **Situational Factors**
 - External environmental distracters
 - Multi-task demands
 - Information processing demands

MULTI-FACTOR MODEL OF FUNCTIONING

- The multi-factor model views cognitive changes after cancer treatment as not fixed but varying from moment-to-moment.
- It reflects inefficient cognitive abilities plus adverse effects on functioning from personal factors and situational factors.
- These factors compete for and may overtax the brain's limited capacity for attention and control at that moment and place.



Introductory Concept 1

On the worksheet below, please write down the following:

- Any brain factors you are aware of
- Write down personal factors that are affecting your performance
- Write down situational factors that are affecting your performance
- Describe how they have affected your performance

How the Multi Factor Model of Functions Affects Me
Brain Factors:
Personal Factors:
Situational Factors:
How these affect my task performance:



AWARENESS

Reflecting accurately on your functioning (known as self-awareness) is essential for effective life management. Framing awareness as a hierarchy can help guide and empower you to not only understand how you function but help you choose and use strategies that enable you to function more effectively.

The three levels of awareness include¹:

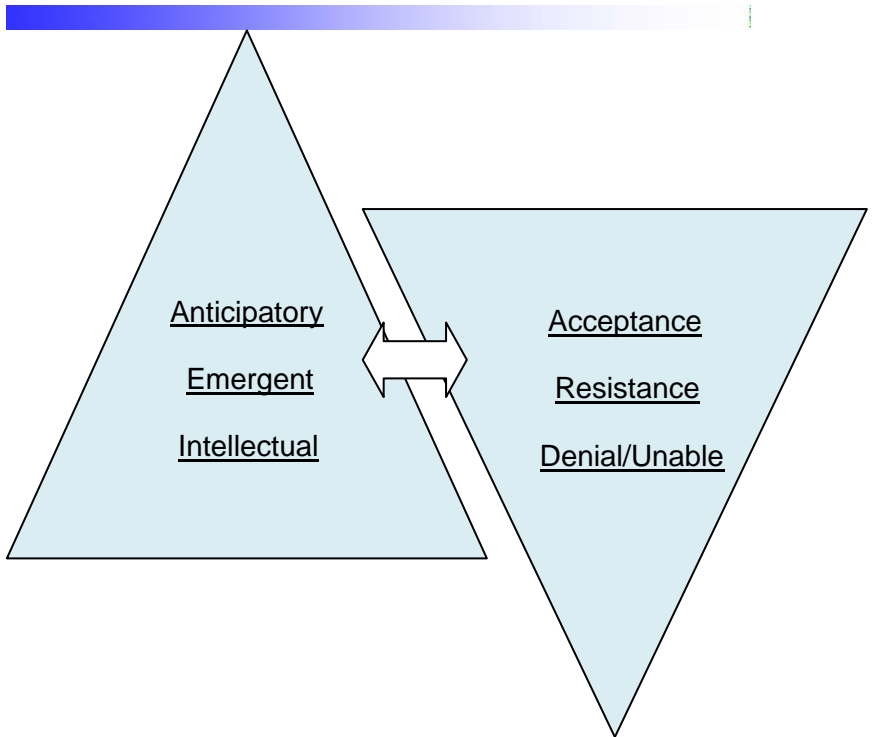
Intellectual:

Know there is a deficit but may be unable to recognize it when it is occurring (“I end up at appointments and do not have what I need.”)

Emergent: Recognizes a problem when it is occurring (“I always leave the house without the things I need and have to run back and get them.”)

Anticipatory: Anticipates a potential problem and has a strategy in mind (“I have a ‘Leaving the House’ checklist. I review it before I leave to make sure I have the things I need before I leave the house.”)

¹ Adapted from the Awareness Pyramid (Crosson B, Barco PP, Velozo CA, Bolesta MM, Cooper PV, Werts D, Brobeck TC. [1989]. Awareness and compensation in postacute head injury rehabilitation. *Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation*, 4, 46-54.)



Anticipatory awareness requires acceptance. This process includes the following elements:

- Identifying / owning a problem or concern
- Understanding options to allow new choices / behaviors
- Time and energy to develop a new habit

On the following sheet, look back on your multifactor functions worksheet.

- Choose a task where you would like to improve your performance.
- Determine if you are at the intellectual, emergent or anticipatory level of awareness.
- Write down one or two behaviors or strategies that you could use to help improve your performance.

