

COGNITIVE REHABILITATION FOR PEOPLE WITH MILD TO MODERATE DEMENTIA

Kudlicka et al. (2023)

Snapshot! This systematic review explored whether [Cognitive Rehabilitation helps people with mild to moderate dementia improve in aspects of](#) everyday functioning. The review included six research studies that together included a total of 1702 participants living with mild-to-moderate dementia. The review found that people with mild-to-moderate dementia improved in their performance of meaningful everyday activities after participating in 10 sessions of cognitive rehabilitation.

WHO?

People living with mild-to-moderate stages of dementia

Dementia is a broad term used to describe a group of symptoms that are frequently caused by a range of diseases affecting the brain. Such diseases include, among others, progressive neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's or Parkinson's Disease and vascular diseases reflecting damage to the brain's blood circulation. Symptoms of dementia typically include cognitive difficulties in processes such as memory, language, and attention. These difficulties are usually significant, and lead to the person having increasing difficulty performing a range of everyday tasks such as remembering important information, operating equipment, or managing finances.

WHY?

The goal of this systematic review was to explore the effects of cognitive rehabilitation for people living with mild-to-moderate dementia on everyday functioning.

HOW? Systematic Review

A **systematic review** involves carefully reviewing all studies that have been published to answer the research question.

WHAT? [Cognitive Rehabilitation](#)

Cognitive rehabilitation is a person-centred and individualised approach in which people with cognitive impairment, their close support network and healthcare professionals work together to identify meaningful and achievable goals related to everyday functioning. Focusing on the person's strengths and resources, a range of evidence-based techniques are then used to help the person with cognitive impairment achieve these goals.

HOW? Cognitive Rehabilitation Strategies

As cognitive rehabilitation is a personalised approach, the strategies used in cognitive rehabilitation can vary depending on the person. Strategies used in cognitive rehabilitation are broadly intended to enhance the learning of information (**enhanced learning methods**), apply strategies to overcome individual difficulties (**compensatory strategies**) and identify tools (**external aids**) that can be used to assist the person living with dementia.

Examples of external aids for people with dementia

- Using a **diary** or **calendar** 
- Placing **sticky note** reminders in areas that are easily visible 
- **Clocks** that display the time and **date**
- **Reminder Devices** (i.e., using a smartphone or tablet to set alerts) 



Modelling



Rehearsing key information



Checklists



Adapting the environment

Enhanced Learning Methods

Compensatory Strategies

WHAT WAS FOUND?

- People with dementia who received cognitive rehabilitation got better at their chosen everyday tasks & activities, compared to people living with dementia who received standard treatment. This improvement was also seen 3 and 12 months after the intervention.
- This finding was seen by people living with dementia and their care partners noted the changes in managing targeted activities.
- It's not clear whether cognitive rehabilitation for people with dementia leads to better management of other everyday activities that are not targeted during cognitive rehabilitation.
- Cognitive rehabilitation may not make a difference in how people living with dementia confidence, well-being or how depressed they feel.