

The Temporal Lobe

The temporal lobe controls language comprehension, and memory.



Temporal Lobe dysfunction is associated with problems with

a. Language

The individual characteristically has a problem with comprehension and a “fluent aphasia” or “jargon aphasia” (gibberish). They will often use long sentences with no meaning, adding incorrect, or non-existent words.

Associated Behaviours

- Individuals display impaired comprehension: difficulty organizing verbal information and selectively attending to auditory and visual input.
- The person may forget what has been said and may repeat things or ask the same question repeatedly.

Effective Care Strategies

- Use positive, supportive non-verbal communication that conveys calmness, reassurance and kindness, e.g. facial expressions, body postures, tone of voice, etc.

b. Memory

Short-term memory impairments lead to an inability to learn new things. As a result, the person can experience difficulty with new situations. Long-term memory loss occurs as dementia progresses. There is a tendency for the oldest memories to be retained longest.

Associated Behaviours

- An inability to remember what happened this morning or last week, but able to remember information from a long time ago (memory loss in reverse order)
- Becoming anxious, overwhelmed, or frustrated by too much new information Individual may become disoriented in a very familiar setting.
- A person may begin to seek the familiarity of previous environments such as the home they grew up in, thereby making constant requests to “go home” despite having lived at present place for years.
- Friends, family members and even the spouse may be perceived as strangers.
- Accusing others of being imposters, withholding information, stealing, or not visiting
- Becoming suddenly uncooperative with familiar tasks or activities
- Repeating questions, comments or behaviours
- Experiencing “Time Warp Delusions” - a past memory triggered by a present stimulus that can potentially cause extreme emotional reactions or misinterpretation of events

Effective Care Strategies

- Use memory aides or reminders such as:
 - Keeping a diary or other visible written schedules for “bath days”
 - Using a “signing book” for visitors
 - Displaying pictures of loved ones, family and friends
- Repeat information without indicating that the information has been provided previously
- Validate experiences of the past while redirecting the individual to more pleasant and meaningful activities in the present.
- Create a “memory trail” to enable new learning by doing important tasks the same way, every day. Routines are important.
- Rather than confronting them it may be helpful to offer to look for the missing items.