

# Cogmed Working Memory Training

## Quotes from Trainees and Parents

- “Starting around 6pm, I realized my anxiety seemed to be gone. It was weird. I felt normal. I jotted down some to dos for the next day, and organized all my papers that had taken over the end of the kitchen counter a couple of months ago into a new little mail organizer -- in just a few minutes. It was easy -- no overwhelm, no agonizing about little decisions. Just: to pay now in front slot; to read in middle slot; and to figure out what to do with in back slot. Suddenly we have some counter real estate back. That pile has driven me crazy so many nights, because I felt so powerless to bust it out -- that it took too much energy -- it was just too much, esp. when my eye would fall on it late at night. And here I did it in 5 minutes.
- The explanation of the training, working memory, etc. provided by Tracy was excellent. She was willing to spend the time with me on the phone or by email so that all my questions were answered thoroughly.
- The Cog Med training web site (where we follow the progress) provided a lot of useful information. Cog Med is also flexible, allowing us to remove certain exercises or decrease the number of trials.
- Thank you so much for all your help and support!! I cannot tell you how glad I am that we did the program. It was just "mentioned" when I brought \_\_\_\_\_ for testing to Duke. I had even asked if there were any computer programs for increasing processing speed, attention etc. and was told no, none that had good "data". I said I had done a lot of research and had 5 or so tagged on my computer but didn't know which to pursue....later she mentioned Cogmed as an aside. She was using it in a research trial that she was running and the kids were doing great, and maybe in a couple years they would get an epilepsy trial. Cogmed was already tagged on my desk top and you were SOOO nice, it made my decision. I spent \$\$\$ for all sorts of testing that visit that said what it always says ...my son is performing at such a higher level than expected or tests show he should be able....ie "be happy he is doing this well"! My husband asked me why, I even take him to be evaluated and I said because I always hope that they will give me some info on how to help him function better, and excel more. Cogmed is that something. It was worth every penny I spent and every penny I spent for the testing, where it was mentioned and gave me the motivation to pursue it... I hope more physicians can at least tell their patients about Cogmed and let them know it is available!!!! I am always happy to spend my dollars to try to gain skills but this is probably the first thing I have done in all these years that I don't have to hope that it helped, I know that it has made a difference!!
- Here is an update. \_\_\_\_\_s piano teacher says he is reading music better than he ever has. \_\_\_\_\_ plays Suzuki piano plus there is a reading component which he struggles through because of visual spatial issues.(I thought) His younger sister has always been a few songs ahead, he has passed her. Last week his teacher said "I have never seen you read so well...and I couldn't say he has "heard" his sister practice it because she had not yet played that song.
- His reading comprehension is much improved. He still has difficulty with inferencing and questions where the answers are not stated. He remembers some info from the reading the day before.(huge)
- He remembers little things, like he puts the ice cream away after he scoops it and if he forgets and sees it on the counter when he is busing his bowl he will actually pick it up and put it away then...wow..
- His start to the school year has been great...he forgets his things sometimes, but he remembers more times!!
- The program can be stopped if a child has used up all their "brain energy" and they can take a break and come back later. At the beginning we divided the one session into 3 "mini" sessions a day, this kind of flexibility on the part of the program is WONDERFUL.
- His ability to focus has increased and the time for which his actually attending is longer.
- “Pleasure. I'm experiencing pleasure. There is a calm that allows me to feel that now. How I wish I could have done this 20 years ago. I'll just have to make up for it now.
- It is a real plus to be able to do this training at home.

