

Functional Assessment Measures

FUNCTIONAL RATING SCALES

This section highlights the assessment of functional limitations. Assessment of functional limitations is essential to help determine eligibility for rehabilitation services; pinpoint barriers to employment; set realistic vocational, training and educational goals; and develop rehabilitation strategies tailored to functional limitations. Included in this section are:

- A listing of the functional limitations domains emphasized in recent legislation.
- A sample of functional assessment scales. Familiarity with such scales may help the counselor “key in” to specific behaviors in the important domains of functioning.
- Typical functional limitations and associated rehabilitation strategies for various psychiatric or learning disabilities will be presented. A hoped for outcome in this desk reference is to suggest relevant and practical applications in vocational rehabilitation that are associated with the common psychiatric diagnoses identified in the psychological evaluation.

LIMITATIONS IN FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY

In Terms of an Employment Outcome, Emphasized by State Rehabilitation Agencies

MOBILITY

Overall Definition

The physical, cognitive and psychological ability to move from place to place inside and outside the home.

Definition of serious functional limitation

A serious limitation exists if the person requires assistance from others to get around in the community; or if the individual requires modifications, adaptive technology, or accommodations (not typically made for other workers) in order to move around the community; or if the person needs specialized training to learn to move around in the community.

SELF-DIRECTION

Overall Definition

The ability to plan, initiate, problem solve, organize, or independently carry out goal-directed activities related to self-care, socialization, recreation, and work.

Definition of serious functional limitation

A serious limitation exists if the individual is confused or disoriented, or requires assistance or intervention on an ongoing basis or during episodes in order to perform tasks, monitor own behavior and make decisions.

SELF CARE (INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS)

Overall Definition

The ability to manage self or living environment (including but not limited to eating, toileting, grooming, dressing, money management, and medication compliance) as they affect the individual's ability to participate in training or work-related activities. Limitations may occur because of physical, cognitive, or emotional impairment and could extend to all tasks or only to specific tasks.

Definition of serious functional limitation

A serious limitation exists if the individual is dependent upon other individuals, services, or devices to manage themselves or their living environment.

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Overall Definition

The individual's ability to establish and maintain personal, family, and community relationships.

Definition of a serious functional limitation

A serious limitation means that an individual has no or limited ability to interact with others in a socially acceptable manner or is unable to relate to peers or co-workers without exhibiting inappropriate behaviors.

COMMUNICATION

Overall Definition

The ability to effectively exchange information through words or concepts (writing, speaking, listening, sign language, or other adaptive methods). The emphasis is on limitations resulting from a disability-related communication difficulty, not from a communication problem resulting from a language or cultural difference.

Definition of serious functional limitation

A serious limitation exists if the individual has severely impaired expressive or receptive communication, either oral or written, and is not able to communicate effectively, without modifications not typically made for other workers. Upon first contact, the person may not be readily understood by others or may not understand others.

WORK TOLERANCE

Overall Definition

Capacity to perform effectively and efficiently jobs that require various levels of physical and/or psychological demand. Perform effectively and efficiently jobs that require various levels of physical and/or psychological demand.

Definition of serious functional limitation

A serious limitation indicates that the individual will require modification, adaptive technology, or accommodations (not typically made for other workers) in terms of capacity or endurance. For example, the individual may not be able to sustain an 8-hour workday, meet production standards, or perform at a consistent pace without frequent rest stops.

WORK SKILLS

Overall Definition

The ability to perform specific tasks required to carry out job functions, the capacity to benefit from training in the necessary skills, and the capacity to practice the work habits needed to stay employed.

Definition of serious functional limitation

A serious limitation exists if the individual is not able to obtain or maintain employment normally available to persons of equivalent age, education, training, or experience. In order to acquire work skills, the person requires modifications, adaptive technology, or accommodations not typically made for other workers.

COGNITIVE DOMAINS SCALE

(Developed by McCue, et. al)

McCue et.a. (1994) at the Center for Applied Neuropsychology in Pittsburgh developed a manual for the functional assessment of individuals with cognitive disabilities. They proposed six cognitive domains to be assessed as follows:

Executive Skills

Executive skills involve a number of fundamental abilities that allow an individual to appraise a problem, formulate and initiate a plan of action, and monitor and make adjustments in that plan on the basis of feedback. Executive functioning includes the following skills: problem/goal identification, organization and planning, implementation and evaluation.

