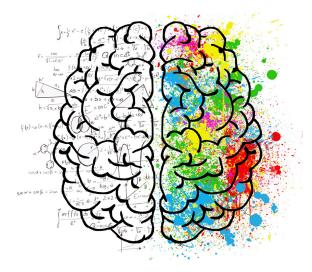# FOR EDUCATORS

*Understanding Individuals with
a Disorder of the Corpus Callosum*

WHAT IS A DISORDER OF THE CORPUS CALLOSUM?

A disorder of the corpus callosum, also commonly referred to as DCC, is a neurological abnormality that occurs during fetal development and diagnosed through MRI testing. The corpus callosum is composed of billions of fibers that carry information across the brain's hemispheres. This is a spectrum disorder with a wide range of functioning levels. Individuals with a DCC may also be diagnosed with other disabilities such as Autism and Epilepsy.

Common Difficulties

LEARNING STRUGGLES

Learning new skills can be challenging, especially with abstract concepts. Expect slower acquisition and allow ample time for extra repetitions to acquire new knowledge.

COMPREHENSION DEFICITS

Tasks involving comprehension and analysis require transfer of information across the brain. Breaking information into smaller, concrete steps will help increase understanding.

SOCIAL GAPS

Individuals with a DCC may not pick up on social cues around them. Explicit social skills instruction helps to maximize performance in social and academic situations.

TIPS FOR THE CLASSROOM

Instructional Accommodations: Break down instructions into concrete steps and provide time for extra repetitions. Frequently check for understanding as the student with DCC may not know when comprehension is breaking down.

Assignments and Tests: Consider orally administering tests to reduce cognitive load and allow the student to focus on comprehension. When reading independently, encourage the student to read aloud which helps present new information in a multi-modal way. Standardized, and cumulative tests as well as long projects will be challenging and should be chunked into smaller portions, when possible.

Adapt the Environment: Experiment with strategic grouping so the student is exposed to age appropriate models. Enhance the environment by posting checklists, charts, and reminders around the room and the student's work area.

Tools and Technology: Consider allowing the student to type written responses when written tasks become too demanding. Provide checklists and organizers that can be used to help the student process and understand meta-cognitive steps when answering questions. Most students with DCC struggle with executive functioning tasks and benefit from organizational assistance.

TIPS FOR EVALUATORS

There is currently no educational qualifying area for DCC under IDEA; however, you may find many similarities with Autism due to the language and social skills deficits (see https://academic.oup.com/brain/article/137/6/1813/2847798 for more information).

Due to the structural abnormality, you may find inconsistent or even reversal scores on cognitive tests, even when repeating the same test on a different day. Cognitive fatigue can greatly impact scores and lead to mixed results. It is also important to look for trends over time when searching for cognitive strengths and weaknesses. When possible, break assessments into subtests to gain a more accurate picture of cognitive performance.

"The greater the obstacle, the more glory in overcoming it."

- M O L I E R E

LONG TERM OUTCOMES

Remember that there is no cure for this disorder, and individuals must find ways to overcome daily obstacles. This is a large spectrum with a wide range of functioning levels. Patience, kindness, and persistence hold the keys to success. Never underestimate the power of encouragement!