Cognitive Overload Scale

This Cognitive Overload Scale was developed by Kae Bendixen MD for use by HDSA and the Huntington's Disease (HD) Community. Dr. Bendixen developed a framework for understanding how HD affects communication and cognition from the inside and created this and other tools to help people with HD and their families navigate medical appointments and understand and advocate for their own evolving needs. Please use these tools in preparing for and during medical appointments and in any other way that is helpful to you.

Cognitive Overload Scale

Intensity levels 1-4

1 = Mild. Try to avoid if possible but is generally tolerable.

2 = Medium. Intense enough to try to prevent or avoid in future, but doesn't interfere with immediate functioning.

3 = Severe. Like "mental puking". Can't continue current task or level of functioning.

4 = Overwhelming. Like "dry heaves" of the brain. Have to sit down, can't function or communicate.

What do our brains have to juggle?

Cognitive overload contributors:

Body: moving your body parts, responding to things in your environment, performing actions, moving through space, sensing the positions and movement of your body parts

Senses and other perceptions (both internal and external): sound, sight, taste, smell, touch, balance, temperature, vibration, pain, hunger, thirst, nausea, bladder fullness, passage of time

Cognitive processing of thoughts, reading, hearing, etc.

Communication to and from other people

Emotions

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