Attention

Attention is defined as the ability to maintain alertness to a task.

Learning and Memory

This domain includes: the ability to encode, store and retrieve information from a variety of contexts (e.g. conversations, classes, book reading, telephone calls, computer applications, etc.); the ability to call on knowledge to problem solve; and the ability to use learning strategies to organize and recall tasks or information in the future.

Language and Communication Skills

This domain includes both receptive and expressive skills. It spans communication that may occur in spoken, written or digital forms.

Sensory/Perceptual/Spatial Abilities

This ability involves the basic awareness (sensation) and interpretation (perception) of external stimuli through a sensory modality (e.g. visual, tactile, hearing, etc). Spatial skills involve the ability to perform analysis of complex visual information such as two and three dimensional designs and models, perform spatial operations mentally (rotate images, visualize), accurate sense of direction and time analysis and are also linked to constructional (e.g. drawing, building) abilities.

Motor Skills

Motor functioning involves carrying out some purposeful activity requiring fine motor or gross motor skills. Assessment can address speed or rate of activity (psychomotor skills), coordination and sensor motor integration (eye-hand, auditory motor

Social/Emotional

This domain includes social skill and emotional regulation. Ability to relate appropriately to others and regulate one's emotions in the workplace area are among the capacities assessed.

COGNITIVE IMPACT TABLE

The table below gives examples of some of the vocational impact of functional limitations in each of the above domains.

Cognitive Domain	Everyday and Vocational Impact of Deficits
Executive Functioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ disorganized or unfocused job search strategies■ confusion over how to register for classes■ excessive time and stress when grocery shopping■ unable to determine vocational goals■ chronic tardiness or missed deadlines■ unable to schedule own time or projects effectively■ unaware of how supervisors assess their work■ often surprised and unprepared for problems on the job■ unrealistic expectations■ slow to "catch on" to office procedural changes■ poor follow-through on direction or assignments
Attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ loses track of current task■ frequently observed to be "off-task"■ unable to sit through a lecture at school■ difficulty proof-reading■ excessive socialization■ distracted by outside noise
Language and Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ difficulty with telephone use, misunderstands messages■ poor or very slow report writing■ does not catch on to "hints" from others■ talks too slowly for others■ confuses other staff when attempting to explain or teach job tasks■ frequently misinterprets supervisor memos
Sensory Perceptual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ may get lost easily■ unable to learn how to read blueprints■ requires repetition/simplification of messages■ incorrect recording of telephone messages■ unable to recognize differences between similar work materials■ problems assembling items from a diagram
Motor Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ clumsiness or slowness handling equipment■ frequent accidents/injury on the job■ messy work samples due to poor dexterity■ slow or inaccurate typing, data entry, or handwriting■ problems with mobility or lifting
Social/Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ history of conflict with supervisors or coworker■ unable to "connect" with customers or deal with complaints■ problems accepting constructive feedback■ highly distressed or agitated over everyday work demands■ perceived as cold or unhelpful by retail customers■ shares personal life details with clients or coworkers

APPENDIX 5: RATING SCALE OF FUNCTIONAL LIMITATIONS

Directions

This checklist may be completed during an interview or given to parents, teachers or other professionals to complete. Informants should rate each item according to the frequency of the behavior. Specific examples or comments should be provided when possible.

- 1 Seldom or Never**
2 Often

- 3 Very Often**
4 No Opportunity to Observe

Specific examples or comments should be provided whenever possible.

Counselor Use Only: Circle the number of any characteristic which could be considered a possible vocational handicap.

