

Diagnostic Criteria for the Different Levels of Consciousness

Condition	Description of Consciousness	Visual Function	Motor Function	Auditory Function	Communication
Coma	Persistent unconsciousness	Eyes always closed	Reflexive and postural activity	No startle reflex to sound	Not present
	Absence of Sleep/Wake Cycle				
	Purposeful response to environmental stimuli is not present				
Unresponsive Wakeful Syndrome	Persistent unconsciousness	Reflexive startle	Periodic non-purposeful or reflexive movements	Reflexive Startle	Brief non-purposeful or reflexive vocalizations, crying or smiling
	NO sustained, reproducible, purposeful responses to external stimuli	Brief, non-purposeful visual fixation	Withdraws/postures from noxious stimuli	Brief, reflexive orienting to sound	No language comprehension
	Periodic eye opening				
	No voluntary activity				
Minimally Conscious State (MCS)	Partial consciousness	Purposefully reaching for objects	Localizing response to noxious stimuli	Verbalization/gestures in response to questions/comments	Intelligible verbalization
	Inconsistent but reproducible & clear awareness of self or environment	Pursuit or fixation in direct response to a visual stimulus	Touching/holding an object that accommodates the object's shape & size		Verbal or gestural yes/no responses (accuracy is not required)
	Inconsistent but reproducible & clear responses to stimuli				Crying, smiling or laughing to visual or verbal stimuli
Emerged from MCS	Consistent behavioral evidence of self/environment		Reliable, functional object use		Reliable, interactive communication
	Full consciousness				
	Functional object use				

