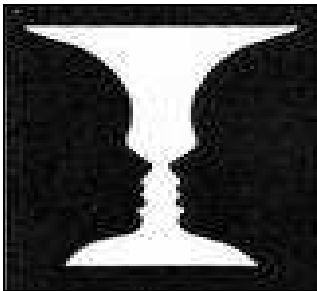




Information on perception



Our perception helps us to understand what we see, hear, smell and touch every day of our lives.

If you have a brain injury you will have tests to find out if you have problems with your perception. If you do, we try different things to help you cope with these problems.

It is difficult to understand what it is like to have perceptual problems. There are lots of different types which affect people in different ways.

Sometimes everyday tasks cause frustration and may take longer but it is worth sticking at them. However, if you find it difficult ask for help.

Sometimes perceptual problems can be made worse by other difficulties such as poor sight or poor hearing.

Some examples of perceptual problems are:

Neglect:

This is when you are unaware of one side of your body or anything else on that side. For example, you may wash or dress only one side of your body, bump into objects on one side, or only eat food from one half of your plate.

Depth and Distance:

This is when you have difficulty judging how far away things are and the height of things. You

might have difficulty when you are reaching to pick up objects, you may fill a cup too full or you might not be able to judge how high a step is.

Spatial Orientation:

This can result in difficulty finding the front and back or top and bottom of clothes, for example, T-shirts, trousers. You may also have difficulty finding your way around the ward.

Figure Ground Discrimination:

This is when you have difficulty finding an object on a background which is similar or messy. For example, a white object on a white sheet or a teaspoon from a cluttered cutlery drawer.

Visual Agnosia:

This is when you do not recognise a familiar object when you see it. However, you may know it when you touch it, for example, a fork or a toothbrush.

Dyspraxia:

This is when you have difficulty doing something that you would normally do without thinking. You often know what you want to do but cannot organise your movements to carry out the task. This can be very frustrating, for example, you may not know how to start getting dressed.

What you can do to help yourself:

It is very important to take your time. Do not rush. People often feel frustrated with their difficulties. If you feel upset, it is important that you talk about this.

If you have difficulties doing things because of perceptual problems, the Occupational Therapist or Psychologist will be able to give you advice or find ways to make things a bit easier for you.

What others can do:

If your relative or friend has perceptual problems they may become upset when they find things difficult. You should encourage them to talk about their feelings.

Where to get more information:

You can get advice or more information from the Occupational Therapist or Psychologist for particular things which may help you or your relative.