

The Kitchen Environment



Neurological conditions may present with some of the following:

Physical difficulty

- **Reduced movement** around kitchen/greater concentration required/fatigue
- **Reduced ability** to handle kitchen equipment in the conventional way

Sensory loss

- May not **hear** a pan boiling over
- May not **see** and locate items in a designated area
- Not **smell** food burning
- **Reduced sensation**, not feel when water is too hot
- **Reduced taste** may impact on appetite, amount of seasoning and spice required

Communication difficulty

- May not be able to **understand** complex verbal instructions or procedures
- Word finding difficulties and reduced vocabulary, interfering with **communication**
- **Difficulty reading** recipes; may require picture support or verbal prompting

Memory and attention

- **Easily distracted**; other people/radio/telephone/visual distractions etc
- **Memory difficulties** may affect ability to complete a task or coordinate timings when preparing a meal
- **Poor visual attention** affects ability to identify potential problems eg when trying to retrieve a hard boiled egg from boiling water

Executive Functioning

- May be a **difficulty in planning**, coordinating and monitoring a kitchen activity eg attempting to make fruit crumble and handling the ingredients in the wrong order
- **New tasks may present a huge challenge** until rehearsed many times
- Activities take much longer as the brain **cannot process information** as quickly

Emotions

- Emotions can be **heightened**; resulting in tears or excessive laughter
- **Frustration** may ensue if task too difficult
- Heightened levels of emotion **increase the level of fatigue** and make it more **difficult to concentrate**
- New situations can trigger **increased anxiety**