Awareness worksheet:	
Problem I would like to address:	<i>Multitasking (I can't cook dinner and talk to my family at the same time.)</i>
My current level of awareness:	<i>Intellectual (I can't do it)</i>
Possible behaviors or strategies:	<i>Sit down and talk to family first; cook dinner later.</i>

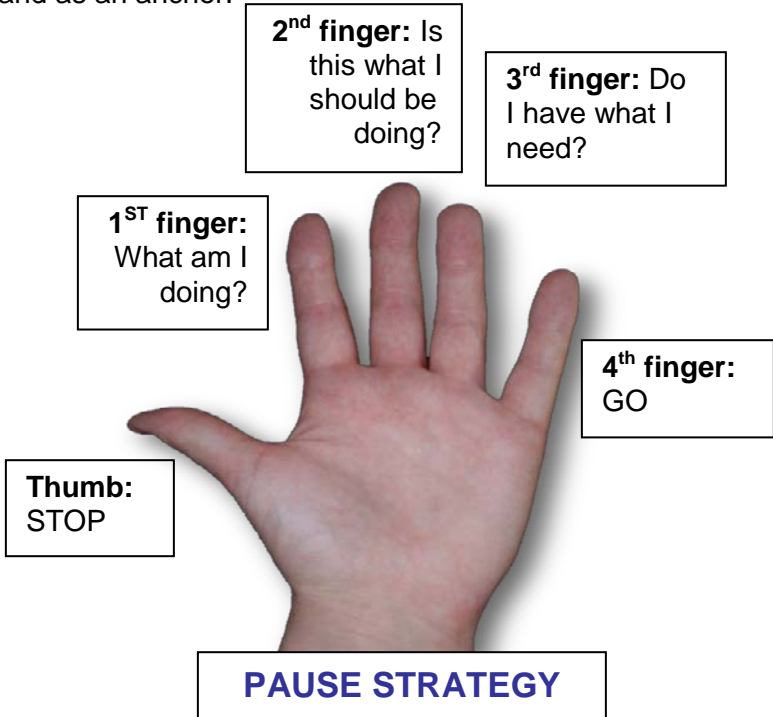


Awareness worksheet:	
Problem area I would like to address:	
My current level of awareness:	
Possible behaviors or strategies:	



PAUSING

One of the most beneficial strategies you can learn and use. It is simply taking a moment to get your brain and body on the same page. It should be used throughout the day. Start by talking yourself through 5 steps. Use the fingers on your hand as an anchor.



I will practice Pausing: _____

My external cue will be: _____



LEAVING THE HOUSE CHECKLIST WORKSHEET

You can decrease memory demands and errors by creating lists.

These lists can be items you need to remember or sequences of behavior. When you review / complete the lists in the same order repeatedly, you can develop a habit and decrease the cognitive energy used.

Sample List:

Leaving the House Checklist:	
Keys	√
Purse <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wallet• Calendar	√
Medications	√
Water	√
Lists	√
Items for errands	√



CHECKLIST WORKSHEET

Leaving the House Checklist:	



COMBINING LEAVING THE HOUSE CHECKLIST AND THE PAUSE

Sometimes you need to combine two strategies to develop habits.

This week you will leave with a pause strategy and a leaving the house checklist.

Every time you plan to leave the house we want you to:

Pause and ask yourself the main questions

1. Stop.
2. What am I doing?
3. Is it what I am supposed to be doing?
4. Do I have what I need?
 - a. Look at your leaving the house checklist and make sure you actually do “have everything” you need.
5. Then Go.



Try this for 1 week.



STRATEGY 3 TIMER USE

Employing new strategies takes awareness and energy. It also requires tracking of time. The use of external cues can be an effective way to increase the chances of remembering to use strategies at the right time. They can also help you track the passage of time if you need cues to start or stop a task.

Suggested tools are:

- A timer (*you are being provided with a timer that you can use to help with strategy use*)
- Alarms set on your phone or computer (your therapist can help you figure out how to set them)





SIX THINGS YOU CAN DO TO MAKE SURE YOUR THINKING SKILLS ARE AT THEIR BEST

1. Good Nutrition

- Stay hydrated
- Eat consistent meals
- Talk with doctor if nausea is a problem
- Talk with doctor if decreased appetite is a problem
- Consult about the use of supplements
- Get easy to prepare foods
- Have family/ friend help you simplify mealtime
- Use external prompts if you are forgetting to eat, i.e. signs on your refrigerator or alarms

2. Good Sleep

- Get up and go to bed at a set time
- No caffeine after 2:00 pm
- No TV in the bedroom
- Relaxation exercise prior to sleep
- Talk with your doctor if you are having trouble with sleep. Medications may be helpful.
- Be mindful of napping. It is important to take breaks and rest, but if you are having trouble falling asleep at night you may need to change the time / duration of naps.

3. Stress Reduction

- Develop relaxation skills. Some people like recordings, deep breathing exercises, stretches, biofeedback... you need to determine what works for you
- Schedule relaxation time into your day

4. Physical exercise

- It is really important to resume some level of exercise
- It is important to take breaks
- Begin slowly and build
- The hormones that are released in your brain during exercise are very beneficial.