- It definitely teaches working memory, at the beginning I could keep up with the sequences presented to my son (who is doing the training). I can no longer keep up with the long sequences that my son (who is training) does.
- I read that some people found it frustrating, but I didn't because when you get one wrong, the next one is easier. It copes with how your brain is doing that day.
- There continues to be some amazing changes. He is coordinating his homework, he is re-evaluating his choices...just last night, a friend called and invited him to study at his house. \_\_\_\_\_ replied, "I've never been to your house and I think I will be too distracted to do my homework" ... He evaluated his time and environment and made a constructive choice .. a choice that he would not of made before! This morning, he woke up (albeit with a little help from me), ate breakfast, and drove himself to school ON TIME! This IS the first time that has happened...especially without nagging from me! We also had a nice discussion last night and at some point, I referred to his "anxiety"...and he said "I HAD anxiety". He is happier and has more fluidity in moving from one activity to the next.
- "I am optimistic because he couldn't do this transitioning of activities that quickly previously. I constantly had to remind him about \_\_\_\_\_ class and it was a stretch to get there two times a week. Now he is shooting for 3 to 4 times a week and is getting ready and out the door by himself. So, to be motivated to do something himself without me is a BIG change."
- "My daughter continued with math tutoring twice a week throughout the summer. Even with her taking a lower dose of medication over the summer, this is the first time that I can recall her tutor saying that she is making solid progress each week. She now knows all her multiplication facts and can recall them quickly, and she is remembering things like how many degrees are in a triangle that had eluded her for years."
- "I have to say, \_\_\_\_\_'s school morning's are going great. She has chosen to get up earlier, handles it all on her own, and wants to be more independent with breakfast and packing lunch. So far, very nice and a definite change."
- I think a new skill that I have developed is the initiative to begin projects instead of procrastinating. About halfway through the training, I noticed that every time I was given driving directions, I remembered them perfectly and wouldn't get lost. I definitely used to have to hear it twice, repeat it back, and maybe write it down. But not anymore! I wish I had practiced piano to see if I have gotten better at that. I feel like I have. I just haven't had time since I got back to school. I definitely remember what my homework is and when it's due and when I should do it a lot more. And I do because the initiative is there a lot more than before. Also, my typing might be faster, like my brain is moving faster.
- Amazingly, (my son) came down stairs and said, "I think my game boy is in the piano bag." Then he proceeded to go find his game boy, pack up the piano books and bring them into the kitchen without me asking... a first!!!
- Although I still do motor-mouth, I am better at staying on topic or catching myself when I stray off into the verbal woods.
- I have made "to do" lists – but I lose them less frequently.
- My home office is neater and better organized. I had been working with a professional organizer, but her systems didn't hold up. By trial and error I found that that labeled drawers work better for storing papers, greeting cards etc. And that cosmetics, hair products, and the like are better stored in larger compartments by type (eye stuff, face stuff,) rather than every item in its own tiny container. Also, things I use every day are in a vanity top holder (make-up brushes, tooth paste and floss) so they are right there – with no fumbling. Do things get out of hand sometimes? Of course. But \_\_\_\_\_ (who works free) or the woman who cleans for us (costs less than organizer and knows my systems) will work with me to throw out or file away.
- Indeed, I am now able to prepare and serve a simple meal to guests, keep the house less cluttered: when in doubt, throw it out. Want to keep. Put it in a labeled box. Next big plan is to make a list of what's where!
- It works.
- Intake process and explanation helps to set up expectations accurately....just what Cogmed can and can't do.
- Easy to do exercises at home from one's own computer at whatever time of day suits the patient best.
- I am more likely to finish a task once I begin – even though I take a bathroom or lunch break. (It took all day to de-spider, clean furniture, clean pollen and dust off of everything – again – on the big screen porch at the lake. But at the end of the afternoon, it was done!

- Most of the time I remember where I left my glasses, cell phone and keys. This makes leaving the house a less stressful event. (\*\*\*\* is Mr., prompt-on-the-button....and any last minute run-backs drive him nuts).
- Charts and graphs which track one's progress visually provide a great incentive to keep going, as do voice-over encouragements prompted by the program as you're doing the exercises and e-mail check ins from the Cogmed provider (Tracy).
- Some of exercises (like Asteroids) were really fun.
- Improvements in focusing skills were evident in a short period of time.
- For me, secondary effects started phasing in just after 2 weeks, and they are continuing to phase in. These include, an awareness of a "priority list" and "time placeholder" beginning to form to the right side of my brain. This first appeared in an incomplete way on my day off, when I was more relaxed, but then started appearing more consistently. Now, a week into extended training, it is there almost all the time, except when I'm over-tired.
- I pack the night before a trip – even meds. I leave only what I will need to take in the morning in the bathroom in a separate container.
- Overall, I think the Cogmed training was beneficial. And you were wonderful coaching me through it.
- Time has appeared to slow down and tasks fall into place. If I don't complete them, there's always tomorrow, and I know I will get to them in order.
- This I didn't expect, but I am more able to separate my emotions from my everyday activities and events without the effort I needed to expend to do that before. This is huge.
- I have no doubt I will finish all 100 extended training sessions. I've already seen a 2 point increase after just one or two trainings. It makes no sense NOT to do them.
- Simple shifts that have been almost "magic": I'm remembering to close the garage door when I come in the house 95% of the time....before Cogmed it was 20%, I'm starting to sometimes "clean up as I go" when I'm cooking or doing some other project. My mother tried to teach me this for 18 years, then my husband tried for over 30....even my adult daughter has tried to get me to "clean up as I go"....to absolutely no avail...sometimes with me ending up in tears. Guess what? After Cogmed, I'm starting to show lots of signs of "cleaning up as I go." Now, that is truly transformational!!
- Unlike the case with some medication, this brain training improves ADD limitations but does not impact the ADD strengths I have come to rely on. The creativity, ability to think outside the box, skill in making connections between seemingly unconnected subjects and events are all still there. The thing is, I can choose to think "in the box" if I want to when the situation calls for it. The linear ability Cogmed is developing in me (and I say developing because it is still in process even though I've finished the initial training) has not diminished my substantial right brain abilities at all. It is just giving me a choice I have not had before.
- Clearly, the cons are minimal in relation to the pros. \*\*\* and several friends have noted definite improvements.
- Certain linear tasks I've learned to do passably well...but still honestly struggle with even after lots of modification, ADD coaching, self coaching, etc....have now become much easier post-Cogmed. This is another real plus.
- Having a (terrific) coach helped a lot. The encouragement, the explanations those "bad" sessions weren't really a sign of failure; tips on dealing with incomprehensible exercises (like the rotating light panel) really helped keep me going.
- Cogmed tech support was excellent, but available only business hours/weekdays. I think there is only one tech support guy, but he's patient and knows his stuff.
- The explanation of the training, working memory, etc. provided by Tracy was excellent. She was willing to spend the time with me on the phone or by email so that all my questions were answered thoroughly.
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