

## The Impact of Cognition and Communication on the Defense of Capital Murder Cases

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**Abstract :** This presentation will discuss how cognitive and communication disorders in the areas of executive functioning, receptive and expressive language can impact the problem-solving and decision making of individuals with such impairments. More specifically, this presentation will discuss approaches the legal defense team of capital case lawyers can add to their experience when servicing individuals who have a history of educational decline, special education, and limited intervention and treatment. The objective of the research is to explore and identify the correlations between impaired executive function skills and decision making and competency for individuals facing death penalty charges. To conduct this research, experimental design, randomized sampling, qualitative analysis was employed. This research contributes to the legal and criminal justice system related to how they view, defend, and characterize, and judge individuals with documented cognitive and communication disorders who are eligible for capital case charges. More importantly, this research contributes to the increased ability of death penalty lawyers to successfully defend clients with a history of academic difficulty, special education, and documented disorders that impact educational progress and academic success.

**Keywords :** communication disorders, cognitive disorders, capital murder, death penalty, executive function

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