5. Brain Engagement

- It matters
- It needs to challenge you
- It needs to be fun
- The list is endless: learn a new language, play computer games, take up gardening, play cards, do crosswords.....just do something each day!

6. Social Engagement

- Connections are necessary
- Meet people for outings
- Invite people over
- Phone a friend
- Send an e-mail



SIX THINGS I CAN DO WORKSHEET

Write down areas that you can improve to help you think at your best more often. List some specific examples of how you can achieve it.

Areas where I can improve:	
Area:	Specific Example:



INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

You may find that memory is not as reliable as it once was. This can impact all aspects of your life.

At this session, we will review the following.

Key concepts:

1. Theory of Information Processing

Strategies:

1. Information Management System
2. Memory Routines / Planning
3. Prioritization

Optional Strategy:

- Momentary Intentions

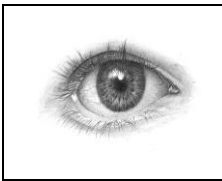
Previous Concepts/Strategies/Resources



Information Management Concept 1

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INFORMATION PROCESSING THEORY



Sensory Memory Store

- Large capacity
- Information from senses
- Brief storage

“Working” Attention

- Finite capacity
- 5-9 “burners”
- Information must be held 15-30 seconds to be “encoded”
- Stored to long term memory or “lost”

Long Term Memory

- Infinite capacity
- Information both stored and retrieved



INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

One of the most effective ways to clear off burners is to write down information in an organized way that is meaningful to you.

What is your preferred method of tracking your time and tasks?

- Smart phone
- Computer
- Calendar
- Post it notes
- Rely on your brain
- Rely on others
- Other options

Is it working for you now?

Is it taking up too much of your burner space?

It is important for you to choose a system that will work for you.

- Develop routines around the use of that system.
- Set up any external cues or prompts to ensure that it becomes a habit.

On the worksheet below write down:

- Your biggest re-occurring memory errors
- Your current strategies / routines. Check the box to indicate if it is working well or not.
- Choose a system that you will use consistently for the next week.
- Record any reflections you have on how the strategies / routines are working for you.
- This system will be reviewed at your next session to make any needed adjustments.

Recurring memory errors:

-
-
-

My current strategies / routines:

**Working
well**

**Not
working**

The Information Management System I will use for the next week is:

Reflections during the week on how it is working:

(continue reflections on back)



MEMORY COMPENSATION

Checklists and routines can decrease memory errors and the amount of cognitive energy required to stay on top of all of the information and life roles you need to manage.

Developing a planning checklist and setting up a time / place for routine use is another strategy, similar to the leaving the house checklist, that can be very useful.

There are two steps to this strategy:

1. Developing planning checklists:

Determine the prompts that you will need to include:

- To Do's
- Appointments
- Life roles
- Time for care of self and healing

A sample planning checklist is provided on the next page.

2. Developing routine use:

- a. Decide on a consistent time of day
- b. Determine a good location
- c. Identify the resources you need available
- d. Follow through on each item as listed
- e. Check them off when completed

Evening planning checklist:

Look at your To Do list for today

- Check off all completed tasks.
- X out / delete any tasks you no longer are going to do.
- Write down any unfinished tasks on tomorrow's calendar for follow-up.

Stay on tomorrow's page

- Write down any additional To Do items.

Prioritize your list

Look at your monthly calendar again

- Is there anything that you need to start planning / preparing for?
- Add to your To Do list as appropriate.

Routines are important. Identify the time and place you will complete your planning checklist in the space below. Also identify any external cues you may need to assist your memory.

Time:
Place:
External cues:



Information Management Strategy 2

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DAILY PLANNING ROUTINE

Daily Planning Checklist	



PRIORITIZING

We have multiple tasks that need to be completed each day. It can be overwhelming. Prioritizing that list can help with time and fatigue management.

We suggest that you identify four different priority levels¹:

A's: High urgency/high importance:

These are tasks that have time deadlines and / high consequences if they are not achieved promptly. These need to be fit into your current day plans as able.

B's: Low urgency/ high importance:

These are tasks that are important to you but there is no immediate deadline pending.

It is important to schedule time to address these tasks.

By planning for them you may avoid always having urgent/important tasks dominating your time.

C's: High urgency/low importance:

These are tasks that have deadlines but the consequences are not as high.

If it is important to other people in your life, delegate the task to them.

If it needs to be you...it is often less tiring to "just do it" than continue to carry it over from day to day.

Consider deleting the task from your list if it truly is not important.

¹From Covey, S. (1989). The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. New York: Simon & Schuster.



D's: Low urgency/low importance:

These tasks are not important to you and do not have immediate deadlines. It is worth asking yourself if it needs to be done at all. Can it be delegated to someone else? Do you want to ignore it until it becomes urgent or you have more time?

PRIORITIZING WORKSHEET

Take a moment to create your to do list.

