

V. Cognitive Issues

A. Mindblindness (theory of mind). This refers to the individual's ability to predict relationships between external and internal states. It is the ability to make inferences about what another person is thinking.

<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Is unaware that others have thoughts, beliefs, and desires that influence their behavior.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Views the world in black and white (admits to breaking a rule even when there is no chance of getting caught).
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Is unaware that others have intentions or viewpoints different from her own; when engaging in off-topic conversation, does not realize the listener is having great difficulty following the conversation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Displays a lack of empathy for others and their emotions (takes another person's belongings).
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Is unaware she can say something that will hurt someone else's feelings or that an apology would make a person feel better (tells another person their story is boring).
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Prefers factual reading materials, rather than fiction.
<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Has impaired reading comprehension; word recognition is more advanced (difficulty understanding characters in stories, why they do or do not do something).
<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Displays difficulty with inferential thinking and problem solving (completing a multistep task that is novel).

B. Lack of cognitive flexibility. This refers to the individual's ability to problem solve, to engage in and maintain mental planning, to exert impulse control, to be flexible in thoughts and actions, and to stay focused on a goal until its completion. Note if there are differences displayed in individual and small and large group settings.

<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Is distractable, has difficulty sustaining attention.
<input type="checkbox"/>	a. Has difficulty with organizational skills (What do I need to do, and how do I go about implementing it?)
<input type="checkbox"/>	b. Has difficulty with sequencing (What is the order used to complete a particular task?).
<input type="checkbox"/>	c. Has difficulty with task initiation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	d. Has difficulty with task completion.
<input type="checkbox"/>	e. Has difficulty with direction following.
<input type="checkbox"/>	f. Has difficulty when novel material is presented without visual support.
<input type="checkbox"/>	g. Engages in competing behaviors (vocalizations, noises, plays with an object, sits incorrectly, looks in wrong direction).
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Has poor impulse control, displays difficulty monitoring own behavior, is not aware of the consequences of her own behavior.
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Displays rigidity in thoughts and actions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	a. Sows a strong desire to control the environment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	b. Has difficulty with transitions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	c. Has difficulty incorporating new information with previously acquired information (information processing, concept formation, analyzing/synthesizing information), is unable to generalize learning from one situation to another, may behave quite differently in different settings and

	with different individuals.
<input type="checkbox"/>	d. Engages in repetitive/stereotypic behaviors.
<input type="checkbox"/>	e. Displays a strong need for perfection, wants to complete activities/ assignments perfectly (her standards are very high — noncompliance may stem from avoidance of a task she feels she cannot complete perfectly).
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Displays inflexible thinking, not learning from past mistakes (this is why consequences often appear ineffective).
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Can only focus on one way to solve a problem, though this solution may be ineffective.
<input type="checkbox"/>	a. Does not ask for help with a problem.
<input type="checkbox"/>	b. Does not ask a peer or adult for needed materials.
<input type="checkbox"/>	c. Continues to engage in an ineffective behavior, rather than thinking of alternatives.
<input type="checkbox"/>	d. Is able to name all the presidents, but not sure what a president does.
<input type="checkbox"/>	e. Is unable to focus on group goals when she is a member of a group.
C. Impaired imaginative play. This refers to the ability to create and act out novel play scenarios. While the Asperger individual may seem to engage in imaginative play, a closer look reveals play that appears to have an imaginary theme (in terms of characters and topics), but is actually very rigid and repetitive. It is important to observe free play/free time choices. Is the play really novel or is it a retelling of a TV show or video? If the play is novel, can it be changed, can playmates alter it, or is the same play repeated over and over?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Uses limited play themes and/or toys.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Uses toys in an unusual manner.
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Attempts to control all aspects of the play activity; any attempts by others to vary the play are met with firm resistance.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Follows a predetermined script in play.
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Engages in play that, although it may seem imaginary in nature, is often a retelling of a favorite movie/TV show/book (this maintains rigidity in thoughts, language, and actions).
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Focuses on special interests such that they dominate play and activity choices.
D. Visual learning strength. This refers to being able to learn most successfully through visual modes. This is especially true for the Asperger individual. Visual information remains stable over time, allowing the individual to process, respond, and remember the information (I don't have to worry about forgetting, I can take my time, the information is still there). Not only is this person a visual learner, but she is also a visual thinker. Visual learning compensates for many of the person's areas of need.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Benefits from schedules, signs, cue cards.
<input type="checkbox"/>	a. Uses visual information to help focus attention (I know what to look at).
<input type="checkbox"/>	b. Uses visual information as a “backup” (I have something to look at when I forget), especially when new information is presented.
<input type="checkbox"/>	c. Uses visual information to provide external organization and structure, replacing the individual's lack of internal structure (I know how it is done, I know the sequence).
<input type="checkbox"/>	d. Uses visual information to make concepts more concrete.
<input type="checkbox"/>	e. Uses visual information as a prompt.

E. Specific strengths in cognitive areas.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Displays average or above average intellectual ability.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Displays average or above average receptive and expressive language skills
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Has an extensive fund of factual information.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Has an excellent rote memory.
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Displays high moral standard (does not know how to lie).
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Displays strong letter recognition skills.
<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Displays strong number recognition skills.
<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Displays strong word recognition skills.
<input type="checkbox"/>	9. Displays strong oral reading skills, though expression and comprehension are limited.
<input type="checkbox"/>	10. Displays strong spelling skills.