ATTENTION/CONCENTRATION

1. Excessive nonpurposeful movement (can't sit still, stay in seat)
2. Easily distracted by auditory and/or visual stimuli
3. Does not respond appropriately to questions or directions as if not listening
4. Does not stay on task for appropriate periods of time
5. Difficulty completing assignments
6. Verbally or physically interrupts others
7. Loses place when reading orally
8. Sits and does nothing (day dreams)
9. Rushes through work with little regard for detail
10. Does not pay attention to most important stimuli

Comments/Other Attention/Concentration Deficits:

REASONING/PROCESSING

11. Makes poor decisions
12. Makes frequent errors
13. Has trouble using previously learned information in a new situation
14. Has delayed verbal responses
15. Takes longer to do a task than others
16. Has difficulty adjusting to changes (schedule, personnel steps in a task, work conditions)
17. Request too much supervision
18. Has difficulty getting started
19. Has difficulty understanding social expectations
20. Has time management difficulties (e.g., attendance, meeting deadlines)
21. Requires concrete demonstrations
22. Requires extra practice sessions
23. Has difficulty following oral instructions
24. Has difficulty following written instructions
25. Has difficulty following a map or diagram

Comments/Other Reasoning/Processing Deficits:

MEMORY

26. Has difficulty answering questions regarding personal history
27. Has difficulty repeating information recently heard
28. Has difficulty repeating information recently read
29. Has difficulty retaining learned information for more than six months
30. Has difficulty following multiple directions
31. Has difficulty performing tasks in correct sequence

Comments/Other Memory Deficits:

EXECUTIVE FUNCTION

32. Has difficulty planning/organizing activities
33. Has difficulty attending to several stimuli at once
34. Has difficulty grasping complex situations

- 35. Appears unaware of possible consequence of physically dangerous activity(ies)
- 36. Has difficulty inhibiting inappropriate responses (talks, acts without thinking)
- 37. Has difficulty sustaining appropriate behavior for prolonged periods
- 38. Has difficulty generating strategies to solve a problem (social/academic)
- 39. Has difficulty self-monitoring
- 40. Has difficulty independently adjusting behavior (self-regulation)
- 41. Has difficulty identifying strengths and limitations

Comments/Other Executive Functioning Deficits:

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS/EMOTIONAL MATURITY

- 42. Interacts inappropriately with supervisors/teachers of same sex
- 43. Interacts inappropriately with supervisors/teachers of opposite sex
- 44. Responds inappropriately to nonverbal cues
- 45. Difficulty understanding social expectations
- 46. Has difficulty accepting new tasks without complaint
- 47. Frequently upset, irritated
- 48. Sits and does nothing (hypoactive)
- 49. Easily led by others
- 50. Uses eye contact ineffectively
- 51. Appears unmotivated
- 52. Is aggressive verbally
- 53. Is too aggressive physically
- 54. Is withdrawn; Avoids social function
- 55. Does not follow classroom or workplace "rules"
- 56. Has difficulty making and keeping friends
- 57. Displays a lack of awareness of social consequences of behavior
- 58. Has difficulty accepting constructive criticism
- 59. Has difficulty getting help from others
- 60. Exhibits signs of poor self-confidence
- 61. Has difficulty working in a group
- 62. Has difficulty working in isolation

Comments/Other Interpersonal Skills/Emotional Maturity Deficits:

COORDINATION/MOTOR FUNCTION

- 63. Has difficulty performing gross motor tasks (e.g. driving, lifting)
- 64. Has difficulty performing fine motor tasks
- 65. Confuses left-right
- 66. Has difficulty keeping balance
- 67. Has slow reaction time
- 68. Has limited endurance/stamina for motor activity

Comments/Other Coordination/Motor Function Deficits:

COMMUNICATION: ORAL LANGUAGE

- 69. Substitutes words inappropriately
- 70. Uses short simple sentences
- 71. Has difficulty explaining things coherently
- 72. Has difficulty communicating on the phone

Comments/Other communication: Oral Language Deficits:

READING

- 73. Has difficulty reading aloud
- 74. Has difficulty reading newspaper want ads
- 75. Has difficulty reading job applications
- 76. Has difficulty reading signs in the environment
- 77. Reading comprehension is below expected level

Comments/Other Reading Deficits:

WRITING/SPELLING

- 78. Has difficulty writing legibly
- 79. Has difficulty copying
- 80. Displays poor spelling skills
- 81. Has difficulty communicating through writing
- 82. Has difficulty with paragraph writing

Comments/Other Writing/Spelling Deficits

MATH CALCULATION/APPLICATION

83. Has difficulty managing money

84. Has difficulty balancing checkbook

85. Has difficulty performing math calculations

86. Math skills are below 9th grade

Comments/Other Math Calculation/Application Deficits: