Introduction to Level 1: Initiating the Next Step

Level 1 is the "Acute Recovery" phase of rehabilitation. These people are typically seen in acute settings, inpatient rehab and SNFs. Medical staff is working to stabilize the person's medical status. Rehab personnel are primarily focused on physical aspects of recovery. The people are rarely oriented to time or space and have no awareness of their cognitive deficits.

At Level 1 activities may need to be performed at bedside and sitting in a wheelchair as the people are dependent for mobility. The main emphasis will be on carrying out basic ADL, preventing falls, increasing mobility and becoming oriented. Simpler tasks that are one or two steps, familiar involving mainly procedural memory are used during sessions.

The people are often passive and do not perform until prompted to do something. Initiation is one of the most perplexing deficits to deal with in cognitive rehab. People frequently have very flat affect and slow responses which makes it unclear for the therapist as to whether the patient is following directions or listening or paying attention.

Overall Goal: Move on to the next "Step" or "Task" or "Exercise" in a sequence without human prompting. Initially they may have to rely on a device or prompting techniques

Level 1 performance characteristics according to 3 global elements:

- Interpersonal: poor eye contact, cues to follow one-step verbal instructions, flat affect, passive, lethargic

- Environmental : scans only within arms reach, cues to turn off alarm, cues for each step of transfer

- Time: unaware of time/date, max cues to initiate change of task, ignores alarm, unable to stay on task

Treatment activities for this level:

- *"*Step by Step*"*: Initiates moving on to the next step/task /exercise in a series

- **"**Numbered Sequence**":** Moves on to the next task or exercise in a specific order

Level 1 Goals:

- Interpersonal: sustains eye contact, follows simple verbal directions or returns demonstrations

- Environmental: locates checklist when prompted, finds and presses button to turn off alarm

- Time: switches to a new task or exercise, responds to an auditory alarm, counts exercises to completion

Conducting sessions at Level 1

- This level may require intense, repetitive training including techniques such as hand over hand guidance, errorless learning and frequent cues are often needed.
- Each step at this level of functioning must be analyzed thoroughly.

Initiating the next step, task or exercise after hearing an alarm

- The alarm set up is the first step in breaking away from reliance on others
- At the lowest level the patient responds to an alarm (auditory/visual/vibratory)
- After he responds to the alarm – the therapist tells him what to do next.
- The person will have to learn to initiate pressing the button to stop the alarm.
- He will have to proceed to the next step when the alarm sounds.
- He will have to stay on the task.
- Often the patient will be slow responding to the alarm – the sound may need to be adjusted or placed closer to him.

Initiating by following a printed checklist

- Once he accomplishes this he may transition to a printed list of instructions
- He will have to learn to initiate looking at the checklist to do what is next.
- Looking at the checklist can be paired with pressing a button to tell him what to do next.
- However the overall goal is to fade away frequent cuing or use of an alarm

If the person cannot read or is having trouble reading

- This can be addressed with a simple aug-com device such as a One-Step
- The therapist pre-programs the next instruction into the device
- The person starts his exercise, then stops when the alarm sounds
- He is then expected to press the button on the device after he hears the alarm.
- Then he carries out the instruction.
- Instructions may include directing him to a new exercise or new location or new task.
- The other option maybe to use a multiple button device such as "Cheap Talk"
- With this device multiple jobs can be entered ahead of time
- Jobs can be identified by number – he needs to carryout a sequence.