



HANDOUTABLE: Strategies to Recall New Names

It is common in patients with memory difficulties to have this difficulty permeate many areas of their interactions, including in learning new names.

The struggle of recalling new names is a frequent comment by persons who struggle with recall.

For many, this increases anxiety and leads to avoiding interactions, among other issues.

This handout focuses on information that will help the patient understand why recalling names can be a challenge for many, as well as listing strategies and solutions -- in order to attempt to improve function in this area.



HANDOUTABLE: Strategies to Recall New Names

It is common to exhibit difficulties learning new names.

Some Background Points:

- Many people struggle with this. And at the same time -- there are steps to take to help you in this area.
- New names are random to us, when newly presented – usually.
- Having a random name given to us without context doesn't give us an opportunity to help it "stick."
- Unless we know the back story of why someone was given or uses a certain name – it doesn't give us a good opportunity to recall it later.
- Context matters when it comes to forming new memories, especially with names of others.

Possible Strategies:

- Say the person's name several times after it is presented to you. Let it resonate in your mouth.
EXAMPLE: "'Bob' is a good, solid name. Love the name of 'Bob.' Not everyone's name is 'Bob!'"
- Ask the person why they were given their name, or why they use their current name. Most people know the backstory, or at least have thoughts on their name. Alternately, they may be able to relay experiences they have had in relation to their name. "Attach" these stories and perspectives with the associated name and connect and relate to it – on any level you can.
EXAMPLE: "I must admit I have difficulty sometimes remembering new names. It would really help if you could please share with me how you were given your name. That way I can remember it better."
- Another strategy is to "attach" new names to people that you already know in your life, or a famous person by the same name or a character in a show, movie, or book with which you are already familiar. Even if it is only a partial connection, it may be just enough of a hint to help you remember.
EXAMPLE: "'Danielle.' That is a great name. My son's name is 'Daniel,' and maybe that can help me remember your name -- if I think of his name when I think of you."
- Each additional piece of information that you can use, think of them as "buttons" that your brain can connect to – in order to improve memory. Following up with this connection at the end of the conversation by saying the name one more time can help, too.
- It helps to remember that many people struggle with this, and you are not alone. Talking about having this difficulty can help, too – because a lot of people relate to it.
- Writing new names down can be beneficial, too. Having a cumulative list of names to re-visit on a regular visit with "button"-hints listed can be an approach that is helpful.



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