Assign a level of priority to each task using the grid below and the definitions on the preceding page.

Decide where this list will be kept. Write the location in the box below.

Priority	To do list

PRIORITIZATION OPTIONS

A. Urgent / Important	B. Not Urgent / Important
C. Urgent / Not Important	D. Not Urgent / Not Important

This list will be kept:

Adapted from Covey, S.R. (1987). "Principles of Personal management"
The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.
<http://j.mp/coveymatrix>



MOMENTARY INTENTIONS

Thinking of an action you would like to complete for a brief duration.

Everyone has walked into a room and not remembered why they are there. Those moments of forgetfulness can be frustrating but may not cause any functional problems. If they increase in frequency, it can be distressing.

The following strategy is recommended to increase the chances of following through on momentary intentions:

- **See it**
- **Say it**
- **3X**

The concept is simple and using it helps ensure that all stages of memory are used.

Example: While watching TV, you see a commercial for paper towels and remember that you used the last roll and need to add it to your errand list. Before you get up to write it on the list:

- Picture yourself getting pen and paper and writing it on the list
- Say to yourself; *“I need to add paper towels to my list.”*
- As you stand up and start walking, picture yourself getting pen and paper and writing it on the list.
- Say to yourself; *“I need to add paper towels to my list.”*
- When you get into the kitchen, picture yourself getting pen and paper and writing it on the list.
- Say to yourself; *“I need to add paper towels to my list.”*

By using this process, you have paid attention long enough to store the information and encode it deeply enough to remember it. Chances of follow through are significantly higher.



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ATTENTION

This session focuses on the importance of paying attention to ensure you are functioning at your optimal level.

This section

reviews Key

Concepts:

- Hierarchy of attention

Strategy:

- Choosing tasks / place / time

Previous Concepts/Strategies/Resources



HIERARCHY OF ATTENTION LEVELS¹

There is a hierarchy of attention levels. It is important to be aware of the different levels; those that give you difficulty and ways you can change or adapt the environment to meet your needs for different tasks.

These levels build on each other.

- Focused:** An ability to attend for a brief moment.
i.e., You hear your name and you turn and look.
- Sustained:** An ability to attend for longer durations.
i.e., You listen to the news.
- Selective:** An ability to filter out external distracters.
i.e., You filter out the music on the radio while balancing your checkbook.

¹ Sohlberg, MM & Mateer, C. (2001). Cognitive Rehabilitation – An integrated neuropsychological approach. New York: Guilford Press.

Alternating: An ability to shift your attention from one task to another and back again.

i.e., conversing with a friend, answering the phone and resuming the conversation with the friend without asking what was said previously.

Divided: An ability to attend to two things at the same time.

i.e., driving while talking to your friend, changing the radio station, etc.

Attention skills vary during the day due to changes in your

- fatigue
- stress
- physical symptoms

It is important to be aware of your current capabilities and try to match tasks and the attention level required to your capabilities.

Complete tasks that require high accuracy when you feel sharpest in an environment with few distracters. i.e., If you are really tired, turn off the radio and do not visit when driving or ask someone else to drive you.

HIERARCHY OF ATTENTION LEVELS WORKSHEET

On the worksheet below:

- Check the levels of attention that you struggle with:
 - Focused
 - Sustained
 - Selective
 - Alternating
 - Divided
- Write examples of tasks you struggle with on the worksheet.
- Write times of day when you pay attention well.
- Write times of day when you struggle to pay attention.

Tasks I struggle with:

Times of day when I pay attention well:

Times of day when I struggle to pay attention:



INTENTIONALLY CHOOSING TASKS

Step 1: Pause and think about your day. Make a list of your primary re-occurring tasks on the worksheet provided.

Step 2: Analyze those tasks in two different contexts:

- The importance of accuracy. Is it a high consequence or low consequence task?
- The amount of effort required. How hard or easy mentally and physically is this task?

High or Low Consequences

High consequence tasks: These tasks require accuracy and good performance. If mistakes are made there is a cost associated with the errors.

- Forgotten bills, checkbook errors, medication errors

Low consequence tasks: These tasks do not require high accuracy. Mistakes or errors are easily fixed or even not noticed.

- Folding clothes, dusting, washing dishes.

Easy or Hard Tasks

Hard tasks: Tasks that require a lot of physical, mental and / emotional effort.

Easy tasks: Tasks that require little physical, mental and / emotional effort.

Rate the task list that you developed as high consequence or low consequence, easy or hard, by checking the appropriate box on the following worksheet.

Reviewing this worksheet can help you choose when / where and what tasks you can choose to do to ensure that you are working “Smarter not Harder”.

High consequence / hard tasks should be performed:

- In a quiet environment
- At your best time of day
- One thing at a time
- With limited or no interruptions

Low consequence / easy tasks should be performed

- At times of the day or circumstances in which your ability to pay close attention is limited
- When your energy level is low
- When the environment is not controllable



Attention Strategy 1

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INTENTIONALLY CHOOSING WORKSHEET

- List out your primary tasks in each category.
- Analyze the tasks and determine if they are:
 - High / low consequence
 - Easy / hard

Key Tasks	Consequences		Difficulty	
	High	Low	Hard	Easy
Personal				
Family				
Household				
Work				
Community				



I will try to use this approach by:



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FATIGUE MANAGEMENT

Many individuals who have had cancer experience fatigue. Understanding that energy is finite can help individuals focus their energy on increasing their tolerance and using what they have wisely.

This section reviews:

Key Concept:

1. Working smarter, not harder

Strategies:

1. Pacing
2. Taking breaks

Resource:

- Pedometer and tracking grid

Previous Concepts/Strategies/Resources



Fatigue Management Concept 1

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WORKING SMARTER, NOT HARDER

Most people have lifelong patterns for managing energy. Some individuals do not stop until the work is done. They “**Work Harder.**” Other individuals assess and manage energy and resources, and will “**Work Smarter.**” Trying to “out work” tasks can lead to decreased efficiency and frustration.

Becoming a smarter worker instead of a harder worker starts with awareness. Read the lists below and check the boxes that describe you.

Working Harder:

- I push myself to do whatever it takes to complete the task or meet the goal.
- I complete my responsibilities and if I have time left over, I schedule time with family and friends.
- My to-do list runs my life; I do not run it.
- I base progress on the **quantity** of tasks accomplished.
- I see things as black and white (done versus not done; success versus failure).
- I get the job done before I take a break.
- I value my role in the family as a “doer” or “hero”.

Working Smarter:

- I plan my time and set limits.
- I pace my activities throughout your day and week.
- I prioritize my to do list and allow changes in plans
- I base progress on tasks by the **quality** of my time management and performance.
- I see the shades of grey – it's OK if things are not done but in process.
- I take breaks when I need them.
- I value myself and my needs as equally as important as my friends' and family's needs.

It is important to recognize the tendencies that are causing increased frustration and decreased performance. Write them in the box below:

Tendencies that DON'T work for me now.

It is equally important to recognize the tendencies that are working well for you.

Tendencies that DO work for me now.



Fatigue Management Strategy 1

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PACING

Pacing is a strategy that enables you to maximize your activity tolerance and thereby, manage fatigue.


Activity tolerance refers to your capacity for output and stamina on a given day. It can be helpful for individuals recovering from cancer to view their activity tolerance as a limited resource that needs to be budgeted. Much like a checking account, if your activity tolerance is not well managed there can be penalties and it can take a long time to recover.

HERE IS HOW PACING WORKS:

Consider the activities that you need to perform throughout a week.

- Personal tasks
- Home management tasks
- Care of others, social tasks
- Medical appointments
- Work and community tasks

Pacing yourself involves scheduling these tasks throughout the course of the week (with rest breaks scheduled as well) so that your energy budget can be used wisely and restored to functional levels with rest. If an event or project requires you to use all of your energy budget at one time, you will need to plan to rest prior and after to help restore that budget.



Begin by tracking the areas that you are primarily responsible for on the following worksheet. Choose days of the week that you will try to perform these tasks. Make sure you are spreading them out throughout the week and not over taxing yourself on any particular day.

Consider all aspects of your life roles:

- Personal
- Household
- Care of others
- Medical
- Social
- Work / Community

REMEMBER: Meeting your task responsibilities as you recover does NOT involve an all-or-none approach. Pacing allows you to continue to perform essential or desired tasks as you thoughtfully schedule them over the course of the week.



PACING WORKSHEET

Task:	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Personal							
Household							
Care of others							

PACING WORKSHEET (continued)

Task:	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Medical							
Social							
Work/Community							



TAKING BREAKS

A strategy where you intentionally take a moment to pause and assess how you are doing and how you are feeling. This helps you determine if you are working effectively or need to stop and manage fatigue before you continue.

This requires you to know:

- When you need a break
- What type of break you need

Step 1: Knowing when you need to take a break

You may require rest due to physical, cognitive, and / or emotional fatigue. Review the following symptoms in each category and check those that apply to you, or write in your own descriptions.

Physical:

- Headache or tension
- Irritability
- Eye strain
- Upset stomach
- Increased pain
- Increased sense of fatigue (If I sit down I will not get back up.)
- Other:

Cognitive:

- Increased number of errors
- Difficulty concentrating
- Needing to start over / not tracking what you did last
- Losing the Gestalt / big picture of the task
- Feels harder than it should
- Taking longer than it should
- Other:


Emotional:

- Distracted by negative thoughts or worry
- Other:

Step 2: Break options

It is important to have a list of options that you can choose from when you notice the need for a break. It takes energy to develop options and if you wait until you are tired you may not be able to develop a good choice and default to napping or not allowing a break.

Generate a list of 10 possible breaks on the following worksheet. Remember to consider options that help in all areas: physical, cognitive and emotional.



Possible Breaks	

Pause and assess your fatigue level:

Having the awareness and regulation to pause and assess fatigue is difficult. Consider setting alarms at key times during the day to ensure that you stop and assess:

- Are you experiencing physical, cognitive or emotional signs of fatigue?
- Are you effective in your tasks?

Your awareness determines your next step:

If you are not fatigued and are still effective, continue task.

If you are experiencing symptoms and / or your task performance is not effective, leave yourself a Stop Note.

1. **STOP NOTE:** a cue for you to help resume tasks without memory errors.

Write down:

What I did last

What I would do next

Fatigue Management Strategy 2

2. Determine the type of break you need:
 - Do you need to stop for the day?
 - Do you need to shift to a different type of task?
 - Do you need complete rest?
3. Determine how long a break you need:
 - Set a timer to get you back to task.
 - Read your *Stop Note* and resume.

Identify times of the day you are most likely to need a break.

Identify the external cue you will use to prompt a Pause to consider your fatigue level.

Write them down on the worksheet below:

Times of day I need to Pause and consider fatigue:

External cue:



PEDOMETER TO MEASURE ACTIVITY TOLERANCE

It is important to put time and energy into building your energy budget back up.

Running errands and taking care of business does not correlate to increasing your activity tolerance. You are encouraged to take care of yourself by intentionally employing an exercise plan that works for you.

One of the best ways to succeed at this is to get moving.

- You are being given a pedometer and a tracking grid.
- You need to get a baseline measure of your activity by tracking steps each day in one week.
- Set a goal to increase the number of steps you take each week as able.

(2,000 steps is approximately 1 mile)

The goal for a healthy individual that is not in the recovery process is 10,000 steps a day.

It is very important that **you determine** your baseline and increase at a pace that is healthy for you.

PEDOMETER TRACKING GRID

For the next five weeks, keep track of your steps on the following grids. Make additional copies for future use.

Week of:	
Day of the Week:	Daily Steps:
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	
Average # of steps	

Fatigue Management Resource 1

Week of:	
Day of the Week:	Daily Steps:
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	
Average # of steps	
Week of:	
Day of the Week:	Daily Steps:
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	
Average # of steps	

Fatigue Management Resource 1

Week of:	
Day of the Week:	Daily Steps:
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	
Average # of steps	
Week of:	
Day of the Week:	Daily Steps:
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	
Average # of steps	



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TIME MANAGEMENT

This section highlights the importance of using your time and energy in an intentional manner.

Key Concepts:

1. Time management
2. Self-regulation

Optional Concepts:

- Initiating
- Stopping

Strategies:

1. Divide and conquer
2. Problem solving structure

Previous concepts/strategies/resources



CATEGORIZING YOUR TASK LIST

To manage your time effectively it is important that you:

- Understand the tasks
- Allow adequate time for task completion
- Consider other demands on your time and energy

To optimize your performance, categorize your task list as follows.

1. **To Do's:** Single item tasks that need to be accomplished

Examples:

- Make a phone call
- Do the dishes

2. **Projects:** Multiple steps / tasks that need to be completed to achieve one common goal or achieve an end product

Examples:

- Organize the kitchen
- Plan a vacation to Hawaii

3. **Problems:** A task, project or situation that does not have a clear or best approach

Examples:

- Choosing a cell phone carrier
- Deciding when to return to work



Time Management Strategy 1

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TASK CATEGORIZATION

To Do's: Prioritization

These single items can still be overwhelming. Prioritizing this list can help you be intentional with your time and energy management. This strategy was introduced in the second session.

A. Urgent / Important	B. Not Urgent / Important
C. Urgent / Not Important	D. Not Urgent / Not Important

Projects: Divide and Conquer

This strategy requires you to:

1. Identify and write out the different categories of tasks within your project.
2. List the individual tasks within each category.
3. Look over your list and label the categories in sequential order.
4. Assign due dates or deadlines as appropriate.

This process allows you to:

1. Clean off your burners and enhance the project.
2. Be realistic in your time deadlines.



Time Management Strategy 2

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DIVIDE AND CONQUER WORKSHEET

On the worksheets that follow:

1. Choose a project that you wrote on your task list.
2. List the main task components.
3. List the smaller sub-tasks under each category.
4. Identify the sequential order by putting numbers in the left corner boxes.
5. Set deadlines / due dates as appropriate.

Fatigue Management Strategy 2

Project title: _____

Divide and Conquer	
Category:	Due Date:



PROBLEM SOLVING STRUCTURE

Imposing a structured approach when solving problems can decrease the working memory demands and increase your access to creative thinking.

Step 1: Notice the Problem

- It is important that you take a moment and define the problem. Sometimes there are multiple problems that combine and make the situation more complex.

Step 2: Define the main goal

- It is important that you are clear on your main goal and/or what the endpoint looks like. This helps direct your solution.

Step 3: Generate Alternate Solutions:

- If there is not one clear solution, generating 3-5 alternatives on paper can help “clean off your burners” and enhance your creative thinking.

Step 4: Identify the Pros/ Cons of each solution.

- This process can help you see your choices more clearly. It helps you define the parameters that you value when weighing your choices.



Step 5: Make your best choice.

Step 6: Determine if the next step is a:

1. To Do : Add it to your list
2. Project: Divide and conquer

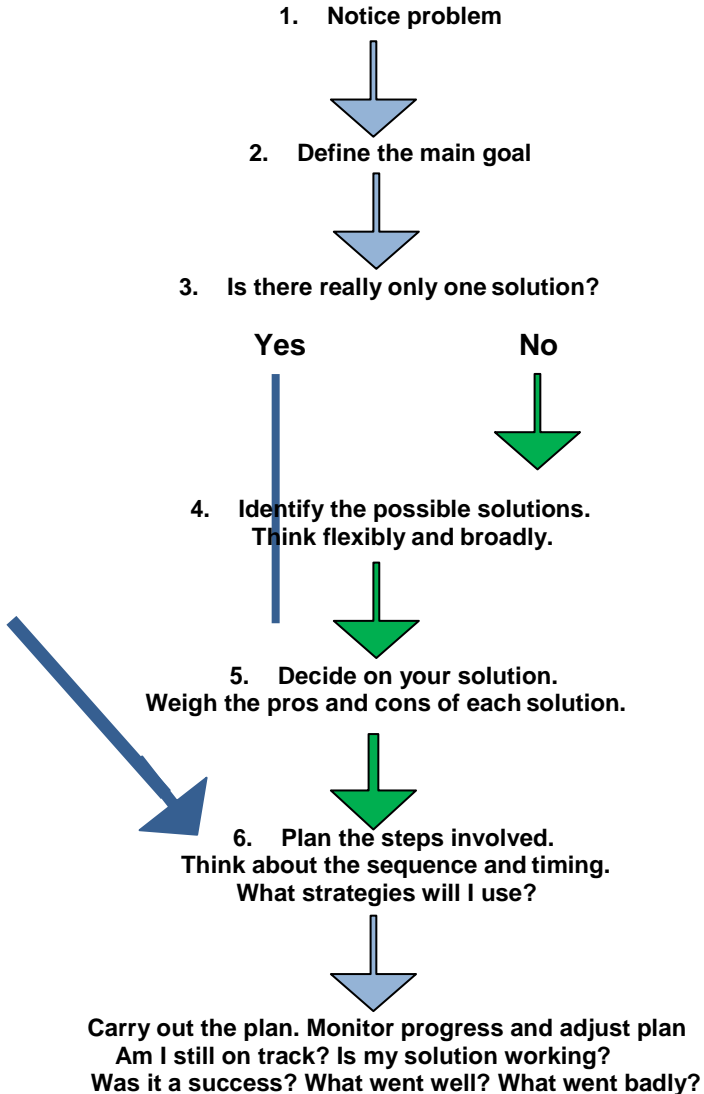
Step 7: Reflect back on your solution

- Determine if you are satisfied with the outcome.

See the visual representation of this process on the next sheet.



PROBLEM SOLVING FLOWCHART





Time Management Strategy 3

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PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS

Choose one of the problems you identified on your task list.

Complete the attached worksheet below:

1. Write down the problem noticed.
2. Define your main goal.
3. Generate and write down possible solutions.
4. Begin your pro / con list for each solution.
5. Choose your best option.
6. Determine if it is:
 - a. To do: Prioritize and complete.
 - b. Project: Divide and conquer and choose the next To Do.
7. Reflect on the process.

PROBLEM SOLVING WORKSHEET

1. Problem noticed:		
2. Main Goal:		
3. If there is really only one solution, go to #6 If there is more than one possible solution, go to #4		
4. Alternate solutions:	Pros	Cons
5. Decision		
6. Plan:		
Step #	Strategies	Done
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7. Remember to monitor and evaluate. Are things going well? If not, do you need to change your plan?		



SELF REGULATION: STARTING TASKS

Sometime starting tasks (or initiation) can be challenging.

There are many reasons people have difficulty getting started. It is important to become aware of obstacles to getting started and strategies that can help you get going.

THREE STEPS TO GOOD INITIATION

Check all that apply:

1. Determine what the barrier is.

- Fatigue/ pain issues:**
 - Lack of energy to start or see things through
 - Pain
- Difficulties with organization, planning and attention:**
 - Inability to divide tasks into achievable steps
 - Fear of being interrupted
 - Difficulty tracking time
 - Procrastination
- Feeling overwhelmed:**
 - Decreased awareness of what needs to be done
 - Difficulty with prioritization
 - Difficulty knowing when to do what
 - Inability to generate ideas of things to do
 - Difficulty staying on task/ attending
 - Inability to function under pressure



Emotional Contributors:

- Lack of desire
- Perfectionism
- Different priorities

2. Identify skills or strategies that can help you move beyond that barrier.

Fatigue/ pain issues:

- Pacing
- Taking breaks
- Balanced lifestyle (see Six Things for Best Cognition Resource Thinking Skills)

Difficulties with organization, planning and attention:

- Checklists
- External prompts/ alarms
- Stop notes: writing down what you did last and what you would do next
- Environmental adaptations
- Development of routines or habits

Feeling overwhelmed:

- Divide and conquer
- Problem solving approach
- Pausing
- Prioritizing

Emotional contributors:

- Work with counselor

3. Choose the appropriate strategies and employ them.



GETTING STARTED WORKSHEET

On the worksheet below:

1. Identify a task or situation that you are not initiating
2. List the possible barriers
3. In the next column list the strategies that may help
4. Choose one that you will try to employ and write it on the last line

Task / situation I am not initiating:	
Possible Barriers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••	Possible Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
This week I will try to employ:	



SELF REGULATION: STOPPING

Knowing when to stop can be challenging for individuals.

THREE STEPS TO APPROPRIATE “STOPPING”

Check those that apply.

1. Understanding the barriers to stopping

- Fear of forgetting
- Fear of not returning to the task
- Fear of failure
- Difficulty with awareness of passage of time
- Other:

2. Identifying skills or strategies to move beyond the barrier

- Stop notes: creating a record of what you did last and what you would do next
- Planning, pacing, making yourself accountable to others
- Working with your counselor
- Timers/ alarms

3. Choose the appropriate strategy and employ it



STOPPING WORKSHEET

On the worksheet below:

1. Identify a task or situation that you are not able to stop once started
2. List the possible barriers
3. In the next column list the strategies that may help
4. Choose one that you will try to employ and write it on the last line.

Stopping Worksheet	
Task / situation I am not able to stop:	
Possible Barriers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••	Possible Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
This week I will try to employ:	



Reflection and Application

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REFLECTION AND APPLICATION

It is very important that you:

- Understand the concepts presented
- Individualize recommended strategies
- Reflect on effectiveness of strategies used

Focus Forward helps you reflect and apply new knowledge and strategies by using the Strategy Log and the Weekly Review forms.

Strategy Log

Determine each strategy's effectiveness:

- Effective – Add to Core Grid
- Ineffective
- Modify or further evaluation – Add to Strategies Under Evaluation column

Weekly Review

Fill out the following sections on the worksheet:

- Record today's date.
- Summarize what you learned at today's session.
- Identify the concepts that you will focus on next week.
- Add specific strategies and techniques to the Strategy Log.

STRATEGY LOG

Date	Strategy	Results of evaluation		
		CORE	Ø	RE-EVAL



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WEEKLY REFLECTION

DATE:

This week in therapy I learned:
My focus this week is:



MY STRATEGIES

Throughout this process you will be identifying strategies that help you function at your best more consistently. It is important for you to have a summary sheet.

We have a tendency to stop using strategies for a variety of reasons:

- Doing well and do not feel they are needed.
- Testing to see if still need them.
- Increased stress and feel there is no time to use them.
- Strategy use and habit formation takes time and energy.

Please remember there are even better reasons to continue using them:

- When something is working why fix it?
- Testing can lead to errors, frustration and negative thoughts. Not worth the “Burner Space.”
- Most apt to forget / not pay attention when stressed. Do not increase cognitive demands when you need the energy the most.
- Feel you can’t afford the time to use strategies. Can you afford not to?

This grid and process also functions as your “staying on track” plan as you move forward in life and face new challenges.



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CORE STRATEGY GRID DIRECTION SHEET

The worksheet that follows will be updated each week.

As you reflect on the strategies that you used the past week you will determine which ones were useful and which ones were not.

Those that are useful will be added to your core strategy grid.

You will record each of the following:

1. The area of concern that the strategy is helping you manage. Example: Memory
2. The strategies that you will use. Example: Pausing and checklists
3. Applications to my priority problem areas: Example: I have a pause cue on my back door next to a leaving the house checklist. Every day before I leave the house I “Pause”, ask myself the five questions, look at my list to make sure I have everything I need and then go.

My priorities:

CORE STRATEGY GRID

Area of concern:	Strategy:	Application to my problem priorities: