THINKING SKILLS REFERENCE SHEET: ADULTS

Language and Communication Skills
- Understands and processes spoken words with adequate speed
- Understands and follows conversations well enough to respond
- Expresses concerns, needs, or thoughts in words
- Is able to tell someone what’s bothering him or her

Attention and Working Memory Skills
- Stays with tasks requiring sustained attention (perseverance)
- Does things in a logical sequence or set order
- Keeps track of time; correctly assesses how much time a task will take
- Reflects on multiple thoughts or ideas at the same time
- Maintains focus and concentration
- Ignores irrelevant noises, people, or other stimuli; tunes things out when necessary
- Considers a range of solutions to a problem

Emotion- and Self-Regulation Skills
- Manages emotional response to frustration so as to think rationally
- Manages irritability well enough to respond appropriately to others
- Manages anxiety well enough to respond adaptively
- Thinks before responding; considers the likely outcomes or consequences of his/her actions
- Can adjust his/her arousal level to meet the demands of a situation (e.g., calming down after being upset)

Cognitive Flexibility Skills
- Handles transitions, shifts easily from one task to another
- Is able to see “shades of gray” rather than thinking only in “black-and-white”
- Thinks hypothetically, is able to envision different possibilities
- Handles deviations from rules, routines, and original plans
- Handles unpredictability, ambiguity, uncertainty, and novelty
- Can shift away from an original idea, solution, or plan
- Takes into account situational factors that may mean a change in plans
- Interprets information accurately/avoids over-generalizing or personalizing (“Everyone’s out to get me,” “Nobody likes me,” “You always blame me,” “It’s not fair,” “I’m stupid,” or “Things will never work out for me.”)

Social Thinking Skills
- Pays attention to verbal and nonverbal social cues
- Accurately interprets nonverbal social cues (like facial expressions and tone of voice)
- Starts conversations, enters groups, and connects with others appropriately
- Seeks attention in appropriate ways
- Understands how his or her behavior affects other people
- Understands how he or she is coming across or being perceived by others
- Empathizes with others, appreciates others’ perspectives or points of view